Exploring Multicultural Education and Culturally

Responsive Practices in an International School context:

A case study of one school.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree

of Master of Education

in the University of Canterbury

by Tiffany Affagard-Edwards

University of Canterbury

2016

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

First, I wish to thank my supervisors, Professor Letitia Fickel and Murray Fastier. Letitia, you have been extremely patient with me and you gave me confidence when needed. I thought that in writing a thesis in my second language I would be of my depth, but your support and guidance were invaluable. Thank you, Murray, for contributing your expertise and for all your help.

Thank you to the teachers and administrators who participated in this study, because it would not have been possible without your input.

To my children, Lily and Clara – who came into this world during this thesis and, despite this challenging time of juggling work, study, and being a mother, you have been, and always are, the highlight of my life. A particularly big thank you to my husband, Brad who has supported me wholeheartedly since the beginning of this long journey.

Abstract

In most educational systems around the world, teaching practices are dominated by the majority culture. This means that often the learning needs of minority groups are not taken into account, which can compromise their educational attainment as indicated by trends in national and international data. International schools are an increasingly popular option in what is fast becoming a globalised education system. These schools have significant student diversity in terms of cultural background and languages. This study investigates how multicultural education and culturally responsive practices are implemented in an international school context. Most research on diversity in education is based in monoculture schools. For this reason, this research study sought to understand what is done in international schools to cater for diverse learners.

This study was conducted as an exploratory case study of an international school by engaging with a sample of teachers and key administration members of the school. Interviews, fieldwork, and classroom observations were conducted to answer the overarching research question: How are multicultural education and culturally responsive practices being implemented in an international school context? As a teacher in the school, I undertook this study from the role of an insider observer, one where I was immersed within the community and able to participate in its daily life.

The findings from the study show that while there is some alignment with multicultural and culturally responsive practices, there is little explicit focus on, or support for, these practices by administrators and teachers. These findings suggest there are implications for both practices in international schools and also for furthering research within international schools, such as the need to pay more explicit attention to professional development, and data recording. There is also a need for more research on international schools that examines school and classroom practices.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Since the initial founding of mass public schooling during the industrial revolution, curriculum and organisational orientations of educational institutions have typically reflected the history and socio-cultural perspectives of the dominant national ethnic/cultural group. More recently we have seen a global shift towards more multinational societies, and more global mobility of families both as short-term migrants or long-term immigrants. In many countries this has resulted in the growth of the number of international schools. With the increase of cultural diversity in societies, however, there has not necessarily been a shift in school practices regarding the creation of more culturally inclusive or responsive curriculum and pedagogy.

When students from minority ethnic backgrounds are not performing academically at similar levels to those from the majority ethnic backgrounds, it is often perceived that the fault lies with the students rather than reflecting upon whether current teaching practices and the curriculum cater adequately to the changing and diverse nature of student bodies. This research study sought to understand what is done in international schools to cater for the diverse learners. It used an exploratory case study design to assess how multicultural education and culturally responsive practices are being implemented in an international school context.

This chapter is divided in four sections. It begins with a background discussion of my personal experiences as a French national in the French schooling system, and then as an immigrant, and as a student teacher in New Zealand. The purpose of the study and the structure of the thesis is summarised. The final section discusses the significance of the study.

1.1 Researcher Personal Experiences

My own schooling experience reflects the current state of education with respect to student diversity. I was first educated in the French schooling system, where there are two clearly defined paths: an academic, and a professional path. Between the ages of 14 and 16, students are identified to be appropriate for one of these two pathways. This is determined by student's academic attainment. My path of education in France was one in the academic system, where the expectations and demands on student achievement is high. The student body within this academic pathway was largely represented by one ethnicity, the dominant, white, native-born French students; however, this is greatly contrasted by the professional pathway, with a large number of French nationals of African descent, including those from Northern Africa, the Sahara and Sub-Saharan nations. My observation as a student is clearly reflective of the demographic patterns within France where "23% of Young French from maghrebine (African) origin have left school without any secondary education diploma, against only 8% from French origin" (Lorcerie, 2010). Because of this, my education was dominated by the majority culture. It was not reflective of the cultural diversity within the student body. Many of the students I studied with were essentially forced to adapt to the teaching methods and curriculum orientations of the majority culture, with little attention paid to their own cultures, home languages, or identities. This did little to involve them in the learning process and so many did not attain the same academic achievements as their French origin counterparts.

I pursued my tertiary education in New Zealand at Victoria University of Wellington, and I also taught in a well-respected and successful public school. The French and New Zealand education systems are distinctly different. Education in New Zealand is more focused on the individual. There are multiple pathways that allow students to be diverse in their interests, yet still achieve academic success. I have found education in New Zealand

very innovative, and exciting as a professional. This system differs from education in France where classes are still largely dominated by didactic teaching methods. This promotes neither student nor community engagement, and therefore excludes many minority groups from the learning process.

This, however, cannot hide that fact that there is an achievement gap between Māori and Pacifika students and those of European and Asian backgrounds. (MOE, 2015). The French system is still very much concerned with the underlying premise that students are either academic or not, and fails to acknowledge, or celebrate, success that does not fit the established academic context. The New Zealand education system places a greater emphasis on educational issues of minority populations and embraces diversity and different perspectives. For example, *Te Kotahitanga* is a culturally responsive model for teachers' professional development that was introduced in many New Zealand schools (Bishop & Berryman, 2010). This model was put in place to help raise Pacifika and Māori student achievement.

Teachers need to be caring and as Rychly & Graves (2012) assert "a 'caring' teacher will be more successful" (p. 4). During my second teacher placement in Masterton, New Zealand, I was inspired by my associate teacher. I saw first-hand the positive effect a teacher can have when student cultural background and identity is taken into account. His teaching style was based on cooperative learning and culturally relevant practices, engaging students and he made all students in his classes feel they were relevant and their backgrounds and views important. He was a caring educator. Because I come from France, where the education system is still very didactic, I found the methods of the associate teacher engaged students and kept them at the centre of the learning experience. Making the classroom environment more inclusive is where my interest in different educational approaches first began.

I have now been working in international schools for eight years. International schools present a unique context for examining the issue of culturally responsive practices. International schools cater to children coming from a variety of backgrounds and whose parents typically work for international organisations and multinational companies. Recent research indicates that international schools are benefactors of, and dependent on, the global economy (Poore, 2005). Teachers also have varying points of origin and bring a plethora of teaching practices and approaches to these educational institutions. Because there are more than 75 different nationalities in the same school there is the need to recognise and celebrate the variety of cultures, faiths, and ethnicities present in the school's community. Although schools often make the assumption that the fault of poor performance lies solely with students, some schools consider more carefully how the organisation of the school plays a role in student achievement (Guild & Garger, 1998). The school that was the focus for this research appears to be one of these later schools, and on the surface appears to be very successful at embracing cultural diversity. Do we, however, follow a clear culturally relevant pedagogy in regards to the personal and instructional dimensions? Because I have taught in mainstream New Zealand schools and also in an international school community, I was curious to investigate how multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy are implemented in international schools.

1.2 Background of the study

The world has become increasingly globalised and interconnected. This is largely due to an increase in the number and prominence of multinational companies, increased international trade, and developments in transport, and communication technologies. All of this has resulted in increased movements of populations and profound demographic changes in almost all societies. We now have more people living and working in countries other than that of their origin (Hayden and Thompson, 2008). To meet the needs,

particularly the educational needs, of our increasingly mobile global population, international schools provide education to those seeking an alternative to the national education system of the country in which they reside. Increasingly international schools are in high demand, and not only from expatriate families but also national families that are seeking a different form of education from that provided by the national system (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

The notion of minority ethnicities not achieving national averages, or performing as well as majority ethnicities, can be understood as a failure of many educational institutions to address the needs of these students. In 1994 Ladson-Billings argued that sufficient evidence supports the notion that there is in fact a relationship between student achievement and educational success. In an increasingly globalised society, where student populations in schools are progressively culturally diverse, meeting the needs of these students is an essential issue for all education programmes. To fail to address this, is to fail these students, and limit their future options.

All children should have the opportunity to be successful at school and understanding students' backgrounds is essential in this process. Most educational research clearly notes that all learners are not the same (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students learn differently, and bring different prior knowledge with them to their schooling, but, the research also indicates that curriculum and teaching methods within schools are often delivered in a manner that conforms to the educational standards and understanding of the majority ethnicity (Bishop & Berryman, 2010). Advocates, such as Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2002) have argued that culturally relevant pedagogy is critical in order to cater to students from all backgrounds. Yet the majority of the literature in education related to these issues of cultural diversity in teaching and learning has been drawn from schools where the majority of students come from one nationality and the minority from diverse

backgrounds. What about international schools, where all students come from diverse backgrounds, and there is no one dominate ethnic/cultural student group within the school? How do international schools and their wider community tackle the issue of cultural diversity and culturally relevant practice differently, or similarly, to other schools?

1.3 The purpose of the study

Most research on diversity in education is based on monoculture schools, where the majority of students come from one nationality and the minority from diverse backgrounds. I was interested in how multicultural education and culturally responsive practices are implemented in an international school context. I was curious to analyse the impact culturally relevant pedagogy has in an international school where the majority of students come from different backgrounds.

As a teacher in an international school, who also has experience attending and teaching in other settings, I feel this topic and field of investigation is particularly relevant. I seek to gain a greater understanding of how multicultural education and culturally responsive practices are implemented in an international school by administrators and teachers in response to the student ethnic and linguistic diversity.

To investigate this overarching research question, I have focused on the following two sub-questions:

- How is the school organising itself to be responsive to the culturally and linguistically diverse international student population?
- How are the educators implementing curriculum and pedagogy to cater to this diverse student body?

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, and discussion/conclusions. This introduction (Chapter One) has provided a background of the researcher as well as the background, the purpose, and the significance of the study. The literature review (Chapter Two) provides an overview of selected literature regarding international schools and international education, including the International Baccalaureate, (IB) which is a programme widely used in international schools. This chapter also provides literature on multicultural education and culturally relevant practices in international schools. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology used in qualitative case study approach, the context of the study, and the role of the researcher. The data collection and analysis process is also presented, as well as the ethical considerations and the limits to the study. The findings are presented in Chapter Four which is divided into two main sections: 1) organisation of the school in response to the diverse student body and educator perspectives and pedagogical practices; and 2) educators' perspectives on diversity and how they are responding to diverse students. In the first section of Chapter Four the school Mission Statement and vision are examined with corresponding examples from the school, and an overview of the school community and curriculum and learning experiences are explored. In the second part of this chapter, educator perspectives on diversity and pedagogical practices are more closely investigated. This includes examining how they are responding to diverse students in regards to classroom pedagogy. Chapter Five contains the discussion of key findings and summary of conclusions from the findings from the data. The chapter also includes implications from this study.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study revealed how an international school with a diverse student population is organising itself in relation to its curriculum and pedagogy. The literature review revealed increasing trends in globalisation and the evident need for multicultural education. It is important for educational institutions, both schools, and their wider administrative programmes to address this much-needed diversity of curriculum delivery. This study has illustrated that culturally relevant practices are not a central driving force in the international school studied.

The literature review revealed that little is still known about the efforts of international schools in planning and implementing culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy. This study begins to fill this gap by looking at how the curriculum and pedagogy is implemented and will assist as a record of what one international school is doing in response to its diverse student body, while offering an international curriculum.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of some of the key literature pertinent to the research study. It is organised in three main sections: International education, International Schools, International Schools and Multicultural Education, including culturally responsive practice. Firstly an introduction to international education is presented with the objective of defining the purpose and intentions of international education and international schools. These are two terms that are commonly accepted be the same thing, but have subtle differences and thus need to be distinguished. The second section focuses on international schools explaining their purpose, the great variety in international schools, and the students that attend them. This section also gives an overview of educational programmes and curricula typically offered, such as the IB Programme, a popular choice for international schools. Finally, an overview of multicultural education and culturally relevant practices is presented, as well as examples of how it has been implemented in international schools.

2.1 International education

Since the early twenty first century the world has changed at a rapid pace. Changes in technology and communication, cheaper travel cost, and increased globalisation have led to greater ease of movement for individuals and families. We now have more people living and working in countries other than that of their origin (Hayden &Thompson, 2008). These movements of people may be permanent or temporary. In addition to this, English is the common language spoken in the global labour market as well as the most widely used language for international communications. With this increased globalisation many parents are now looking for a form of education that differs from the national system of the country in which they live, and allows students to either transition back into their original education

system, or prepares them for tertiary education. Many of these parents are turning to schools that provide an international education.

The term "international education" is difficult to define in a singular sense and is often a term that takes on varied meanings. Hayden & Thompson (2008) point out the continuing debate around the concept of international education, particularly due to the "inconsistencies in terminology" (p.15). As they note, this is because, " related concepts – including comparative education, development education, global citizenship education, world studies, and education for international understanding – are discussed without acknowledgement of the overlaps between them" (Hayden & Thompson, 2008, p. 15). However, Hayden (2006) offers a clearer focus by defining international education as "the integration in the national systems of educational considerations that go beyond national boundaries" (p. 5). The two aspects that can create school variations relate to how the curriculum is delivered and the nature of the student body, which can be experienced or implemented in both national schools and international schools. There is a need to distinguish between international education as an overarching educational purpose or goal, and international schools which relate to the organisation and nature of the students.

2.1.1 International education vs International Schools

The terms *international education* and *international school* are often blended terms that many see as one and the same. It is therefore often assumed that international schools provide students with an international education. This, however, is a common error and does not take into account the varying nature of international schools and furthermore it suggests a lack of a clear interpretation and understanding of what an international education is. The two terms are unique, and simply because a school is an international school, does not mean that the mission statement, curriculum, or educational practices are

international in nature. We can distinguish between an international education and an international school, in that the former refers to the purpose of the programmes of education, and the later to the nature of the organisation.

An international education is one that drives a strong understanding of international mindednesses. While this term can be hard to define, key elements include a celebration of diversity, empathy, and respect for those who hold different views and responsible engagement in a global community. Advocates suggest there are many advantages to an international education; such as it should help students "to develop understandings of the interdependence among nations in the world today, clarify attitudes toward other nations, and reflect identifications with the world community" (Parker, 2002, p. 135). A paper from the UNESCO centre takes this a step further and asserts that an international education encourages learning about diversity, helps cooperation and sharing with people from different backgrounds and more importantly accepts difference by providing "an opportunity to act with interest towards others" (Martinez, 2004, p. 98).

An international school is an organisation that has been created to provide education for a community that either requires or desires an education system that is different from the national system. Those differences may relate to the curriculum (where many international schools offer programmes such as the IB or Cambridge programmes), the language the curriculum is delivered in, class size, sports programmes, and location, among others. There are a vast number of reasons why families choose to place their children in international schools. In the same light, there is a broad spectrum of international schools. They can vary immensely in organisation, mission statements, and education programmes. There are non-profit and for-profit schools, as well as schools, such as the United World Colleges, that are directly associated with the United Nations. All of this reflects the fact

that international schools vary greatly in their purpose and therefore in their direction of education and wider goals. (Hill, 2000)

Hill (2000) has argued that the notion of "internationally-minded schools" (p. 24) corresponds with the promotion of an international education, and notes that a key aspect of such an education is rooted in the promotion of "intercultural understanding" (p. 34). Similarly, Hayden and Thompson (2008) suggest that the ideology of international education is to offer education and to encourage young people to become global citizens with a concern for world peace, environmental responsibility, and sustainable development. However, they state that:

> Some international schools fall largely at one end or other of the pragmatic/ideological spectrum referred to earlier, while many fall somewhere in between, essentially responding to a pragmatic need but, in doing so, offering a form of education that aims to prepare young people for adult life as responsible and capable international citizens of an increasingly globalized world. (p. 27)

It is therefore imperative that schools implement programmes which promote the key ideals of international mindedness if they are to be considered a school which promotes an international education.

2.2 Programmes for International Education

It is clear that international schools are not implementing international education simply by default. It can only be determined if an international education is being implemented by evaluating the nature and purpose of the educational programmes and the schools' wider aims. The IB is one programme that supports an international education. Hill (2000) argues that while IB schools vary, "their one common bond is that they all seek to develop international mindedness as defined by the IB Learner Profile and mission" (p.

63). Teachers in international education programmes are often drawn to such programmes because of their wider goals, such as the mission of the IB programme and its Learner Profile, both of which place a great importance on students being responsible global citizens. Hill states, "What is more important to international educators is whether the school is developing international mindedness in its students, whether they might be and whoever they are" (p. 9)

International educational programmes such as the IB and others also appear to be favoured by many government agencies and non-governmental organisations. It appears their underlying ideals of increased international relations and a responsible global participation is at the core of many of these organisations; however, more than simply this increased interaction are the mission statements, values, and attributes promoted by such international education programmes. A UNESCO report (Martinez, 2016) stated:

> Education for international understanding favours international cooperation and guarantees peace and international security; human security; sustainable development; the creation of a culture of peace; and the establishment of democracy by eliminating prejudices, misunderstanding, inequality, injustices; and by developing the mentality of peace and the capacity of resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner (p. 99).

To this end we can assume that the mission statements and values of international non-governmental organisations appear to align well with the mission statements and values of international educational programmes such as the IB. It is for this reason that in expatriate and international communities with ties to multinational corporations and transient populations, curricula, such as these, would naturally appeal to the communities they service.

2.2.1 The International Baccalaureate

Many international schools wishing to ensure an international education for their students offer one or more of the IB curriculum programmes. The programmes aim to develop "the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world" (IBO, 2016). Today they work with 3,538 schools in 144 countries and offer four challenging programmes to over 1,084,000 students aged 3 to 19 years (IBO, 2016). The four programmes offered by the IB are: Primary Years Programme (IB PYP), Middle Years Programme (IB MYP), Diploma Programme (IB DP), Career-related Programme (IB CP).

__The four programmes as described by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (2016) are:__

The Primary Years Programme: *preparing students to be active participants in a lifelong journey of learning.*

Designed for students aged 3 to 12. This curriculum focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and it also has a strong emphasis on real word connections. It is a framework guided by six interdisciplinary themes of global significance. These are explored using knowledge and skills, as well as a powerful emphasis on inquiry, which are derived from six subjects' areas, as well as interdisciplinary skills.

The Middle Years Programme: *preparing students to be successful in school and to be active, lifelong learners.*

Designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning, which encourages students to be creative, critical, and reflective thinkers.

The IB MYP emphasises intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding, and global engagement, qualities that are essential for life in the 21st century.

The Diploma Programme: *preparing students for success in higher education and life in a global society.*

The IB DP is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students, aged 16 to 19, for university studies and beyond. It has been designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of students. The programme has gained recognition and respect from the world's leading universities.

The Career-related Programme: an international education focused on preparing students for careers in the modern employment sector.

The CP still maintains the academic engagement and challenges present in the IB DP programme, but also offers students aged 16-19 and more career-related and practical study preparation for either tertiary education or direct employment.

The IB programme is widely regarded as the premier international curriculum with a long and well documented history. It also benefits from the frequent positive appraisals from many leaders in education and university institutions. It appears the students that have received one or more IB programme, especially the IB Diploma programme are well prepared and suited to tertiary education and have a high success rate when compared with students from national curricula. (IBO, 2016)

2.3 International schools

The number of international schools continues to expand as the rates of expatriates and those working in destinations other than their point of origin increases. Not only is the demand from expatriate communities increasing their popularity, but there is also a demand from nations looking for alternatives to their national curriculum. The reasons for parents enrolling their children in these types of institutions are vast and varied and attempting to define what is an international school is a complex task. This section attempts to do just that, by examining in more detail what is an international school and who are the students that attend them?

2.3.1 What is an international school?

The first international school that was created was the International School of Geneva in 1924. This was quickly followed by Yokohama International School in Japan in 1924 and The Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur in 1946 (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). In the mid-twentieth-century these schools catered for children of expatriate, globally-mobile professional parents. They were referred to as "traditional international school" (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). The number of international schools is now over 7,000 and this number is expected to grow in the future with the sector expected to develop into an $89 billion dollar industry by 2026 (Morrison, 2016).

Although there is a vast array of international schools they often differ significantly in nature. As Hayden (2006) observed, "the notable characteristic of international schools is the absence of any central international regulating body that can determine whether a school may be defined as such" (p. 18). Hayden and Thompson (2008) note that generally, international schools are individual and independent in their philosophy, "though their interests may overlap in some respects" (p. 23). The overlaps suggest that international schools reflect two main orientations; those that almost entirely cater for expatriate

students, and those that also attract national students. They suggested three types of international schools:

Type A: traditional, market-driven for the children of expatriates and predominantly not-for-profit;

Type B: ideological, mission-driven to promote international understanding and peace such as United World Colleges and Aga Khan Academies; and

Type C: non-traditional, market-driven for the local elite, predominantly for-profit. (p. 4)

Although all of these are types of international schools, Hayden and Thompson concede that not all international schools necessarily provide an international education. That is, they do not necessarily focus on developing international mindedness among students.

Cambridge and Thompson (2004) have noted that the presence of international education and schools in a country can often lead to competition with the national educational system. They cite the fact that international education in these contexts can be ambiguous and contradictory, "offering ways of having more intimate contact with the world, whilst also insulating oneself from it" (p. 172). They highlight the unusual dynamic of international education celebrating cultural diversity, "whilst tending towards the development of monoculture orientations" (p. 172). They attributed this to the fact that international schools interact with communities, but the knowledge, skills, and attitudes delivered and modelled follow a European or North American pedagogical origin. This is because Western European and American nationals typically dominate the teaching faculties in international schools or within international education programmes such as IB in national schools.

Recent research indicates that international schools are benefactors of, and dependent on, the global economy (Poore, 2005). While our world is becoming

increasingly globalised, there is no clear global culture, and no common global vision. Poore (2005) mentioned that although we think we are all teaching the global citizens of tomorrow by promoting multiculturalism, we should look closely at the leaders of international schools, because they are often of Western descent (p. 156). Teachers are often Caucasian and from mainstream backgrounds. The education they received is often from this same mainstream background, leading to a sense that their educational upbringing and views are the norm. In the same sentiment as Poore (2005), Hayden and Thompson (2008) state that:

> In regards to nationality, there seems to be a persistent dominance of Western candidates, which may be the result of the national affiliations of many international schools. As well, some schools have policies that require heads to be of a particular nationality (p. 23)

2.3.2 Who are the students in international schools?

As previously mentioned in the section on international education, there is a difference between international schools and an international education. Schools follow either an international standard of practice in their education programmes such as the IB, or they may implement the national curriculum, depending on the country of location and the laws that govern education in that country. As Hill (2000) argues,

> Most parents do not focus on the education programme *per se*. As long as the school has a good reputation and gives a sound education, they are happy for it to be a national or international programme, and in some locations abroad there is not a lot of choice (p. 11).

The International Schools Consultant Group research (2016) has shown that 80% of the demand for places in international schools now comes from wealthy nationals who want

their children to receive a quality, English-speaking education in order to access the best universities and higher education programmes. This is a significant change from 20 years ago when the student bodies in international schools were dominated by expatriate children. (ISC, 2016)

Table 1: Number of international schools around the world.

SCHOOL BY REGIONS

Region	Schools	Percentage
Africa	791	9%
Americas	1,134	13%
Asia	4,816	56%
Europe	1,801	21%
Oceania	109	1%

Source: (ISC, 2016)

As can observed in Table 1 the greatest demand for international schools is in Asia. China has the largest number of international schools followed by Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar (ISC, 2016).

There are many different characteristics of international schools but most are private and generate high fees. International schools contain a large percentage of students whose parents are working for transnational corporations and are therefore required to work abroad, or may change employment positions and locations regularly. These schools "also educate the children of the diplomatic corps, and offer education to children of host country nationals who want their children to learn English or who prefer the greater flexibility which an international school offers over the national system" (Hayden, 2006, p. 11).

Hayden and Thompson (2008) distinguish among three types of international school students: The Third Culture kids, the Returnees and the Host Country national students. Third Culture kids are:

Children who do not feel a real association or belonging to what might be considered their "first culture" (of their passport country) nor to their "second culture" (of the country in which they are temporarily living), but rather feel most at home in what was described as the "third culture" (p. 43).

They are usually the children of expatriates or diplomats. The Returnees are the Third Culture kids that have moved away from their home country, have lived overseas and whom parents want to remain in international education. Finally, the Host Country Nationals are typically from the region in which the school is located, and are for parents who are looking at different wants for their children such a private education, a curriculum delivered in English, or smaller class sizes. This can naturally create some significant difference in the student bodies, being split between the local national students and those students from other countries. This can create challenges for both administration and teachers in attempting to cater the school curriculum and learning experiences to a culturally and linguistically diverse student body.

2.4 Multicultural Education and International Schools

Due to globalisation and the increased movement of large sectors of populations, the demand for international schools is increasing. Arslan (2009) mentions that "increasing polarization of human societies between the rich and the poor adds not only to economic but also religious, racial, ethnic, political, and sexual polarisation: these changing demographic factors need multicultural education to keep societies democratic, free and peaceful" (p. 18). It is clear that this increased growth in international students studying in countries other than their country of origin indicates that educational institutions need to cater for this diversity. Institutions must adapt to the changing demographics in their student body in order to succeed. Richards, Brown, and Forde (2004) state that when

multicultural education is implemented in schools, academic success of culturally diverse students increases. Because international schools have a culturally diverse student body part of supporting this student body may be found in multicultural educational practices.

2.4.1 Multicultural Education

With the ever-increasing globalised world, there is a growing ethnic, cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious diversity and therefore an increased need for multicultural education (Banks, 2009). According to Banks (2009), a multicultural education is one that incorporates texts, beliefs, and views that are diverse in nature and not dominated by one particular mind-set. Banks (1995) identified five dimensions to multicultural education:

1) **Content integration**: The extent to which teachers use examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalisations, and theories in their subject area or discipline.

2) **Knowledge construction process:** the procedures by which social, behavioural, and natural scientists create knowledge and how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways that knowledge is constructed within it.

3) **Prejudice reduction:** The characteristics of children's racial attitudes and strategies that can be used to help students develop more democratic attitudes and values.

4) **Equity pedagogy**: Teachers use techniques and methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups.

5) **Empowering school culture and social structure:** The process of restructuring the culture and organisation of the school so that students from

diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality and cultural empowerment (Banks, 1995, p. 5).

These dimensions help to define, categorise, and identify multicultural education. Banks (1995) argued that the purpose of multicultural education is to ensure educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. He also noted that ensuring equality required multicultural education to be implemented successfully, and this needed institutional changes in schools, "including changes in the curriculum; the teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school" (p. 4).

Arslan (2009) similarly noted the numerous benefits of culturally diverse schools, as well as emphasising the need to ensure student academic success. He also argued for the need to create culturally sensitive education and stressed the importance for the institutions to set goals. He noted the importance to teach all students ideas, values, and rituals so they could be successful within the school. He noted the importance of making students feel welcome, encouraging them to engage in learning, and ensuring all students are included in activities and curriculum. In order to reach these goals, Arslan states, "principals and teachers must work collaboratively with school staff members, parents, and the community to accomplish goals" (p. 16).

Much research also suggests that a multicultural curriculum promotes sensitivity to other ethnic groups and cultures. It helps students understand the importance of values. Such sensitivity to other ethnic groups and cultures can also be a support to the international mindedness goal of international education. For example, Sleeter and Grant (1994) explain the objectives of multicultural education are:

-To acquire the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for increasing an individual's ability to function effectively within a multicultural environment;

-To develop the ability for seeking information about the economic, political, and social factors of various cultures;

-To foster the affirmation of all cultures;

-To provide individuals with opportunities for experiencing other cultures and recognizing them as a source of learning and growth;

-To build an awareness of an individual's cultural heritage that provides a basis for personal identity;

-To increase tolerance and acceptance of different values, attitudes, and behaviours. (p. 4).

As previously noted, there are many advantages to international education. We could conclude from Banks' (2009) arguments that multicultural education could support these international educational goals: "it should help students to develop understandings of the interdependence among nations in the world today, clarified attitudes toward other nations, and reflective identifications with the world community" (p 9). What has distinguished these areas in the past is that multicultural education was a curriculum and organisational response to diversity in national educational contexts, where international education was initially a similar response to such needs in international schools.
Hill (2007), however, has argued explicitly that research over the last decade is demonstrating that international education and multicultural education are merging.

2.4.2 Culturally relevant practices

Culturally relevant practice is a pedagogical framework that supports multicultural education. It is a term created by Ladson-Billings (1994), who defined it as "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 382). In this way it reflects

Banks' (2003) notion of equity pedagogy within multicultural education framework. Looking at the needs for multicultural education in schools in the previous section of this chapter, it is evident that a culturally relevant pedagogy is needed not only in national school systems but also in international schools because the number of "international students or global nomads", as defined earlier, are increasing due to an increasingly globalised world.

Ladson-Billings argued (1994) that sufficient evidence supports the notion that there is in fact a relationship between student achievement and educational success and the presence or absence of established crossover between students' culture and the dominant cultures within schools. Essentially students that come from the same, or very similar, cultures to those practised in schools have a greater chance of succeeding than those whose cultural backgrounds are different from the dominant culture of, or within, the school. Her research showed that if the experiences and language that students speak at home are brought into the learning experiences within schools, then students are more likely to achieve academic success. Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts that, "culturally relevant teachers utilise students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (p. 161). Her research served to question the norms of educational practices in schools and placed culturally relevant pedagogy at the core of what is vital for student success. Her framework for culturally relevant pedagogy that has three criteria:

- Students must experience academic success;
- Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and
- Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (p. 160).

All schools have norms, values, and other aspects of culture, including international schools. Thus, the need to ensure student cultural experiences and language are used, as a vehicle for learning is an important consideration in these contexts as well.

Other researchers have examined these issues or have built on Ladson-Billings, meaning multiple terms have been used to identify similar practices and conceptual frameworks, culturally congruent or culturally responsive. However, regardless of terminology used, the general premise of such culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy is that "academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students. The lived experiences are more personally meaningful, have a higher interest appeal and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Therefore, it is important that teachers become familiar with the cultures of the students they teach. Bishop and Berryman (2010) have argued that: "gaining intercultural understanding of one's culture and its impact on others would be of benefit if incorporated into teacher education programmes in New Zealand" (p. 44). This is a notion that could be applied to any classroom or educational facility in the world. Furthermore, Bishop and Berryman note that while the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, the teaching force is largely homogeneous and from the majority culture within the school. They agree that many teachers are not experienced in teaching these types of diverse learners due to a lack of cultural understanding and they struggle to provide relevant and engaging instruction. This is also relevant in international schools, where the majority of educators are of one or a limited number of ethnicities.

Another area highlighted in the literature around culturally relevant or responsive practice is the importance of relationships. The vast majority of noted educationalists agree that the teacher-student relationship is essential for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Bishop & Berryman, 2010). According to Ladson-Billings (1994) culture is

central to learning: "It plays a role not only in communication and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. A pedagogy that acknowledges responds to and celebrates fundamental cultures, offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures" (p. 159). If culture is the centre of learning, it is important that educators are trained in intercultural literacy in order to building relationships with their students and create the positive cross-cultural experience needed for learning and success. Poore (2005) has noted that we often interpret other cultures with the frame of reference of our own culture, and while living overseas, people will never live as part of the other culture, but will be living with or next to another culture. This applies also to teachers in national schools teaching minorities students, as well as in international schools, as all too often in education, teachers' backgrounds are generally very different from the students they are educating.

The striking remarks of Alfred (2009) are relevant when we analyse at culturally relevant pedagogy:

> "Much of what we are as human beings is a product of our histories, where we are born, where we grew up, where we went to school, who our friends were, who was our first lover. Who we are today is a subtle mixture of all of these forces, and they influence how we think and what we do as educators" (p. 142)

We could effortlessly add *who our teachers were* in this quotation. Teachers can influence students greatly and the need for culturally relevant practices is important in education. It needs to become part of how relationships are built with students and the wider community. Therefore it has been said that teachers need to be caring. Rychly & Graves (2012) assert "a 'caring' teacher will be more successful if she approaches her goal of holding all students to the same rigorous standards by seeking first to understand where her students are" (p. 4).

It is not just enough to build relationships and change the pedagogy of delivery, the curriculum also needs to be adapted. This is echoed in the views by Rajagopal (2011) who has outlined these as the three self-reinforcing facets of 'culturally responsive practices':

Relationships

- **Learn** about your students' individual cultures.

- **Adapt** your teaching to the way your students learn.

- **Develop** a connection with the most challenging students.

Curriculum

- **Teach** in a way students can understand.

- **Use** student-centred stories, vocabulary, and examples.

- **Incorporate** relatable aspects of students' lives.

Delivery

- **Establish** an interactive dialogue to engage all students.

- **Stay** within your comfort zone and do not come off as "fake".

- **Continually interact** with students and provide frequent feedback.

- **Use** frequent questioning as a vehicle to keep students involved. (p. 38).

Rychly and Graves (2012) argue that a distinction should be made between culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural education (p. 45). They suggest that a multicultural education can be delivered to students from a same cultural background, as it is the content taught that contains different views and perspectives. In contrast, they argue that culturally responsive pedagogy must be adapted to the diversity of cultures in the class. Rychly and Graves (2012) reinforce that such pedagogy "connects new information to students' background knowledge, and presents the information in ways that respond to students'

natural ways of learning" (p. 45). Banks (2009) does not make such a distinction, as his fourth element of multicultural education, equity pedagogy, contends that teachers use techniques and methods that support the academic achievement of students from the range of diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups in their classrooms. Nevertheless, the underlying notion of the scholarly work in this area of culturally relevant practice is about the importance of teachers adapting their delivery methods in a way that ensures student can understand the content and the context. For this reason, incorporating relevant aspects of students' lives is essential. If the student feels comfortable, they are more likely to succeed.

As argued earlier, all students are different and often teachers tend to deliver curriculum the same way, but, it is important to be immersed in the culture of our students in order to obtain a better understanding of their actions and backgrounds. As our world is increasingly globalised, being culturally responsive is crucial. Relationship gaps that exist between student and staff is a major obstacle to student's educational attainment. This is true for all educational systems and institutions, including international schools.

2.4.3 Examples of culturally relevant practices in international schools.

While multicultural education has become a dominant field for investigation; there is little literature on the implementation of multicultural education teaching and learning processes of this in international schools (Sheets & Fong, 2003). One study of culturally relevant pedagogy in an international school that is particularly informative to this study was conducted in the Philippines by Bernardo and Malakolunthu (2013). They found that the observed teachers from the school who were from the local national culture had a common vision of teaching, which focused on respect and trust with their foreign students. They argued that "teachers need to send a message to the foreign students that they are

welcome and will be able to proceed with their education in all fairness without fear, prejudice, ridicule or harassment" (p. 59). This is closely associated with the research of Arslan (2009) and Bishop and Berryman (2010), who highlight the importance of developing strong teacher-student relationships and engaging students in the learning process.

Banks (2009) also refers to the importance of educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. According to Bernardo and Malakolunthu (2013), "an important dimension of international education has to do with the aspect of multiculturalism which in practical sense means making students realise and recognise the reality of cultural diversity and the truth of one culture being as good as another" (p. 4). They noted that the teachers included in their study seemed to be aware of this need and were engaged in supporting practices.

This study by Bernardo and Malakolunthu (2013) also demonstrated that the teachers were able to enhance students' awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity when they created "a balanced mix of locals and foreigners in classroom activities and utilised students' cultural background and personal knowledge and experiences as supplementary tools of instruction" (p. 105). This pedagogical practice of using student cultural background to inform practice is one of the five dimensions of Bank (1995) multicultural theory, specifically content integration. It also reflects Ladson-Billings (1995) facets of culturally relevant teaching, as the teachers in the Philippines used the student's culture as a vehicle to gain cultural competence, but, the researchers of this study stated that while the school was an international school, they did not believe it offered an international education. This study in the Philippines was conducted in an international school where the teachers were nationals and not expatriates. This may have been a contributing factor as to

why they found "many teachers with limited formal training in the administration and facilitation of international education in the schools" (p. 59). Thus they raised the question: "What would happen if the Filipino teachers were not culturally inclusive people by nature?"(p. 59).

Another interesting case study in Malaysia focused on a small group of host country nationals attending an international school in Malaysia (Bailey, 2015). Two important points came from this study. The misconception that all international schools naturally implement an international education, as was mentioned in the case study in the Philippines. In this case study, only five staff expatriate teachers identified the school as an international school, two more were unsure how to describe the school, and only one saw it as a Malaysian national school. The expatriate staff were required to modify their teaching methods on arrival in Malaysia, and were encouraged to promote a more Western style of teaching and educational practice. The staff had to adapt their teaching practices by experience rather than relying on the existing staff for help and advice. What is interesting is that the expatriate staff did not believe in the effectiveness of the local approach; however the local students did not necessarily prefer the Western approach to teaching (Bailey, 2015). It was also noted that this international school in Malaysia was separate, and isolated from Malaysian culture. As noted previously, this can often be the case in international schools where they appear to put a wall around themselves, disengaging from their surrounding communities (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004).

In sum, this case study of an international school in Malaysia showed that little was done to incorporate culturally relevant practices. Although the school leadership explicitly pushed a Western oriented pedagogy, they seem to limit integration of local cultural content or practices, thus holding back vital access to education for the local students who were the minority within the school's student population.

2.5 Conclusion

One of the overriding issues with international schools and international education, is the falsehood that they are one and the same. People see international in the title of a school and assume that the school naturally incorporates international education practices. It is important to distinguish that they are not necessarily the same. However, one aspect of international schools that is consistent is they serve a culturally diverse group of students. An overwhelming amount of research supports the notion that not all learners are the same and that they bring their culturally-informed perspectives and experiences to their learning process. But, as Guild and Garger (1998) argue: "Most schools still function as if all students were the same. Schools are heavily biased, favouring uniformity over diversity" (p. 14). Moreover, in international schools there is a tendency to employ teachers from either North American or European backgrounds and these teachers may not have experiences in working with culturally diverse students.

Even though our world is becoming increasingly globalised, too often education, and in particular international schools, appear to continue to disregard student cultural diversity, sticking to the known methods of educational instruction. It is therefore reasonable to argue that too many educators continue to treat all learners the same are not reaching their entire audience, or worse, they are in fact teaching to the minority, who happen to come from the same educational backgrounds as they do. Every child should have the opportunity to be successful at school and understanding students' backgrounds is essential to this process.

As summarised in this chapter, many researchers such as Banks (1995, 2009), Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) and Gay (2002) have all argued that with diverse student populations, educators must become culturally responsive pedagogical leaders in order to

equitably teach all students. This argument is based on the understanding that students learn differently, and bring different prior knowledge with them to their education, but, the majority of the literature in education related to these issues of cultural diversity in teaching and learning has been drawn from schools in the national education system, where the majority of students come from the dominant nationality, and the minority from diverse cultural backgrounds, and often from marginalised groups. What about international schools, where many students and teachers come from a range of diverse national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and there is no one dominate ethnic/cultural student group within the school? To offer insight into this matter, I investigated an international school using an international education programme, the IB programme in order to understand how multicultural education and culturally relevant practices were being implemented in such a setting.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In the field of education it appears that much of the research about multicultural education and culturally relevant practices are based on examinations of schools in the national education system, and in societies in which there is a clear national or ethnic majority that directs education policy including curriculum guidance. Although there is research beginning to be developed based on international schools, we still know very little about international schools generally, and even less about how they engage with the ideas of multicultural education and culturally responsive practices.

The purpose of this research was to add to the body of knowledge on international schools by examining the overarching research question: How is multicultural education, and culturally relevant practice being implemented in an international school? By focusing on the high school sector, this study was guided by two sub-questions:

-How is the school organising itself to be responsive to the culturally and linguistically diverse international student population?

-How are the educators implementing curriculum and pedagogy to cater to this diverse student body?

This chapter outlines the methodology used to examine these questions. It includes summaries of three key aspects of the research. First, it provides a description of qualitative research and the case study approach used, including the use of ethnographic strategies to inform the data collection. Second, the chapter explains how the methods were used to examine the research questions, including description of the school, the researcher's role and data sources, and the data collection, and analysis processes. Finally, the chapter provides a summary of ethical considerations, and a discussion of the limitations of the study.

3.1 Qualitative Case Study Approach

Case study is an accepted qualitative method. As Johnson and Christensen (2008) note, "Qualitative researchers view human behaviour as dynamic and changing, and they advocate studying phenomena in depth and over a long period of time" (p. 388). The goal of a qualitative case study is to give a narrative report with a rich description of a phenomena, in this case of culturally responsive practices in an international school. One of the goals of the case study is to enter the world of the various participants (teachers and administrators) to find out their experiences and perspectives. This type of focus for the case study draws from the tradition of phenomenology. Phenomenological studies attempt to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon. Therefore, the purpose of phenomenology is to gain access to the individuals' life experiences, "including a combination of feelings, thoughts and self-awareness and to describe their experience as a phenomenon" (p. 395).

This study was designed as an exploratory case study to explore the phenomena of the implementation of culturally relevant practices in an international school context. Specifically, it sought to understand how a school staff organises their practices, curriculum, and pedagogy to cater to a linguistically and culturally diverse student body, which is often in contrast to what they typically experience in their home countries. To do this, the exploratory case study focuses on school's organisational culture as it implements an international education programme. Johnson and Christensen (2008) describe a case study as a "bounded system" (p. 406) where researchers try to understand what is happening in that system. Because, however, this case study focuses on exploring the implementation of culturally responsive practices within the school, the cultural aspects of the school—the norms, values, and daily practices—became a focus of the study and the implementation of this bounded system. Fetterman states (2010), culture can have a materialist or ideational perspective. Although a materialist perspective focuses on behaviour, "culture is the sum of a

social group's observable patterns of behaviour, customs and way of live" (p. 16). The most popular definition for ideational focuses is the cognitive definition, "culture comprises the ideas, beliefs and knowledge that characterise a particular group of people" (p. 16).

With this focus on the culture of the school, this case study has used some of the traditions of ethnography. Ethnography is defined as the "discovery and comprehensive description of the culture of a group of people" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 400). It tells real stories through the eyes of local people (Fetterman, 2009). Conducting educational ethnography has the primary objective of collecting data that "conveys the subjective reality of the lived experience of those who inhabit educational locations for various purposes" (Pole & Morrison, 2003, p. 17). In this study, it is focused on the story of the international school from the perspective of teachers and administrators.

3.2 Conducting the Study

Methodology is very important for case study data collection, and fieldwork is the hallmark of such research. It provides common-sense perspective to data. In this study, as the researcher I had to distance myself from my position as a member of staff in order to try to minimise potential bias. Below, I provide a description of the school, and my role as the researcher.

3.2.1 Context of the Study

The United American School is the pseudonym used in this study for an international school located in Dubai. It is managed by Educational Services Overseas Limited (ESOL), a leading school management organisation that operates a total of nine international schools in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Egypt, Cyprus, and the Lebanon. ESOL schools follow an American or British curriculum and are accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and

Schools (MSA) and/or the Council of International Schools (CIS). The United American School is an accredited International Baccalaureate World School. (ESOL, 2015)

The school offers the IB programme for primary school and high school but in the middle school a conceptually based curriculum is offered. This is a solid and adequate transition from elementary to high school. Students in high school can take either the IB Diploma or Diploma courses in their final two years. English is the language of instruction throughout the school.

During the 2014 academic year, when this study was undertaken, the school had a student body of 1,450, including 597 students in the high school. The students represented 75 nationalities and there was a slight dominance of male students. Students in the school originated mainly from Arab countries or were the children of parents who were in the region for contractual obligations. The school had a total count of 209 staff members, including 83 in the secondary school, 96 in primary, and 30 administration staff. The teachers came from a range of countries, with the majority from the United States of America and Canada, as well as some Australians, New-Zealanders, and Europeans. The few Arabic teachers were locally hired and were mostly Egyptians or Lebanese. Among the 83 high school teachers 36 were male, and 47 were female.

Further details and description of the school student population, administration, and teaching staff is presented in Chapter Four as part of the findings of the case study.

3.2.2 Researcher Role and Data Sources

As a teacher in the school, I undertook this study from the role of an insider-researcher. In this role, the researcher is able to be immersed within the community and to participate in their daily life. According to Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) being an insider-researcher has three main advantages: you have a greater understanding of the school culture; the flow of

social interaction is not unnaturally altered; and relationships are already established with colleagues so an element of trust already exists. Despite all these advantages being an insider can have its disadvantages. Greater familiarity can lead to a loss of objectivity (Unluer, 2012). I needed to ensure not to introduce any pre-assumptions or opinions, and that the participants are aware of when the study is being conducted. The study is a qualitative case study with a constructivist epistemological framework. Merriam (2009) states that "qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a programme, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit" (p. 205) of which this is one.

The research was conducted in one quarter of the school year. Though this is not an extensive period of data collection for a case study, it did provide a reasonable timeframe in which to attempt to capture a representative snapshot of the life in this international school.

Triangulation was used to enhance the credibility of the data. Triangulation involves using multiple data sources in an investigation to produce understanding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As an insider-researcher triangulation is important because "rather than seeing triangulation as a method for validation or verification, qualitative researchers generally use this technique to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed" (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008, p. 1). Data collection during fieldwork included examining school documents, artefacts, archival records, and carrying out observations, and interviews. The four main sources of data include: 1) school documents; 2) interviews; 3) observations; and 4) researcher field notes. The goals for the researcher in collecting this data were as described below.

Table 2. Data Sources

Data Source	Possible outcomes
School documents School handbook (staff and parents handbooks) School website	Discovery of whether the school has any documentation guiding culturally relevant pedagogy.
Interview with leaders	Discovery of whether the senior leadership support or engage in practices and management strategies that support culturally relevant pedagogy.
Interviews with teachers	Teachers are supporting culturally relevant pedagogy within their classes. What do they find challenging in terms of student diversity?
Focus Group-Heads of Department	Whether the Curriculum Leaders (Heads of Department) are emphasising practices or creating curriculum that supports culturally relevant practices.
Classroom observations	Discovery of whether teachers are implementing strategies that support culturally relevant practices.
Field notes	On-going researcher reflection during the study.
Student data	Information regarding first language Information about citizenship vs country of origin.

As noted, a key data source within fieldwork is the interview. Interviews should be conducted with people who have specialised or specific knowledge about the phenomena being investigated. Fetterman (2009) points out that: "Ethnographers rely on their judgment to select the most appropriate members of the subculture or unit based on the research question" (p. 35). In this study, I selected participants that reflected the three types of staff within the high school: 1) school leaders. 2) curriculum department heads, and 3) classroom teachers. The table 3 below provides a summary of the participants.

Table 3: Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Nationality by region	Years of experience in leadership	Years of experience in an international school
School Leaders				
Director	M	North America	18	16
Secondary Principal	F	Australasia	7	7
IB Coordinator	M	Australasia	5	5
Curriculum Leaders				
HOD English	F	North America	6	6
HOD Science	M	North America	8	5
HOD Languages	M	Europe	1	5
HOD Social Sciences	F	North America	3	10
Teachers				
Teacher- English	F	North America	28	18
Teacher- Sciences (Physics)	M	Asia	16	10
Teacher- History	M	North America	32	18
Teacher- Maths	M	North America	10	5

3.2.3 Data collection and analysis processes

After initial investigations regarding the purpose and goal of this research, information sheets were created for school administrators and teachers (Appendix A). This helped clarify the process of the interviews and observations, but also clarified any confidentially issues that could restrain staff from being part of this study. At a staff meeting I outlined the details

of the study to staff. I explained that I was extending invitations to those staff willing to take part in this study, and the information sheet would be placed in their pigeonholes. All senior management confirmed they would participate in this study, with an additional four teachers and four heads of departments also confirming their availability and willingness to partake in this investigation.

3.2.3.1 Interviews

For this research, semi-structured interviews were established to analyse the depth of how the school responded to the learning needs of their culturally diverse student population. Two different interview guides were created (Appendix B). The teachers responded to fifteen questions that related more to the classroom and the leaders responded to eleven questions focusing on the structural organisation of the school itself; its documentation, strategies, and support offered to teachers. I began each interview with a reminder that all information would be kept confidential. During the interviews, all questions were asked in the same order as the interview guide, to keep the interviews, and data collected consistent. At the end of the interview, supplementary questions were probed, "is there anything you would like to add in regards to cultural diversity? Is there anything else I should have asked?" This allowed the participants to engage in any additional topics or areas they felt were either especially important or had not been addressed by the interview questions.

The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes. The interviews for the teachers were conducted after the class observation in their own classroom, and generally after school, to avoid disruption, and to permit a more relaxed atmosphere. The leader interviews were conducted by appointment and held in each administrator's office at the most convenient time and setting for them. The interviews were done individually for the Director, Principal, and IB coordinator, but, this was conducted as a focus group for the four heads of department. A focus group allowed them to share their opinions, ideas, and

reactions. During the focus group I tried to ensure there was flow and structure in the process. During the interviews I used active listening techniques to allow the interviewees to think and explain further. I also tried not to give clues or direct the interviews a particular way, but to allow each person to share their perspective in response to the questions.

A professional translation company transcribed the recordings. To ensure confidentiality to the participants' names were not stored on the file sent to the company. Collected data was stored on my private computer at home, not in the school. This data will be kept for three years and then destroyed.

3.2.3.2 Observations of Classroom Practice

To conduct the classroom observations, I developed an observation protocol based on two sub topics: classroom environment and pedagogy: content/activity/assessment (Appendix C). The observation protocol was informed by the literature regarding culturally relevant practice as overviewed in Chapter Two. This was used to guide observations that took place in different classrooms. The interviews with the teachers followed my observation of their lessons.

3.2.3.3 Data Analysis

To establish greater clarity to the information gathered from the interviews, I took all the responses from the leaders--directors and Heads of Departments--for each question and established common themes and ideas that were consistent in the groups' responses. The common themes were: ideas regarding diversity, vision, events, uncertainty, values, challenges, perceptions of curriculum, and expectations.

Second, I reviewed the array of school-based documentation I had collected such as the staff handbook, student/parent handbooks, field notes, school enrolment data, curriculum documents, school action plans, and staff data. This analysis was to identify key aspects of the school organisation.

Once the interviews with the individual teachers had all been conducted and transcribed, I companioned these with the observations. By merging the two together, key themes around teacher practice could more clearly be identified and analysed. The analysis of this data focused on identifying common and different aspects of classroom practices as reflective of culturally relevant practices.

As a final data analysis strategy, I used a T-chart with each interview question and the key themes from participants, and related data found through document analysis and observations. These research strategies allow a clear analysis across the range of the data collected. This focused on identifying data that might support, extend, or challenge their descriptions and perspectives on school practices.

As the researcher, my field notes were on going and grounded the data from interviews and document analysis with my own observations of events and activities within the school. It allowed me to reflect on what could be seen and heard. Comparing my observations with what had been said during an interview or what is appearing in the school documents allowed me to understand how teachers and administrators were enacting practices based on their understandings or perspectives.

3.3 Ethical considerations and limits of the study

Case studies are a human process that shares experiences of other people's lives. Sharing feelings can create anxiety and insecurities for both teachers and leaders I intended to interview. "Insider research is frequently accused of being inherently biased, as the researcher is considered to be too close to the culture under study to raise provocative questions" (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 4), but, the main advantages of being an insider research is the easy access to documentation and the knowledge of the school itself.

3.3.1 Ethical practices guiding the study

In order to ensure the research was conducted in keeping with the guidelines of the University of Canterbury, I completed the ERHEC (The Educational Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury) approval process before commencing data collection (Appendix D). Because I conducted the research in my own school, confidentiality and anonymity were important factors to take into account. A key aspect of ethical engagement in research is the assurance of informed consent by the participants. To deal with this I explained the purpose of the research to all members of the staff in the school, and to the governing board, to ensure everyone was aware of the study and its purpose. I ensured the governing board approval before beginning the study. The invitation to participate was extended to all high school teachers in the school.

Ethical standards require that research participants have the right to remain anonymous, and researchers should seek to do all they can to protect this anonymity and confidentiality (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For this reason, I protected their confidentiality and names were not be used in any transcripts or data. Data collection is stored securely and electronic data are kept on my private computer drive. The data collected has been used only for the purposes of this study. A further measure to ensure confidentiality has been the use of a pseudonym for the school throughout this thesis, and in any future-related dissemination.

As mentioned earlier, being a current member of staff has its advantages and disadvantages. One main advantage is the access to sensitive information. As a researcher, I made sure I created an explicit awareness of the possible effects of collecting data. I respected the ethical issues in relation to anonymity of the school and the participants at all times.

3.3.2 Limitations of the Study

For this study, only four teachers, as well as the seven members of the leadership team, responded positively to my invitation request. This is, therefore, a very narrow view of the actual enactment of pedagogy within the selected school. The time period used for data collection equates to one quarter of the school year from April to June 2014, which also adds to the select nature of the data collected. This may also have implications regarding whether this accurately represents the findings of the investigation.

Other possible limitations include the fact that only one observation was conducted per teacher. Given the fact that only one observation was undertaken per teacher this also limits the data collected. Multiple interviews and data collection over an extended period of time may have added greater depth and breadth to the data collected.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the case study methodology used for this study of an international school. I am very grateful to all the participants; senior leaders, middle management, and teachers. This allowed access to information regarding all aspects of the school. This included school-based documentation, and first-hand information from all elements of the school structure. Because this was an exploratory case study, the small scale allowed for a detailed study with key personal in the school, which adds depth, but perhaps not breadth to this study

Chapter 4: Findings

4.0 Introduction

  This exploratory case study examines how multicultural education and culturally responsive practices are being implemented in an internationally accredited IB world international school in Dubai. The following two sub-questions guided the study:

   -How is the school organising itself to be responsive to the culturally and linguistically diverse international student population?

   -How are the educators implementing curriculum and pedagogy to cater to this diverse student body?

  The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the organisation of the school, including: the vision of the school, the school community, the curriculum, and learning experiences. The second section of the chapter presents the findings related to the educators' perspectives on diversity and pedagogical practices. The pedagogy and the curriculum of the school were more closely investigated to explore how this is adapted for the diverse student body.

4.1 Organisation of the school in response to the diverse student body.

  4.1.1 Overview

  The United American School is accredited by both the Middle States Association of Schools as well as by the Council of International Schools. The School itself is managed by ESOL, a leading school management organisation that operates a total of nine international schools in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Egypt, Cyprus, and the Lebanon. ESOL schools follow an American or British curriculum and are accredited by MSA and/or the CIS. Currently seven ESOL schools offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme with some also offering the IBPYP. Figure 1 demonstrates the direct link between ESOL and the school's director.

Figure 1: Organisational Chart
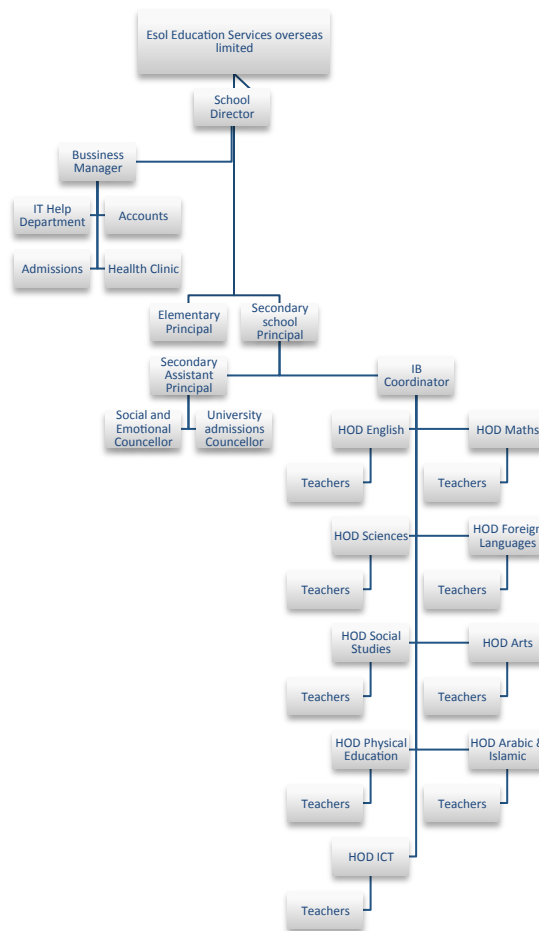
Figure 1 also provides a visual representation of the link between the school's secondary school Principal, the school IB coordinator, and the secondary school Heads of Department (HODs). The HODs are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the IB programmes, including curriculum development, classroom and assessment practices. The departments are divided into nine groups, with department sizes ranging from seven to eleven teachers: English, Foreign Languages, Arabic, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, the Arts, ICT, Physical Education. The teachers involved in this research were from the English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science departments.

4.1.2 School Mission and Value Statements

For this ethnographic case study, school culture is at the centre of the research. This is in

part reflected in the school's mission and vision statements. This section examines the United American School's mission and vision statements in detail to identify what the school does and what it places value on.

4.1.2.1 Mission statement

The Mission Statement of the school states "The United American School provides a challenging, inquiry-based American and international education that empowers students to be caring individuals, critical thinkers, and responsible global citizens". In the interviews conducted, the school leaders mentioned the importance of global citizenship within international education. The IB Coordinator stated: "the Mission Statement is largely in line with the IB Mission Statement which talks about being global citizens and how people with other viewpoints can also be right". Similarly, the Director noted that "the Mission Statement talks about an inquiry-based American and international curriculum that empowers students to be caring individuals, critical thinkers, and responsible global citizens".

4.1.2.2 School vision

The school has an explicit vision statement which is included on the website, and is also publicised widely within the school. The vision is as follows:

We believe the United American School community should:

1) Challenge students academically, artistically, and athletically;

2) Think and act critically, creatively, and independently;

3) Communicate proficiently in English and at least one other language;

4) Be internationally-minded leaders who participate in local and international projects that better humanity and contribute to a sustainable and peaceful world;

5) Conduct themselves in a principled manner; and

6) Enjoy positive and healthy lifestyles.

Each of these six aspects of the school vision is discussed below.

Challenge students academically, artistically, and athletically.

The school uses the IB curriculum, which is internationally recognised as being academically rigorous. In addition, the school allows students to either take the IB Diploma, IB Diploma Courses, or sit for a US High School diploma, because the school is also a US accredited high school. With over 90% of graduating students attending university or some other tertiary education, the high school is focused on preparing students for university. This has been part of the decision to offer the IB curriculum because it is the most widely recognised international curriculum and is familiar to universities worldwide. The school also offers a US high school diploma to those that meet the school's graduation criteria, due to its US accreditation status.

The school has a dedicated university counsellor who assists students with their university applications. Courses are also offered for Scholastic Assessment Tests.

and American College Test preparation, as well as guidance and tutoring given to those taking English language proficiency tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language or the International English Language Testing System.

The IB coordinator met with each IB student individually to review the student's results at the end of each term and set new goals were for the following term, with the aim of continuously raising student attainment. This process also included reviewing the results students require to gain entry to universities they were applying to. Similar processes were applied in Grades 8-10 with consistent monitoring of student attainment and a strong emphasis on students raising achievement results on IB examinations.

The school is involved in a number of international assessment models, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment and The Programme for International Student Assessment testing programmes. The school also has a number of academic related

awards in place as shown in table four below.

Table 4: Subject and Special Awards

Subject Awards
Subject Awards are allocated as follows: • 1 x **"Best Academic Achievement"** award per <u>course</u>, in each Grade: e.g. English B, Chemistry <mark>Standard L</mark>evel, History etc., (recognising the highest grade) • 4-6 x **"Quality Achievement Award"** award per <u>faculty area</u> for each grade e.g. English, The Arts, Arabic, Islamic Studies, Science, Foreign Languages etc. (recognising conduct, determined effort, and maximising potential)
Special Awards **Principal's Leadership Award** to one student, chosen from each **Grade 7-11** who has done the most to <u>forward the school through his/her leadership</u>. (Extra-curricular Activities, attitude, behaviour, personal leadership, student leadership, and Grade Point Average must be at minimum 2.5 **Harvard Book Prize (Grade 11 only):** awarded to an outstanding student who is academically excellent, with exceptional personal qualities, and who makes a significant contribution to school or community.

In the area of the Arts, the school has a dedicated curriculum and well-supported extra-curricular programme. Visual Arts, Drama, and Music are compulsory for Grades 7 and 8 and become optional subjects for both Grades 9-10 and also the IB Programme. The department consists of five teachers; two Visual Arts teachers, two Music teachers, and one Drama teacher. Numbers in the IB classes are lower than some other subjects, but are consistent with Arts numbers in other IB schools. Participation rates in Grades 9 and 10 shows a strong support of the Arts at the United American School.

Along with supporting the academic and artistic development of the students, the school also offers athletic opportunities, including 29 sports' teams. In total, 36 teachers act as coaches for these sports, including 21 secondary school teachers. The school hosted the

track and field regional competition during the fieldwork for this study, and I noted that many teachers and parents volunteered to organise and run the event.

Think and act critically, creatively, and independently.

The school Director stated that by offering the IB programme they ensured that the curriculum offered is challenging academically, requiring students to think critically, and independently. In addition to this the senior leaders suggested the middle school's conceptual curriculum offered considerable curriculum choice. They felt a conceptual curriculum requires more than content-driven understanding, but a deep knowledge of concepts and topics at a conceptual level. They also stated activities such as the long-standing Model United Nations (MUN) group, was indicative of the type of opportunities students had to engage in creative and culturally diverse activities.

Communicate proficiently in English and at least one other language.

All classes are taught in English, and Arabic is compulsory for all students. The school also offers French both as a first and second language, and also Spanish as a second language. The school created a mother tongue initiative as an optional after school activity, but, this was not well attended, and when the founding teacher left the activity was removed from the after school programme. The school also holds an annual Poetry Slam competition where students are encouraged to participate and poems were accepted in any language, with many students preferring to speak in languages other than English.

Be internationally-minded leaders who participate in local and international projects that better humanity and contribute to a sustainable and peaceful world.

The school offers a variety of curriculum-based and extra-curricular learning experiences in support of this aspect of the vision. In the interviews senior leaders spoke of the many activities that students do within school on a regular basis that they felt reflected the school's focus on ways to better humanity. These included having recycling bins in

every classroom, and fundraising for events, such as the Philippines Cyclone Relief Fund, and other charitable causes.

One example of education outside the classroom is the "Week Without Walls" initiative. The school website describes this experience in this way: "Students have an incredible opportunity to be actively and closely involved with other countries whose residents are not as fortunate as ours, along with gaining first-hand experience of content taught within the classroom". There were a great number and variety of activities offered during the week, ranging from theatre-based trips to London, history trips to Italy and Greece, service trips to Thailand and Kenya (where students worked on development projects with local communities). There were also local trips based in the United Arab Emirates, where students could select from mountain and hiking courses. In addition to this, there were literary and art-based trips also provided in Dubai, with practical activities taking place at the school and day trips to museums.

Conduct themselves in a principled manner

The school's discipline policy is clearly stated in the school's Parent and Student Handbook, which is issued to each student and family at the start of each year. Students and parents are expected to read this handbook and sign a form stating they have read the information and agree to comply with expected behaviours as outlined in the handbook. Classroom and general school behavioural management is guided by a Level 1-4 rubric, which is present in the Parent and Student handbook. There are clear guides as to what constitutes inappropriate behaviours at school and the accompanying consequences. This begins with Level 1 infractions, which are considered to be "low-level, infrequent behaviours that interrupt teaching and learning" and are handled by the classroom teacher. Ongoing behaviour issues are dealt with additional administration and parental involvement based on the actions of the student and consequences as indicated in the Parent and Student

Handbook. During fieldwork for this study, I noted the large majority of the students seemed very respectful of each other. Conversations between students were well mannered, and students consistently behaved with respect towards teachers, referring to them consistently as either Sir or Miss. In addition to this, there was a distinct air of conviviality between students and students, students and teachers, and teachers and their colleagues. At no time was any aggression or overt negative interactions witnessed.

Enjoy positive and healthy lifestyle.

In considering how the school supports this aspect of the vision, senior leadership members made reference to the school's sports and after school activities (ASA) programme, as well as the school physical education programme. They acknowledged at certain times of the year, particularly the summer months of September, October, May, and June, when temperatures are often in excess of 40 degrees, ensuring all students were getting sufficient exercise was challenging, but, they felt sufficient opportunities were provided to students on the whole. The school has a medical centre with a doctor and two nurses on site at all times. The doctor and nurses regularly gave presentations to all grade levels on a fortnightly basis on a range of health issues from the importance of exercise, and healthy diets, to issues associated with drinking, smoking, and drug use, and basic medical assistance. In addition to this the doctor and nurse also went into the elementary and middle-school classes and led sessions with smaller groups of other health-related activities.

Points not directly addressed by the interviewees, but collated from the school artefacts and my observations around the school are: The ASA which is designed to offer both students and faculty a wide variety of activities for social, creative, academic, athletic, and cultural experiences lends itself to addressing some aspects of cultural diversity in the school. The ASA programme expands the personal experiences of each student involved,

which complements the school mission and philosophy. Each activity is organised and executed in a way that enriches the whole school community. The ASA programme encourages participation and cooperation. Each student has the opportunity to enjoy themselves in a welcoming environment, explore a variety of extra-curricular interests, and develop friendships outside of the classroom. I did, however, observe that the ASA programme only includes one cultural aspect, and that is the Islamic study group.

From my observations, there are many other events organised by the wider community such as the Booster Club: a club organised by teachers and parents to promote cultural and sports activities. These include musicals that are often adapted to cater to the cultural makeup of the school, such as an adaptation of *The King and I*, which connected with Arab culture. During the term of this study, the Booster Club organised the *Broadway Revue*. This production consisted of 14 different musicals where 131 people were involved, including 90 students and 41 adults, ranging from support staff to the Director of the school. There are also many extra-mural sporting events held each year; teacher versus parent games, for example, soccer, volleyball, badminton, and other sports. All of these are devised to connect the stakeholders of the school and celebrate the diversity of the wider school community.

4.1.3 The School Community: Staff, Students, and Parents

4.1.3.1 Staff

Within the staff, there are two very dominant nationalities; USA and Canada, which represent 48% of the 83 staff in the high school. There are also a significant number of teachers from other Western nations such as Australia, New Zealand, and Europe. The few Arabic teachers are locally hired and are mostly Egyptian or Lebanese. The fact the majority of teachers are from North America is no coincidence, but a strategic decision by the school's administration. This is due to the fact that the school is accredited through a

US organisation, and explicitly states it has adopted an American curriculum. Therefore, since 2010 the school's Director indicated it has been a strategic decision to hire US teachers who are more familiar with the contemporary best practices that align with the US schooling system. New regulations and directives from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), the Educational authority, in Dubai further affects this decision. This directive has required schools with an American curriculum to have a set percentage of teaching and administration staff with US citizenship and US teaching qualifications.

Although the school attempts to recruit highly experienced international teachers, this is not always possible. Nevertheless, all teachers at the school are required to have a teaching degree and a teaching qualification from a recognised university, or education provider. It is also expected that teachers maintain their teaching registration with the country they came from or recognised education provider. Teaching qualifications are then checked by the Ministry of Employment in Dubai, to ensure that all teachers have an equivalent teaching qualification to either a Bachelors of Teaching or a Degree in specific subjects with an additional Diploma of Teaching.

The result of the school policy and KHDA directive is that many of the teachers are highly qualified in their subject areas, but do not have experience teaching in an international setting with an ethnically and culturally diverse student body. Senior leaders of the school said many of the teachers hired are underprepared for the cultural differences they encounter. When asked about how the school supported and mentored teachers to be successful in such a culturally diverse setting, the senior staff all indicated that the school offers no specific induction nor professional learning in this area. There is a small session on cultural sensitivity held during the staff orientation, but overall the school does not put a

lot of time nor effort dedicated into preparing teachers for the diverse nature of the classes they are about to face.

In interviews, I asked teachers about how they, themselves, engage in the school activities with the wider community. Most teachers felt they actively engaged in many activities that connected teachers, students, and parents. Examples they gave for their engagement included: sports events, arts evenings, the annual Picnic in the Park, coaching and chaperoning trips both in the UAE and to other countries. For example, the English teacher explained: "We try to get to at least one, if not most, home athletic competitions at the various teams, even all the way down to U-14. We go to the plays". Teachers also mentioned project nights where parents were encouraged to come in and work on school projects with their children as an important engagement activity with parents.

Overall, the teachers felt strongly that these activities were vital to bringing the wider school community together. The science teacher reflected this general perspective by stating:

> I try to be a part of the community, the wider community, and I try to
>
> interact with different people whenever there is an International Day. I try
>
> to play a major role in bringing all different countries together and I try to
>
> bring things related to my country, as well as I try to help stalls from other
>
> countries and making it successful.

4.1.3.2 Students

Many parents choose to enrol their children in the school so they attain an American education. Because the school is a US accredited school, students who successfully complete the credit requirements, achieve a US high school diploma. The school has a student body of 1,450, representing 75 nationalities. The secondary school sector has a total number of 597 students. Table 5 shows the number of students by nationality, including

only those nationalities with a minimum of 5 students. The six dominant nationalities are: USA, Canada, UAE, the Lebanon, Egypt, and India.

Table 5: Numbers of Students by Nationality.

Nationality	Count
USA	129
Canada	63
UAE	58
Egypt	46
India	28
Jordan	18
Iran	17
Pakistan	16
Germany	14
UK	13
Korea	12
Syria	9
Italy	7
Philippines	7
Belgium	5
Australia	5
Netherland	5
Japan	5
Mexico	5
South Africa	5

According to this data 32% of the secondary school population is North American. Many students have lived or studied in multiple countries and therefore have often been exposed to many differing cultures and school curricula. While the dominant languages used by students in the school are English and Arabic, it is also common to hear students mixing multiple languages in lessons and in social settings. Over 90% of students come from expatriate families and are living in Dubai on a temporary or semi-permanent basis.

Therefore, there is not a dominant national or indigenous culture in the school, because the local Emirate student body is not the largest ethnic group.

The school database tracks students by citizenship based on the passport they use for registration, rather than their nationality or ethnicity. Many students have multiple passports and nationalities, so they choose a particular passport, and therefore, nationality, for registration purposes. Taking only citizenship into account means the school may not be able to take accurate consideration of a student's ethnic-cultural background. Also, the school does not record information pertaining to the students' mother tongue language(s) or additional languages spoken at home, or in wider family or social settings. Moreover, no assessments of English proficiency of students are completed on enrolment.

4.1.3.3 Parents

As a private school, the administration, and teachers are aware of the need to positively engage with parents. There is an active Parent Teacher Organisation (PTO), which does much to bring teachers and parents together, holding a weekly coffee morning for teachers and parents to meet and engage with each other. These weekly meetings are also used to discuss key initiatives in the school as well as providing an opportunity for any concerns to be raised.

The PTO works to support the school community and to celebrate cultural diversity with events such as the International Day. This in an annual event where the entire school community is involved. The PTO organise the International Day each year, where parents and staff volunteer to represent their countries by sharing their culture and richness of their traditions. There are booths from over 40 countries where food, posters, artefacts, and more, are on display. The entire day is dedicated to the school's diverse cultural makeup. Parades are held and people are encouraged to try and engage in these different aspects of each other's culture. Within the school community this is a significant day and goes a long

way to bringing the community together. I was present for this special day and the whole school atmosphere felt very harmonious and unified.

The school also uses four key activities to maintain parent engagement: the school Portal, which is a web-based presence; email; parent-student-teacher conferences; and the PTO. These provide on-going opportunities for engagement and discussion between parents and teachers. In the interviews conducted for this study, two teachers mentioned that the administration regularly reminds staff to be in contact with parents as much as possible, especially regarding academic progress, with an email to parents any time a student fails an assessment, or prior to sending report cards. The history teacher explained, "the school does give us constant reminders to keep open channels of communication, which is common sense". School policy also states that it is necessary for all teachers to email parents in advance if a student is in jeopardy of failing a course.

Each of the sections of the school hold Parent-Teacher conferences three times per year. This provides regular opportunities for parents to meet with teachers in a specified time to review a student's progress and attainment. In addition to this, parents are regularly seen in the school, either because they have arranged a meeting with a teacher or administrator, or are working on a project with students and teachers. There appeared to be a very open-door relationship between the school and parents, where parents could feel part of the school community and not distanced from the daily activities of the school. For example, the secondary school held a coffee morning with parents, teachers, and administrators once per month. This allowed interactions between parents, teachers, and administrators in an informal, but regular manner.

4.1.3.4 Communication with parents

The school has invested significantly in creating a school Portal that is point of connection and exchange between teachers, students, and parents, and all three parties have

access to this software, including login details etc. Teachers post information and tasks on the Portal, so that everyone is informed and aware of important information such as dates for parents and students, teacher conferences, dates for key assessments and trips, progress reports, accessing key documents, forms and discussion forums, and much more. Teachers are required to update their Portal pages weekly and this is checked by the secondary Principal. The maths teacher affirmed that the school does communicate well with the community, stating:

> As teachers were encouraged to communicate with parents all the time especially if the kid is struggling. The communication with the students is pretty strong, we have generally speaking, at least from my experience, pretty small class sizes so that you can give a lot of individual attention. But, yes, I think the communication is actually quite good here.

All teachers' email addresses are available to parents so they can contact teachers with any concerns they may have. Teachers and parents regularly communicate with each other by email, and in fact this seems to be the preferred method of communication. This, of course, also presents challenges in an international setting. For many parents and teachers, English is not their mother tongue, but, it is the language of communication at the school. Many parents and teachers are not always able to express their exact meaning in English and this can result in correspondence which, as one teacher described it, "the message is lost in translation". When this arises, there is often a bit of frustration on both sides. On occasions, parents do hold meetings with a teacher and bring along a family member or child to translate, or the school will ask one of the Arabic or Foreign Language teachers to attend the meeting to translate the conversation. If necessary a school administrator will be present. While this is often a more accurate way of communicating, it is also time consuming for all parties involved. Many parent-teacher conferences run vastly

over the allotted time because of this issue. Moreover, having the student serve as translator can be awkward and difficult for everyone. It can put the student in a vulnerable position of having to negotiate the relationship between the parent and teacher who are both authority figures for the student.

In sum, cultural diversity within the school was evident; by simply walking in the corridors it is clear the student body, faculty, and larger school community consist of people from many different cultural backgrounds. This is evident by hearing different languages being spoken and a variety of accents, and by simply seeing the different ethnic-cultural groups that make up the United American School community. This wider school community and particularly the student body appeared to have positive relationships. I did not observe any signs of barriers or separations based on ethnicity, language, or other differences. I observed students from diverse ethnic groups being together in the corridors, at lunch, and during recess. There was no time during the study where I observed groups segregating themselves from the rest of the school community. Teachers of the IB course, Theory of Knowledge, also shared that from their observations and experiences, students seemed to be respectful of each other's different cultures and values. Similarly, the Principal stated at the end of her interview:

> I find that we have a good variety in regards to diversity and it will be interesting in two years when we will reach our goal of 1,800 students and have added a new building to see if we can keep this diversity because it is a positive aspect that we have.

4.1.4 Curriculum, Teaching, and Assessment

4.1.4.1 Curriculum

As mentioned previously, the United American School is an IB school. They feel strongly that this curriculum supports their school vision. As the school website states:

Within the secondary school, and particularly in the middle school, teachers have created a curriculum that is designed to develop students who are critical thinkers, caring individuals, and responsible global citizens. Our teaching and learning model reflects best practice and prepares students for the models used in modern accredited universities throughout the world. At all grade levels we develop in our students the school/IB Student Learner Profile attributes.

The secondary school includes both the middle school and the high school. In the middle school, the school offers a school (internally) developed conceptually based curriculum, which provides a solid, and adequate, transition from elementary to high school. In high school, the school offers the IB Diploma, but, students who choose not to complete the full IB Diploma Programme can either take the IB Diploma Courses programme, or the school developed diploma.

Table 6: The proportions of students taking the different options are below:

Number of students	*2008-2009*	*2009-2010*	*2010-2011*	*2011-2012*	*2012-2013*	*2013-2014*
IB Diploma students	28	29	47	45	43	51
IB Diploma courses students	31	31	37	29	35	27
School diploma	2	4	3	5	7	4

The data in Table 6 indicate that the IB Diploma programme has grown significantly over the years and the United American School is achieving strong IB results with a growing majority of students successfully completing the diploma level, shown with 95% success rate. The Grade 10 programme is designed as a preparatory year for the IBDP at Grades 11-12.

Because the United American School is an accredited US high school, the school is also required to meet US state standards. The IB programme and its curriculum is understood to meet all US state standards, and therefore the school meets US state standards by implementing the IB programme. The school has aligned its middle school curriculum with the New York State standards (NYS) and the Common Core standards. The Common Core standards are common set of curriculum standards adopted by 43 US states. Where it is not possible to align to a NYS standard, the school draws on the Common Core. This is done in subjects such as Business Studies and Economics, which are not taught as individual subjects in the NYS.

4.1.4.2 The choice of curriculum

The decision to align the curriculum with the NYS standards has created both opportunities but also challenges for the school. Although teachers felt that being a US accredited school had important benefits, it also required a significant amount of work to align their current curriculum to the NYS standards, or to develop units where the standards were not being met. The school has satisfactorily met the required standards as specified in the NYS Standards, as determined through the accreditation process. Given the range of subjects offered at the school, students are generally able to choose a set of course offerings that meets both their interests and which also provides them with a pathway to their chosen field of tertiary study. As noted, most of the teaching faculty come from the US, so are familiar with the Common Core. The NYS standards are also very similar to many other State standards, so they are comfortable, and confident, in teaching the subjects offered at the school.

Teachers in the school also felt that the implementation the IB programme has had positive and negative impacts. Some felt the subject options were very traditional and lacked diversity in key areas because not all subjects were able to be offered at the school.

In some situations students were not able to take a subject due to timetable conflicts. In contrast, teachers were very complementary of the IB programme and the level of analysis and in depth study required to be successful in this programme. Although all IB subjects have curriculum guides, they are very generic in nature, which allows teachers the freedom to execute the curriculum in a way they feel best suits the needs of their students. For example, the IB Coordinator, who is also a Geography teacher, explained how case studies could be drawn on from many different regions of the world, as long as these cases allow for the Learning Outcomes from the IB guides to be met. He felt this enables teachers to design their courses to cater for the diverse learners in their classes, if they so choose.

The level of teacher autonomy in this regard was clear in the responses from the teachers in the interviews. Teachers were asked if their students are involved when selecting topics and or units within their IB courses, by either taking into account the students' backgrounds and prior knowledge, or by actually allowing the students to select the topics to be covered, where options were available. Although the Maths teacher said a resounding "No", other teachers stated that it depended on the topic they are covering and what was relevant to their classes. Therefore, if there were relevant topics that students were able to select from this may have been possible in some subject areas. For example, the Geography teacher stated in his interview that he allowed the students to select the Optional Topics in the IB Geography course by class vote. He noted that students' choices were more closely related to their experience with the topics rather than their cultural background.

4.1.4.3 Teaching

The leaders of the school seemed to feel there was a significant focus on good teaching practice and differentiation, but not necessarily based on culturally responsive teaching. The IB coordinator stated:

In terms of looking at what do we do with the same emphasis looking at cultural diversity, I would say we don't do a lot, it is not promoted by or a clear directive of management policies or directives, nor from a departmental perspective. Where we see it happening is just good teachers reacting to the students in front of them and trying to connect and engage those students more in the topic by applying settings that students will naturally connect with, their home country for example. But in terms of how much we push that as a management team, It isn't' I suggest a priority.

The teachers interviewed also confirmed that the school does not explicitly encourage teachers to implement culturally relevant practices in their lessons or assessment. The Science teacher said that the school gives total liberty to its teachers and that they respect teachers' views and opinions, but at no stage had he been directed or encouraged to implement any culturally relevant pedagogy.

The Director of the school also mentioned that the school as a whole does not do enough for the local culture. He stated:

I personally feel we don't do enough to recognise and celebrate local culture, Arab culture here in the UAE. Yes, we do have National Day, and yes, there is a little assembly programme, but I think we could be doing a lot more. I think teachers in the classroom when they have opportunity should work in lot more on the local host nation culture.

It appears clear that culturally responsive practices are not something that are a priority for the administration team, or have not been recognised as a priority or something that needs to be addressed. Although administrators were able to acknowledge the importance of it, they were aware in their comments of how this may be lacking in the school.

4.1.4.4 Inquiry-based learning and professional development

The school has an explicit focus on inquiry-based learning, as noted on the website:

> "The school promotes project and problem-based learning. Inquiry-based learning approaches require students to think, collaborate, problem solve, and build new knowledge to promote student inquiry, discussions, teamwork, and an understanding of multidisciplinary concepts. This focus is seen as important for the high school because the school sees inquiry as appropriate for adolescent's need for emotional engagement, assistance and extension, and intellectual stimulation".

In the lower secondary grades, particularly Grades 9 and 10, this emphasis on inquiry-based learning, means taking a project-based approach in social studies, sciences and languages, including allowing the students to be part of the decision-making process when selecting topics and lines of inquiry. It is, however, important to note that this project-based approach varies between subject areas and even within subject areas depending on the teacher. It appeared that some teachers were greater advocates of this than others. This also appeared to resonate more with the teachers that allowed students to be part of the decision-making processes regarding the topics selected, and formats of and presentations style of these project-based- assignments. As the Principal stated:

> There are teachers who come from a background where content is most important. When asked to think in a conceptual way or think beyond the content, some people have difficulties because for them the knowledge of content is the most important. They do not see that it is possible to teach the content and the conceptual level.

Given the emphasis on teacher autonomy, the school administration supports different teaching styles. This is not necessarily reinforcing the need to cater for diverse learners or those from different cultural backgrounds, but, to promote this inquiry-based learning and conceptual curriculum, the school does offer professional development to improve

instruction such as in-house training sessions where the school brought in specialists to assist with identified areas for staff development. For example, an education specialist from the US was brought in to work with different groups of teachers on differentiation. There were also three annual staff professional development days, which were run by the administration of the school, and focused on key targets of the school. These sessions included inquiry-based learning, specific departmental development programmes such as the IB Group Four project, or integration of the IB Theory of Knowledge.

In addition to this, the ESOL Company that owns the school brought together five of their schools in the region for a teaching workshop. The school also allocates US$500 per year towards individual professional development. IB teachers regularly attend IB training and workshops as recommended by the IB organisation. While it is evident there is an array of professional development opportunities, none of these focused on culturally responsive pedagogy, yet this is concern for all of the ESOL schools, because they are all international schools with diverse student bodies.

4.1.4.5 Assessment and Student Achievement

The school has a very sophisticated data system that is used to monitor student achievement. In relation to student's records, I asked the senior leaders how the school records achievement data. In particular, I wanted to know if they tracked achievement by student nationality or ethnicity. I felt this was important for understanding if, and, how they were analysing if some student groups were achieving better outcomes than those from other backgrounds. All the responses confirmed that the school does not record student achievement by nationality. The school does, however, look at the Emirati population compared to the other nationalities for the national KHDA board. This is done as part of an annual inspection process that all schools in Dubai must adhere to. The school has noticed that in some subject areas Emirati students do attain lower scores than other nationalities,

but, this data fluctuates from year to year based on the small samples taken and does not take into account the fact that nearly all of the subjects the Emirati students are taking are in English, a second language for all Emirati students. The Principal and Director both stipulated that in their view nationalities have little influence on academic attainment. Rather, as the Principal said, they believed that in international schools, "It is really is the student motivation, the capacity to work and the support they get from their parents at home. All of these have more effect than the nationality of the student".

During this study, I was able access the school data system, and I looked specifically at the Grade 12 results. The total count for the year was 59 students, (35 males and 24 females). Based on their final GPA, the three highest nationalities, with respect to achievement, are Indian, Canadian, and Egyptian students, and the two lowest achievers were Pakistani and Emirati students. An examination, however, of the disaggregated data by gender shows that the highest achievers for females were Emirati and American, and for males the highest achievers were Canadian and Egyptian. Jordanian females and Pakistani and Emirati males showed the lowest achievement.

As previously stated, it is important to take into consideration that the school uses citizenship rather than ethnicity during the enrolment process. Many Arab students hold an American, Canadian, or alternative passports. Taking only citizenship into account may not allow for accurate understanding of student ethnicity, and therefore does not support a disaggregated analysis of student achievement using this variable. It would, therefore, be very difficult to analyse this information or come to any real understanding from these results. This may be a contributing factor as to why the school administration is uncertain about the need to record achievement based on ethnicity/nationality.

When asked if the school records student achievement and analyses data according to their nationalities the Principal indicated that they did have such detailed statistics: "We

do not want to have a dominant culture too much. It is an American school so it is the highest nationality, but we try to keep a balance". The Director, however, felt quite differently. He shared his thoughts saying:

> No. None whatsoever. It is all a level playing field and so whatever nationality you are, you're all playing with the same curriculum, the same test questions, there's no – what's word that I want to use -- exceptions made on that.

This indicates that the school is not looking at assessment data by nationality and therefore may not be attempting to identify if any specific ethnic groups are experiencing either significant success or facing academic challenges.

4.2 Educator perspectives and pedagogical practices: Responding to diverse students

Having examined the organisation of the school, including the curriculum, and learning context, I turned to the question of how the educators were implementing the curriculum in practice, and what their pedagogy looked like. Before looking closely at classroom practice, I examined how the educators at the United American School understand diversity in their context. This included learning more about the teachers' backgrounds and own experiences with diversity. Diversity as it is described in many definitions, means the "state of being diverse", or having a variety of entities. This generally suggests that a diverse student population must contain a variety of students. This variety is most commonly noted in the representation of nationalities or ethnicities within the student body. The following section examines the staff members' perspectives on diversity, and what the school staff does to incorporate and respond to the cultural diversity of their students.

4.2.1 Educators understandings of and experiences with diversity

Given the school vision and aligned practices, I asked teachers in what ways they believe the school promotes cultural diversity. Both sets of answers from the leaders and

teachers were very similar and all interviewees spoke about the school environment being an international school, with a student and faculty population from many countries. The interviewees stated the school does promote cultural diversity well and encourages the entire community to do so. For example, the secondary Principal said:

> Well, we have over 75 nationalities among students so already we are culturally diverse. Among the teachers have also more than 20 nationalities, and I think the students get along very well and there is no cultural or religious discrimination.
> Furthermore, the Director stated:

First of all, by the nature of our enrolment, where there's no bias whatsoever, we have a mixture of nationalities in our school. That number is close to 70 different nationalities. Each of these nationalities come from cultural backgrounds that blend in with what our purposes is as a school, and we certainly have opportunities to celebrate that cultural diversity in our school at the events like International Day, plus discussing geopolitics and/or in working with the Parent Teacher Organisation, which is very diverse in culture. So, yes we have cultural diversity in the school and we feel blessed by having cultural diversity.

All the interviewees consistently mentioned the cultural diversity of the school body and these two statements capture the general notion of all the teaching staff. The observations were similar to some of the comments I encountered about the presence of cultural diversity of the students. For example, the school buildings have central areas that display flags from each of the countries that students and faculty come from. There is student artwork that celebrates the cultural makeup of the school and wider community in the hallways. Also, I noted that just by walking in the corridors and other central areas, watching and listening to different accents demonstrated that the diversity of the school is

consistently on display.

The leaders of the school were asked in what ways cultural diversity was taken into account or incorporated within school documents, such as the Mission Statement and handbooks. They expressed uncertainty about such explicit attention being given in this way. As the Director stated: "I do not think that there's an attempt made to write statements for this school, such as the mission statement, and policies, and procedures that in fact attempt to address multiculturalism". The school leaders, however, consistently mentioned the importance of global citizenship in international education, as cited in the Mission Statement. For example, the school Director looked at the Mission Statement and read it aloud, then responded: "Now, global comes out in that statement, and one can argue that was meant to take in cultural diversity, but it wasn't designed that way". The secondary Principal further reinforced this notion of global citizenship by highlighting the point that, "In the Mission Statement it says that we are an international school offering an international education". The leaders consistently mentioned that they did not see any direct attempts to address multiculturalism as such. They seemed to draw a parallel between cultural diversity and multiculturalism; however, they did not make the same link of cultural diversity to global citizenship or international education.

Although both the leaders and teachers recognised and stated the importance of cultural diversity, there was no clear definition among the staff about what cultural diversity meant in the context of the school setting. There were also greatly differing views on how this could be addressed through the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The general theme formed in most responses was that by the school being an international school, there was an innate culturally responsive environment - one where all students could feel valued and had opportunities to prosper. When further probed about how an individual student's cultural identity could be recognised or seen as valued, the

responses focused more on the importance of the school's wider international community rather than the individual. For example, the Principal stated:

> Culturally diverse? I don't see that is being of primary importance. I -- you know, again, we have to teach to the standard of IB and to the American curriculum and my expectation would be that whereas cultural awareness must always exist, I just don't think you can necessarily adapt instructional strategy and curriculum to the multi-cultures that are here at the school.

It was also stated by one of the teachers that to respond to each student's individual culture with such a transient population could create significant increases in workload on teachers. Many teachers mentioned looking for examples or case studies from countries of which students in their class came from, others focused on the importance of different perspectives, which may be influenced by students' different cultural backgrounds. The teachers mentioned that they used content that allowed them to discuss different perspectives. For example, the English teacher mentioned that the texts studied in class are prescribed, but the students

> bring in their own examples, whether it is just talking about them, or whether it is bringing articles to share. Also in IB they do further oral activities where – that's completely their own. They bring in their things from the outside.

In trying to understand the educator's perspectives of cultural diversity, I thought it was important to know more about their own educational backgrounds. Specifically, I wanted to know if their prior experiences teaching in a school environment with many different nationalities differed greatly from their own education. Most of the teachers noted that there was little diversity where they were educated. In their own schooling experiences students were predominantly from one ethnicity, usually the mainstream dominant culture. Of the four teachers I focused on for this study, three came from very small towns in the

United States where there was little ethnic diversity. Only the Physics teacher, who was from India, informed me that he grew up in a multicultural environment. The English teacher was typical: "I went to the same school of Grades 1 through 12, in the same town. And it was in Minnesota, a small town and everybody was white. Everybody". Similarly, the Maths teacher talked about his own experience and being used to more of an "American system". For him, the IB system was different. Also, he hadn't had much experience in his own schooling with cultural diversity: "We didn't -- I didn't know people from -- I knew a couple of different nationalities but never as many as we have here obviously". In contrast, the Physics teacher had a schooling background that was highly culturally diverse. Nevertheless, he didn't see cultural diversity as informing issues around teaching, noting that physics was a "universal subject, where the motivations and the students' goals were similar".

Regarding specific preparation for teaching in a culturally diverse learning environment before coming to this school, despite many teachers having little exposure to diversity growing up, they had all taught in schools where cultural diversity was present. For example, the English teacher noted this was her sixth or seventh overseas school. Also, she had been an international exchange student in high school, so felt she had a lot of experience with cultural diversity. Similarly, the Maths teacher had various experiences teaching in the US. He indicated his experiences were "not obviously as culturally diverse as here", but noted he had "taught larger Latino and Black populations - African-American populations. That was my experience before I got here".

4.2.2 Pedagogical practices

To get a better understanding of classroom pedagogical practices, I observed four teachers from four different subject areas: English, History, Maths, and Physics. These teachers worked with a range of students aged from 15 to 18 years old. The main domains

observed were the classroom environment and the content of the lessons (See Appendix C).
While observing the classroom environment, I firstly looked at the routines put in place
such as the Learning Outcomes on display and explained to students, the greetings by the
teacher followed by an observation of the classroom layout, the seating arrangement, the
decoration of the classroom, and recognition of the students' work. I also looked at how the
teacher interacted with his/her students, the relationship that had been established, the
general discussion, and activities conducted in the lesson.

The second main domain observed was the content, the activities, and/or assessment
conducted in the lesson. I noted the pedagogical resources used on the day of observation,
particularly if the content catered for student diversity and if the students were actively part
of decision-making processes regarding topics, activities, and group work arrangements.
Student participation was observed as were the teacher's attempts at catering for different
abilities and levels within the classroom. To give a better description of what teaching
looks like in this international school, I have used a vignette of the observation of one
teacher, Laura Smith, and drawn comparisons with the observations of three other teachers.

4.2.2.1 Vignette of classroom practice: One's teacher's response to student diversity

Laura Smith started her lesson by welcoming her Grade 11 English students and
talking about the previous lesson to establish if content and skills from that lesson were
retained. The lesson concerned analysing visual texts; one poster and one advertisement
from a magazine. She shared the learning objectives of the lesson orally with 17 students.
She did not write the learning objectives on the whiteboard or have students record them in
their notes.

The students, nine males and eight females, were sitting at individual desks, which
were arranged in a U-formation, which allowed the teacher easy access to each student.

Laura Smith encouraged the students to work in a *think-pair-share activity* with the person next to them and to give each other oral feedback on how they interpreted the visual texts. This group activity was not reinforced, however, so some students withdrew from the group and worked individually.

Because this lesson was a visual analysis of texts, it was designed to cater to both visual and oral learning styles. All students had the same two visual texts to analyse. They were not provided an opportunity to access any other resources, and so seemed to be expected to use only their own prior knowledge to complete the analysis. Both of the visual texts presented by the teacher were Western perspective texts. There was no explanation given to the students about the selection of the texts, nor why these examples were being used, but, it is known case that the IB uses predominantly Western perspective texts and examples in the examinations and assessments.

Students were asked to write their answers out on paper. The questions used were designed to simulate IB examination questions. This meant there was no choice for students about how to present their work.

The teacher stopped and questioned students' understanding at regular intervals. There were four students that routinely shared their responses when the teacher stopped to check for understanding. These four students tended to dominate the discussion, and therefore limited the participation of other students. The views they shared were also not discussed as a whole group and so there was little opportunity for in-depth analysis or consideration of their ideas. Ms Smith did offer some discussion in regards to where students may witness these sort of visual texts in different situations, for example in magazines or journals.

In the follow-up interview, Ms Smith stated that she encourages students to express new perspectives, but, the students were not working as one group or even in smaller

groups, and most of the questioning and discussion was directed by the teacher. Thus, the lesson reflected more of a teacher-centred orientation, with little opportunity for student initiated inquiry.

In further reflection with Ms Smith on this lesson and her general classroom practices, she noted aspects of culturally responsive teaching. Her classroom had a range of course related materials, such as posters and images on the class boards, which showed recognition of cultural diversity. For example, there was a wall display with poems from different authors, in different languages based on the same theme. There were authors from the US, Spain, the Lebanon, Jordon, and the UK. The students' work showed their knowledge and understanding on topics covered in the course.

4.2.2.2 Comparisons of teaching pedagogy

As noted, in examining classroom pedagogy the observations focused on two key aspects of practice: 1) classroom environment and 2) content. These serve as the organising framework for the following comparative description of the teaching practices of the four focus teachers.

Classroom environment

When looking at the first domain observed, which is the classroom environment, it was clear that all teachers had friendly and warm interactions with their students. There was a positive relationship established between the educators and the pupils that were observed. All four teachers demonstrated a strong rapport with their students, which made the atmosphere very welcoming, and a positive learning environment. For example, the Physics teacher shook hands with his students and the History teacher asked many of the class what they did over the weekend. The students showed respect towards their teachers at all times and there were no classroom management issues observed.

The Learning Objectives were communicated in all classrooms either written on the board or orally, and in some cases both were used. The Learning Objectives seemed clear and the students were observed to be on task and working to complete activities as instructed by their teachers. One could argue that the Physics teacher, who had his Learning Objectives on his PowerPoint (PPT) presentation, was a little clearer because they appeared on the board. As he moved through the PPT slides, however, the Learning Objectives disappeared and there were no further opportunities for the students to refer to them. The Maths teacher was the only teacher who had his Learning Objectives written on the board for the full length of the lesson so the students had an easier time of establishing what the teacher wanted them to do and know.

The seating arrangement in the English lesson had the students in rows and this did not encourage cooperative learning, but, despite the physical barriers to collaboration there appeared to be a high level of engagement and participation from students in the class. The History class appeared to be similar. The students were seated in a line facing the front of the class. The seating was not done in a way that encouraged collaborative learning. The Physics class was also seated in a way that was not conducive to group based activities, but, this lesson was conducted in the science laboratory and the teacher explained that with many fragile materials in the class, and ongoing experiments on the benches, he did not want students to damage any of these materials.

In two other lessons teachers used similar questioning techniques as observed in the English lesson. For example, in History, the students were encouraged to respond orally to questions from the teacher. However, similar to the vignette of the English class, some of the responses given orally did lend themselves to student led discussion, which the teacher had encouraged. Five students, however, were quick to respond and dominated these opportunities for group feedback and discussion. This appeared to result in other students

not engaging or withdrawing from the discussion, as many were not sharing their responses. Some students were adding notes to their work while others gave their responses, but some students appeared to be simply listening and not doing anything further with this information.

In the Physics lesson there was no direct instruction from the teacher to encourage students to work collaboratively. The teacher and class were moving through the content and question quickly in a teacher-centred manner. Although the teacher did at times check for understanding or seek student contributions, students were a little reluctant in responding with their answers. The quick pace made it feel as if there was not time to discuss each aspect of the lesson in detail.

Interestingly, the Maths lesson was the most engaged with collaborative learning. Students were sitting in groups of four at large tables facing each other and were encouraged to work collaboratively. The teacher made a point of firmly instructing three students to work with their groups and not individually. He also gave guidance on how to be a productive group/team member; sharing ideas, allowing others to have their turn and speak on behalf of their group.

The Maths teacher asked groups to show their responses to questions, including their working on small boards so this could easily be seen by the rest of the class. The students were engaged in this activity and were responsible in their roles within the group. This lesson was very interactive and the students appeared to enjoy this activity greatly. One aspect the teacher was emphasising in this lesson was the idea of interdependence and that each group was reliant of each of its group members fulfilling their roles. By delivering consistent cues on how to conduct an effective group, students were able to understand their roles and be very productive group members.

As noted, one strong aspect which showed evidence of diversity with Ms Smith the English teacher was her wall display. The classroom was decorated with many posters, much of which was work produced by students. Given the demographic of the school, the posters showed diversity that was representative of the student body and wider community, as there were different styles of work and two of these were written in Arabic, with an additional one written in both English and Arabic. The classroom was very colourful and created a warm and inviting place to study. All four classrooms had displays on the walls, but Ms Smith's was perhaps the only classroom, which demonstrated, and highlighted, attention to cultural diversity. The Maths and History classrooms had some posters with names of students on them, which gave students recognition of their work. The Physics room was the room with the least number of displays on the walls. It did contain some student work in the form of posters, but it was not clear as to which class had produced it. Two posters looked quite faded so they may have been from a previous class.

Content

During the observations, I attempted to identify if the teachers drew on student diversity as a pedagogical resource, and if there were any aspects of the learning where students are given the opportunity to be part of decision-making process. There were some similarities between the Physics, History, and Ms Smith's English lessons in that there was no evidence of teacher using the students as a pedagogical resource. One aspect of seeing students as a pedagogical resource is enabling student choice in terms of leading their own learning process. The lack of such choice was seen clearly in the example of the Physics teacher, who gave out a booklet at the start of the lesson that the students had to complete; there was no choice as such of the materials in this lesson. The teacher also outlined how students should use their textbook to review the lesson. Students were required to follow this method exactly, but, at the end of the lesson he was the only one to collect the students'

booklets while the other teachers conducted a similar conclusion to their lessons as Ms Smith by leading a review of individual responses to gather understanding.

In the History lesson this matter of student choice was also not evident, although the teacher did use one student's oral response as an example of a strong response and therefore higher cognitive learning, but, any links or opportunities to explore the student's culture or how this connected to this lesson were not followed up on. The students then had to complete an analysis of pre-selected primary sources. The teacher had selected these in advance of the lesson.

The lesson that again differed the most was the Maths lesson. The teacher drew on different groups to respond to different questions and even different aspects of questions. He asked groups to give feedback and criticism to each other, and to try and take this in a positive light, promoting students to learn from each other. In this particular lesson the students did not choose the material but the teacher did not give direct instruction on how to answer the questions. Part of the reason for students sharing their answers and giving feedback was to look at the different ways that students could answer the same question. Therefore, in this style of activity students had autonomy on how they addressed the questions. This lesson came across as more student-centred, in that they had elements of self-determination regarding the ability to answer the questions and set the pace of the lesson. In fact, the class did not complete all the questions, but the teacher did not seem overly concerned about this.

To cater for different abilities and skill levels in the class, the English lesson did provide some analysis and evaluation questions, which required higher levels of cognitive thinking.

In the other lessons observed in History, Science, and Maths, it was clear that attempts were made to differentiate in regards to styles of learning, as well as the level of difficulty of activities.

The Maths teacher consistently moved to each of the groups and did spend more time with two groups that were having difficulty with some questions. In History, the teacher stated at the end of the lesson that the three sources analysed were of different levels of complexity. In Physics, there were also a range of questions provided to cater to students who had completed some exercises quickly and required some further extension materials. It was witnessed in the English lesson, all of the teachers checked students understanding. Three teachers moved around the room to check students' work. The History teacher checked understanding orally but did not necessarily check the student's notes.

The students in the four different classes were mostly on task and no behavioural management issues arose. The positive relationships the teachers had with their students made the observations pleasant to conduct. Nevertheless, it was evident that teacher-centred, content-driven teaching pedagogy was employed consistently across the range of teachers observed. The exception being the Maths teacher who also used collaborating techniques and inclusion.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented data related to the organisation of the school and the pedagogical practices. The United American School is a large international school providing an international education. The student body has over 75 nationalities and the teaching staff is derived from a variety of nations, adding to the diverse nature of the school community. The school's Mission Statement refers to the importance of developing "global citizens" and the corresponding statements are in line with the IB mission statement. The teachers are attempting to cater for diverse learners. Many noted it is natural for them to do

this, because of the general make-up of the student body. They noted, however, that their own educational backgrounds and training was not conducted with such diversity in students or teaching staff, but rather occurred in more homogeneous schools where they were of the majority ethnicity.

As witnessed in the lessons observed, and within the wider school community, the presence of wellbeing, tolerance, and inclusion are present in the school. There appear to be no stereotypes nor bias, which could affect student learning. The school does not record student achievement by nationality and all students are treated the same with respect to their learning. There are instances where students are involved in both the selecting and/or design of curriculum and class based activities, but, this is not happening across the school in a broad sense, and is only currently implemented by a small number of teachers. It is, however, clear from the interviews with both the administrators and teachers that this aspect is not a priority for the school and little is done do develop this by senior and middle management. Diversity is present in the school and there are many examples of this in the school displaying a rich sense of diversity, despite the fact that this is not a central driving force of school development.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

5.0 Introduction

In this study, interviews, fieldwork, and classroom observations were conducted to answer the overarching research question: How are multicultural education and culturally responsive practices being implemented in an international school context?

Banks (2009) asserts that in an ever-increasing globalised world, there is a growing ethnic, cultural, racial, language, and religious diversity. Educators must address this diversity and must attempt to capture and harness students' interest. Multicultural education is a vehicle for doing this. Banks (1995) identifies multicultural education as an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process. The purpose of multicultural education is to create equal opportunities for all students. Culturally relevant pedagogy has been described by Ladson-Billings (1994) as, "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 382). Culturally relevant practice is the ability of educators to facilitate learning in a manner that is accessible and understood by all students without any bias or stereotypes, and to ensure more equitable outcomes. In this way it supports the implementation of multicultural education.

In his framework of multicultural education Banks (1995) identified five components of multicultural education. These help teachers and administration implement culturally relevant practices within schools. This chapter summarises and discusses the key findings using these five components of multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. A summary of findings and implications from this research are discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Content Integration

Content integration is the use of examples and content in lessons that vary according to the cultural backgrounds and diversity of the students in the class. In effect, teachers use texts, and other support materials, from different cultures or thematic units in all subjects. Ladson-Billings (1994) advocates that to achieve this, teachers are required to bring students' culture into the classroom and imbed this in the learning process. Culturally relevant pedagogy can be seen as the teacher and students connecting to create a learning community that celebrates all backgrounds, and views each background as equally important. It is vital that students feel they are in a safe and engaged learning environment, so they are able to relate to the content and assessment practices.

In this study, the teachers revealed that they allowed students to share their varied perspectives in lessons. This supported the use of various cultural understandings in learning activities. Several HODs and teachers noted, however, that in senior classes the IB programme prescribed, or gave, specific guidance on the texts to be used. They felt this did hinder their ability to use a wide range of materials to appeal to all students from all backgrounds.

School populations, particularly in international schools are becoming increasingly diverse. Yet as Bishop and Berryman (2010) state, many teachers are not experienced in working with these types of learners due to the lack of cultural understanding or experience either in their training or previous teaching positions. This is the case of the United American School, where many teachers stated they had little exposure to a diverse student body or community before joining the school. During the observations it was also noted that the materials used by students had been selected by teachers, and there was little evidence that they selected content to reflect the cultural diversity of the students. However,

students were often encouraged to work collaboratively and there was regular opportunity for discussion in these lessons as a vehicle for the exploration of different perspectives. While this is not explicit content integration, it does offer the potential for integrating multiple perspectives and viewpoints.

Ladson-Billings (1994) asserts that culture is central to learning. The case study has revealed that the international curriculum, specifically the IB programme, offered by the school enabled teachers to bring some cultural elements and examples into the classroom. This was due to the fact that the IB subject curriculum guides are written in a way that allows all schools anywhere in the world to select and adapt the required teaching materials to meet the needs of their students, while still meeting the criteria of the IB. For example, while there is a prescribed list of authors and a prescribed list of texts to be used in some subject areas, these are varied and provide opportunities for a broad selection of materials within any subject area, but, it can be argued that because culturally responsive practices are not a central part of the school's administrative goals, it is likely this reinforces the teacher's perceptions that the IB curriculum prescribed and limited their curriculum planning and daily lessons.

5.1.2 The knowledge construction process

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, although international schools that use the IB curriculum vary, they all have the same central goal, which is to develop international mindedness within students. The IB Learner Profile and Mission Statement both cite the importance of students becoming responsible global citizens (Hill, 2000). The United American School is certainly providing opportunities for their students to develop the IB attributes as stated in the IB Learner Profile. This also fosters a sense of international mindedness. The IB programme occupies a central place within the school and provides teachers with strong guidance. Therefore, the United American School is an international

school offering an international education. It seems the IB curriculum could aid in the development of culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom, by providing a curriculum that can be developed to meet the needs and interests of students from around the world. It is not clear, however, in this case that it does.

Knowledge construction process describes how educators help students to understand content. Banks (2009) explains that in the classroom students become critical thinkers and share or rewrite their stories from different perspectives. The School's Mission Statement explicitly states a focus on using an inquiry-based education to empower students to be critical thinkers.

The lessons observed were mostly teacher-centred and students were not included in the selection of texts, nor how responses could be presented. Students still were mostly engaged in lessons and the Learning Outcomes were largely achieved in the observed lessons. In observations teachers consistently used varied questioning techniques, although to varying levels of effectiveness. In many of the observed lessons, a small group of vocal students dominated the discussions. This limited other students' opportunity to contribute to the knowledge construction process taking place in the lessons. Nevertheless, all the participating administrators and teachers felt strongly that the IB curriculum develops critical thinking, and that by using this curriculum they were helping students develop an international-mindedness that was global in outlook.

5.1.3 Prejudice reduction

Prejudice reduction is present when learning activities help students to develop positive attitudes towards different racial, cultural, and ethnic groups. Sleeter and Grant (1994) argue that one objective of multicultural education is to "increase tolerance and acceptance of different values, and foster affirmation of all cultures" (p. 4). Practices that can support increased acceptance of other include use of posters, photos, selected texts, and

displays showing evidence of cultural diversity in classrooms and throughout the school. It is also supported by other curricular and cocurricular learning experiences.

This study shows that the United American School demonstrates some evidence of using the cultural diversity of the school's students, staff, and families to promote positive intercultural attitudes and respect. Decor within the school reflected the many nationalities present in the student and wider school community, and it was possible to hear many languages being spoken by students, staff, and parents in daily life in the school. The United American School did embrace the variety of cultures that are present in its community and there were positive attitudes expressed by staff towards the school containing diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic groups. Extra-curricular activities were offered that seemed to help students build intercultural relationships with peers based on shared interests. All members of the school community were regularly invited and encouraged to participate in these activities. Through participation they increased their opportunity for positive engagement with others from different cultural backgrounds, but, in the lessons observed this richness of diversity did not seem to translate into the same engagement with cultural or linguistic diversity in the content or pedagogy. One could argue that teachers were not encouraged to do so by the administration and therefore did not feel the need to do this in their lessons.

There were no explicit efforts taken in implementing any regarding prejudice strategies at the United American School during the observations, but, prejudice reduction may have been supported through extra-curricular activities and other non-class based activities. The IB programme "has been designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of students" (IBO, 2016) In addition to this the IB's Mission Statement addresses prejudice reduction where the IB asserts there aim is to foster "learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right" (IBO, 2016) and

there are also explicit references in the IB to developing students to become global citizens and being internationally minded.

5.1.4 Equity pedagogy

According to Banks (1995) equity pedagogy is established when teachers adjust their teaching strategies according to the students' background in order to raise academic achievement. This aligns with Sleeter and Grant (1994) who state that multicultural education "helps build own awareness of cultural heritage and identity" (p. 4). By incorporating students' cultural backgrounds success in academic attainment has a greater opportunity of taking place. In the classroom, this would be indicated by practices such as collaborative group based work, discussion, and differentiation. It is also supported by wider school processes that monitor student learning and access to learning opportunities and outcomes.

Generally, classroom practices within the school did not place students at the centre of decisions regarding choice or development of curriculum. The autonomy given to teachers around pedagogy meant that student engagement varied greatly from teacher to teacher and class to class. It appeared there was greater opportunity for student involvement in some of the IB subjects, where students were able to choose some of their topics and appeared more independent. This, however, is not the norm and is only being practised by some of the more experienced and confident teachers in the school.

With over 90% of graduating students attending a university or tertiary education, the high school is focused on preparing students for entrance to university. The IB is a well-known and trusted international programme, which does achieve its overall goal of preparing the students for tertiary education, but, teachers appear to be mostly focused on IB prescribed curriculum and they are not necessarily trying to implement culturally responsive pedagogy into their teaching.

As an accredited US high school the United American School does offer a US high school diploma to those students that meet the School's graduation criteria. The school uses a grade conversion table when allocating credit for IB courses towards the US High School Diploma, because all students take IB classes and therefore all students are, in effect, following the same curriculum. The school feels that IB courses meet or exceed US national subject requirements. As a result of this organisation of classes and curriculum, we can again witness attempts by the school to treat all students the same, regardless of what course options they take. As mentioned previously, however, teachers cannot treat students as if they were one or the same, teaching them one curriculum with no adaptation for diverse learners. Students are not all the same and as it will be discussed in the key findings below, teachers need to bring culture into the classroom.

5.1.5 Empowering school culture and social culture

Empowering school culture and social culture is created when both the culture and organisation of the school is adapted to cater for all students' backgrounds. In the classroom, teachers should believe that all students could achieve success regardless of background or culture, and aim to inspire students that are not from the dominant culture. This also relates to the general organisation of the school in relation to the school culture and its ability to change institutional practices to ensure that it suits all groups (Bank, 1995).

The United American School recognises diversity in terms acknowledging that the school has many different nationalities and there are many events held by the school to embrace this diversity, but, in relation to the institutional practices it seems that culturally relevant pedagogy was not being discussed or addressed in a consistent and overt way. There was no professional development offered that specifically addresses working with culturally diverse students, supporting English language learners, or using culturally

responsive practices. It is not something that was discussed routinely or at length in key school initiatives by the administration. In fact, in some of the interviews the staff expressed concern that attention to cultural diversity might lead to inequities, or not treating students the same.

It appears that School's vision is being achieved in many areas such as extra-curricular activities, sport, cultural activities, and art, but, this same emphasis in recognising, celebrating, and implementing culturally relevant practices is not applied as an administratively important aspect of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment. The extra-curricular activities appeared to be empowering, because students were allowed to choose activities with which they identified with and enjoyed. They worked on projects or in special programmes such as Model United Nations where there was a focus on collaboration and building peer relationships, which had an embedded message of unity and tolerance. There were also opportunities to engage in trips and projects where they could learn about themselves and other cultures. It does seem then that the United American School provides opportunities to students to become more empowered and develop their social culture. However, when looking at the taught curriculum this is less apparent.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

This exploratory case study of the United American School showed that some aspects of multicultural education and culturally relevant practice are being implemented. Diversity is seen as valuable, as witnessed by the school leaders discussing the importance of global citizenship in international education. This aligns with the School's Mission Statement which focuses on the importance of being a global citizen and an internationally-minded leader. Both of these goals are understood to align with goals of multicultural education, as Hill (2007) has argued.

No clear attempts have been made, however, to address cultural diversity in key school documents such as the School's Vision or Mission Statement. In what appeared as an effort to be fair and just, the administration and staff were attempting to treat all students equally, which for them means the same. This indicates there were missed opportunities to embrace the varied and rich cultures that exist in the student body. This seems to support Guild and Garger's (1998) argument that little has changed in education and students are mostly treated the as if they are the same, as a homogeneous group of students.

As Poore (2005) points out, most heads of schools, and teaching faculties in international schools are dominated by people of Western descent. This is very much in line with the current demographics of the staff at the United American School. Nearly half of the teaching staff are North American citizens. Within the staff interviewed nearly all mentioned that they had received little exposure to diversity in either educational background or previous teaching experiences. Although there appears to be a lack of experience in dealing with diverse learners within its teaching staff, the school offers no professional development sessions on this topic and many of the administrators conveyed this was not a centrally important concern for the school. Robinson and Clardy (2001) have noted that teachers are not likely to use culturally responsive practices when they do not have experience with cultural diversity, or do not value it. This appears to be one aspect of the situation with United American School.

Some teachers at the school seem to be engaged in aspects of culturally relevant practices, but, the culturally relevant practices witnessed at the United American School varied greatly from the international school in the Philippines, as mentioned in Chapter Two. The teachers in that study had prioritised the development of their foreign students. They used "the student's culture as a vehicle to gain cultural competence" as Ladson-Billings (1995) would define it. And relates to her argument that culturally relevant

pedagogy has three criteria: students must experience academic success, students must develop cultural competence, and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The majority of students in United American School were experiencing academic success, and were supported to develop cultural competence, but, the focus on critical thinking in the school was not necessarily focused on considerations of challenging the status quo or social order. Their vision of global mindedness did not necessarily include this perspective.

The students at the United American School appeared to be tolerant towards each other and the range of cultural/ethnic diversity. There were no signs of racial divides nor discrimination within the student body. Moreover, teachers and students appeared to have very positive relationships and demonstrated mutual respect. Bishop and Berryman (2010) emphasise the importance the teacher-student relationship, and feel it is essential for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. In addition to this, Rajapogal (2011) emphasises the importance of knowing the students' cultures. Because culturally relevant practices are not used or encouraged means teachers are not able to further develop these relationships. This limits their ability to make links between student backgrounds and curriculum content.

Overall, the findings from this research suggest that despite its vast diversity in demographics, with students from more than 75 countries, the United American School's pedagogy, curriculum, and hiring policies are still largely entrenched in a typically Western style of thinking. Overall the school is dominated by Western views on education, including the subject matter and materials selected in daily activities and assessment. Although it has an explicit Mission Statement and vision focused on an international education not all of the school practices align with this goal. Moreover, only some of the school's practices and pedagogy align with the dimensions of multicultural education.

Finally, there is some evidence of culturally relevant practices and the adaptation of curriculum to be more inclusive and representative of the student body. However, this is not happening across all areas of the school and does not appear to be a priority for the school's administration. Would it make a more of a difference for the students if culturally relevant practices were prioritised? The question is still out.

5.3 Implications

This study suggests there are both implications for practices in international schools and for further research within international schools. In international schools there is a need to pay more explicit attention to professional development, and data recording. There is also a need for more research on international schools that looks at school and classroom practices.

Professional development:

The diversity of populations is changing around the world due the increasingly globalised and connected nature of the world. This is particularly relevant in international schools where there are many nationalities in one class or cohort. Students learn differently, and bring different prior knowledge with them to their education. Many of the teachers appointed in international schools are often not prepared, or trained, to teach diverse learners. To this end, it would be to the schools' advantage to create induction and professional development programmes to support teachers developing culturally relevant practices. Professional development is key for building teaching capacity and therefore vital for schools in addressing culturally relevant practices. Teachers need to have specific training and guidance on how to implement culturally relevant practices in the classroom and teach diverse learners. It is important that teachers become familiar with the cultures of the students they teach in order to provide equal opportunities for all students in their classes.

Data recording

As examined in Chapter Two, relationship gaps that exist between students and staff is a major obstacle to student educational attainment. Arslan (2009) states, "principals and teachers must work collaboratively with school staff members, parents, and the community to accomplish goals" (p.16). It is important, however, for any type of school to record data and use this to inform decisions made by administration and teachers. This is particularly relevant when examining student attainment and the strategies required to support non-achievers. Looking at trends for students from different cultural backgrounds or who have English as a second language would help schools be more focused on supporting equitable outcomes. In sum, schools must be using data as the basis of all key decision-making processes.

Further Research

The research on practices in international schools continues to expand. Much of this has focused on implementation of the IB curriculum, and international mindedness. Few studies have looked at issues of multicultural education or culturally responsive practices in these types of schools. This study suggests more study would be useful. If this research were to be further extended the following would be of interest:

- Individual case studies of a variety of international schools to examine how international education and multicultural education are implemented and what the overlap is between them.

- A cross-case comparison of how different types of international schools are organising themselves to be responsive to the culturally and linguistically diverse international student populations. The variety of schools could include: an international school not offering an international education, or an international school with a majority of national students.

Research in this area would help educators understand the different ways culturally relevant teaching in diverse types of international schools is happening, and what the effects might be for student learning. Such studies could inform the field about the usefulness of multicultural education in this context.

As trends in globalisation continue to expand so will the number of international schools. It is important to ensure there are appropriate responsive practices among these international schools to meet the needs their student bodies. This study helps to build a foundation of knowledge regarding multicultural education and culturally relevant practices in an international school offering an international education.

5.4 Conclusion

This study was conducted as an exploratory case study of an international school by engaging with a sample of teachers and key administration members. It is clear educational practices in international schools are still dominated by the majority culture of the school and in international schools this is often seen as the western education model. Although there is a vast array of international schools and these are diverse in nature, the vast majority do offer an international education, as it is apparent at the United American School. It is important, however, that international schools also ensure the pedagogy applied by teachers is suitable for the diverse learners typical of these settings. As this study shows, following an international curriculum does aid in this process, but doing this alone is not enough and culturally relevant practices must be implemented to ensure equity.

Ladson-Billings (1995) argued her research served to question the norms of educational practices in schools and placed culturally relevant pedagogy at the core of what is vital for student success. Hayden and Thompson (2008) have identified three types of international school students: The Third Culture kids, the Returnees and the Host Country

national students as mentioned in Chapter Two. Regardless of the origins of the students it is vital that schools guide staff to better support our diverse learners, our global nomads, our Returnees, our Third Culture kids in international schools. Banks (1995) argued that the purpose of multicultural education is to ensure educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. Our world is changing rapidly and if education programmes are to meet the needs of all students it also must keep pace and ensure all students have equal opportunities.

APPENDIX A
Information sheets for the Administration and teachers.

College of Education

Tiffany Affagard-Edwards
Researcher
tiffany.affagard@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+971 55 66 47621
INFORMATION SHEET for leaders
Exploring culturally relevant practices in an international school context:

An ethnographic case study of one school.

My name is Tiffany Affagard-Edwards and I am a postgraduate student in master of Education at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. As a teacher in an international school, I am interested in how international schools respond to the learning needs of their cultural diverse student populations. For my thesis research study I am using an ethnographic case study approach to examine the way in which one international school is engaged in culturally relevant practices. As part of the case study I will be gathering data through three approaches:

1. Collecting artefacts and documents from the school (e.g. policy documents, departmental curriculum documentations, school strategic plans and school events)
2. Observing classes
3. Conducting interviews with administrators and teachers to collect their insight and perspectives.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. If you agree to take part you will be asked to participate in some of these activities. Specifically as a school leader you will be invited to participate in an individual interview. It is anticipated the interview would be approximately 30 minutes and it will be held in the time and place arranged with you by mutual agreement in advance.

Individual interviews will be audio recorded and all transcripts and related documents will be safely stored in researcher's archive. Only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the recorded data. You will be provided an opportunity to review your individual interview transcription notes to ensure accuracy.

Particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this research. The interviews will not involve personally sensitive or specific issues where you might be able to be identified, and your name will be known only to myself. However, due to the nature of the study anonymity cannot be guaranteed. All reasonable steps will be taken to protect your identify. To minimise risk of inadvertent identification, the data in publications will be presented in aggregate form as much as possible. In those cases where individual quotes or specific data are presents, pseudonyms will be used.

The information provided by you will be analysed and included in a non-identifiable way into a summary for your review. The results of the study may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at education conferences.

In accordance with the University of Canterbury research procedures the data will be securely locked in a filing cabinet or a password protected file for a period of 5 years then destroyed. No other parties will have access to the data.

Please note that participation in this study is totally voluntary. However should you choose to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question/s;
- withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or any repercussions to the ongoing evaluation. If you choose to withdraw, I will remove any of the information relating to you from the study, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during the participation;
- provide any information on the understanding that your name will not be used, and I will put in place measures to ensure confidentiality as described above.
- complain if you have any concerns about the conduct of any of the research team. Complaints may be addressed to The Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me in the envelope provided.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. If you have any questions please ask me before you decide whether to take part. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

If you require further information you may contact the following:

Researcher:
Tiffany Affagard-Edwards
Telephone: 055 66 47621
Email: tiffany.affagard@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Professor Letitia Fickel, Ed.D, Head of School
Telephone: 0064 3 345 8460 ext. 44460
Email: Letitia.fickel@canterbury.ac.nz

Ethics Committee:
UC Education Research Human Ethics Committee
Telephone: 0064 3 364 2987 ext. 45588
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

College of Education
Tiffany Affagard-Edwards
Researcher
tiffany.affagard@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
+971 55 66 47621

23rd April 2014

INFORMATION SHEET for teachers

Exploring culturally relevant practices in an international school context:

An ethnographic case study of one school.

My name is Tiffany Affagard-Edwards and I am a postgraduate student in master of Education at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. As a teacher in an international school, I am interested in how international schools respond to the learning needs of their cultural diverse student populations. For my thesis research study I am using an ethnographic case study approach to examine the way in which one international school is engaged in culturally relevant practices. As part of the case study I will be gathering data through three approaches:

1. Collecting artefacts and documents from the school (e.g. policy documents, departmental curriculum documentations, school strategic plans and school events)
2. Observing classes
3. Conducting interviews with administrators and teachers to collect insight and their perspectives.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. If you agree to take part you will be asked to participate in some of these activities. Specifically as a teacher you will be invited to participate in two activities 1) classroom observation, and 2) individual interview.

The classroom observation will be arranged for a time and specific class or subject which is determined by you, and prearranged. As part of the observation, I would ask for a short briefing before the class which outlines your goals for the lesson and the course, as well as any other information you would like to share about the class or the students. The observation is not an evaluation, and my role as researcher is not to evaluate or judge your actions or you as a teacher. Rather, I would be there to learn from you about how you are making sense of teaching and learning in response to the culturally diverse student group in your classroom. I will provide you with my written notes of my observation for your review.

After the observation, we would arrange for an individual interview. It is anticipated the individual interview would be approximately 45 minutes and it will be held in the time and place arranged with you by mutual agreement in advance. The interview will include your reflections on the lesson I observed, as well as other questions about your experiences as a teacher. You will be provided an opportunity to review your individual interview transcription notes to ensure accuracy.

Individual interviews will be recorded by audio recorder and all data and related documents will be safely stored in researcher's archive. Interview transcripts and classroom observation notes will be read by only me and by my thesis supervisors.

Particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this research. Your name will be known only to myself, and the identity of the students in your classroom will be protected. The observation and interview will not involve personally sensitive or specific issues where you or individual students might be able to be identified. However, due to the nature of the study, anonymity cannot be protected. All reasonable steps will be taken to protect your identify. To minimise risk of inadvertent identification, the data in publications will be presented in aggregate form as much as possible. In those cases where individual quotes or specific data are presents, pseudonyms will be used.

The information provided by you will be analysed and included in a non-identifiable way into a summary for your review. The results of the study may be submitted for publication to national or international journals or presented at education conferences.

In accordance with the University of Canterbury research procedures the data will be securely locked in a filing cabinet or a password protected file for a period of 5 years then destroyed. No other parties will have access to the data.

Please note that participation in this study is totally voluntary. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation to participate in this research study. However should you choose to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question/s;
- withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or any repercussions to the ongoing evaluation. If you choose to withdraw, I will remove any of the information relating to you from the study, including any final publication, provided that this remains practically achievable;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during the participation;
- provide any information on the understanding that your name will not be used, and I will put in place measures to ensure confidentiality as described above.
- complain if you have any concerns about the conduct of any of the research team. Complaints may be addressed to The Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me in the envelope provided.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. If you have any questions please ask me before you decide whether to take part. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

If you require further information you may contact the following:

Researcher:
Tiffany Affagard-Edwards
Telephone: 055 66 47621
Email: tiffany.affagard@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Professor Letitia Fickel, Ed.D, Head of School
Telephone: 0064 3 345 8460 ext. 44460
Email: Letitia.fickel@canterbury.ac.nz

Ethics Committee:
UC Education Research Human Ethics Committee
Telephone: 0064 3 364 2987 ext. 45588
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Tiffany Affagard-Edwards

APPENDIX B
Interview protocol

FOCUS: How international schools respond to the learning needs of their cultural diverse student populations.

Name of participant: --
Date of interview:--
Starts: -----------------------------   **Ends: -------------------------------------**

Interview with leaders

Before we begin the interview, I'd like to confirm that you have read and signed the consent form, that you understand that your participation is voluntary, that you may refuse to answer any questions.

I would also like to remind you that all information will be kept confidential.

Do you have questions before we proceed?

1. In what ways do you believe that the school promotes cultural diversity? Please provide some examples.
   a. Sub question if documents aren't addressed above: How do you believe the school has incorporated culturally relevant pedagogy in key documents such as curriculum documents, mission statement, and handbooks?

2. What challenges have you faced working with such a large number of different nationalities?

3. Generally, how important do you think it is is for teachers in international schools to use culturally relevant pedagogical practices? Why?

4. What do you think are the most important factors when teaching culturally diverse learners?

5. Please describe what you believe a culturally relevant classroom looks like.

6. Do you believe that teachers here are using these sorts of culturally relevant pedagogical practices you describe, or otherwise catering for diverse learners? How wide-spread do you think these practices are among the teachers? What % would you estimate?

7. How do you support and mentor teachers to succeed in such a culturally diverse setting?
How is this put into practice in learning environments?

8. Does the school record student's achievement according to their nationalities and analyze the data well? (Not just Emirati vs non-Emirati)

9. Is there anything you would like to add in regards to cultural diversity? Is there anything else I should have asked?

END OF THE INTERVIEW

FOCUS: How international schools respond to the learning needs of their cultural diverse student populations.

Name of participant: ---
Date of interview:---
Starts: ----------------------------   **Ends:** -------------------------------------

Interview with teachers

Before we begin the interview, I'd like to confirm that you have read and signed the consent form, that you understand that your participation is voluntary, that you may refuse to answer any questions.

I would also like to remind you that all information will be kept confidential.

Do you have questions before we proceed?

1. Why did you choose to teach in an international school?
    a. Sub question probe if not included in answer: Was teaching a diverse student population a factor in deciding to teach internationally?

2. Did you have any specific preparation for teaching in a culturally diverse learning environment before coming to this school?

3. Does this school environment with many different nationalities differ greatly from the educational background you come from? Has this presented challenges to you as a teacher?

4. What do you do in your classroom to cater for our culturally diverse learners?
    a. Probe: Describe your classroom environment. What does it look like? Sound like?

b. Are your students involve when considering a topic to study?

c. Would you describe your classroom as culturally responsive? Why/why not

5. In what ways to you believe the school promotes different cultures and/or supports cultural diversity? Please share specific examples.
   a. Sub question—how does/has the school supported the use of different teaching styles to meet the needs of culturally diverse populations? (Please provide any examples)

6. Describe the opportunities the school has provided you for professional development in culturally relevant/responsive teaching practices?

7. In what ways does the school encourage communication among teachers, parents and students?

8. Do you engage in school activities with the wider community? Give examples

9. Is there anything you would like to add in regards to cultural diversity? Is there anything else I should have asked?

END OF THE INTERVIEW

Classroom Observation Protocol

Date of observation: _____ # of students in classroom: _____

Academic subject: _____   Grade level(s): _____

Lesson theme:

_____

Start time of observation: _____End time of observation: _____

Student cultural diversity in the classroom:

_____

Classroom environment	**Field notes**
How does the teacher demonstrate care in his or her interactions with students? Is a friendly and personal teacher/students relationship evident?	
Are the objectives of the lesson made clear for students? Visually? Orally?	
How is diversity demonstrated in the classroom through wall decoration? (Posters, quotations from a wide range of languages…)	
What student work is displayed to show student recognition?	
How are students arranged? (Groups? Individual rows? Is there a seating plan that has been created by the teacher?)	

	Field notes
In what ways is collaborative work encouraged by the teacher? (Different methods are used: oral, visual, kinesthetic…)	
How does the teacher encourage class discussion? Which students are participating actively? Which aren't?	
In what ways does the classroom interaction among students reflect a community of learners? What signs are there that students feel connected to this community and do they look out for each other? Are there actions that seem to push some students away? Who is participating, who isn't?	

Content/Activity/Assessment	**Field notes**
In what ways does the teacher draw on student diversity as a pedagogical resource?	
What aspects of the learning are students given the opportunity to make a choices? (i.e. topics, processes, who to work with, etc.)	
In what ways are the teacher's lessons student-centred, enquiry-oriented, and connected to the experiences lived by the students? How does the curriculum content make links to real life relevance by addressing diversity effectively?	
In what ways does the teacher cater for different abilities and skill levels in the class?	

Which students are participating in the activities? In what ways? What students aren't? What are they doing?	
What management practices are being used?	
What is the content of the lesson with respect to being inclusive and without stereotype or bias?	
How does the teacher provide individual / group feedback and feed forward?	
What assessment methods are used? How do these types of assessment appear to get a clear view of student understanding?	

APPENDIX D
ERHEC Approval letter

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND
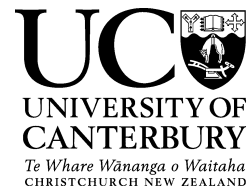
HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE
Secretary, Lynda Griffioen
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: 2013/63/ERHEC

16 December 2013

Tiffany Affagard-Edwards
College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Tiffany

Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal "Exploring culturally relevant practices in an international school context: an ethnographic case study of one school" has been granted ethical approval.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 6 December 2013.

Should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Surtees
Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

E   S

Bibliography

Alfred, M. V. (2009). NonWestern Immigrants in Continuing Higher Education: A sociocultural Approcah to Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. *The Journal of continuing Higher Education , 57* (3), 137-148.

Arslan, H. (2009). *Multicultural education: from theory to practice.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Bailey, L. (2015). The experiences of host country nationals in international schools: A case-study from Malaysia. *Journal of Research in International Education, 14*(2), 85-97.

Banks, A. J. (1995). Multicultural Education: Goals and Dimensions. Retrieved 05 13, 2013 from education washington: education.washington.edu

Banks, J. (1998). The Lives and Values of Researchers: Implications for Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society. *Educational Researcher, 27*(7), 4-17. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/stable/1176055

Banks, A. (2009). Diversity and Citizenship Education in Multicultural Nations*, Multicultural Education Review, 1:1, 1-28*

Bonner, A & Toldhurst, G. (2002) *Insider-outsider perspectives of participant observation.* Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12149898

Bernardo, M. A. C., & Malakolunthu, S. (2013). Culturally-inclusive behavior of Filipino teachers in international schools in the Philippines: Perspectives of international education in a developing country. *International Journal of Educational Development, 33*(1), 59–64.

Bishop, R., & Berryman, M. (2010). Te Kotahitanga: Culturally responsive professional development for teachers. *Teacher Development, 14*(2), 173–187.

Cambridge , J., & Thompson, J. (2004). Internationalism and globalization as contexts for international education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *34*(2), 161–175.

Cohen D. & Crabtree, B. (2008). Qualitative research guidelines project. Retrieved July 22, 2016, from http://www.qualres.org/index.html

Esol education. Retrieved November 2, 2015, from http://www.esoleducation.com

Fetterman, D. M. (2009). *Ethnography: Step-by-step (applied social research methods series), Vol. 17* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*(2), 106–116.

Guild, P.B. & Garger, S. (1998). *Marching to different drummers*. (2nd. Ed) Washington. DC

Hayden, M. (2006). *Introduction to international education: International schools and their communities*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, United Kingdom.

Hayden, M., & Thompson, J. (2008). *International schools: Growth and Influence.* Paris: UNESCO.

Hill, I. (2000) 'Internationally-minded schools', *International Schools Journal*, XX (1): 24 -37.

Hill, I. (2007) *Multicultural and International Education: Never the Twain Shall Meet?*, International Review of Education, Vol. 53, No. 3 (May, 2007), pp. 245-264

IBO. (n.d.). Diploma Programme. Retrieved October 10, 2015, from http://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/

ISC. (2016, 11 17). *New data on international school suggest growth*. From ICEF MONITOR: monitor.icef.com

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2008). Educational Research, qualitative, Qualitative and mixed approaches. Thoudand Oaks, california: Sage Publications

Ladson-Billings G. (1994) The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children. San Francisco, CA, Jossey–Bass Publishers. Retrieved 02/03/2013 from The Education Alliance: http://www.alliance.brown.edu.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/stable/1476635

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. United States: Sage Publications.

Lorcerie, F. (2010). École et ethnicité en France: pour une approche systémique contextualisée. Retrieved from http://sociologies.revues.org/3706

Martínez de Morentin, J. I. (2004). What Is International Education?: Unesco Answers. San Sebastián: San Sebastián Unesco Centre, 2004. *UNESCO*.

Morisson, N. (2016, June 29). International Schools Markets to Hit $89 Billion by 2026. Retrieved October 03, 2016, from http://www.forbes.com/

Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M.-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M. (2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *20*(5), 405–416.

Merriam, S. (2009). Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. Jossey-Bass. San Franscico.

MOE.(2015). Ministry of education. Retrieved December 21, 2016, from
http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/

Parker, W. (2002). *Education for democracy: contexts, curricula, assessments*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Pub.

Pole, M., & Morrison, M. (2003). Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings *Ethnography for education.* Open University Press

Poore, P. (2005). School culture: The space between the bars; the silence between the notes. *Journal of Research in International Education*, *4*(3), 351–361.

Rajagopal, K. (2011). Create Success!. : ASCD. Retrieved from http://www.ebrary.com

Richards, H. V., Brown, A. F., & Forde, T. B. (2007). Addressing Diversity in Schools: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. *Teaching Exceptional Children , 39* (3).

Robinson, C. C., PhD., & Clardy, P., PhD. (2011). it ain't what you say, it's how you say it: linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 18*(3), 101-10. Retrieved from
http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/docview/1011724734

Rychly, L & Graves, E. (2012) Teacher Characteristics for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Multicultural Perspectives, 14:1, 44-49

Sheets, R., Fong, A., 2003. Linking teacher behaviors to cultural knowledge. The Educational Forum 67 (4), 372

Sleeter, C.E., & Grant, C. (1994). Making Choices for Multicultural Education: Five Approaches to Race, Class and Gender. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Unluer, S. *Being an Insider Researcher while conduction case study research*. Retrieved on May 18: www.nova.edu