

**INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES THAT FACE REFUGEE STUDENTS IN
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR - AN EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVE**

Garrett Flight

A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Education (Educational Leadership Studies)

Faculty of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

November 2021

St. John's

Newfoundland and Labrador

ABSTRACT

Using a series of semi-structured interviews to gather data, educators were asked to explore the struggles that refugee students face, explain how the current system is effective and ineffectual, and make recommendations for good teaching practices with this at-risk demographic. Extracted from twelve interviews from these educators, who all have experience teaching refugee students, were obstacles that are identified by three classifications: academic, social, and emotional. Hindrances and successes in the current refugee education model have been identified from the perspective of educators. Lastly, the study makes recommendations to improve the educational experience for all stakeholders and to create an environment where refugee students can overcome the massive challenges that they encounter. The participants teach and administrate from Grades 7-12 and have a vast range of experience. Results of the study were robust and many themes came from the data. These include recommendations of investing more resources (i.e. teacher allocation and training), building strong student-teacher relationships at a school wide level, participating in trauma informed practice, and implementing early intervention for students who arrive under the age of Grade 7.

GENERAL SUMMARY

The study explores twelve educators' experience in working with refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador. These interviews identify the barriers that refugees encounter in the Newfoundland and Labrador public school system. The study investigates how the current system has been effective and how it hinders the progress for refugee students' education.

The study presents several recommendations to improve refugee education within Newfoundland and Labrador. There is a need for increased teaching units and teacher training and more school-wide initiatives to develop connections with refugee students. A focus on trauma-informed practice is imperative to refugee students' success, and utilizing guidance counselors to alleviate the trauma students have endured. The final recommendation is the implementation of a refugee education program for grades 4-6.

The study identifies weaknesses in the current program in order to create an educational experience for refugee students that allows safety, acceptance, and opportunity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to show my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Jerome Delaney, for his encouragement, patience, and counsel through this entire process.

The research for this study would not have been possible without the incredible educators that took part in this study. I am indebted that you offered me your time, insight, and passion. Thank you.

Finally, I would like to reach out and show a special appreciation to my support system. My family, my partner, my friends, and colleagues. Your support was critical and for that I am incredibly grateful.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my students and their families. Their profound grit is inspiring, I am in awe daily. To my mother, thank you for always being the cheering section I needed. To my father, your patience and belief in me was paramount.

I truly stand on the shoulders of giants.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	1
GENERAL SUMMARY	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
DEDICATION	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
LIST OF APPENDICES	7
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
Background and Context	8
Statement of Problem	15
Purpose of Study	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	19
Emotional Stress and Trauma	19
Acculturation and Adapting to a New Society	24
What Can Educators and Stakeholders Provide	39
Chapter 3: Methodology	49
Research Design	49
Research Questions	50
Chapter 4: Results	53
Academic Challenges	53
English Second Language (ESL)/English Language Learner (ELL) Support	57
Social Challenges	58
Emotional Barriers	63
Positive Aspects of the Current Refugee Education Program (LEARN)	66
Shortcomings of the Current Refugee Education Program (LEARN)	67

Chapter 5: Recommendations, Discussion, and Conclusion	70
Resources	70
Connections	71
Trauma	73
Early Intervention	74
Discussion	76
Limitations	79
Conclusion	80
REFERENCES	83
APPENDIX A - INVITATION LETTER	88
APPENDIX B - BASE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	90
APPENDIX C - ICEHR ETHICS APPROVAL	94

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A - Invitation Letter.....	89
Appendix B - Research Questions.....	91
Appendix C - ICEHR Ethics Approval.....	95

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Context

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) describes refugees and people of displacement as individuals that are being forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations (UNCHR, 2018). The Government of Canada (2017) stated “refugees are people who have been forced to leave their country and who are afraid to return because of war, violence or persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.” (Government of Canada, 2017).

Canada has accepted thousands of refugees in the past 10 years. This has been due to both tradition and the global circumstances that cause citizens to flee their country. Internationally, Canada has been seen as a leader in refugee programs. Globally, it is regarded as incredibly welcoming for demographics that have been victims of humanitarian violations that have forced them to leave their home country (Fleras, 2015). Canada’s refugee program became the generous program we see today during the latter part of the 20th century. Due to this refugee program Canada has created a society that is multicultural and distinctly Canadian (Epp, 2017).

Canada’s refugee program has resulted in Canada having the largest refugee population per capita of their own population. The high rates of accepting refugees has resulted in a considerable amount of benefits to aid in the rebuilding of refugees’ lives. This model has bolstered Canada's reputation on the international stage because of their empathic efforts and their upholding of basic human rights. Comparing Canada’s efforts to other major world powers, Canada’s approach to refugees is transparent and benevolent (Fleras, 2015). It is anticipated that Canada will be expected by the international community to continue to take in asylum seekers. Due to its large landmass and relatively small population both citizens within Canada and

citizens of the global community will continue to pressure the Canadian Government to continue their generous history of taking in people who are fleeing their home country (Epp, 2017).

By the end of 2018, the global refugee population was recorded by the United Nations to be 25.9 million. Since 2012 the number of refugees within the world has doubled. A report in 2019 regarding the demographics and information on resettlement was completed by the UNHCR. The report stated that according to official government statistics provided to UNHCR, 92,400 refugees were resettled to 25 countries during 2018. Of all the countries to admit refugees according to the mandate of the UNHCR, Canada was the country that had taken in the most. The UNHCR has also recognized Canada as the fifth ranked country to accept unaccompanied children. These unaccompanied children are minors who have fled alone or have become separated from parents and are not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so. Canada is fifth with the countries of Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan ahead (UNHCR, 2018). What is clear is that refugee populations are on a significant rise and Canada is a country that has taken in a large portion of refugees. Also, what should be noted is that with Canada being a country that has taken in a large portion of children that were unaccompanied, only to be behind four countries that have a significantly lower GDP (UN, 2018). Canada took more youth than countries with the same level of development. With its large land mass, Canada's provinces all have taken on the obligation to welcome these refugees to the country. Within this study we will be focusing on the province of Newfoundland and Labrador which is located on the East Coast of Canada, namely the Atlantic Provinces region.

The last census that was completed in Canada was in 2016. Within one year the Atlantic provinces alone received 3435 refugees, with the majority of them being from the Syrian Arab

Republic (Canada, 2019). Also, what should be noted is that the majority of the refugees coming from Syria are under the age of 15 (Stats, 2016). This surge of Syrian refugees was spawned from the Syrian Civil War. In March 2011, the Syrian government responded to public demonstrations. These demonstrations were in support of a group of young boys who were arrested for writing graffiti in support of the Arab Spring, a series of anti-Government protests that had occurred across Northern Africa and the Middle East. Since these protests, more than half of all Syrians have fled their homes due to the violence and brutality of the civil war. It has been recorded that roughly 6.6 million Syrians have fled the country (UNHCR, 2018). Canada has taken in 44,000 Syrians in humanitarian efforts. (Canada, 2019). What is clear is that Canada has taken a leadership role on the global stage to aid in the displacement of some of the world's most vulnerable demographics with the Syrian Civil War being a major contributing factor to the recent influx of refugees into Canada.

As more people continue to take refuge in Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador remains to have the lowest percentage of visible minorities. As the population itself is predominantly white, Newfoundland has an incredibly homogeneous demographic. Newfoundland and Labrador has relatively low ethnic diversity, as only 1.36% of the province's population identified as visible minorities in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013). These numbers have increased to 2.3% and raised to 4.3% in the metro area of the capital city of St. John's (The Government of Canada, 2016). So with the rise of immigration it is important that Newfoundland and Labrador understand the challenges for proper integration for new people into the country. With the growth in immigration and refugee populations, proper multicultural education programs need to be considered.

In 2016, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador stated that proper immigration for newcomers in Canada is vitally important. Newfoundland and Labrador's demographic challenges and labour shortages could be alleviated with legitimate integration (Government of NL, 2016). The newcomers who have arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador are young migrants. A significant number of them have families with young children (Taskforce, 2017) and Government policy must respond to the educational needs of these displaced children. In order for these families to arrive and settle here in a permanent capacity it is important that proper educational supports are placed in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. With a variety of newcomers coming to Newfoundland and Labrador from a multitude of places in the world these students will require specialized programming that domestic students would not avail of or need (Task force, 2017).

Currently over 70% of immigrants live in the most populated area in the province, the metro area of St. John's on the Avalon Peninsula (WayFo, 2017). The supports that are currently in place for refugee students are English Second Language (ESL) courses are offered in the education system from kindergarten to grade 12 (Li & Grineva, 2016). Allocation of ESL teachers is based on language assessments by ESL teachers. The other major programming that refugee students have in Newfoundland and Labrador is Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers or LEARN. This program is developed in mind of educating students who have major gaps in their education or have no prior formal schooling. The program is divided into two main components: LEARN-1 and LEARN 2. LEARN-1 is made up of basic literacy in English and basic mathematics. The literacy portion of LEARN-1's goal is to educate the student to a transitional reading level as they are integrating into Canada. The nature of literacy is both academic and life skill oriented. In regards to mathematics, LEARN-1 aims to

bring the student to a grade 6 level in numeracy. Again, the focus of math is both academic and practicality. Once those skills have been achieved, the students will then move to LEARN -2. The subjects of science and social studies are added to the academic workload of the student. The science course aims to develop literacy, skills and strategies using scientific topics of earth science, biology, and physical science. Social studies courses focus on history, geography, and civics in a Canadian context in which students will also learn literacy and skills through this subject. (Department of Education, 2011).

There is a consensus that there is clearly a growing need for more reforms and support for the public school system in Newfoundland and Labrador. To address these needs the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador led by Premier Dwight Ball created a task force on November 8, 2016, to address the problematic areas in the education system and provide solutions. The mandate for the Premier's task force for “Improving Educational Outcomes” is divided into nine distinct facets. One of those facets is multicultural education (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2016). In July 2017 the Task Force released their final report to address the problematic aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador’s education curriculum and its execution (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2017).

The report that was released from the Government was critical of a variety of aspects of multicultural education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. One of the glaring issues for multicultural education in Newfoundland and Labrador is the demanding student-teacher ratios. In 2016 there were roughly 495 ESL students with only 12 ESL teachers employed by the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD). This ratio roughly accounts for 40 students for each ESL teacher. The majority of ESL teachers are assigned to multiple schools where most ESL students will see a teacher for roughly two hours in a seven day cycle. When

the report was released the NLESD which is in charge of hiring, professional development, and program delivery there was no designated specialist for multicultural education which is the umbrella of both ESL and LEARN programs. The NLESD does work with the Association of New Canadians (ANC) to aid in the integration of landed immigrants. The ANC is a federally funded organization that offers after school tutoring programs, works closely with teachers and school administrators and offers translation services for school meetings.

The Premier's task force made a number of recommendations. The initial recommendation for multicultural education is to create a document that actually plans to satisfy the needs of students taking part in multicultural education and emphasize multiculturalism into the curriculums of Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system. Another recommendation was to create a position for an individual who will guide the direction of multicultural education. This will allow educators who are working with students that are enrolled in ESL and LEARN programs to have clear direction and support. The report also suggested the NLESD make changes in regards to student-teacher ratios.

Another recommendation is establishing ESL and LEARN programs outside the census metropolitan area of the capital city of St. John's. At the time of the report St. John's had the only schools equipped in any capacity to execute the ESL and LEARN curriculum. Also, another recommendation is creating a proper standard for both ESL and LEARN teachers. Another recommendation is to develop education programs to prepare young newcomers for post secondary education that they may want to pursue. The final recommendation is for all Government and community stakeholders to remove the barriers within society that prevent newcomers from accessing educational opportunities (Taskforce, 2017).

Both Canada and Newfoundland are accepting more migrants who have been forced from their homes in recent years. With more refugees entering the country, refugee children have the right to an education in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1990). Newfoundland and Labrador's school system must be better prepared for the influx of students who come from different countries and have dealt with some tremendous conditions and trauma. Newfoundland and Labrador is low in cultural diversity as discussed. So, in Newfoundland and Labrador this could be a challenging endeavour. Refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador have been going through the prepared ESL and LEARN classes. According to the reports by the Government, there have clearly been some shortcomings. This study will look at the challenges for these students by examining their academic, social, and emotional obstacles that they face in their day-to-day experiences. The study will conclude by investigating both the positives and negatives of the current system.

The data itself will be through the lens of educators who teach at the intermediate/junior high level. Overall, it is important for Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a successful program for multicultural education. With the Government looking to immigration to help aid in the issues of labour, entrepreneurial development and a low tax base, it is in their best interest to prepare a curriculum where young refugee youth can succeed. The Government has both a legal and moral obligation to provide these children with the education that is regarded as a right owed to them.

Statement of Problem

There has been a drastic increase in the refugee population in Western Countries, which includes Canada and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. With this increase in refugees, it is imperative that Newfoundland and Labrador's education system keeps up with the needs of the evolving demographics in the province. This study plans to uncover both the setbacks and success of refugee students in the province since the implementation of refugee education in Newfoundland and Labrador. In particular it will identify problems and obstacles for refugee students by the educators who see them in the classroom.

The path to proper integration and achieving a proper education, comes with a variety of challenges. Over the past ten years, the global population of refugee people grew from 43.3 million in 2009 to 70.8 million in 2018 (UNCHR, 2018). This trend of demographic displacement displays the importance that new immigrants who are fleeing these areas need to be properly educated and welcomed in order for proper integration within their new country of residence. With these experiences refugee youths who are entering a country and in-turn a public school system may be experiencing challenges citizens of the host country and non-refugee immigrants are not.

These challenges will be discussed in detail. Challenges that have been identified are vast in scope and their nature. Some of these challenges that have been identified are emotional trauma in part with post traumatic stress disorder, language barriers, unprepared educational institutions, extended gaps of education, and low expectations for these vulnerable students. Overall, the problem that is being investigated is from the perspective of the educators in Newfoundland and Labrador. What is their viewpoint of the struggles that refugee students have from experiencing success. This study will evaluate if challenges that have already been

identified by researchers are present in Newfoundland and Labrador and if there are any issues that seem to be genuine to the province.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and identify possible hindrances for refugee youth here in the intermediate/junior high public school system of Newfoundland and Labrador. This study will investigate the effectiveness of the current education model for refugee students. This study will give a platform for education professionals who have worked with youth who have recently landed in Canada from countries in which they were forced to flee. The study itself will look at the obstacles these students face academically, socially, and emotionally. Little research has been conducted in challenges that have occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador regarding refugee youth specific to the province. Some research that has looked at the highschool level through students' perspectives. This study will focus on the educators perspectives in the intermediate/ junior high level. This study will contribute to the body of literature in order to gain more insight on the struggles that occur.

Students who have claimed refugee status in Canada and live in Newfoundland and Labrador, usually participate in what is known as the LEARN (Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers) program. This program came into fruition in 2011. The LEARN program was developed to meet the academic needs of refugee students. These students usually have significant gaps in their education as a whole. These gaps are particularly prevalent in both literacy and numeracy achievement. These gaps are generally due to a lack of formal schooling and these lapses in education usually stem from societal breakdown of their former countries due to war or some form of danger that has caused them and their families to flee. This

study will also look at how the LEARN program has been implemented and specific shortcomings as discussed by educators. Also, classroom teachers in the school who do not teach LEARN classes will also be interviewed as they can discuss their experiences of refugee students in their classroom for non-LEARN courses.

The study itself is qualitative in nature. It will be made up of semi structured interviews from both teachers and administrators that have experience working with refugee students. Using the information gathered in these interviews, analysis will reveal obstacles that professional educators have identified. With the data that are collected, the analysis will uncover the struggles that educators see for these students. The overall intent of this study is to identify, describe, interpret, analyze, and conclude problematic challenges that these students experience in the public school system of Newfoundland and Labrador. The study will also identify what educators perceive as effective approaches to integration for these students who have been forced to relocate from their home and the deficiencies of their current educational model. The study will conclude with limitations, suggestions to implement the public school system of Newfoundland and Labrador, and identifying the major themes that have come from the interviews.

The study will interview 12 education professionals in the metro area of St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador. This place has been chosen because St. John's has the highest concentration of refugee students in the province. These education professionals are from a variety of schools around the metro area. The educators that will be interviewed will be from the junior high/intermediate academic level.

Overall, this study is aiming to provide education professionals in Newfoundland and Labrador with insight on some of the challenges experienced by refugee youth in the province's public school system. These challenges could be academic, social, or emotional in nature. The

LEARN program is relatively new in the education system of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Many of these students are integrated in other classes. Gaining a perspective that has not been investigated will help to further develop the educational programming to accommodate the needs of refugee youth as they come to Newfoundland and Labrador and begin to integrate into this new society

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature surrounding refugee students and the challenges they face in their day-to-day activities have identified common themes. Themes within the literature are emotional distress and subsequent trauma due to the nature of being a refugee with obstacles and challenges revolving around acculturation and integrating into a new society. Researchers have attempted to identify ways educators can help refugee students overcome barriers to success.

Emotional Stress and Trauma

One common struggle that refugee youth experience is the emotional stress of trauma. Trauma is common among refugee youth and can be caused by many different experiences. These experiences can range from, but not limited to, violence, relocation, separation, and loss. Dyregrov in 2004 conducted a study that investigated the connection between trauma and education. Dyregrov stated that trauma has been shown to have a negative effect on educational outcomes and academic achievement (Dyregrov, 2004). Saltzman, Pynoos, Steinberg, Eisenberg and Layne (2001), in a study of children who had been exposed to trauma (community violence), found that there was a suggested link between trauma and its severity and school performance (Saltzman et, 2001). Trauma in the literature has shown to be detrimental to the performance in the classroom and success in school at a holistic level. It is important for educators to realize trauma creates challenges before the delivering of curriculum ever comes into the equation. Refugee youth in particular have a significant amount of trauma which needs to be addressed.

McBrien in 2005 noted that many refugee students who enter the classroom have experienced extreme trauma. Separation from family, rape, abduction and victims of human

trafficking. There is a possibility of refugee youth being subjected to cruel treatment as child soldiers or child brides (McBrien, 2005). Sinclair in 2001 had also produced an article in which she states that trauma can impede the ability of refugee children to learn. This is problematic as she also contends that education provides a vision of positivity in the future for these displaced youth. But many of them will struggle due to the emotional toll of being displaced in such a manner. Education gives refugee youth an opportunity to stave off depression and provides them an outlet for their aggression. Education can also provide a sense of normality through a routine and support psychological healing as it cultivates a safe space for displaced youth (Sinclair, 2001). Refugee youth have a significant amount of trauma in their lives. These range in severity but the nature of being displaced can be chaotic for young people. This trauma can create issues in performing academically which is unfortunate as education is seen as a proper outlet that aids in rehabilitating and healing emotional wounds.

Trauma and its severity has been linked to school performance. The more severe the trauma the higher the degree of struggle for the student. Dyregrov in 2004 found that intrusive thoughts regarding traumatic experiences make it hard to concentrate on school subjects. Many refugee youth show symptoms and have been diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This condition can lead to the feeling that there is a continuous threat, in which the students do not feel safe in their new surroundings. Trauma and loss is often followed by depression. Depression has been shown to slow down cognitive functions and decrease motivation. The disturbing intrusive memories or thoughts can interfere with concentration and memory. Stress makes it difficult to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. In addition, refugee students at times can have problems with self regulation which can create poor socialization experiences. Dyregrov concluded that children and adolescents that experience loss

or trauma are likely to experience difficulties in learning (Dyregrov, 2004). A large body of research indicates that the number of these traumatic events to which child refugees are exposed is directly related to their symptoms of PTSD, aggression, and internalising problems. The issues with PTSD also affect the home support of many refugee youth. Many parents who are living with PTSD have difficulties connecting with their children, in particular, at a time when support is needed living in a new country and new culture (Hadfield, Ostrowski, & Ungar, 2017).

Bang and Collett (2018) conducted a study titled “Educational gaps and their impact on Iraqi refugee students' secondary schooling in the Greater Detroit, Michigan Area”. Bang and Collett stated that PTSD creates both conditions where students cannot control their behaviour and or maintain any sort of concentration. Stress of a family’s welfare in their home country continues to be a heavy burden on their emotional well-being. These conditions compromise the student’s abilities to express themselves as they create a negative impact on their self-confidence (Bang & Collett, 2018). Kanu in 2008 completed a study revolving around educational needs and obstacles for African refugee students in the province of Manitoba. The researcher identified that separation from family not only created severe loneliness for many of the students but it removed the role models who had recently been in their life. With the compromising stability of structure at home, schools have the potential to give the structure that refugee students require to thrive academically. Kanu also noted that this instability and lack of structure was detrimental to the progress of refugee students. The researcher also displayed that the social behaviours and welfare of refugees includes overcoming trauma and adapting to an environment where security and rule of law is upheld. This situation can be difficult for refugee families to adapt. Also, there is a struggle to come to grips with their new life and adjusting to the new culture and the expectations of said culture. At the same time, they want to be able to retain the values they were

raised with in their native country. Refugee youth rarely get proper counseling or therapy to deal with all these emotional and social turmoil that they have experienced and what they currently live with (Kanu, 2008). Arnetz found gender can aid in identifying PTSD among refugees. They concluded that female refugees will suffer more and have a higher degree of symptoms from PTSD (Arnetz & Arnetz, 2013). Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar (2017) focused on the study of mental health and well-being of Syrian refugee children and adolescents since they have arrived in Canada. The researchers stated that refugee youth who have come to Canada have experienced extreme trauma of different magnitudes. The trauma that was experienced by refugee youth in these warzones range from the nature of war, bombings, torture, and daily violence. Refugee students and their families experience an immense amount of culture shock as a result of these conditions. As the new society, Canada, is so different from the turbulent home country. The trauma is evident in the researchers' study, as the experience of their participants range from being uprooted from their friends and communities to travelling in dangerous circumstances to seek asylum, and possibly having lived in a settlement or refugee camp for years before resettlement in Canada. (Hadfield, Ostrowski, & Ungar. 2017)

In a study conducted by Hurt, Malmud, Brodsky, and Giannetta, they noted that witnessing of violence in their environment can have detrimental effects on a child's academic performance. They concluded that witnessing violence and conflict has a hindering effect on their academic performance. Overall they concluded that higher exposure to violence correlates with poorer performance in school, manifestation of anxiety and depression, and poor self respect. (Hurt, Malmud, Brodsky, and Giannetta, 2001).

Tyrer and Fazel (2014) reviewed the literature on community-based interventions for refugee and asylum seeking children, stating that prevalence of psychological disorders varies

amongst refugees across studies, although high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) appears to be a common finding. (Tyrer and Fazel, 2014). Hos in 2016 stated that students are in need of social and emotional support in order to properly succeed. As refugee students begin to adapt to their new environment it is important to know that isolation becomes a dominant feeling. As stated previously, Hos also uncovered that many refugee youth have emotional scars and trauma due to violence, conflict, and the journey to their resettled country. Hos's ethnographic study focused on a refugee youth in an American classroom. Hos noted that some major obstacles revolved around the fact that the student felt like a "newcomer" and this emotional stress affected their adaptation to their new school. The participant in Hos's study was often unable to focus on their studies, The participant easily became upset during classes and could not pay attention and engage in the lesson. When he was upset, he would want to leave and go home. The student's frustration often stemmed from not being able to cope with failure. Educators in the study spoke of their frustration that refugee students who need emotional support and proper rehabilitation, were not getting what they deserve (Hos, 2016).

The literature has shown that trauma has a direct connection with the performance of a student in the classroom. The literature surrounding obstacles has shown that PTSD and emotional trauma has been uncovered as a major theme for refugees as they integrate in their new place of residence. Overall, the literature has shown that the emotional toll of escaping their initial home has created a substantial obstacle in the education of refugee youth. It creates issues in the classroom like poor self-regulation, low motivation, upsetting mental images, and low self esteem. Home support can be compromised due to PTSD and these refugee youth cannot properly express themselves, which leads to more frustration. Also with PTSD, research has shown that gender matters, as women are more likely to show symptoms of the condition. The

body of literature revolving around challenges for refugee youth has identified trauma and consequently PTSD as a major obstacle that hinders refugee youth in the classroom.

Acculturation and Adapting to a New Society

The majority of refugees that migrate to Western Countries come with a substantial amount of cultural differences than their home country. The Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar (2017) study on Syrian children and adolescents integration in Canada examines major challenges that refugee youth must encounter. This cultural adaptation and integration is known as acculturation. Many refugee children who come to Canada are moving to a country with a different cultural framework. This includes language, food, traditions, religion, laws, and judicial system. Given these differences, these have the potential of being incredibly disorienting and a large amount of stress may come due to their new cultural environment. As refugees continue to integrate and adapt to their new culture it becomes significantly stressful. The researchers found this dynamic was in Syrian refugee children. McBrien (2005) stated that cultural misunderstandings can cause issues for proper integration into their new culture. These misunderstandings can cause prejudice, bias, and overall intolerance. Students have to adapt to a new culture, learn a new language, and also have to respond to possibly negative attitudes from other areas of society. McBrien stated that newcomers who know the language of their new environment are more successfully integrating than people who do not (McBrien, 2005). In 2005 McBrien compiled the literature revolving barriers for refugee students. The cultural misunderstandings and the question of language are both clear barriers that have been identified within McBrien's review.

Language can be a huge obstacle for refugee students in the public school system. Szente, Hoot, and Taylor (2006) have looked at common language as a significant challenge for

refugee students in the classroom. Students who have poor proficiency in the official language of the country they now reside have been shown to have difficulty addressing their needs. In particular, when some of these refugee students are placed in classrooms with local students, they get lost. Due to the language barriers teachers have become overwhelmed due to the difficulty in properly executing instruction (Szente, Hoot, & Taylor, 2006). Refugee students who enter public school systems in which they do not know the dominant language can be problematic. For many refugees coming to North America, the dominant language is likely to be English. The reality is when students do not know the dominant language, integration can become incredibly unwelcoming for newcomers. If the environment and social interactions are poor, it makes learning the new English language that much more difficult. Within the schools, socially, many newcomers experience hostile behaviour from peers. This makes learning the new language more difficult and adds pressure to properly integrate. Also, another challenge for refugees and refugee students is that learning a new language can create the feelings of shame of losing their home language (Olsen, 2000).

Language has been shown to be a major factor in acculturation. The more of the language that the newcomer knows means a higher likelihood of a positive settling experience. Refugees with a higher degree of proficiency of the language of the country they entered had experienced lower levels of stress in the acculturation process. In Hauck, Lo, Maxwell and Reynolds (2014) found that for Burmese, Bhutanese, and Iraqi students who were unable to attend English classes in the United States after landing in America caused significant stress. As they felt language comprehension was critical in becoming a part of society in the United States of America. The research also stated that refugee students with a higher proficiency in English have less stress

than their unfluent counterparts. Not being able to attend English classes created a substantial amount of stress for refugee students (Hauck, et al., 2014).

Olsen (2000) also concluded that many immigrant students and newcomers are eager to learn English. They concluded that when refugee students and newly immigrated students to English speaking countries, in particular North America, need to develop strong English language skills. Newcomers hope to integrate as quickly as possible. But Olsen has noted that most ESL programs fall short of the needs for these students. Once refugee students grasp basic conversational skills the follow up into the next step of participating in proper academics is still difficult to achieve. Without a strong foundation in the English language, newly immigrated students and explicitly_refugee students will have incredible difficulty with any subjects that have any sort of literacy. This is not only exclusive to English and literature, but additionally mathematics, science, and social studies. With refugee students struggling in these areas, a lack of language skills will perpetuate the educational gaps that already exist. Without fluency in the English language, the gaps that exist will continue to grow as comprehension of all other subjects will not be obtained (Olsen, 2000).

Shakya (2010) looked at refugee youth within Canada's largest city, Toronto. One challenge that they recognized was language. The linguistic barrier also does not only affect the youth but parents/guardians. Within the study it was revealed like many other studies that acquiring a new language is a key challenge in pursuing academic goals. Participants stated that struggling with acquiring English made it difficult to comprehend what is being presented in class, the student's English proficiency was keeping them from asking questions or clarification from educators. Also, they are less able to communicate with other classmates and engage in peer-on-peer support. This in turn resulted in refugee youth falling behind and creating more

academic challenges. In the study the focus groups which were interviewed mentioned that presently there are difficulties in getting proper details and guidance regarding the Canadian education system for example the high school credit system. Also, many participants in the focus group indicated that even the education that the refugee students do have, their previous educational level/capacity was not valid in Canada (Shakya, 2010). Shakya's study displayed that refugee youth have responsibilities at home that many western students do not have; this could include childcare or part time work to support the family. Also, the language barrier is detrimental to the academic experience. It limits them in many aspects in properly integrating into their new environment.

Overall the barriers are present and need to be identified before solutions can be proposed. The need for proper English language development is imperative for success in integrating their new educational endeavours. The need for language comprehension is not only for integration and education, but for the actual mental health of refugee students. Poor English language skill can become problematic at an academic and programming level. In some cases refugees can be placed in certain grade levels that are not accurate due to the assumption that they are weak and low achieving due to low level of language proficiency. Other challenges, in regards to language, are prevalent due to the nature of the English Second Language (ESL) classrooms.

Rossiter & Rossiter (2008) noted that many participants had felt that the student to teacher ratios in their ESL classrooms were not suitable for proper learning. Another issue brought up in the classes was lack of resources needed to do a proper job and poor programming in general. The researchers noted that many staff within the school had low expectations of newcomers. School staff had limited knowledge of the educational, cultural, and family

backgrounds that might help them to relate and aid in the development of these students. Language should be considered a vital component to the success of refugee youth. The literature has displayed a variety of approaches in order to create more successful cases of acculturation. Rossiter and Rossiter also stated that ESL teachers should be trained specialists and not just standard classroom teachers. Institutions should be aware that by refugee students learning English they are able to thrive in other aspects of school. Schools should value the needs of English language learners as this is vitally important to their growth and acculturation. The general school staff should receive training in multicultural education and be informed on the process of learning a new language for these refugee youths. Understanding their backgrounds and the nature of their diversity is critical for any educator working with refugee youth.

Also, refugee youth need chances to develop positive relationships with students, staff, and administration. It is important to identify at-risk youth, using culturally common methods and assessment tools. If educational institutes can implement such accommodations, it is likely for educators to find more success within the delivering of content and assessment as a whole. Also, within schools, lack of language can lead to discrimination and bullying. Cases of students engaging in harassment against refugee students need to be resolved quickly and be restorative in nature. (Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009).

It should be also noted that with the lack of communication isolation becomes incredibly prevalent among refugee youth. Many newcomers hope to learn English so they can integrate faster and become more comfortable. With lack of resources and proper educational support, most ESL programs fall short of providing an adequate academic program. Once basic conversational skills are achieved, a focus on the next step to participate in academic endeavours with fluency are rarely attained. The result is if students do not know english, they will have an

incredible amount of difficulty with any subject that includes literacy including Math, Science, and Social Studies. Lack of fluency means their educational gaps that are already prevalent will continue to grow wider and wider.

Another clear challenge that refugee students face is the fact that they have little school experience or even contact with a classroom. Szente, Hoot, and Taylor (2006) revealed that a major issue facing refugee students is that they have little experience in an educational setting. In some cases, there are students who have never engaged in formal education in any capacity their entire lifetime. Within their study, the researchers encountered this situation. Many refugee students will have little experience in an actual school setting. This school experience is usually incredibly different from the expectations and experiences of their new home (Szente, Hoot, & Taylor, 2006). A significant number of refugees have limited experience in an educational setting. It is important to remember this as they are embarking on a new life experience. The expectations and protocol are all new and take time for refugee students to adapt.

Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar (2017) note that bullying can be quite prevalent for refugee youth. Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar's study identified that refugee youth are commonly bullied by their peers due to their ethnicity and nature of their arrival in their new country. The researchers did note that it would be important for schools to ensure there are some anti-bullying interventions in schools. These need to be intensive, long lasting, and involve guardian interviews for all parties. This coupled with a firm disciplinary approach have been shown to decrease victimization by 20%. Positive experiences in an educational environment and a school setting serve as a tool for proper integration and rehabilitation (Hadfield, Ostrowski, & Ungar, 2017). Brewer (2016) outlined methods to include refugee students within Canada. What they noticed was that negative experiences and challenges led to worse mental health

outcomes instead of acting as a protective environment (Brewer, 2016). Noting that environments that do not cultivate a safe and caring culture can be detrimental to the mental health of refugee students.

Refugee students have a delicate balancing act as they attempt to acculturate in their new country. Many young refugee youth feel a sense of pressure to stay “true” to their own roots and country. They feel such tension and pressure from parents and older relatives, in particular, to ensure they maintain their heritage and culture. At the same time, they are attempting to properly integrate into their new culture in which they attempt to build a new life after being forced out of their old one. Other challenges revolve around the lack of insight students of host countries have on the plight and struggle of being a refugee. Peers from the host country are usually not empathetic to the struggles refugee students have faced (Brewer & McCabe, 2014). Brewer and McCabe add to the literature the acculturation process is complex with many facets. One that should be noted is the expectations for refugee youth to hold onto their heritage as they integrate in their new home is difficult. This is a stressful concept that can act as an emotional and social barrier for refugee students.

Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar (2017) also noted that parents and refugee families face a similar dilemma in accepting their new culture and environment. What many families struggle with is the expectation of living a traditional life in comparison to their new home’s culture. What makes it even more difficult is that cultural norms can be vastly different and some previous norms may no longer be accepted. This study was conducted with new Syrian refugees in Canada. A finding showed that many parents/guardians struggled with balancing their approach to parenting. For example, their resettlement country’s Government may become involved due to the approach of child rearing. These types of practices include leaving small

children with siblings, physical discipline practices, and not seeking professional help for medical or mental health problems (Hadfield, Ostrowski, & Ungar, 2017).

Similarly, this information is similar to Lerner's findings as they state it is common for refugee families to rear their children differently than families in America and the Western world. (Lerner, 2012). It is important for all education professionals to know that the family dynamic and family roles will be different depending on the country of origin for each refugee family. Even then they will change depending on the life experiences of each family.

These types of approaches are generally problematic in their new homes in Canada. The researchers discussed that developing peer relationships was critical for adolescents who are refugees. They noted that Almqvist and Broberg stated that adapting to their new society, dealing with their new environment, and promoting self-worth can be an accurate forecast by the peer groups that they associate with (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999). So it becomes problematic as many refugee have difficulties forming meaningful relationships with peers due to mental health issues, social imparment, language, cultural differences, and discrimination (Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar, 2017).

Overall, it is important to note that both refugee students and their guardians struggle with adapting to their new culture as they still want to have the cultural identity of their native country. A major barrier has been identified in the acculturation for refugee students but also the family unit as a whole. It is important, obviously, that newcomer families do not violate the progressive laws and standards of Western countries such as Canada. But it is critical that they also can celebrate their roots and their distinct culture. It is a difficult balancing act for all stakeholders involved.

Canada's immigration pattern displays that one in five children in Canada is a refugee or a new immigrant. Since the 1960s areas such as the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia have been the main source of immigration into Canada. Yet, public school education curriculums still represent that Canada is one steady culture or pool, yet there are increased dropout rates among English second language learners (Richardson, 2002). Asadi has stated that acculturation is a definite demand on refugee youths coming to any country and in his article's case, Canada. A major obstacle is that there are many competing commitments in the acculturation process. Refugees have to balance the expectations of settling in a new country and honouring their native heritage. This is similar in the findings that Hadfield, Ostrowski, and Ungar had found in 2017. Asadi discusses the importance of creating a new identity based on their established principles and values. This new identity can often lead to positive development for youth. But in order for that to happen it is important that educational institutions also help in the acculturation process. Educational institutions are able to aid in the acculturation process by proper representation through race, culture, language, religion, class, and gender in curriculum. By doing this schools will have a higher likelihood of engaging students who are not from Canada, instead of devaluing their cultural identities. This approach allows for students to feel that their histories and heritage are respected and they can be related to and allows for proper integration and belonging (Asadi, 2014). When newcomers arrive in Canada and their children attend public school, one major obstacle is them acclimatizing to the new school system as much of the curriculum is eurocentric in nature.

Roax and Roy (2012) had conducted a case study that investigated a Somali Bantu male high school student who experienced struggles in all aspects of school. One of the results of the study was that the educators did not take into account the participants' race, experience, or

educational history. This complete lapse of empathy by the educators of the school caused much stress for the refugee youth regardless of the participants success or failure. Roax and Roy also identified an additional challenge for refugee youth. Within the case study the participant had little academic home support as his father could not aid in helping with his assigned work due to content and little english proficiency (Roax & Roy, 2012).

This theme was similar to a finding by Kanu in 2008. One of the major challenges that was identified was little academic support provided at home and that the family member who created boundaries for the youth did not migrate to the new country (Kanu, 2008). Rossister and Rossister had stated that educators must be aware that home support for many refugee youths are unable to assist their children with homework because of their own limited English language proficiency. Refugee parents may be unable to supervise homework or attend parent–teacher meetings because of work, rather than disinterest in their children's progress and their academic well-being. A lack of understanding of the education system also can be an obstacle for refugee youth as they need home support. They are unable to properly plan for future endeavours in post secondary education that will allow them to enter a career in which trained skills are required. The research has shown that many refugee youth in school may be in the workforce (Rossiter & Rossister, 2009).

Kanu also identified issues in regards to educators and their administration exhibiting behaviour to refugee youth that was perceived as discriminatory behaviour. Kanu's participants voiced that these feelings of dircrimination creates challenges that would manifest as sources of stress. These feelings have created the conditions for refugee youth to perceive themselves as having a low sense of self. Kanu identified a litany of challenges for refugees. Kanu noted that there is a suspicion or distrust for people who are in a position of power. So what this creates is

an environment in which refugee students end up leaning on students who are within their own cultural sphere. They look at teachers in the classroom and administrators of schools as authorities or figures who cannot be trusted. These students end up relying on students who are in the same academic, emotional, and social situations as themselves. They also will not self-advocate and many of them were placed in grades based on age and ability in English and not based on their academic ability. Furthermore, much of the instruction by educators is not altered nor is the assessment (Kanu, 2008). With the abundance of issues that refugee students face when they enter a classroom, it is imperative that educators make an effort in their teaching to create a transition as untroubled as possible. If educators are unable to adjust their teaching, policy needs to be altered in how to properly integrate refugee students into the school system and fill in the educational gaps that they have.

Teachers and administration have a critical part to play in diminishing the challenges refugee youth face as they acculturate into society. It is important that education professionals are properly prepared and realize their role and impact on refugee youth. Henderson and Ambroso (2018) conducted a study on the implementation of English immersion of refugees in Arizona. Henderson and Ambroso revealed that if refugee student teacher relationships are strained or non-existent it creates an immense challenge for refugee students. The byproduct of such behaviour cultivates an environment of isolation and segregation. Their findings did uncover that classroom teachers felt completely unprepared teaching refugee students with such complexities that are needed to assist students to acculturate. They also state that educators, regardless of level of education, felt that they could not be prepared in filling the significant gaps in the education of refugee youth and the multicultural classroom as a whole. Teachers advocated for more training in multicultural education (Henderson & Ambroso, 2018). Within

the literature it shows that proper training is imperative and that educators get proper training in order to properly accommodate the needs of many of these students. With classroom teachers feeling completely unprepared to deliver curriculum these conditions are problematic for all stakeholders.

Low socioeconomic status or class is common for refugees and immigrants who are fleeing from violence and conflict. Young refugees work part time in order to aid in the costs of living for their family as they become settled in their new country. Due to this, refugee youth may be fatigued, lose focus, not have food for lunch, or have hygiene issues. Student refugees who are in the workforce and attend school were perceived to make slower academic progress. Due to slow academic processes they are to be at higher risk of dropping out than their permanent resident counterparts. Overall, the economic status of these refugee youth has been shown to be a major challenge and the literature has stated that educational professionals need to understand this struggle (Rossister & Rossister, 2009). Shakya (2010) looked at the aspirations of refugee students to attend post secondary institutions. The study began to recognize a series of barriers and challenges for refugee students who recently come to Canada. The study revolved around refugee students in the metro area of Toronto, Ontario. One recognized barrier that Shakya noted was that as refugee families arrive in Canada, the youth of the family takes on more responsibility. Young refugee students become key contributors of the family as the head of the house has low education, minimal language skills, or problematic health. Students need to contribute and they take on a variety of roles such as: translators/interpreters, service navigators, and overall caretakers. This added pressure takes away from time to focus on academics and school. Additional challenges for refugee youth is when parents/guardians are unable to acquire employment. This adds more pressure on refugee students. In the focus groups that were

interviewed in this study, refugee students mentioned how low fluency in English among their parents/guardians and when parents are employed they often experience fatigue due to lengthy work hours and both combined to hinder the mentoring they needed in this critical point of their education. In particular, older refugees who are parents or guardians are experiencing a range of emotions and realities of being a refugee. For refugees, coming to a new country, such as Canada, can be an intensely conflicting process. The process can generate feelings of safety, security, freedom, hope, and empowerment while coinciding with their sense of loss, separation, tragedy, displacement, and marginalization. It takes these negative aspects of their life and pushes it to the forefront (Shakya, 2010).

Zhou & Bankston III's (2000) study on Vietnamese refugee students also highlighted the repercussions of being in the low socioeconomic sub-section of society. The study noted that refugee families come to Western Countries with little wealth and struggle economically. Due to this low socioeconomic status many refugee families take advantage of low-income housing. This area of underprivileged populations are marginalized both socially and economically. Educationally, many schools base their enrollment on the geographic area students live. With this in mind, refugee students are usually exposed to peers who have little value in education. They exhibit traits of low motivation, oppositional defiance, and disruptive behaviour. All these traits are connected with low academic achievement (Zhou & Bankston III, 2000). The literature has displayed that refugee youth have an incredible amount of obstacles to their educational endeavours. The economic status is connected to their academic achievement. As they are placed in areas of marginalized and underprivileged sub-sections of society they become defined by the people in that area. Students from this group usually are problematic in regards to behaviour and academically have deficiencies. These conditions, added with the initial obstacles

of being a refugee and a new landed immigrant, make a difficult situation for these students that much more challenging.

Other obstacles for refugee youth are regarding their survival skills. Some refugee youth develop these survival skills in refugee camps. These survival skills usually translate to physical violence as a means of conflict resolution. This is not understood nor tolerated in educational environments. So when physical violence occurs many school policies respond to physical violence in schools with zero tolerance policies that may result in numerous suspensions and expulsions which could lead to refugee youth being uprooted once again to be moved to a new school. Participants stated that these processes and protocols are not well translated into refugees integration (Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Students coming from refugee camps need to be shown compassion as there is a clear integration process that occurs. Obstacles with policies and expectations no doubt can create obstacles for refugee youth.

Li and Grineva (2016) conducted a study in Newfoundland and Labrador on the social and academic adjustments made by refugee youth. They uncovered a variety of struggles refugee students have in the province as they make Canada their new home. Li and Grineva's study is relevant to this dissertation as it also focuses on struggles of refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. The article itself focused on the academic and social adjustments of high school students. The study used interviews for predominantly high school refugee students and some educators who worked with these youths. Their conclusions found that refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador have similar challenges as previous studies looking at challenges that refugee youth face from the perspective of education. A challenge in acculturation is trying to balance the students native culture with their new culture that they are integrating. This was no different for the experience of refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Li and Grineva

also stated that refugee and immigrant groups may want to maintain a strong connection to their culture and traditions. This attitude could make refugee youth hesitant to properly integrate into Canadian or Newfoundland and Labrador's society.

Also in the acculturation process, refugee students have felt discriminated against. Due to this perception they rarely will forge peer groups with youth of Newfoundland and Labrador. They then will focus on creating peer groups with youth who are similar to them culturally and in regards to life experiences besides other obstacles in developing new peer groups. In one case in the study the student was accepted to their new environment and academically motivated but felt humiliated from a particular experience regarding hygiene. As the hygiene expectations are much different in their previous home. Due to this experience they now make no effort to develop new peer groups or become involved in school to any degree. This embarrassment turns to resentment which almost led to the student dropping out. They felt the approach by the teacher was an act of bullying and became bitter, despite the teacher attempting to help the student. Even though unknown to staff, the student only had a single change of clothes in which they had to manually wash each night themselves. Overall, it is shown to be a struggle by refugee students to properly acculturate. It was noted in their study that refugee students found it problematic to find a place in which they could live with conventions and concepts (cultural characteristics and views on sexual orientations) not conforming to their home traditions and religions without losing their sense of self and pride for their home country. (Li & Grineva, 2016; Li, 2015). Overall, much of Li and Grineva's issues with acculturation has been seen before, but nonetheless present in Newfoundland and Labrador. The issues of discrimination and balancing their native culture can contribute to being difficult tasks for refugee youth to integrate into their new societies.

What Can Educators and Stakeholders Provide

Rossiter and Rossiter (2009), stated that most Canadian teachers generally have minimal or no training in the field of multicultural education. They are unaware of how to interact in a manner that is culturally relevant or how to adapt their curriculum to the needs of refugee students who encounter a series of challenges (Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Most educators in Canada are confronted with the severe challenges and complexity when working with refugee students. It is imperative that teachers make efforts to attain these skills. Further, there are more issues and unfortunate practices that hinder the education of refugee students. In Roax and Roy's case study about the experiences of a Somali Bantu male high school student, issues were noted by how educators engaged with the student. Roax and Roy identified the issues with both race and class. They concluded that the participant's educators did not see him as a refugee as they attempted to treat him like everyone else. Race, experiences, and past education were never taken into account for both successes and failures. This complete lapse by the educator of the participant creates an educational struggle for the participant (Roax & Roy, 2012).

Croce (2018) demonstrated in her study that refugee students each possessed distinctive sets of literacy and life experiences. The literature emphasizes that the experiences of these refugee youth must be taken into account. Social standings and life experiences must be factored into the delivery of any curriculum. Refugee youth have unique life experiences that create a different perspective when learning and there are certain concessions that each educator must make. It is critical that educators make an effort to understand and empathize with the struggles of refugee youth. Croce suggested the use of dialogue journals. This could be utilized in order to communicate more effectively not only with refugee students but also with their parents/guardians (Croce, 2018). Within Roax and Roy's study the participant felt that one of

the major struggles was the fact that teachers and administration showed little empathy to their struggles along with little help at home due to their father knowing little English (Roax & Roy, 2014). Overall, Roax and Roy's study suggests that teachers need to empathize with these students who have come from countries of conflict. In order for them to succeed, understanding and compassionate support is vital for academic and social success.

Li and Grineva's (2016) study on refugee youth's struggles in Newfoundland and Labrador found that teachers' knowledge of and efforts to understand their student's cultures, past experiences, and present situations can make a significant difference. Teachers need to prepare or have an understanding of their students' culture and have a welcoming approach to these students. Furthermore, in their study, they highlighted one student's issues with personal hygiene. Personal hygiene has been shown to be a social adjustment in Canada for refugees in the province of Newfoundland according to Li and Grineva. Within their study some students had issues with personal hygiene and this created an obstacle for proper integration and the formation of friendships with their peers. The nature of hygiene issues in an already turbulent part of life as an adolescent on top of integrating into a new culture which can be difficult and frustrating. This was shown to lead to embarrassment and humiliation. That humiliation can then turn to resentment which can create the conditions for refugee students to drop out. After interviewing the student who struggled with this they noted that "He even considered the teacher's approach an act of bullying, in spite of the teacher's extended effort to help. One important factor, of which the teachers were not aware and the student did not disclose, was that he did not own another set of clothes at the time. He had to do laundry manually every night to meet the school hygiene requirements. At the time of our interview, he was proud to own three pairs of socks and was planning to buy a second pair of sneakers at a thrift store." (Li & Grineva,

2016). Overall the literature has shown that empathy and understanding is critical for the success of refugee students in all facets of their school experience. Without the attempts to empathize and create teacher student relationships, refugee students will encounter obstacles unnecessarily.

DeCapua and Marshall (2009) researched refugee students with limited or interrupted education in the United States. The researchers found that forming strong relationships, being culturally aware, and implementing culturally relevant pedagogy will allow educators to properly engage the potential of refugee students (DeCapua & Marshall, 2009). Stewart in 2015 focused on using refugee experiences as a way to teach literacy and help educators understand their refugee students. She noted that using culturally relevant material will help with refugee student's academic performances by touching on their experiences and creating a strong bond between refugee students and educators. This is imperative for refugee student success and creates a positive classroom practice (Stewart, 2015).

The literature has also suggested that educators have to make an effort to create a more inclusive environment for refugee students who come to their school. Amthor and Roaxs (2016) revealed in a study that societies in the west can have anti-immigration sentiments within it. In order for refugee students to do well it is important that educators take the role in creating a more inclusive space against the anti-immigration sentiments of society. Also, the need for a focused curriculum that revolves around multicultural education is required. The majority of curriculum that refugee youth engage in is created by the people in power and can ignore the experiences of refugee students. This creates marginalization among refugee youth (Amthor & Roaxs, 2016). Amthor and Roaxs have stated that a multicultural curriculum needs to be developed as the eurocentric curriculum creates a disadvantage for refugee youth. Johnston (2008) noted that there are issues from a curriculum point of view. For example, in Canada curriculums used in each

province are eurocentric in nature. Each of the curriculum promotes certain values, roots, expectations, and culture (Johnston, 2008).

This clash of values and cultures puts refugee students at a disadvantage compared to their non-immigrant counterparts. It is important for educators to realize this and attempt to manipulate and develop curriculum that would be considered multicultural and suitable in nature. This was noted previously in the study conducted by Li and Grineva. They stated that curriculum wise the clash of values was apparent in their study. One example was with the muslim student body. There is an expectation in Newfoundland and Labrador for high school students to achieve a fine arts credit. They stated “The Muslim participants in our study reported discomfort in taking fine arts, a subject that required activities prohibited in their religion and therefore threatened their religious identity”. To get around this concern and obstacle Li and Griniva suggest alternative course requirements for religiously and culturally variant students would be an option. Li and Grineva also identified that the nature of the credit system in the high school portion of the public school system was problematic. It takes newcomers much longer to grasp the protocols of the high school credit system and also problematic for guardians at home to comprehend the workings of this system. (Li & Grineva, 2016).

The issue with curriculum was also raised in Henderson and Ambroso. In Henderson and Ambroso’s study it identified that the prescribed curriculum itself was limiting. In particular, a focus on standardized testing for refugee students is not effective (Henderson and Ambroso, 2018). This recommendation of alternative courses to accommodate the clash in cultures that can occur is a recommendation that the literature on this subject of refugee education has proposed. Also, classroom teachers and school administrators need to ensure to the best of their ability to inform and monitor the graduation requirements for refugee youth within their school. The

literature has shown that this is a clear struggle for many refugee youth as this school system is substantially different from their previous educational institutions that they may have attended, not to mention some students may have never actually participated in a formal education system. Szente, Hoot, and Taylor (2006) focused on approaches to accommodating refugee students in the classroom. The study highlighted effective accommodations starting with the need for translators or interpreters. These professionals are essential when a refugee child joins a classroom. If possible, have the translator or interpreter implemented in the classroom before the arrival of the student. But the study stated that, unfortunately, such services are usually not available or too much of a financial burden on the school system. Educational professionals also encouraged schools to search out international students at local colleges/universities who speak the student's native language to become mentors. Schools should attempt to seek out international agencies that may be able to provide more cost effective services. When teachers first begin to teach refugee students they should not assume anything regarding the child's previous experiences. For refugee students their education may be sporadic, they may come from a fractured family unit, or they may have had education in one academic discipline more than others. Educators have shown that peer group learning experiences for teaching and tutoring refugee children have been found substantially effective. Summer schools, after-school programs, weekend clubs, or community projects can be established that are geared towards helping refugee children adjust to the academic expectations. Teachers need to work together with the school administration to establish realistic expectations for these refugee students with consistent and fair assessment policies. Szente, Hoot, and Taylor (2006) made suggestions to utilize literature and resources to teach non-refugee students about the experiences refugees

have. This allows non-refugee students to develop empathy and attempt to have an understanding for the challenges of refugees.

The aforementioned researchers added that much of the literature has stated that an emphasis on professional development, and workshops revolving around the native culture of different refugee cultures would be valuable. Lastly, the researchers did advise educators that refugee students need the support from home. Communication with their parents/guardians is imperative. If the guardians at home do not speak or have poor language skills, use written communication. These messages can then be translated and communication can be made. Szente, Hoot, and Taylor noted that educators need to ensure that they empathize as the guardians at home are also transitioning to a new country and culture. Being forced to move to a new country can be difficult for any family member regardless of age. The researchers have recommended taking time out of the day to day activities to educate non-refugee students about the plight that refugee students face and how their experiences can be severely traumatic. This creates a strong sense of community and belonging for all students in the classroom (Szente, Hoot, & Taylor, 2006). It is essential that educators assess refugee students properly and give them the opportunity to show their academic ability. Organized homework clubs and general extra-curricular activities have shown to have great success in the education of refugee students. The literature has displayed that educators can aid in the academic achievement of refugee students by having them more involved in school activities outside the classroom. In particular, utilizing any academic driven activities allows them to continue to progress and fill in the educational gaps that are a product due to social conditions and conflicts of their previous countries of origins. Combining these recommendations with establishing contact at home and

maintaining an open line of communication, the refugee students will have more opportunities to succeed in school while successfully integrating into their new country's society.

In Henderson and Ambroso's study she noted that most teachers felt completely unprepared for the task of educating refugee students who have severe gaps within their education. Regardless of education, the majority of teachers felt that what they learned in the university classroom had not prepared them for the challenges of a multicultural classroom and refugees with such significant educational hiatus. Overall, teachers craved for more training in the area, as they felt that was critical to finding success in the classroom. (Henderson and Ambroso, 2018). Educators who have had experience in the multicultural classroom understand the incredible challenges they face with refugee students. The need for them to have proper, ongoing training is paramount for success. A university degree alone cannot prepare educators to navigate the complex and intricate waters of refugee education, in particular, with educational policies that can create significant challenges for refugee youth that already have a significant number of obstacles ahead of them.

Rossister and Rossister (2009) made a number of recommendations for educators and policy makers to ease the transition for refugee youth in order for them to succeed in the classroom. One recommendation was for educators to make an effort of early identification of at-risk youth, using culturally appropriate diagnostic and assessment tools. Along with that recommendation, ESL teachers should be trained specialists within the school, and it is critical for schools to make a greater effort to value and address the needs of English language learners. Other recommendations include that the entire staff within any educational institute should receive training in intercultural issues and gain insight in the process of youth acquiring a second language acquisition process. Also, educators are encouraged as well to be debriefed on

immigrant and refugee youth's backgrounds, the diversity within their ethnic communities, and the adjustment difficulties experienced by their families.

Refugee youth need opportunities to develop positive relationships with both peers and staff within the educational setting to participate in school life. A recommendation for this is peer ambassador programmes. This makes an effort to carefully match newcomers with integrated immigrants from similar cultures which can be helpful. Responses to discrimination and bullying within the larger school community should be immediate and restorative in nature. School-based after-school or weekend outreach programmes have been shown to be effective in proper integration to life of the school and Canadian culture (Rossister & Rossister, 2009). Overall, the recommendations that have been discussed creates integration within the student body of a school. ESL programs and proper teacher professional development, coupled with peer mentoring programs allows refugee youth to have a higher likelihood of success within their new homes away from the conflict that has plagued their home countries.

Tyrer and Fazel's (2014) reviewed the literature for school and community-based interventions for refugee and asylum seeking children. As stated previously, across most studies it is clear that there is a prevalence of PTSD amongst refugee students. In the review it was highlighted that the schooling environment is a valuable resource. Schools have the potential to be the first line of response of implementing interventions to address mental health complications. In areas that have been disrupted, schooling is usually the first institution that is created so children understand the idea of school. In school, educators have access to both refugee children and their families. Schools can implement efforts for early identification and provide programs to aid in the rehabilitation of emotional and social development. Refugee children arriving in a new country may or may not be with their actual family. Regardless, they

are likely to benefit from schools and the services that schools provide as they integrate into their new home . The researchers also reported that refugee students who make it to a new country regardless if they come with their family or if their family situation is dire will find benefits from school and the services that come with that environment (Tyrer & Fazel, 2014). What is clear is that school can be served as a vehicle to aid students as a component of rehabilitation. The prevalence of PTSD has been noted throughout the literature, but a proper programming of academics and services can have great potential in helping with both recuperation and integration of refugee students.

In Kanu's (2008) they came to conclusions for recommended policies to help refugee students. These policies are aimed towards the Federal Government of Canada. Kanu suggested that at the federal level, it is important they make efforts to decrease the wait times for refugees to enter the country. By doing this it decreases the amount of time that children are in a refugee camp. They are not exposed to the volatile environment of some refugee camps and lower the amount of time that their education has been forced into disarray. Kanu has recommended that the Federal Government of Canada forgive loans and financial aid that refugees accrued and to help refugee families integrate more smoothly in an effort to recognize credentials and education levels to allow refugees to enter the workforce with more success. This will allow family units to become more stable and aid in students having more support. Kanu also recommends there needs to be an effort for Government institutions to promote refugee families to draw upon their cultural communities for support. By establishing strong community oriented ties to their native culture, it will allow them to feel supported during this turbulent time as they integrate into Canadian society. The researcher also touched on the need for proper housing in neighborhoods that are safe and stable. This will allow for refugee students to reduce their levels of

psychosocial stress (Kanu, 2008). Overall, Kanu has identified the need for the Federal Government to initiate efforts to allow the transition for refugee families. If refugee families as a whole can integrate smoothly, it will allow refugee students to integrate properly as their home is being supported.

Overall, this study hopes to add to the body of literature revolving around refugee students and the struggles they endure integrating into the classroom of their new society. Teachers of refugee students see them grow and observe their progress as they become climatized to their new surroundings. The literature has identified a variety of recurring themes and patterns. As it has been displayed in the literature, obstacles such as PTSD, isolation, acculturation, minimal training, and lack of ESL support is common. This study looks to reaffirm similar patterns in Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system but additionally to see if there are any other challenges. This study hopes to confirm patterns that past researchers have concluded or uncover struggles and challenges that are exclusive to Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system. This study is adding to the literature the perspectives of educators in Newfoundland and Labrador. Education professionals have insight, training, and expertise that is valuable. In particular, the study will look at the aspects of refugee education that should be celebrated and what facets refugee education in Newfoundland and Labrador need to be addressed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. It is made up of semi-structured interviews from both teachers and administrators that have experience working with refugee students. Using the information gathered in these interviews, analysis has revealed obstacles that professional educators have identified. With the data that is collected, the analysis uncovers the struggles that educators see these students endure. The overall intent of this study is to identify, describe, interpret, analyze, and conclude problematic challenges that these students experience in the public school system of Newfoundland and Labrador. The study also identifies what educators perceive as effective approaches to integration for these students who have been forced to relocate from their home and the deficiencies of their current educational model. The study concludes with limitations, suggestions to implement the public school system of Newfoundland and Labrador, and identification of the major themes that have emanated from the interviews.

The study interviewed twelve education professionals in the metro area of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. This location has been chosen because St. John's has the highest concentration of refugee students in the province. These education professionals are from a variety of schools within the metro area. The educators to be interviewed will be from all levels of instruction. These interviews will be recorded with a digital audio recording device. Field notes will be taken to ensure that the accuracy of each statement is upheld and transcribed. The data will be anonymized to the best of the project's ability.

Research Questions

In order to facilitate the best educational experience for these new refugee students this research aims to investigate five extensive questions that need to be addressed. These questions are broad in nature and answered through the data that are collected by the semi-structured interviews that are conducted. The educators who are working with these young refugees will aid in the answering of these critical inquiries.

- What do you perceive as the most significant challenge academically for refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador?
- What do you perceive as the most significant challenge socially for refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador?
- What do you perceive as the most significant challenge emotionally for refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador?
- What are the existing supports placed in the public education system in Newfoundland and Labrador and how do they function?
- How might refugee students be better served with respect to successful integration into a Newfoundland and Labrador public school system?

Within the semi-structured interviews there are other questions that will be asked to augment the responses of the participants.

The first question addresses the academic challenges refugee students may experience in Newfoundland and Labrador. Refugee students usually have severe gaps within their education due to being displaced. An educator's view on what is preventing them from filling these gaps would be insightful. The second question will focus on the social struggles these students may

experience. Socially, refugee students are becoming integrated into a new society with diverse cultural norms. Understanding their social struggles will allow educational institutions more understanding on how to create an environment that is caring but also cultivates safety. The third question will look at the emotional challenges that educators in Newfoundland and Labrador perceive. The study will investigate possible emotional challenges refugee students have that could be identified by education professionals who work with these students in their day to day encounters. Many of these refugee students have dealt with traumatic and grim life experiences. These emotional struggles can be roadblocks to proper integration and academic achievement.

The focus of the final two questions will be investigating the current educational supports that are placed for refugees who are in the process of integrating with Newfoundland and Labrador society. These two questions will give the opportunity for educators, who work directly with refugee students, an opportunity to discuss both the successes and shortcomings of the current landscape of refugee education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Data have been recorded, transcriptions were created. These transcripts along with audio recordings and field notes, discussion and observations will all be collected. This material will be prepared to be analyzed. The data have been organized and properly coded in order to recognize proper trends, patterns, and conclusions. Much of the process will be guided by Creswell's work in his publication regarding educational research in 2012. These codes have taken specific data and broadened them into themes. The codes and the data that comprises them have been reviewed multiple times to gain a deep understanding so these themes are properly developed and documented. The themes have been developed, conclusions and interpretations have been finalized, with recommendations to follow.

This process has gone through the following steps. As the data has been analyzed and the major themes and patterns have been compared to the research question and to determine if there is an accurate conclusion to the research question that was presented. Reflections from the conclusion and the process are recorded in order to give explanation to the findings. Further, the data and conclusions drawn are juxtaposed to the literature that has already been established. It is important to recognize both the similarities and differences of the conclusions of this study and the established literature. Further, limitations of the study are identified and documented. Understanding what could be done to improve the study and understanding the constraints of the study is important. Finally, suggestions for both policy makers and future research in the area will be addressed (Creswell, 2012).

Overall, each interview was 45 minutes to two hours in duration. This allowed the participants ample time to articulate their thoughts, observations, and suggestions regarding the research questions on refugee education. The interviews are semi-structured by design and allows for participants to have the flexibility to communicate their ideas. Data has been collected and coded into broader themes and conclusions are developed. This qualitative study presents insight on refugee students and their education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Chapter 4: Results

Academic Challenges

Throughout the entire interview process, all participants were asked to speak on the academic barriers that they perceive for refugee students. These academic hindrances are referring to why refugee students struggle to learn the prescribed curriculum in Newfoundland and Labrador. Through the analysis of the responses of the interviews the lack of English skills was considered one of the most critical reasons that refugee students encounter academic challenges. Much of the refugee population in Newfoundland and Labrador do not speak the dominant language of English in the province. Participants have voiced that this is an immediate setback for this vulnerable population. The low and non-existent English skills are a deficiency that immediately needs to be catered to once refugee students arrive in Canada and, in particular, Newfoundland and Labrador.

A number of educators in this study identified that another major academic struggle for refugee students is that they are being taught in a language in which they have low language skills. Many refugee students that have come to Newfoundland and Labrador are quite deskilled by the time they arrive in the province. They have poor academic and learning skills in their first language and because of this it creates an even greater challenge to begin to learn new material in a second or third language. Participants noted that even if they had strong language skills in their first language the academic language that is needed to learn in a second language takes many years to acquire and these students do not have that skill set. As identified previously, participants mention that refugee students that are in classrooms and schools have major gaps in their education, so even literacy and numeracy in their own language is limited. Furthermore,

literacy and numeracy gaps are apparent, as well as gaps in concepts such as civics, science, and critical thinking. In some cases, schooling has been inadequate or inappropriate in nature.

Another observation is that participants within the study have shown that these students come to Canada with very little documentation. This is problematic as many educators have difficulty focusing on and identifying the actual needs of each student. This is a trend that was brought up by a number of participants within the study. Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is perceived that both the school board and Department of Education do not have the appropriate resources and skill sets to properly diagnose learning deficiencies, learning exceptionalities, and proper counseling for these students. Participants noted another academic struggle is that many refugee students are placed in classes outside of English and Math. They begin immediately studying subjects which focus on the use of academic language in order to conduct the lessons. Each subject has an insurmountable amount of vocabulary that can be overwhelming for any student who hasn't been in school for a number of years. One participant stated:

“ I mean, it's just impossible to expect somebody who doesn't know English to go to social studies and learn social studies just like everybody else, and then write the social studies test.”

This is magnified for refugee students due to the low language skills in English and gaps in the subject matter. When refugee students are assessed in these subjects, participants have noted that some educators are not mindful of the language in the assessment itself, which adds another layer of difficulty to the assessment and does not allow for the refugee student to articulate their knowledge of a subject area. It was also noted that resources given to refugee

students in many classes are not at their literacy level, yet students are still expected to utilize them.

Some participants mentioned how many students have gaps of three years to some students never being in school. Their education has usually been interrupted due to a variety of reasons. Educators within the study have noted violence, persecution, and war having caused many families to flee their country and take refuge here in Canada. Some participants mentioned a need to be more efficient with our instructional time and help these students grasp conversational skills before increasing the difficulty straight to academic language. Within the data some participants have viewed putting students in these courses as a way to house them, as resources are not adequate to continue educating them in smaller groups amongst their own skill level. According to the data, this structure has been done because of lack of teaching units and scheduling purposes. A number of participants expressed that teacher allocation and resources were insufficient. There is a high teacher to student ratio within both the refugee education classes and when they are in classes with the local population. This limits the number of opportunities in which teachers can work with students in small groups or one on one.

Other academic challenges that have been identified by educators in Newfoundland and Labrador is that when refugee students enter the school system, many times they have very little notice and can come unprepared. One major trend within the data is that the environment in a school in Newfoundland and Labrador is incredibly new to these students. Where many of them have gaps within their education they are unaware of basic routines. Many of these routines that would have been conditioned in earlier grades are not recognized by these students. One educator mentioned that deadlines was a concept that needed to be articulated many times as this expectation was not a norm within their usual day to day activities. It was noted by a participant

that refugee students enter the school and experience a certain form of culture shock. They are given inadequate instruction and have not been properly communicated to how their schedule will be. They need consistency in order to reach the expectations in the school and fulfill their potential.

An educator noted that there are no integration plans in place and this creates a problematic situation for both the student and teacher. Many teachers teaching refugee students are adapting as they go and as refugee students enter the classrooms throughout the school year. Many of the resources are created as the students come into their classroom and more concrete resources are needed. In regards to resources, they are usually Eurocentric in nature and are not culturally relevant for these students and this adds to the tremendous learning curve they are experiencing. Even for students who have some schooling in their past, the curriculum is different culturally than what they are likely expecting. When refugee students are taken in small groups you have a multi-skilled demographic as some students have a more developed skill set than others in their class. This essentially becomes a multigrade classroom which has its own challenges.

Other setbacks within learning could be present for students. This could be something physical such as hard of hearing or what has been prevalent in the data is mental health issues revolving around trauma. These traumas that students have due to their past experiences before they came to Canada affects their memory recall, focus, and ability to critically think.

Within the data it has been noted that not only do the students have issues with these traumas and lack of education but so do other family members and, in particular, the people who care for them. The data has shown that many parents have little education themselves and are unable to properly support the children academically. Many families do not have the resources

to fund their children to have access to technology that local students would have that aids in their academic development. As it was stated, the need to acquire English skills is crucial to their academic development and data has shown that there is a major need to invest in and increase financial support for English second language teachers and resources.

English Second Language (ESL)/English Language Learner (ELL) Support

The acquisition of the English language has been expressed as a crucial gap that needs to be filled for refugee students. It aids in the progress in all academic endeavours in Canada. Socially it aids in connecting with both peers and staff and emotionally it aids in relieving the language isolation that participants have witnessed. Participants stated that there are not enough teachers, resources, or training within the classroom in Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system. Ratios of ELLs are perceived to be too high. Educators are overwhelmed with the needs of these students as they grasp this new language. Educators feel there is a lack of training and need more insight on properly implementing lessons for ELLs. The data has shown that because the ratios are so high, usually students who are in the beginning level of their English language skills will get priority. Participants understood why but there are students who conversationally are strong, but still need support and teaching in reading and writing. With this lack of support, students who have been in Elementary or Junior High have been noted that they still do not have the proper language skills that they need to succeed once they reach high school.

Furthermore, another major trend that was presented in the data is that the current ESL model in the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District is outdated and not efficient. Participants noted that the itinerant model no longer is effective due to the influx of ELL demographics in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was noted that in schools that have a low

number of ELL students this itinerant model can work. But schools that have high numbers of ELL students, the traveling between schools means instructional time is being lost. Further, ESL teachers begin having large rosters from many schools. This can be problematic as students are not getting the instructional time they need and the student/teacher connection they need to succeed. ESL teachers have many staff, administrators, rules, and norms to navigate. If ESL teachers are assigned to one school they become a part of the school culture and be able to connect better with the entire student body. The data discussed that ESL teachers are being stretched so thin, many schools still rely on placing refugee students in classes out of their language level in an attempt to immerse the students as a tool to reach proficiency. This is perceived by educators as ineffective and being done, in many cases, for scheduling purposes. Participants stated that schools that have a LEARN/refugee education teacher should have sufficient ESL support and a permanent ESL teacher on staff.

Social Challenges

A major facet for the struggles of refugee students is the social barriers that surround proper integration into Canadian society. Within the data many of the participants indicated that staff and students were unfamiliar and had a lack of understanding of where many of the refugee population are coming from; this includes cultural norms, language, and traditions. In particular, these unknowns for local students creates an “us versus them” mentality in some cases. Participants perceive that this friction creates an environment where social connections with the local population can prove difficult for refugee students. Within the data, educators voiced that there needs to be efforts by staff to help “fill in the blanks” of these unknowns. Staff need to aid in the integration and the transition of refugee students entering their new schooling environment.

“When you don't fill in the blanks and help them transition. They will fill in their own blanks. Often in a school setting that leads us to behavioral issues, social issues, emotional issues, and many of them are avoidable because kids are very accepting when there is guidance in place for them.”

One of the major trends seen by participants is that refugee populations have a tendency to associate or stick together in their social groups. It should be noted that participants highlighted that language was the big factor that connects them and having the similar experiences of being new Canadians. In some cases, peer relationships, regardless of culture, can be difficult to procure. This has been observed by educators within the study in which they note that due to their academic challenges and hardships in their personal lives they do not have the confidence in the classroom to attempt to make the social connections that they need to thrive. In addition, many of these student's confidence is being tested as they are overwhelmed by content and language in their different classes outside the refugee education classroom. The data have also displayed that students within the refugee demographic experience racism in some capacity. Examples of racism that have been witnessed by participants vary from violence, to ethnic slurs, or criticism of culture. This creates a massive social barrier. One statement by a participant noted:

“ Like kids being assaulted, kids having their glasses broken, kids being been told to go back to their country, kids being called terrorists and screamed at 'you're just here to bomb our country.' So there's you know a kid in the school who's been saying those things to some of the kids since Grade 3. So you know that's an issue, right?”

Students feel attacked and because of this environment violence amongst refugees is common. In particular, data have shown that cultural expectations regarding respect have created many violent encounters between the local student population and the refugee student population. Combined with the racist behaviour that refugee students experience, participants highlighted that local culture can create friction for the refugee population. The data showed that participants expect more to be done in regards to addressing racist behaviour that occurs in the school. Local students who do not actively engage in racism have noted that microaggressions are common without their knowledge. The understanding of cultural practices and cultural idioms further isolate refugee students and at times can be misunderstood and create a response that can be perceived as an overreaction.

Within the school itself it has been highlighted that they are isolated also by their language. Many participants have articulated in the data that language has created many social barriers. The communication issues between students and staff can create an uncomfortable learning environment. A participant discussed that refugee students would be placed without proper integration. They would be faced with many rules and regulations. They would not understand how the average school day functions, it created a social hesitancy. For example, participants commented that they have had refugee students on their initial introduction of school that do not realize they must ask permission to leave the room or that it is expected that they need to sit in their seat. What they expect is different from what the reality is. Their idea of a school experience is changed on them, without properly communicating what is happening.

This communication breakdown affects different parties in the school. The data noted that staff are unsure about the nature of the student's background. Staff want to create a welcoming environment but are hesitant to make connections to these refugee students in fear of making

them uncomfortable and offending them. More communication regarding these students would be needed to accommodate their integration within the Newfoundland and Labrador Public School System. Where they cannot socialize in a language they are proficient in, they begin to be alienated and suffer from low self-esteem. Educators within the study noted that they have witnessed refugee students who arrive in schools that have a low diversity rate feel isolated because of their cultural differences. These minority cultures feel unwelcome and not included in the school's culture. Participants mentioned the need to be more inclusive in regards to different holiday celebrations, signage, and extracurricular activities. Participants noted that addressing these inclusion issues can alleviate the tension and uncertainty for many refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Many students within the refugee program see being in the program as a remedial class. The data have shown that refugee students believe they perform poor or are unable to do the prescribed work. When, in reality, the program is there to fill in the necessary gaps in order for them to find success in the prescribed program. Even within that classroom there are difficulties as geopolitical conflict can spill into the classroom. This creates an uneasy and unsafe learning environment. Many of the social expectations in school have not been taught due to lack of schooling. This can be stressful and embarrassing for refugee students. Data also showed that their cultural understanding of discipline, consequences, and authority are different. Many refugee families are hesitant of authority and have a mistrust in general. The data recognizes that refugee students had issues understanding the effectiveness of restorative practices, in which they were used to corporal punishment as the main tool to correct behaviour. So these social expectations which were introduced and reinforced at a young age are introduced much later

compared to the local student population. This can create social issues and the expectations on how refugee students are to behave.

The data have displayed that there are factors outside of the school which can create social barriers within the school. The data have shown that many refugee students and their families live in poor housing conditions. These low socioeconomic areas have social issues that come with the respective area. Refugee students are exposed to this and see this as modelling behaviour. There is a ghettoization of these student's families, these social issues can reflect back into the school. Participants have noted that many of their refugee students have stronger English language skills than their parents/guardians. This creates a social pressure and responsibility that adolescents of the local community would not experience. The data identify examples such as going to doctor appointments with guardians and doing the banking for the household. These responsibilities create an added layer of stress that is unique to the refugee experience. Many of these families are single parent families where medical issues are common and they are financially unstable. Employment is difficult for these families, in particular, where Newfoundland and Labrador has low ethnic diversity and established communities are small and limited. Many of the communities aid in employment, food, adapting to new weather challenges, and overall support. This is an added stress compared to the experience in larger metropolitan cities within Canada. Also, the data noted that their values or beliefs can clash with the school culture which creates a conflict for the student. They are being challenged in different directions in how they culturally identify.

Emotional Barriers

While collecting the data many participants noted that the emotional barriers can create a negative effect on the academic and social progress of refugee students. They perceive it as detrimental to their development as they grow through adolescence. A trend in the data is that emotional regulation has been seen as a difficulty for refugee students. In particular, many participants referred to these emotional regulation problems as ‘meltdowns’. These behaviours were usually displayed with crying or extreme anger. Participants noted that these meltdowns could be caused by minute triggers. These meltdowns could create an environment where refugee students may become violent and confrontational. Within the data it has also been displayed that meltdowns into crying can be common and emotional regulation can be a challenge. Clearly, these behaviours and emotions are difficult to regulate for these students and it has the potential to hinder their progress in the academic and social realm of integration into Canada.

Many of the participants have directed that the reason for these types of behaviour is due to past traumas. As stated previously, many of the students who are/were refugees have entered Canada due to war, persecution, and conflict. These traumatic events are evident in the classroom. Many of these students suffer from post traumatic stress disorder. The data stated that because of this condition many students have difficulties focusing, poor memory recall, and truancy. Participants have noted that some of their students who suffer from trauma have poor sleeping habits. They get little sleep and are exhausted when the school day is just beginning. Due to the trauma in their past many refugee students struggle with anxiety issues. This makes the new environment they are entering a daunting task on top of all the social and academic barriers that they are already facing. As mentioned previously, this has a severe impact on their

confidence and self esteem in their ability to connect and learn. Participants expressed in the data that mental health in general is a concern for this vulnerable demographic. These mental health issues and extreme stress can begin to display physical ailments as well. Results amongst the data also present issues in maintaining relationships with both the student body and teachers. There is a mistrust in general to most people but, in particular, authority within the school. Participants have put an emphasis on making connections that can be difficult but they are critical for the success of refugee students within the school. These traumas have created trust issues that are important to confront for both teachers and students.

The emotional struggles and past traumas can place students in a state of fight, flight, or freeze. The results of the study have uncovered that this is a common phenomenon within the refugee education experience. As mentioned previously, refugee students can have a tendency to engage in violence. Many refugee students can be runners. Participants have revealed past experiences of students walking out of class or school. Incidents of students hiding or running from the classroom have been recorded. This happens as they are on high alert due to the trauma they have experienced in the past. Other incidents are students who freeze. These students seem to 'zone out' or 'daydream'. These students will shut down and not engage with anyone until they are not having that feeling of danger. Certain students feel a state of panic and need to know that they can leave the room. These past traumas have created conditions that make it difficult for students to focus on academics and forge meaningful social connections.

Within the data an emotional barrier that was identified similar to a social setback is the racism many refugee students encounter. The racism and even microaggressions are perceived to create a feeling within refugee students that they are not welcome within the school. They have arrived at the school and many of them are experiencing this emotional turmoil regarding racism

and even culture shock. Many refugee students have limited schooling and the schooling culture is very different from the expectations in a Canadian classroom. So, there is a shock that is present and that combined with hostility of racism creates conditions in which acceptance is not perceived by the student which is another cause for isolation. A participant noted that they noticed refugee students speak little about their customs when they are in the minority. They expressed that they did not want to alienate or draw attention to their diversity. Many participants expressed that the adolescent age group should be taken into consideration. These students, like the local population, are going through major changes in the body. With these changes come sensitivity, embarrassment, mood swings, and overall growing pains. Many participants noted that these changes combined with the other emotional barriers magnify the impact compared to local populations.

Participants revealed that educators are not resourced, trained, or generally equipped to face these emotional challenges head on. It was expressed in the data that teachers in the classroom know very little regarding these students' backgrounds. This could be due to an actual lack of information that came with the student or that teachers are not given the information that is in their confidential file. The data have displayed this as a frustration perceived by educators. Where many classroom teachers are unsure of the background of these students, their behaviours can be misinterpreted and teachers do not realize the root of such outbursts. The results of the interviews conducted show that these students need guidance and when these students are not given the guidance that they need, behavioral and emotional issues will be present.

Many times the refugee education teacher who spends the most time with these students takes on the role as their guidance counselor due to the connection that they have. This is an extra load for this teacher. But many of these students need that strong connection but also

support from guidance, in general, to work through the emotional barriers and traumas that they have encountered. If not, certain behaviours will be more prevalent and the data have displayed that this behaviour could be extreme in nature and can be explosive and safety for all students can be compromised. In the data it was noted that the majority of refugee students do not get the counseling and time in guidance that they need to overcome and help with the issues that they bring to the classroom.

Positive Aspects of the Current Refugee Education Program (LEARN)

The establishment of the refugee education program known in Newfoundland and Labrador is known as LEARN. The implementation of the program is new for Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system. Participants expressed that the implementation of this program alone should be recognized and celebrated. Previously, students with gaps both academically and linguistically were placed in the prescribed classroom with little or no support. Participants noted the importance of the LEARN program allowing an easing in process for refugee students. The data have shown that the curriculum that is implemented is a good foundation. It does an adequate job in filling these crucial gaps. These gaps are being filled as articulated by participants. They have seen success in the classroom from these students. In some cases continuing on to post-secondary education.

Another success that many participants noted was that having a LEARN teacher within the school is valuable. This teacher takes ownership of these students who need connection. But they also perform as a resource for classroom teachers who may need insight and support when they have refugee students in the classroom. If there are problems occurring, they aid as a resource to find solutions. This teacher acts as a go-to for their students. Students have someone

in the school with whom they can feel comfortable asking questions, seeking advice, and feeling heard. This teacher allows for a safe space for these students who usually come from turbulent environments. The refugee education teacher is able to cultivate a safe space in order for students to begin filling their educational gaps.

Another benefit that is revealed in the data is that this class allows refugee students to connect with peers who have a similar life experience as them and speak the same first language, and it instills confidence. It has allowed a teacher to be a primary representative for the school and outside institutions like the Association of New Canadians. These institutions aid in the integration and settlement of immigrants coming to Canada. The data have shown that the relationship between schools and organizations of this nature are critical. It allows for open communication to students' guardians and allows for families to communicate with the school. It has been shown in the data that the role of such organizations is invaluable.

Shortcomings of the Current Refugee Education Program (LEARN)

In regards to the shortcomings of the refugee education/LEARN program in Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system, some consistent trends appeared in the data. One observation is that many participants voiced their concerns that these students need instructional time with a refugee education teacher in other core subjects. In particular, in the junior high school setting, participants noted that students will have specialized instruction in mathematics and English class but be placed in social studies, science, and French classes that consist of the local population. Here, students who are ELL and have significant gaps are overwhelmed in these classes. This instructional time is incredibly valuable and participants have noted that more resources need to be put into the LEARN program so that students are not

placed in classes in which they are not capable of completing or even attempting. In particular, participants voiced that the need for smaller classes within the LEARN program is required. With smaller classes and more teachers, this vulnerable group can avail of the vital instructional time that they need to fill the educational gaps that they have. Where each student has a program individualized, the high teacher to student ratio creates a working condition that can overtax classroom teachers and specialized teachers.

Another hindrance of the LEARN program in Newfoundland and Labrador is that participants expressed that refugee students rarely have access to instruction resource teachers, guidance, or in class support, in general. A shortcoming that has been identified is the need to properly resource current programs before expanding the program to other schools. The data stated that it is critical to support and resource current programs before expanding them. Ensuring these resources are culturally relevant has also been voiced by participants and making sure that material is culturally relevant to them.

One prominent trend in the data that is considered a shortcoming for the LEARN program and refugee education as a whole in Newfoundland and Labrador is that it is not present in the elementary grades, in particular the grades of 4-6. Participants have stated that many students sit in a “limbo” as they attempt to acquire the new language and they still have significant gaps in numeracy by the time they advance to Junior High. Participants who are classroom teachers noted that they do not know the structure or the program overall. There is a need for more communication from administration and how the program will be utilized at a school level. Without this communication, distance from staff and these students who they do not teach is created. It has also been noted that having administration who have interacted with refugee students has been considered an asset. Finally, the data noted that the refugee education

program needs more focussed training at a school wide level to address the challenging and demanding circumstances of the LEARN program.

Chapter 5: Recommendations, Discussion, and Conclusion

Resources

The analysis of both the literature and results of contributions from interviews of participants identified recommendations that can promote further development and enhancement of refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador. One recommendation is the need to invest in resources for refugee education. The need to expand teaching units is clear from the data. More educators allow for smaller classrooms and, in particular, it provides more opportunity for increased teacher-student time that is critical for refugee students to succeed. This allows refugee students to access a proper program within schools that offer courses that enables them to transition into the prescribed curriculum. For example, in the junior high setting this will ensure students will be able to complete more classes in the refugee education classroom rather than being placed in classes that are linguistically advanced. Increased funding will also allow high schools with refugee education programs to properly offer all the courses needed for refugee students to achieve a high school diploma in a timely manner. The students will grasp both English at a quicker rate and fill the gaps in their education.

An additional recommendation for their program is the implementation of more in-class support. This would be in the form of English second language teachers, instructional resource teachers, or teaching and learning assistants. An investment in these resources will allow refugee education programs to offer more “pullout” time for students who need a slower pace and empower students who are grasping the material quickly to continue at an accelerated pace. This then will allow for educators to more effectively meet the students needs based on their ability. This recommendation also promotes more out of school or extracurricular activities because of increased staffing which has been articulated by participants as an effective tool for learning and

creating a comfortable atmosphere. Another suggestion to aid in minimizing barriers for refugee students is providing more training for all teachers within a school. This primarily targets refugee education teachers, but also includes a classroom teacher who teaches prescribed curriculum to local students. This insight and tools will enhance and engage the student body as a whole. More training can allow for more conceptual approaches to pragmatic and hands-on approaches. It will be important for teachers to be given the tools they need to teach and in turn take care of such a vulnerable population.

Connections

It is recommended that staff within a school have to establish a conscious effort to make connections with these students. Refugee students can be hesitant in nature due to their life experience and cultural differences. It is paramount for all staff within a school to make an effort to develop connections or a rapport with these students even if they do not directly teach them. Even minor interactions that consist of greetings can cultivate a culture of acceptance and allow refugee students to utilize basic English conversational skills to create comfort and confidence. As mentioned previously, properly resourcing a refugee education is a recommendation that has come from this study, and in particular increasing teaching units. The increase in resources in teaching translates into more teachers within the refugee education program. This can mean more possibilities in connections for refugee students. Also, it is important to note that partial positions for refugee education teachers would be problematic in schools. The nature of refugee education teachers, as articulated in the data, is that they are the homebase and a constant resource person for these students. Participants in the interviews expressed that these students

require consistency and being in school only part time or partially throughout a school schedule would be difficult to fulfill the role of a refugee education program.

Connections are vital and they create the environments of safety and trust that is needed to educate and address the gaps in education for refugee students. It is recommended that schools make an effort, in a respectful way, to celebrate the diversity that refugee students bring to the respective schools. Schools should avoid actions that fall into the realm of tokenism. Finding connections across the different cultures and celebrating the cultures within the school will create a unity amongst schools that can help alleviate the toxic culture of ‘us vs. them’ and reduce intolerance. A further recommendation as dictated by the data is that there needs to be an effort by all schools with refugee education programs to foster a relationship with outside institutions that aid in the settlement of new Canadians. Within this study the Association of New Canadians (ANC) was the institution that was spoken of in the data. Organizations like this aid in the integration of students and families into the new Canadian society.

Also, these connections create an easier line of communication between the schools and homes of refugee students as they are equipped with more language services and have insight on the families’ and student’s backgrounds. They have organized social events for these students and after school programs that give students the opportunity to work with teachers and volunteers to catch up on their academic deficiencies. These organizations can help in conflict resolution between students and school. They fill a role that is important and has been identified as a valuable tool in the integration and academic progress of refugee students. An institution of this nature helps nurture connections between schools, families, students, and their peers.

Trauma

As was stated in both the literature and the data, trauma has a profound effect on refugee students' performance and social integration. A recommendation is to continue to invest educators' professional development in trauma informed practices and understanding of the repercussions of such traumatic events. This will allow school staff to have the opportunity to gain an understanding and empathy for refugee students in their schools. An additional recommendation is to allow teachers within the school to have information and the background knowledge they need to make well informed decisions on how to deliver lessons, aid in social integration, and behaviour interventions. It is important that the needs and backgrounds of these students are communicated to the teachers that they will be interacting with and seeing on a daily basis. Teachers need to know the parameters within which they can work. In order to properly educate, teachers need to know the student's context. Without this context, teachers are developing lessons and doing their job at a disadvantage.

More communication regarding these students will make teachers within the Newfoundland and Labrador public school system more effective. As many refugee students come from different places in the world and have different life experiences, it is critical that schools develop a staff culture of open mindedness in order to truly be empathetic to the experience and perspectives of these students. As previously mentioned, safe and comfortable spaces are essential for these students. Due to the trauma that many of them endured, the data projected that cultivating a safe space for refugee students is foremost. Giving refugee students clear expectations and understanding will allow refugee students to begin to feel comfortable as they become aware of what to expect. With expectations set, students who have trauma in their backgrounds are given stability, security, and welfare. With these conditions it allows them to

feel reassured and begin to connect with their teachers. As stated previously, the data have stated that connections are crucial to effectively fill gaps of refugee students.

Another recommendation in regards to trauma is for refugee students to engage with school guidance counselors. The data depicted that where many refugee students have traumatic backgrounds, there is a need for them to process their experiences and aid in the coping of their trauma. Within the data it was expressed that rarely are guidance services utilized on the demographic of refugee students. Trauma has detrimental effects on academic, social, and emotional performance. The need to invest in proper counselling through guidance is a gap that has been identified. Refugee students, as they arrive in Canada, are bringing with them a tremendous amount of damage emotionally and often psychologically. In order for them to find success in the classroom and school, such interventions must be implemented. Without such services, refugee students will continue to struggle as they leave the education system and enter the Canadian workforce.

Early Intervention

The final recommendation that is suggested is the implementation of a refugee education program that begins in the elementary grades. Establishing a refugee education program in Grades 4-6 will allow for early intervention for refugee students that will enable them to procure a skillset to aid in finding success earlier and more efficiently. Currently, when a refugee student in grades younger than Grade 7 enters the Newfoundland and Labrador Public School System, they are placed in a classroom and do not have the opportunity to properly address their gaps of numeracy and literacy. They interact with an English Second Language teacher a certain amount of times in a cycle. The protocol is for classroom teachers to help them improve while

continuing with the curriculum for the other students in class. Participants in the study noted that many times they have seen refugee students who have been in the province since grade five enter grade seven with poor skills in numeracy, reading, and writing. Even students who have been here for a couple years in elementary school still only have basic conversational skills. Having refugee students enrolled into a regular elementary classroom creates an incredibly difficult balancing act for the classroom teacher as they attempt to continue to teach the prescribed curriculum and attempt to fill in the gaps to the new Canadians who likely have had limited schooling. This classroom teacher probably has other needs in the classroom in regards to modified programs, behaviour issues, and other student needs that need to be tended to.

Students who are of refugee status learning English will not have the academic language needed to participate properly in the prescribed curriculum. Furthermore, with the creation of a refugee education program in the earlier grades, it will allow more students to transition properly into the prescribed program sooner as they have the proper interventions in place. With students' needs being taken care of in a more timely nature, this would ensure that classes in both the junior high and high school levels would be more manageable and effective. Rather than having a refugee student who is in Grade 5 in “limbo” for two years as an elementary classroom teacher juggles all the other needs in the class, a refugee education teacher in elementary school can aid in assisting that student to learn the foundational skills in literacy and numeracy. It should be noted that children at a younger age have the ability to learn at a greater rate due to the plasticity of the brain and pruning has not occurred. This need has arisen in the data numerous times and if implemented will help the welfare of students, staff, and the system as a whole.

Discussion

The study established that the challenges and struggles for refugee students are apparent in three major facets: academic, social, and emotional. Academically, refugee students have major gaps due to the lack of educational institutions and opportunities. These institutions and opportunities are either non-existent, insufficient, or inappropriate. In order for these students to properly find success in Canada these educational gaps or shortcomings need to be rectified. But as we add a second language that is English into the equation it becomes more difficult. It is critically important that students have the interventions that they need to grasp the literacy portion. For without that, it will be a labourious task to fill the gaps in subjects of social studies, science, mathematics, and other areas of study. In the recommendations, it states it is necessary for the implementation of a refugee education program in the elementary grades of school. Early interventions will allow students to have the tools to learn English at a faster rate and have access to material and curriculum to fill in the gaps that they need to find success in the public school system and further into post secondary education or the workforce. In Newfoundland and Labrador there is a need for immigration to increase the tax base of the province. When refugee students can move to the province, find success in the schools and continue in their schooling there is a higher chance that they will stay here and develop communities that are based primarily in the larger metropolitan areas.

In regards to the social issues, it is obvious that many students feel isolated in this new culture. They are isolated by language, peers, and nuances of their new surroundings. Refugee students are subjected to ignorance and racism. Racism can be threatening to them both emotionally and physically. These factors, combined with the culture shock that they are experiencing, make for barriers that are multi-factored in nature. What should be noted as

dictated by the data is that refugee students have a myriad of barriers socially as they integrate into a new Canadian society. This demographic of students has become more prevalent, in particular in the last 5-6 years. Schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are experiencing an influx of refugee students. It should be noted that this phenomenon is still new to students and staff within these schools. This dynamic is relatively new to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, as a whole.

The last recorded data noted that Newfoundland and Labrador has a low ethnic diversity rate. This low diversity rate creates an unknown for both students and staff in school, and it is the educators' job to approach these unknowns that create hesitancy and intolerance. This influx of new cultures and people, at a school level, may take time for proper transition and integration early on due to the homogenous nature of Newfoundland and Labrador. At the school level it must be done properly in order for society to harvest the fruits that a multicultural society bestows. It is important that refugee students are given the resources they need to not only navigate Canadian society, but thrive within it and carve out their own place within it. For Newfoundland and Labrador this is new for the majority of schools within the province. It is important that this new demographic is developed and nurtured and that refugee students are given adequate and an equitable share of resources they deserve.

Emotional struggles have been apparent. Mental health has been identified as a clear barrier for these students. The need for teachers to be properly trained and communicate what is happening has been articulated in the data. The study has directed that there is a need for more guidance counselors to satisfy the demand as refugee students usually arrive with trauma that is detrimental to their growth as a student and overall as a member of society. Ensuring that these students have the outlet to work through their traumas will not only aid in their success as a

student, but also in their progress and pursuit to call Canada their home. What has been noted is that the mental health dilemmas that these kids face are magnified. The stress, anxiety, and isolation that many of them feel are magnified due to the other factors revolving around academic and social barriers. It is important that policy makers and leadership understand that these struggles are multifaceted in nature. But refugee students are coming to a province in Canada that has very little diversity compared to other parts of the country and are still missing components within the school system to properly accommodate refugee students. When schools are properly accommodated and supported in a meaningful way teachers can make the inroads they need with these students. Newfoundland and Labrador has commenced this process but more resources, training, and understanding are needed.

Within the research there was data that did note that Newfoundland and Labrador is on the right track. There are efforts to hire more ESL teachers in the coming years and the establishment of their refugee education program (LEARN) has been beneficial. The students who have gone through this program have been able to obtain support. It is important that policymakers and leadership give these students the proper support. Moreover, participants also celebrated that though these students come in with many obstacles in front of them, they have shown resilience. One participant stated:

“ Generally I notice a very resilient group and I think the research bears out that refugees in general are extraordinarily resilient and that's what I notice most of all.”

These students are capable and have great potential to offer to Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada, in general. Educators need to be the ones to dismantle the barriers and

policymakers must give the schools the resources they need to put the recommendations into action.

Limitations

The study itself does have limitations. One limitation is that educators that were interviewed teach and work with students in the Grade 7-12 range. None of the educators directly teach any students in the primary and elementary level. As a result there is an insight missing and the struggles for primary and elementary refugee students may come with a different set of challenges that have not been identified. Further investigation would be needed in order to come to a consensus on the barriers that face refugee students in that age group.

An additional limitation was that each interview was only conducted once. It should be noted that stronger connections with the participants could reveal more authentic insights. Having the ability to continue the conversation with these participants could display more common themes. A larger sample size would be able to identify more themes and struggles that refugee students face in their daily activities in Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system. More schools that are involved in this research would create a more well rounded perspective on the struggles that refugee students confront in Newfoundland and Labrador.

A question that remains unanswered is what struggles are exclusive to Newfoundland and Labrador's refugee students. Due to its scope the research was unable to identify this. It should be noted that there are social and emotional barriers that refugee students experience due to living in a place and going to school in which they are a clear visible minority. Where Newfoundland and Labrador has a low diversity rate this could be seen as an exclusive problem compared to the rest of Canada but it is only one facet of the research question and cannot be properly acknowledged as particularly an obstacle for students in Newfoundland and Labrador.

A geographical limitation exists in this study because all refugee education programs (LEARN) are primarily based in the St. John's Metro area. This may be perceived as an urban to rural divide but in reality this exists due to high enrollment and settlement in St. John's.

For further research considerations, it would be recommended to include more schools in the study and extend the sample size. The study should be broadened to primary and elementary school levels. By doing this, refugee education in Newfoundland and Labrador could have a well rounded view of the issues that are present in the classroom. Also, investigating certain refugee groups and nationalities may garner insight on the variety of viewpoints of the refugee experience. There still is much to explore in regards to refugee education in Newfoundland and Labrador. Further investigation in this field could yield more insight that has the potential to aid in the education of this vulnerable population.

Conclusion

The data show that educators play a pivotal role in the progression, success, and integration of refugee students in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. What has been clear in the results is that policymakers and leaders within education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador must acquire an open mind and invest in education for refugees and newcomers who have gaps in their education. With Newfoundland and Labrador having such a low diversity rate, there are struggles for refugee students and their families. Factors such as religion, ethnicity, and language makes for a difficult transition to Canada, especially for minority refugee students. Newfoundland and Labrador is unlike larger urban areas which have established cultural communities that aid in the support system.

This group of at-risk students now have a refugee education program known as LEARN. This is relatively new for Newfoundland and Labrador's school system but refugee students have been settling here for many years. It is a step in the right direction that such a program is established. But more resources, training, and teachers must be implemented into this program. There needs to be more of a focus on having students engage in authentic efforts of addressing their educational gaps and not placed in classrooms that are too far above their comprehension level. The refugee education program (LEARN) is established in schools in the capital of the province, St. John's. It is important that these programs are properly staffed and resourced before extending further into other communities and schools. The program will become more effective with the implementation of a LEARN program in elementary grades of 4-6. This will help manage junior high and high school refugee education classes numbers. It will allow teachers to focus on newer students and aid in the chaotic transition into Canadian schools and society. These students have obstacles that are layered and consist of a wide spectrum of barriers. These students do not have one hindrance, but numerous and often complicated issues confronting them.

The barriers that refugee students have experienced in Newfoundland and Labrador can be alleviated. The following recommendations have been curated based on the research and data of the study.

- Increased resources: More teaching units in refugee education, English Second Language, and training for all educators who work with the refugee population.
- Connections: School wide initiatives to develop connections with refugee demographics. This fosters a culture of safety that is imperative for refugee students. Continue to work with settlement agencies such as the Association of New Canadians.

- Trauma: Trauma informed practices are vital for the success of refugee students. Keeping teaching staff properly informed and communicating the information that is needed to properly educate and fill in the educational gaps. There needs to be efforts for guidance counselors to become more involved in aiding in the healing process of the trauma that these students have endured.
- Early Intervention: Implementing a refugee education program for grades younger than the junior high level. Having a refugee education program in grades 4-6 will support elementary school teachers who have refugee students in their class. Interventions in literacy and numeracy early will aid in a more efficient transition to the prescribed curriculum. Students will have gaps filled in a more timely manner and assist in keeping refugee education program numbers at a more manageable level at the junior high and high school level.

If educators, educational leaders, and policymakers are able to help dismantle these barriers these students will have a greater chance of finding success and integrating properly into the society of Canada and, in particular, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Government of the province has noted that a low tax base has created unfavourable conditions in the province. One of the solutions to this is immigration. If the school systems can properly support refugee students and aid in creating thriving multicultural communities within the province, it is possible to help alleviate the taxbase problem of the province. In the spirit of our provincial and Canadian heritage, the Government and the education system has a duty and tradition to reach out and create an environment of safety, opportunity, and acceptance to advance the primary and secondary education of refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador.

REFERENCES

- Almqvist K, & Broberg AG (1999), Mental health and social adjustment in young refugee children 3 1/2 years after their arrival in Sweden. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 38: 723—730.
- Asadi, Neda. (2014). Refugee students in Canadian schools: Educational issues and challenges. In C.A. Brewer & M. McCabe, *Immigrant and refugee students in Canada*. (pp. 161-174). Edmonton, AB: Brush Education.
- Amthor, R., & Roxas, K. (2016). Multicultural education and newcomer youth: Re-imagining a more inclusive vision for immigrant and refugee students. *Educational Studies: Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, 52(2), 155–176.
- Arnetz, J., Rofa Y, & Arnetz B. (2013) Resilience as a protective factor against the development of psychopathology among refugees. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 201(3): 167–172.
- Bang, H., & Collet, B. A. (2018). Educational gaps and their impact on Iraqi refugee students' secondary schooling in the Greater Detroit, Michigan Area. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 13(2), 299–318.
- Brewer, C. A. (2016). An outline for including refugees in Canadian educational policy. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education / Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheurs et chercheurs en éducation*, 7(1), 1-9.
- Brewers, C. A., & McCabe, M. (2014). *Immigrant and refugee students in Canada*. Edmonton, AB: Brush Education.
- Croce, K.-A. (2018). Refugee Students Arrive at a School: What Happens Next? *Global Education Review*, 5(4), 7+.
- DeCapua, A., (2016). Reaching students with limited or interrupted formal education through culturally responsive teaching. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 10(5), 225–237.
- DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H.W. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education in US Classrooms. *Urban Rev* 42, 159–173 (2010).

- Dyregrov, A. (2004). Educational consequences of loss and trauma. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 21, 77–84.
- Epp, M. (2017) and Canadian Electronic Library Distributor. *Refugees in Canada: A Brief History*. Documents Collection. Web.
- Fleras, A. (2015). *Immigration Canada: evolving realities and emerging challenges in a postnational world*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Government of Canada. (2017). *Canada: A History of Refuge*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadians/celebrate-being-canadian/teachers-corner/refugee-history.html>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2011). *English as a Second Language and Newcomer Programs (ESL and LEARN)*. Retrieved from Newfoundland and Labrador Education and Early Childhood Development website: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/eecd/k12/curriculum/guides/esl/>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2017). *The Way Forward Immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador*. Retrieved from Newfoundland and Labrador Advanced Education, Skills and Labour website: https://www.gov.nl.ca/immigration/files/Immigration_101.pdf
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2017). *The Way Forward on Immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Retrieved from Newfoundland and Labrador Advanced Education, Skills and Labour website: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/aesl/files/publications-pdf-immigrationplan.pdf>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (n.d.). *Myths & Facts About Immigration*. Retrieved from Newfoundland and Labrador Advanced Education, Skills and Labour website: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/immigration/myths-facts/>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2011). *Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) CURRICULUM GUIDE LEARN-1 Language Arts: Basic Literacy*. Retrieved from Newfoundland and Labrador Education and Early Childhood Development website: https://www.gov.nl.ca/eecd/files/k12_curriculum_guides_esl_learn_learn1_language_arts.pdf

- The Premier's Task Force On Improving Educational Outcomes. (2017). The Next Chapter in Education in Newfoundland and Labrador, Now is the Time. Retrieved from Newfoundland and Labrador Education and Early Childhood Development website: https://www.gov.nl.ca/eecd/files/task_force_report.pdf
- Hadfield, K., Ostrowski, A., & Ungar, M. (2017). What can we expect of the mental health and well-being of Syrian refugee children and adolescents in Canada? *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 58(2), 194–201.
- Hauck, F. R., Lo, E., Maxwell, A., & Reynolds, P. P. (2014). Factors influencing the acculturation of Burmese, Bhutanese, and Iraqi refugees into American society: Cross-cultural comparisons. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 12(3), 331–352.
- Henderson, J., & Ambroso, E. P. (2018). Teaching Refugee Students in Arizona: Examining the Implementation of Structured English Immersion. *Global Education Review*, 5(4), 55+.
- Hos, R. (2016). The Lives, Aspirations, and Needs of Refugee and Immigrant Students With Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) in a Secondary Newcomer Program. *Urban Education*.
- Hurt, H., Malmud, E., Brodsky N., & Giannetta J. (2001). Exposure to violence: psychological and academic correlates in child witnesses. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*;155(12):1351-6.
- Johnston, I. (2008). " Decolonizing Canadian Literary Education". In A.A. Abdi & G. Richardson (Eds.), *Decolonizing Democratic Education: Trans-disciplinary dialogues*. (pp. 13-25). Rotterdam: Sense.
- Kanu, Y. (2008). Educational needs and barriers for African refugee students in Manitoba. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 31(4), 915-940.
- Lerner, A. B. (2012). The educational resettlement of refugee children: Examining several theo-retical approaches. *Multicultural Education*, 20(1), 9–14.
- Li, X., & Grineva, M. (2017). Academic and social adjustment of high school refugee youth in Newfoundland. *TESL Canada Journal*, 34(1), 51–71.

- McBrien, J. L. (2005). Educational Needs and Barriers for Refugee Students in the United States: A Review of the Literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 329–364.
- Olsen, L. (2000). Learning English and Learning America: Immigrants in the Center of a Storm. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(4), 196-202.
- Richardson, G. H. (2002). A border within: The western Canada protocol for social studies education and the politics of national identity construction. *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Canadienses*, 4, 31-46.
- Rossiter, M. J., & Rossiter, K. R. (2009). Diamonds in the rough: Bridging gaps in support for at-risk immigrant and refugee youth. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 10 (4), 409–429.
- Roxas, K., & Roy, L. A. (2012). "That's How We Roll": A Case Study of a Recently Arrived Refugee Student in an Urban High School. *Urban Review*, 44(4), 468-486.
- Saltzman WR, Pynoos RS, Lane CM, Steinberg AM, Eisenberg E. Trauma and grief focused intervention for adolescents exposed to community violence: Results of a school-based screening and treatment protocol. *Group dynamics: Theory, research, and practice*. 2001;5:291–301.
- Shakya, Y. B., Guruge, S., Hynie, M., Akbari, A., Malik, M., Htoo, S., Khogali, A., Mona, S. A., Murtaza, R., & Alley, S. (2012). Aspirations for Higher Education among Newcomer Refugee Youth in Toronto: Expectations, Challenges, and Strategies. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 27(2), 65-78.
- Sinclair, M. (2001). Education in emergencies. In J. Crisp, C. Talbot, & D. B. Cipollone (Eds.), *Learning for a future: Refugee education in developing countries* (pp. 1-84). Lausanne, Switzerland: United Nations Publication
- Statistics Canada. 2017. *Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada. Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.
- Statistics Canada. 2017. *St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada. Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

Stewart, M. A. (2015). "My Journey of Hope and Peace" : Learning From Adolescent Refugees' Lived Experiences. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(2), 149– 159.

Szente, J., Hoot, J., & Taylor, D. (2006). Responding to the Special Needs of Refugee Children: Practical Ideas for Teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 34(1), 15-20.

Tyrer, R. A., & Fazel, M. (2014). School and community-based interventions for refugee and asylum seeking children: A systematic review. *PloS one*, 9(2), 1–12.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2018. 2019 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). What is a Refugee? Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html>. Accessed March 31st, 2020.

Zhou, M., & Bankston, C. L., III. (2000). *Straddling two social worlds: The experience of Vietnamese refugee children in the United States*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

APPENDIX A - INVITATION LETTER

Invitation Letter

Dear Administrators and Educators,

This correspondence is to invite you to participate in a study I'm currently developing titled "Investigating the Challenges that Face Refugee Students in Newfoundland and Labrador - An Educator's Perspective". The purpose of this study is to determine the obstacles that face intermediate/secondary refugee students within the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. The results of this study will be my thesis for my graduate degree with the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

To participate in this study, you are asked to contact me at garrett.flight@nlead.ca agreeing to meet with me to discuss the challenges that face refugee students as they become accustomed to their new environments and institutions. After completing this request we arrange a time that works best for you to enable me to gather your valuable input. It should be noted that the time arranged will be outside the instructional hours of the school day and the professional responsibilities of teachers and administrators. Furthermore with the unprecedented series of events that has occurred in recent months regarding COVID-19, interviews will be completed in accordance with Government policies. If you have any concerns or reservations regarding this aspect of the study please do not hesitate to inquire.

Additionally your data's anonymity and confidentiality will be protected to the best efforts of the researcher, as names will not be used. The results and findings will be reported to the research supervisor and you will have an opportunity to review your transcripts. As your decision to participate, or not, will not be reported to your employer or colleagues. Schools that have the Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) program will be the school contacted. Where there are a limited number of these schools, it is important for participants to understand that with a small group it may be possible to identify participants.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant) please contact me to discuss the issue. To speak to the ICHER please contact them at icehr@mun.ca

Thank you for your consideration of this request,

Garrett Flight, B.A, B Ed.
LEARN Teacher - Leary's Brook Junior High
Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland

APPENDIX B - BASE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Interview Guide

Prepared Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

Title: Investigating the challenges that face intermediate refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador - An Educator's Perspective

- State your name, your school, and your position
 - Years of service with the NLESD
 - Years teaching refugee youth
-
1. What academic challenges are present for refugee students who have recently entered Canada?
 2. Are there any particular challenges you see present for these students that are exclusive to Newfoundland and Labrador?
 3. Why do you think refugee youth are struggling to do well in their academics?
 4. What do you perceive as a social challenge for refugee students in the classroom of Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system? This includes integrating in schools day to day, developing peer relationships, or integration in Canadian Society
 5. What is creating these social challenges you have identified?
 6. Newfoundland and Labrador has relatively low ethnic diversity, as only 2.36% are visible minorities. Do you believe this could have an effect on refugee students' integration into the Newfoundland and Labrador school system?

7. What are some emotional challenges presented by refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador? This can include the classroom, supervision duty, or extracurricular activities.
8. Do you believe refugee students have emotional challenges that students who are from Newfoundland and Labrador do not have? If so, what are they?
9. What are the approaches to achieving proper integration for refugee youth? What are practical approaches to aid in the success of refugee education in Newfoundland and Labrador.
10. What are the benefits of the current educational programming for refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador?
11. What are the shortcomings of the current educational programming for refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador?
12. Have you ever experienced any behavioural issues by refugee students? Do you believe these undesired behaviours have roots that are exclusive to refugee students compared to students from Newfoundland and Labrador.
13. Do you believe the English Second Language support is sufficient?

14. Do you have any concrete examples of refugee students finding success in Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system? Why do you believe they have found success?

15. Do you have any concrete examples of refugee students who have struggled and not succeeded in Newfoundland and Labrador's public school system? Why do you believe they have found this outcome?

16. Do you have any other comments on challenges faced by refugee youth or their educational programming in Newfoundland and Labrador?

APPENDIX C - ICEHR ETHICS APPROVAL



Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL Canada A1C5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	20200502-ED
Approval Period:	January 7, 2020 – January 31, 2021
Funding Source:	Not Funded
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Jerome Delaney Education
Title of Project:	<i>Investigating the challenges that face refugee students in Newfoundland and Labrador - An educator's perspective</i>

January 7, 2020

Mr. Garrett Flight
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Mr. Flight:

Thank you for your correspondence addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project. ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to January 31, 2021. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project.

Please complete the ICEHR - Post-Approval Document Submission form and upload the research approval documents from the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District.

The *TCPS2* requires that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before January 31, 2021. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. If you need to make changes during the project which may raise ethical concerns, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes for the Committee's consideration prior to implementation. If funding is obtained subsequent to approval, you must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR before this clearance can be linked to your award.

All post-approval event forms noted above can be submitted from your Researcher Portal account by clicking the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Portal homepage. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Blidook, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

KB/bc

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Jerome Delaney, Faculty of Education