Placelessness through Children's Literature

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Abstract

Where do you belong? This seemingly simple question can be answered very differently by individuals of different ages. What is the developmental age when we find the answer to this question? What factors can influence our answer to this question? Answering this question or just feeling we are being questioned about it can contribute to feelings of placelessness. This can be especially difficult for the immigrant population (Schwartz et al., 2011; Syed & Juang, 2014). Additionally, since the place we live can act as a significant marker of identity (Corcoran, 2002), determining how they are connected to the place can also have an effect on a child's sense of culture and belonging. This qualitative study addresses the lacuna of research focused on the pedagogical practices teachers can use to enhance the voices of immigrant children through new understandings of place attachment in school immigrant populations and shows how schools can be supportive of children's expression of culture and community.

The study will explore how arts-based pedagogical practices and children's literature can help to enhance students' identities and voices through their shared place-based narratives. Furthermore, it will explore challenges and successes with the multimodal expressions of immigrant children's voices in a primary classroom in an Eastern Canadian school with a diverse population.

Keywords: Placelessness, Arts based practices, Place-based teaching pedagogies, Teachers, Immigrant children's voices

General Summary

In a multicultural country like Canada, a respectful, welcoming, and supportive learning environment is essential for diverse learners. To create such environments, students need to feel connected to the place. This qualitative study identifies the meaning of attachment to place for students to facilitate their expression of culture and identity. It will investigate how place-based narratives can be used to make education more culturally responsive and address students' voices and explore interventions and lessons that promote the feeling of place attachment. The researcher gathered data for this study by hosting eight classroom sessions with a classroom in Eastern Canada and engaging students in reading, storytelling and activities. The analysis of the data suggests that children's literature, multimodal storytelling, and hands-on activities aided students in expressing their agentic voices. In the follow-up interviews with students and teachers, we learned that students felt they knew each other better after these sessions and felt safer and more included in their classroom overall. Our results show that children felt a sense of belonging in places like their country or their home or with a significant person in their life, such as their mother, and that these places made them feel safe and happy. By contrast, students identified placelessness with a lack of happiness and safety, in addition to separation from their safe places and families. Students also related this feeling back to the storybooks they had read. Although this is a small case study of only one classroom, this study shows how children's literature can be effective in facilitating difficult conversations and improving feelings of inclusion and cultural diversity.

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude and respect to my supervisor, Dr. Anne Burke. Without her support and guidance, this study would not have been possible. I also thank Memorial University and its Faculty of Education for supporting and guiding me through my graduate research.

I would like to extend my love and appreciation to Farshad, my husband, for always being there for me and for helping me pursue my dreams. In honour of my parents, I would like to thank them for all they have sacrificed in order to help me become a better person and have a better life.

Additionally, I am grateful to the teachers and children who welcomed us into their classrooms and safe places; your perspectives are invaluable and will make the world a happier place.

Thesis Impact Statement

In response to the impact of the global pandemic, the researcher includes this statement at the start of the thesis, which outlines the effects of COVID-19 on the research that she has undertaken toward her master's degree, as well as other related matters. The researcher started her program at Memorial University in September 2019 and completed the course section of the program in December 2020 in the hope of starting to work and collecting data for her research afterward. Unfortunately, on March 18, 2020, the Minister of Health and Community Services of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) declared COVID-19 a public health emergency under the Public Health Protection and Promotion, ending March 14, 2022 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic impacted NL and its school communities greatly, including causing the closure of schools and delays in reopening. The impacts as a result of COVID-19 disruption included an inability to conduct face-to-face research and data collection, restricted access to libraries and other working spaces, and, most importantly, baneful effects on the mental health and well-being of the researcher due to her family and friends being in mortal danger caused by the unavailability of vaccines in her country, Iran, and the extreme spread of COVID-19.

Due to school closures at the time of the pandemic and the fact that all the necessary data for the study had to be collected within the school environment, the researcher had to postpone the collection of data until schools reopened and eventually conducted research virtually rather than in person due to health safety concerns at a later date (June 8-25, 2020) than initially planned. Virtual data collection would not have been possible without the great support and collaboration of the classroom teacher and staff of St. Andrew's Elementary school. As a result

of COVID-19 and university closures, the researcher has limited access to libraries and study places, adding to the obstacles on the way to completing the research.

Additionally, the researcher had to go through many difficult and traumatizing times in her life during the completion of this research, including flight PS.752 being shut down by the Iran government, thousands of protesters getting killed on the streets during Bloody November, no access to vaccinations amid the COVID-19 surge, and the loss of family members and friends as a result. Lastly, as I write this section of my thesis, the greatest feminist movement in history is occurring in Iran. People are getting killed on the streets for protesting for their basic human rights and demanding justice for many innocent souls murdered by the totalitarian regime of Iran. It was a very difficult year to complete this study on attachment to place while, in a parallel manner losing my attachments to the place I once used to call home.

Definitions of Terms

Placelessness: Relph (1976) investigates how places might be experienced authentically or inauthentically. An authentic sense of place is "a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places—not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, nor following stereotyped conventions" (Relph 1976, p. 64). According to Relph, a phenomenon called placelessness is increasingly replacing an authentic sense of place in the modern era.

Relph (1976) describes placelessness as the bare minimum, removing everything invested in what makes a place and space. "You have seen it, heard it, experienced it all before, and yet you have seen and experienced nothing" (Relph, 1976, p. 26).

Place-based Narratives: The concept of "place" encompasses more than just physical locales. The place is a narrative that affects identity and culture and clarifies what experience is. Exploring place and the connections that arise from it helps to create an exciting context that motivates transforming thoughts and deeds. Narratives that provide the opportunity of introducing real word experiences about different cultures and communities in the form of stories (Sobel, 2004).

Sense of Place: Sense of place is a "source of security and identity for individuals and groups of people" (Relph, 1976, p. 54). Agnew's theory (1987) also frames the sense of place as a set of feelings that people have about the place.

Attachment to a Place: Giuliani (2003) explains that attachment to place refers to people's "affective bonds with places - rootedness, sense of place, belongingness, insideness, embeddedness, attachment, affiliation, appropriation, commitment, investment, dependence, identity, etc." (p. 137). Although the sense of place is challenged by advances in contemporary

urban environments, feelings of attachment to place persist as a crucial marker of identity and community (Corcoran, 2002).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The process of formal learning in schools often exists outside of a student's context of lived life, yet this process plays a central role in their personal growth as human beings (Gruenewald & Smith, 2014; Thomas et al., 2019). Unfortunately, when a student's learning context is not factored into the formal learning process, it can increase a student's lack of attachment to places that are central to their identity construction, such as their school, homes, and community. For children, a sense of place may constitute the basis for their discovery of the self (Cobb, 1978).

The education delivery process needs to acknowledge the interconnection between individuals and their place in society (Wolff, 2011); determining how they are connected to a place can also affect a child's sense of culture and belonging. One's sense of culture and belonging is vital to acknowledge while working with children since they have different experiences and feelings associated with different spaces that can "shape the way that young children's voices are expressed and heard" (Arnott & Wall, 2022, p.106).

Forming this connection can be quite challenging as often immigrant students may have a different conceptualization of place due to various factors, such as their time spent in a place, their prior experience in schools in other places, and their feelings. Arefi (1999) states that a "sense of place examines people's ties and attachments to their places" (p.180).

This matter may be more significant in immigrant children's school populations because their sense and feelings for a place may draw from past learning and schooling experiences and,

at times, be oriented around memories and traditions. Notably, the feeling of attachment to a place resonates as a significant marker of identity and community (Corcoran, 2002); however, it can also impact the expression of a child's sense of culture and belonging to a community. The feeling of attachment to a place and a community is significant, since each reinforces the identity of the other. Additionally, the connection between culture and immigration has historically been a reciprocal one. In industrialized nations like Canada, migration helps to create a wide variety of cultures, ethnicities, and races (Bhugra & Becker, 2005).

When considering school as a place, based on the definition by Gussow (1974), a place can be referred to as "parts of the environment which give rise to our experiences and are claimed by feelings" (p. 11). Therefore, it could be considered that a student's connection to their school is very significant and vital for enabling their voices and their expression of culture and identity.

Voice is often presumed to be verbal when applied to children (Wall et al., 2019); however, this assumption becomes more complicated regarding immigrant student populations, as an immigrant child may be misjudged due to a lack of English language proficiency or a different social mentality resulting from other cultural experiences when compared to their Canadian classmates.

This study addresses the lacuna of research focused on the pedagogical practices that teachers can use to enhance the voices of immigrant children through new understandings of what place attachment can mean for this population, helping schools to remain a place supportive of children's expression of culture and community.

Globally, there have been significant changes in the dispersion of populations around the world. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the most

significant level of displacement on record globally shows more than 68 million people worldwide being forced to leave their homes (UNHCR, 2011). Over 26.4 million of these individuals are classified as refugees, with over half under 18, with only two-thirds of these refugee youth making it to secondary school due to the difficulties caused by their forced immigration (UNHCR, 2021). This gap has become more significant amid widespread school closures due to the ongoing pandemic, and these learners, in general, are among the most prominent groups to be affected by school closures (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Kuhfeld et al., 2020). These issues are happening in Canada as well.

Canada, as a country with a multicultural society and the first country in the world to adopt a multiculturalism policy (Jedwab, 2020), could advance its educational system by ensuring that all students feel connected to their schools and that their voices are being heard, alongside their expression of culture and identity within the education system. The next section expands on this assertion, discussing how we may facilitate these voices and expressions in the classroom by building a sense of attachment to place for these learners.

1.2 Research Rationale

Although research has been conducted on the phenomenon of attachment to place and placelessness (Corcoran, 2002; Gruenewald & Smith, 2014; Orr, 1992; Relph, 1976; Smith & Sobel, 2014), little is known about how they are experienced by immigrant children. Arefi (2007) states that the meaning of place has transformed over time, affecting the meaning of people's attachment to the place: “While 'placeness' embedded in rootedness connotes belonging, envisions fate and destiny and embodies will and volition, placelessness signifies loss of meaning” (p. 183). Relph (1976) describes placelessness as the bare minimum, removing everything invested in what makes a place and space. “You have seen it, heard it, experienced it

all before, and yet you have seen and experienced nothing," wrote Relph (1976, p. 26) as a definition of this phenomenon.

In recent years, there have been 244 million migrants globally, and that number is anticipated to keep increasing, according to the United Nations Migration Report from 2018 (UNM, 2018). It is crucial for academics in the field of education and immigration to focus on the physiological and social effects of this phenomenon on their research participants. With a growing population of immigrants in North America (Chuang & Moreno, 2011), it is necessary to study how immigrant students' understanding of place through their own narratives can be used to address this phenomenon. Supporting this need is the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the late 1980s, heralding a greater exploration of children's voices and rights (Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015; Honkanen & Karlsson, 2018; Lundy et al., 2011; Nilsson et al., 2018). The UNCRC prompted a shift in how children are treated in research, viewing them as "active rather than passive research participants; subjects rather than objects" (Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015, p.162). The organization also redefined children "as social actors in their own lives, not as the passive results of socialization" (Honkanen & Karlsson, 2018, p. 185). While teachers and schools have now incorporated the UNCRC's outlined suggestions to provide a focused time and place for children's voices, immigrant children are often still silenced.

Some immigrant children may experience placelessness as a result of this silencing. This problem is particularly significant in immigrant children's school populations because their feelings of place are rooted in the past and often oriented around memories and traditions of a past life. A child's attachment to a place is tied to their identity within their community (Corcoran, 2002); thus, when not recognized as interdependent on a number of contexts and

cultural experiences in schools, attachment to place can impact a child's understanding of their culture and position in their community. In consideration of placelessness and how children's voices factor into their identity, formal education in schools may be isolated from the students' community contexts (Gruenewald & Smith, 2014). Prior research on the phenomenon of placelessness has largely ignored the perspectives of immigrant children on several levels.

Canada's immigrant school population may experience placelessness on social, political, psychological, and phenomenological levels. As previously noted, with a growing population of immigrants in North America (Chuang & Moreno, 2011), there is a need to research the impact of placelessness on immigrant children in schools.

Understandably, the growth in the population of immigrants leads to more diversity in Canadian classrooms. Alongside this, diversity brings various cultures, voices, and identities into the school that must be acknowledged to foster an attachment to the place. Students may have a different attachment to school as a place in consideration of various factors, such as the length of their attachment to the place, their prior experiences of school, and their emotions regarding their immigration journey. This study, with the use of rich data, intends to explore the difficulties immigrant students experience due to a lack of attachment to their living place within an elementary school when expressing their culture and identity.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In addressing the above research problem, the study specifically investigates the following objectives, which underpin the purpose of this study, and which attempt to:

i. Identify a meaningful attachment to a place where students may facilitate their expression of culture and identity.

ii. Investigate how such place narratives can be used to make education more culturally responsive through addressing students' voices.

iii. Explore interventions and lessons with pedagogical practices that promote the feeling of place attachment.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What does Placelessness mean for Canadian and Immigrant students?
2. How might children's place-based narratives be used in the classroom to address the phenomenon of Placelessness and expressions of culture and identity?
3. What examples of compelling place-based narratives in the classroom enhance the feeling of place attachment in the student population?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Research findings from this study may ultimately promote a learner's success inside and outside the school since a sense of attachment to place, developed by combatting placelessness, resonates as a significant marker of identity and community (Corcoran, 2002) and will help with heralding a more thorough exploration of children's voices and rights (Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015; Honkanen & Karlsson, 2018; Lundy et al., 2011; Nilsson et al., 2018).

In addition, classrooms where students feel attached and where educators handle cultural identities will promote a sense of belonging for learners from diverse backgrounds (Hausmann et al., 2007). Furthermore, classrooms that students feel attached to and where educators handle

multiculturalism well tend to promote a sense of belonging for learners with diverse backgrounds (Hausmann et al., 2007).

The pedagogical focus of this study is pivotal since research shows that, with a growing population of immigrants in North America (Chuang & Moreno, 2011), studying this issue with immigrant students is essential, as is thinking about how their sense of place through personal narratives may be used to address it. Therefore, opportunities such as providing a space for students to feel safe enough to express their identity should be encouraged and promoted among children (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012; Lindsay et al., 2013). This study provides the opportunity to identify and use compelling place-based narratives focused on the children's voices in the classroom, a pedagogical approach that has been shown to lead to equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning practices. Through narrative, we gain a deeper understanding of Canadian and immigrant children's experiences of placelessness and attachment to place.

1.5 Scope of the Thesis

The study's specific objectives included identifying the identity and culture of grade four students and learning how teachers may strengthen students' attachment to place through the facilitation of their voices in the classroom, using place as a way to communicate children's narratives.

Sobel (2004) defined place-based education as the process of using the community students are living in to teach different concepts and subjects in the curriculum, thus benefiting real-world experiences. By using place-based narratives, we have the opportunity of introducing these real-world experiences about different cultures and communities in the form of stories. This approach to education "increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger

ties to the community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens" (Sobel, 2004, p. 7).

The geographical setting of the study is the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (hereafter NL), Canada. The school was close to where the researcher lived, and there was a large international population and many multicultural learners at the school. Additionally, the school and school board embraced the study, as their school development plan was to embrace more culturally responsive practices by recognizing and utilizing the skills and abilities that each student brings to the classroom and by ensuring that all students are engaged in meaningful learning experiences. These practices build community and a sense of place for the school's students.

1.6 Synopsis of the Research

This study has five chapters. The first chapter comprises a background of the study, a statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and a synopsis of the research. The second chapter reviews related studies and details the gaps in the literature and the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The third chapter describes the research methodology, comprising the research design, study setting, population, sampling method and sample size, instrumentation, data collection procedure, research ethics, and data analysis technique. The fourth chapter presents and discusses the study's data through children's experiences. The fifth chapter presents conclusions, recommendations, and future research directions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This study explores the meaning of attachment to place and placelessness for students and how to strengthen this attachment by facilitating their voices and expression of culture and identity using place-based narratives. This chapter provides a review of the literature on this topic.

This chapter investigates four main topics in the literature, which are the critical concepts in line with the research objectives: place, immigration, culture and identity, and place-based narratives. The chapter will expand on identifying a meaningful attachment to a place where students may facilitate their expression of culture and identity, investigating how such place narratives can be used to make education more culturally responsive through addressing students' voices and exploring interventions and lessons with pedagogical practices that promote the feeling of place attachment.

2.1 The Concept of Immigration

In today's world, migration is a very well-known phenomenon. However, migration can be a stressful experience for people going through it. In general, migration is defined as the movement of people from one place to another, affecting two geographical units: origin and destination (Bhugra & Jones, 2001).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that more than 68 million people worldwide have been compelled to leave their homes, representing the greatest level of global displacement ever recorded. Only two-thirds of the nearly 26.4 million people who are categorized as refugees—of whom more than half are under 18—complete secondary education (UNHCR, 2021).

Because of the widespread school closings brought on by the COVID-19 outbreak, this gap has grown increasingly serious. Learners, in general, are probably among the most prominent groups to be affected indirectly by the pandemic due to school closures (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Kuhfeld et al., 2020). The pandemic has affected Newfoundland and Labrador like any other province in the world.

Newfoundland is a Canadian province located at the eastern edge of North America with a growing immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2017) and a total population of 510,550 and 14,250 immigrants (Census,2021). The population of Newfoundland is becoming more multicultural, and according to the 2016 census, approximately 4,000 minorities made up a significant portion of St. John's population, the province's capital. The number of immigrants entering the province is increasing yearly, nearly doubling from 546 in 2007 to 1,190 in 2016. As a result, there will be an increasing number of children from other countries and cultures in early childhood programmes and K-12 schools, and these students will require extensive support from the province's education system.

People immigrating to Canada are primarily people who choose to leave their country and reside in Canada or refugees fleeing war, persecution, or other insecurity; however, both groups are influenced by migration, and the education of their children may differ significantly compared to their previous educational experiences (Li X. et al. 2016). It can be more challenging in this province since “Newcomers to Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) are faced with unique integration challenges due to the province’s cultural and linguistic homogeneity (Li X. et al. 2017. p.1106).

2.1.1 Repulsion and Attraction of Places

Lee (1966) defines migration broadly as a "permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (p. 49). He explains migration under the effect of the following four significant factors: first, factors associated with the area of origin; second, factors associated with the area of destination; third, intervening obstacles; and fourth, personal factors.

Accordingly, the tendency to migrate is created if the total result of motivating and deterrent factors is favourable. If personal factors fail to eliminate this tendency and obstacles in the way of migration do not exert any deterrent effect, migration takes place, and the individual begins their journey from origin to destination. Moreover, Lee (1996) states that there are interfering barriers between two places that are small in some cases and more significant in other cases.

Some characteristics effectively attract people to the area of destination (positive symptoms), and other characteristics lead to the removal of individuals from their area of origin (negative symptoms). The sum of the positive and negative symptoms is different for any immigrant. At the same time, it is possible to distinguish classes of people who respond similarly to these symptoms. The effects of each of these symptoms will vary according to personality, age, sex, level of education, skill level, race, ethnicity, and more. One such group is immigrant children (Lee,1996).

Stark and Taylor (1989) consider migration a phenomenon that affects the social organization of origin and destination. Adaptability to society's dominant values and norms is difficult for immigrants who decide to migrate. This adjustment is more difficult for the people who are forced into it. According to Stermac et al. (2012), individuals from all over the world are

forced into migration and resettlement due to military conflicts and war, and Canada is one of the countries to which these immigrants travel (Government of Canada, 2021).

2.1.2 Immigration and Children

The realization of children's rights worldwide faces many challenges. Of the 272 million refugees in 2019, 33 million were children (UNICEF, 2019). Individual factors, such as previous educational experience and flexibility to adopt a new environment, can encounter social and educational barriers and lead to negative consequences in countries where immigration has taken place (Harry et al., 2008). Having ample knowledge on the psychological and social effects of Immigration is essential to study fields related to education of immigrant population.

Migration can impact children's and adults' mental health (Barrett et al., 2000; Stevens et al., 2015). Therefore, migration and its related processes have been widely studied as a contributing factor to the mental health of children and adolescents (Bhugra, 2004; DuPlessis & Cora-Bramble, 2005; Stevens & Vollebergh, 2008).

Children who endure unpleasant experiences early in life will be less able to learn from life's experiences and using and understanding emotional information (Gabbard et al., 2018), which leads to greater emotional instability and a higher risk for psychiatric disorders (Chartier et al., 2009). Although the number of immigrant students is increasing worldwide for numerous reasons, we do not witness the same growth in the training and education of the teachers and professionals who will work with these students in the classroom. Lawson et al. (2019) recognize that most educators, including university professors of education, are not prepared to assess and address students' trauma symptoms, which can be caused by immigration.

The stress caused by the migration process stems from the lack of family and friends, the unavailability of cultural customs, and the need to adapt to the new cultural environment

(Guarnaccia & Lopez, 1998). Financial, occupational, and social stressors such as social isolation or anxiety resulting from a significant change in life, may also happen during or after immigration, alongside the arousal of intergenerational conflict in immigrant families (Le & Stockdale, 2008). Immigrant children may also face racism (Noh & Kaspar, 2003), which can negatively affect their psychological functioning (Pasco & Richman., 2009). An extensive study in Germany showed that one in six immigrant children report a history of discrimination and racism (Baier et al., 2019). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect that migrant students may exhibit more emotional and behavioural problems than their Canadian classmates (Montogomery & Foldspang, 2008; Stevens et al., 2015).

Immigration can lead to language barriers, economic pressures, experiences of discrimination, and family segregation (Arbona et al., 2010; Leidy et al., 2012). In fact, many of the factors that exist in the living environment of immigrant children can negatively affect their mental health (Kouider et al., 2014). Intercultural differences can also be detrimental, such as the different parenting styles (permissive, authoritative, neglectful, and authoritarian) of the country of origin versus the destination country.

In general, a low level of education or low socioeconomic status are risk factors for emotional and behavioural problems in children, and migration is often associated with socioeconomic difficulties. For example, a study by Kouider et al. (2014) stated that most of the immigrant child population lives in a different socioeconomic status compared to their origin country.

The exceptional circumstances of immigrant children can cause more psychological stress than the circumstances of non-immigrant children. The stressors described above can affect their social relations in various ways (Kouider et al., 2014), including causing them to

withdraw from the community and increasing the possibility of forming an ethnic-racial group in the classroom or society, which was something that could be witnessed in the classroom being studied for this research. Due to cultural differences, migrant children may face identity development challenges. Efforts for identity and cultural expression and orientation toward cultural cohesion and family and school standards are challenges that immigrant children may experience (El-mafaalani & Toprak, 2011).

The immigration process, as discussed previously, can lead to a high prevalence of psychological problems in immigrant children. On average, immigrant students show significantly higher academic failure, dropout rates and risk of experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Therefore, the need to provide a safe place in the school that enables them to express their identity and culture and have a feeling of attachment to that place is imperative.

2.2 The Concept of Place Attachment

Guiliani (2003) explains how, as human beings, we all have formed a bond with some places during our life, positively or negatively. It could be a place existing in our past, such as a house we lived in during our childhood, or in our present, such as the university at which we are studying, or it could be an imaginative attachment to a place in our future, such as the country or city to which we want to move. In her study on the theory of attachment and place attachment, Giuliani (2003) states that "The very variety of terms used to refer to affective bonds with places - rootedness, sense of place, belongingness, insideness, embeddedness, attachment, affiliation, appropriation, commitment, investment, dependence, identity, etc. – seem to indicate not so much a diversity of concepts and reference models as vagueness in the identification of the phenomenon" (p. 137).

Moving to a new place and not having enough knowledge of the place on different aspects, such as cultural context, can cause enormous pressure on immigrant children and their parents (Li,2016) as it requires them to get familiar with the new place to create “a mediated space” that they can feel connected to and live their daily life (Li, 2010, 2015).

The growth in voluntary or compulsory relocations of people worldwide has greatly impacted the formation of attachments to places during a person's lifetime, and this trend is expected to continue in the years to come. Sennett (2000) asserts that connection and involvement with specific places is dissipated, and the accumulation of common history and of communal memory lessens as capitalism spreads its tentacles globally into the public space of the city.

The 21st century has brought many challenges into our lives, which has led to the NL government reviewing their international educational policies to acquire and implement new teaching strategies to prepare students in competencies such as creativity, innovation, collaboration, communication, character, culture, ethics citizenship, and computer and digital technologies (NL Department of Education, 2013).

One of many challenges occurring in this century is the continued growth of the diversity of students in the classroom. According to the 2020 annual report to parliament on immigration, Canada welcomed over 341,000 permanent residents, including 30,000 resettled refugees; over 402,000 study permits and 404,000 temporary work permits were also issued. NL is recognized as a province in Canada that follows the same trend as other provinces in the growth of international students and diverse learners in schools (Statistics Canada, 2021).

This diversity introduces various cultures, voices, and identities into the classroom that need to be acknowledged in order to foster an attachment to place. Students may have a different

concept of a place depending on various factors, such as the length of their connection to the place, their prior experiences, and their feelings. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that place plays a significant role in creating open discourse for voice.

2.2.1 Sense of Place

The Dictionary of Human Geography can be one of the first sources to clarify the different senses we can attribute to place. This dictionary defines a place as "a portion of geographic space" (Johnston et al., 2000, p. 582). The Encyclopedia of Sustainable Tourism defines the sense of place as “the compound and often complex meanings assigned to a place by a person or group” (Cater et al., 2015, p.379).

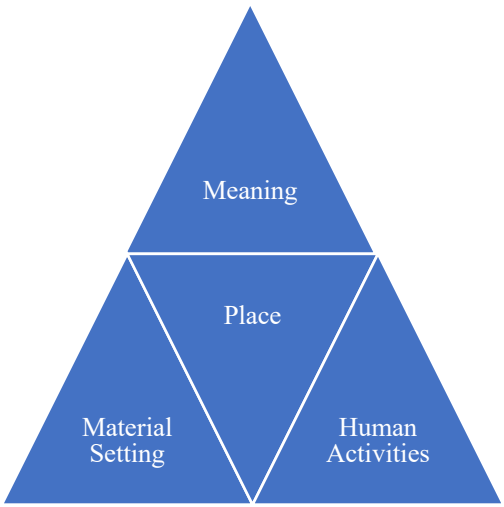
This concise conceptualization already signals the relevance of the relation between space and place. Another list of different meanings can be found by looking up a non-geographical source like the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary; "physical environment" and "a particular part of a surface or body" are some definitions included in that list.

To have a clear understanding of placelessness, we need first to clarify the concept of place. We may consider "place" a common concept that is present in our everyday life. It is a term that impacts our understanding of the location and our own identity as belonging or not belonging to a place; "one might think that such a concept would be relatively easy to define and describe," Staeheli claims (2003, p. 158). Nevertheless, the extensive bibliography (Lewicka, 2011; Relph, 1976; Trentelman, 2009; Tuan, 1977) focusing on different aspects of the notion of place demonstrates that it could easily be one of the most contested terms in human geography. The feelings evoked by the term, the different ways it has been used by the theorists, and the importance of the social roles concerning place are some of the arguments given by researchers to explain the complexity and variety of shades of the concept (Masterson et al., 2017; Relph,

1976). A study by Masterson et al. (2017) underlined the significance of evaluative place attachment and descriptive place meanings as research tools to examine systematic differences in the sense of place within or among people or types of locales and the consequences for resilience. Seminal work by Relph (1976) provided one of the most comprehensive definitions and explanations for the concept of place. He had identified a variety of definitions for a place, considering how we experience these places, based on four main themes. The first theme considers how the relationship between space and place may project the range of place experiences and concepts for an individual. The second theme focuses on the profound psychological links between people and places that emerge when exploring the different components and intensities of one's place experience. The third theme is what makes Relph's research seminal, as it analyzes the nature of the identity of places and also people's identity with regard to places. Finally, he illustrated how place attachment is manifested in the making of places and landscapes.

Figure 1

Identity of Place, Source Researcher's Construct of Relph (1976)



Relph (1976) argues that distinctive and diverse places are manifestations of a deeply felt involvement with those places by the people who lived in them. For many, such a profound attachment to a place is as necessary and significant as an attachment that comes with a close relationship with others.

He also mentions that places are a “source of security and identity for individuals and groups of people" (Relph, 1976, p. 54). As a result, Relph’s scholarship reminds us not to lose the means of experiencing, creating, and maintaining significant places. Moreover, with the increase of movement in global population patterns, signs are emerging that these means by which place helps to construct one’s identity and attachment are disappearing and that placelessness is now a dominant force and has a deep association with places to rootlessness.

2.2.2 Conceptualization of The Structure of Feelings Around Place

Corcoran's (2002) research on the meaning of place attachment and its connection to location in marginalized neighbourhoods evidenced that the sense of a place is constructed through the accumulation and archive of memories and experiences. Corcoran states, "Place is a slippery term difficult to define. Embedded within the concept of place are layers of sedimented meaning derived from memory, sentiment, tradition, and identification with a spatial location" (p. 49). Researchers Shannon and Galle (2017), in their book *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Pedagogy and Place-based Education: From Abstract to the Quotidian*, define place as a “socially constructed and negotiated setting bounded by time and space and is tied in intimate ways to our sensory experience” (p. 2). Arefi (1999) states that a “sense of place examines people's ties and attachments to their places” (p. 180), or what Agnew (1987) has called the “structure of feeling.”

Relph (1976) categorizes place as less where something is on a map and more about the event connected to a place that establishes an emotional connection. This definition provides us with a perspective for a place as being an emotional connection, such that you may be drawn to a particular place as opposed to avoiding a place, not because of your dislike of the architecture, but because of what experience you associate with the event happening there.

A significant factor that needs to be considered when providing an environment to which children can feel connected is to avoid separating these places from their conceptual and experiential context. In other words, children's learning is tied to concepts as well as life experiences; this is in line with the study done by Smith and Sobel (2014) on how place and community-based education can be effective to prevent the separation of children and teenagers experiences in the school from their life in their home and community.

2.2.3 Place and Immigration

It is essential to attend carefully to the requisite requirements of making the place a relational space for immigrant students in Canada who face the dilemma of placelessness on political, psychological, and phenomenological levels. Place-based narratives can be used to address this phenomenon effectively. For example, Powers (2004) analyzed the effects of four place-based narrative education programs on teachers, students, schools, and communities; Chawla and Escalante (2007) studied the benefit of this approach on immersing students in different cultures, opportunities and experiences; and Smith and Sobel (2014) addressed critical gaps in the experiences of children, including contact with the natural world and contact with the community, using place-based narratives.

Relph (1976) postulates that the relationship between community and place is meaningful and significant since each reinforces the identity of the other, and that landscape is an expression of values and beliefs held by the community composed of interpersonal involvements. In this regard, child immigrants entering Canada for the first time do not have a common understanding of their new landscape or its identity, since they have little comparison to past lived experiences. The experience of being in a classroom can be different for each individual, no matter their ethnicity, since our identity allows us to live a place differently and experience a place through the lens of our attitudes, experiences, and intentions and from our unique circumstances (Lowenthal, 1961). In his study on geography, experience, and immigration, Lowenthal (1961) stated that our conceptualizations of place are built by our actions and experiences; two siblings living in the same house may have a different perception of place because they had different experiences in their lives, and the place is very much tied to our choices, actions and experiences in life.

People quickly attach to new places in contemporary society either because the landscapes are similar to ones already known to them or because they are open to new experiences (Adams et al., 2016). It can be a different experience for immigrant children from developing countries with very different landscapes from Canada, who were forced to emigrate and adapt to the new environment (Government of Canada, 2021). In such situations, "individuals and groups need to work out how to live together, adopting various strategies that will allow them to achieve a reasonably successful adaptation to living interculturally" (Berry et al., 2006, p. 305). For children, the process of adjusting to a new culture, language, and customs is stressful. This is especially true for refugee children, who bring with them the lingering effects of loss, trauma, family breakdown, and social isolation (Bhugra & Becker,2005).

2.3 Culture and Identity in Education

Researchers, such as Bouchard (2015), Fleras and Elliot (2002), and Jedwab (2020), cite Canada as the first nation to implement a multiculturalism policy and a nation having a multicultural society. Importantly, Jedwab (2020) analyzes the policy, ideology, and message of multiculturalism in Canada and states that this country has the opportunity to advance its educational system by ensuring that all students' voices are being heard and their expression of culture and identity is being acknowledged in the education system.

In Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, "diversity" is defined as "the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society" (2009, p. 4). This diversity can hold very different dimensions, such as culture, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and more. It is paramount that such dimensions be considered when looking at culture and identity in Canadian classrooms.

Childs' recent work (2020) attests to how, in a pluralistic society, an individual's desire to live in harmony with their identity will naturally result in a society with diverse cultures. Based on their work with teachers and their views regarding culturally responsive education, Karataş and Oral's (2015) study foregrounds identity as something that one has publicly declared to be affiliated with, such as race, tribe, or religion.

It should be noted that racial, cultural, and ethnic identities are a part of an individual's identity. This identity varies as a result of migration and acculturation and as an individual develops on the social, personal, and professional levels (Bhugra, 2004).

2.3.1 Culture and Perception of Migration

Culture is an essential tool for empowering and expressing the diversity of people in society. There are different ways of understanding culture. Sager (2007) believes that we can

categorize culture into general and societal cultures to understand it better. Kymlicka (2001) defines societal culture as a culture that involves a common language and social institutions and general culture as one that emphasizes common religious beliefs, family customs, or personal lifestyles.

To have a clear comprehension of cultural identity, there is a need to consider all aspects of culture in individuals' lives. Culture is learned and passed down from generation to generation and includes the beliefs and value system of a society. It is described as a shared feature that connects people to be part of a community. Identity is also the totality of one's perception of oneself or how we, as individuals, consider ourselves unique to others (Karataş & Oral, 2015; Ramos et al., 2019).

The connection between culture and immigration has historically been a reciprocal one. Migration contributes to the abundance of diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and races in developed countries such as Canada (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Immigration has also allowed a variety of people to recognize new cultural diversity, create new experiences in the course of life, and shape a new structure of everyday life.

Nevertheless, migration and cultural divisions also pose several challenges for migrants (Choi, 1973; Lee et al., 2014; Mori, 2000; Bell& Ward, 2000). Immigrants experience a variety of stressors that can affect their mental health, including adaptation to new cultures, changes in their cultural identity, and the loss of cultural norms, religious customs, and social support systems (Koch, 2003; Van de Vijver et al., 2005; Yakushko et al., 2008).

2.3.2 Cultural Compatibility

Immigrants migrate from diverse cultural backgrounds with diverse cultural identities. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, various factors influence cultural identity during and after migration. Cultural differences is a severe issue that immigrants experience.

In determining the degree of adaptation to the migration process, it is crucial to consider the nature of the community from which one has migrated and the social characteristics of the person who has migrated. Socially oriented or collectivist societies emphasize cohesion, strong bonds between individuals, group solidarity, emotional interdependence, traditionalism, and collective identity. Based on the 2017 Census, 3675 immigrants resided in NL from 2011 to 2016 (Census, 2017). This requires an educational system in which this population can express their culture and identity in different places, such as their schools and communities, and not feel like "Others" or experience "Othering" in these places (Nxumalo, 2018; Ritchie, 2016). Weil (1996) describes what needs to be rooted in individuals to help them avoid being different or left out: "to be attached to places and have profound ties with them is an essential human need" (p. 53).

More recently, Relph (2014) mentioned two significant reasons for attempting to understand the phenomenon of the place: first, it is interesting in its own right as a fundamental expression of man's involvement in the world; and second, improved knowledge of the nature of the place can contribute to the maintenance and manipulation of existing places and the creation of new policies. Another important reason for studying place is its effect on individuals; the identity of places can affect the identity of the people living there.

Erikson (1959) noted, "the term *identity* connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of character with others" (p.102). Relph (1976)

added to this that "identity is founded both in the individual person or object and in the culture to which they belong" (p. 63). Therefore, the identity of immigrant children is rooted in the identity of the place where they have grown up, so they may enter the classroom with a different identity compared to other Canadian students; they lack a persistent sharing of some kind of character with others, which is a part of the definition of identity. However, the question is, does this identity change over time? Are some ways to make these identities similar to the identity of the place they are living in now? There is an inner instinct in human beings to make themselves compatible with the environment they are living in. This compatibility can be in terms of culture, language, lifestyle, and more.. To elaborate on the concept of Outsideness and Insideness and to distinguish different degrees of the emotional attachment of human beings to specific places, we can look at the different categories proposed by Ralph (1976):

- Existential outsideness: self-conscious and reflective involvement, alienation from people and places, homelessness, a sense of unreality of the world and of not belonging.
- Objective outsideness: deliberate adoption of dispassionate attitudes towards places to consider them selectively in terms of their locations or as spaces where objects and activities are located.
- Incidental outsideness: places that we visit.
- Vicarious insideness: second-hand experiences of a place.
- Behavioural insideness: being in a place and seeing it as a set of objects, views, and activities arranged in a certain way and having certain observable qualities.
- Empathetic insideness: willingness to be open to the significance of a place, to feel it, to know and respect symbols.
- Existential insideness: deep and complete identity, unreflect.

In terms of different modes of place experiences, immigrant children's goal is often to move from existential outsideness to existential insideness.

To address the connection to place, there is a need for a shared world pedagogy to frame these ties for students to avoid "othering" feeling and experiences. Taylor (2013) defines common worlding as "thinking about common worlds as dynamic collectives of humans and more-than-humans, full of unexpected partnerships and comings together" (p. 78). This view helps children and educators move from learning from, to learning with.

The common worlds framework is seen as a creative and productive way to respond to anthropogenic challenges because it allows educators to extend their practices to the more-than-human worlds, see complex entanglements, and build a collective instead of a child-centric pedagogy. This work is informed by the fluid connections between humans and more-than-humans and the ethics in constructing this collective (Nelson et al., 2018; Taylor, 2017).

2.3.3 Culture and Voice Expression

Based on article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), voice is presumed to be verbal in children, but this can be different in regard to immigrant children who do not have enough English language knowledge and proficiency or are not sufficiently socially aware to air their voices. What does voice look like in an immigrant child who has no sense of the place where they are?

While much has been written about the voices of children and how to support them in expressing their views (Bartels et al., 2016; Clark, 2005; Kellett, 2014; Smith, 2016; Wall, 2017), there is still a lacuna in the studies done on the voices of immigrant children.

2.4 Place-Based Narratives

Capra (2002) argued, "the process of knowing is the process of life. The organizing activity of living systems, at all levels of life, is mental activity" (p. 34). This type of curriculum can be found in place-based education. No education system can function in isolation from the social surroundings in which it exists. One of its fundamental aims is to build a bridge between one generation and another. The primary task of education is to socialize the young to understand the needs, goals, and expectations of the society in which they live. Education is primarily a social system, and education and society are not mutually interdependent and they reflect one another (Kantzara, 2016, Trent et al., 1985). In this sense, Durkheim (1956) referred to education as the “methodical socialization of the young” (p.71).

Place-based learning engages students in their community, including their physical environment, local culture, history, and people. With place-based learning, students see the results of their work in their community. They build communication and inquiry skills, learn how to interact with any environment, and better understand themselves and their place in the world.

Powers (2004) states that place-based education is a learning strategy that focuses on applying the local community as an integrating context for the learning process, and is grounded in the local community's resources, issues, and values. This term is often used with other similar terms, including community-based learning, service-learning, environment, and project-based learning. Smith and Sobel (2014) offer a diverse range of definitions that discuss the history and uniqueness of place- and community-based education. One characteristic that sets place- and community-based education apart is the ability to achieve a balance between the human and non-human by providing ways to foster "sets of understanding and patterns of behaviour essential to create a society that is both socially just and ecologically sustainable" (p. 22).

Chawla and Escalante (2007) stated that, from the outdoor program of place-based education approaches, students have shown higher cooperation and conflict resolution skills, more positive environmental behaviours, and better problem-solving, learning motivation, and classroom behaviour.

Gussow (1974) states that "a place is a piece of the whole environment which feelings have claimed" (p. 11). In order to feel this feeling regarding the classroom and school, students must be able to do what is suggested by Knapp (2010) as bridging the gap between students' lives outside of school and what they encounter in the classroom. Schools must encourage students to examine and portray aspects of their world that have been left out of the images encountered on television and contemporary films, and they should seek to stimulate in students a way of seeing the world that focuses less on the conquest and consumption of places than on the building of relationships and personal meaning (Graham, 1995).

To facilitate building this relationship, we as teachers must have answers to what we are doing in our schools and what education has to do with our lives. We should consider what education is, our place in the system, how it has formed who we have become as teachers and learners, and our motivations and inspirations.

Based on NL Schools' Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting policy, "learning environments need to be places where we foster hope and the joy of learning" (2017, p. 2). Assessment and evaluation need to provide opportunities to promote learning, show learners their strengths and how they can progress, and provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their practice to respond to the learners' needs (NL Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Policy, 2021). These needs are different for different groups of students. For example, immigrant students in Canada face the dilemma of placelessness on political, psychological, and

phenomenological levels, and place-based narratives can effectively address this phenomenon. This is a significant issue, because the educational materials that immigrant students use in their classrooms are strongly tied to their understanding of that specific country and context. Education must acknowledge the interconnection between individuals, their place in society, and their nature as biological beings.

Wolff (2011) postulates, “humans shape their relationship to nature through their views of themselves, of others, and the entire planet” (p. 329).

2.4.1 Placelessness and Place-based narratives

Using place-based narratives in the classrooms, we can address immigrant children's concept of place attachment and the phenomenon of placelessness. Relph (1976) describes placelessness as the bare minimum, removing everything invested in what makes a place and space. Relph (1975) states, “within one person, the mixing of experience, emotion, memory, imagination, present situation, and intention can be so varied that he can see a particular place in several different ways" (p. 43). In this chapter, we consider that immigrant children could have a different view of their new living place or classroom than their Canadian classmates. Sharing place-based narratives can be used in the classroom to enhance the feeling of place attachment in the immigrant population and how it may affect their expression of culture and community.

The use of children's books is instrumental to our study. Children come across books daily and can get a quick glimpse of the characters, setting, and mood through illustrations or pictures in the book. Children learn that stories can be about individuals like them, stories about their experiences are worth telling, and other children have felt just like them. Children's literature can build a sense of inclusion, fight intolerance, and aid in addressing the issue of social justice goals in schools, such as belonging, acceptance, and equality. Curricular resources

such as children's literature relevant to children's social and cultural experiences pique their interest and inspire them to learn more (Hade, 2002). Tomilson discusses how "international stories teach children about their peers in other lands since they bring the people, history, and traditions of these countries to life and counteract stereotypes" (1999, p. 15, cited from Monobe & Son, 2014, p. 69).

Although current children's literature deals with various social justice issues, some teachers are reluctant to expose children to the realities of these atrocities. Some adults feel the need to protect children from life's realities, which can result in children's literature that does not give an accurate depiction of war and that focuses on heroism rather than the truth of the devastation that war causes. However, children are "much more resilient, hopeful, and capable of dealing with reality than adults often give them credit for," and "the Western conception of childhood is overgeneralized, essentialist, and ignores versions of childhood vastly different from middle-class, white heterosexual ones" (Minslow, 2017, p. 203).

Children's literature is vital to encourage students to view things from other perspectives and develop empathy. When discussing issues of war and displacement, it is beneficial to introduce multiple pieces of children's literature to children, especially if students lack an awareness of those atrocities. By choosing not to incorporate the realities of atrocities into the curriculum, adults are not protecting children, but instead are censoring the information they provide to students. Historically, the murder and displacement of many Indigenous peoples in Canada during European settlement have not been heavily discussed in classroom literature, resulting in an extensive delay and disengagement in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. A lack of understanding within and between different cultures and societies contributes to a bigger problem when students make boundaries between their own country or people and “Others.”

This ultimately leads to a distinction between "us" and "them" (Monobe & Son, 2014, p. 69). Therefore, adults must choose quality examples of children's literature that identify the realities of events, such as European settlement, to ensure no "gaps in knowledge" (Minslow, 2017, p. 206) about the atrocities occurring around the world.

Because topics that address atrocities can be challenging to discuss with small children, Roberts and Crawford (2009) suggest that these books be used as read-aloud, and that adults help children understand the concepts in the books, offering them positive solutions to these problems. Additionally, children should read books that discuss the complex realities of war but also "demonstrate great care and concern for their intended audience" and offer hope for world peace, encouraging the students to be the change needed for society (Minslow, 2017, p. 200). When introducing concepts about war and displacement, teachers and parents must explain these ideas in age- and developmentally appropriate ways. Students should understand that the victims of these atrocities are real, even if the story is fictional (Minslow, 2017).

While it is critical for asylum seekers and refugees to see their stories told in schools, it is also essential for Indigenous students to hear these stories and learn about other people's experiences. These accounts are crucial in demonstrating that refugees are "ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances" (Hope, 2008, p. 297) and in helping children develop empathy toward them. Picture books also allow children to explore their cultural identities, understand other cultures, and become more aware of diverse cultural perspectives and the universality of the human experience. This can help prevent the stereotyping of other cultures (Monobe & Son, 2014). Students will ultimately become more empathetic, tolerant, and compassionate when educators incorporate children's literature that discusses placelessness in the classroom. Using appropriate children's literature to teach about placelessness allows all children to place

themselves in the characters' shoes and empathize with their experiences. Students will ultimately expand their ways of thinking about global issues and understand their classmates' cultural experiences more fully. When students develop empathy, they can support their peers rather than ostracise them based on unjust stereotypes or differences.

These books are great for discussing compassion, empathy, tolerance, justice, conflict resolution, and human rights in the classroom. The reasons for seeking protection and asylum are frequently misinterpreted. Many people are unaware of the extent of hardship asylum seekers and refugees face, particularly children; picture books can serve as windows into their world. They can communicate the story realistically and sympathetically. While international refugee numbers can be challenging to comprehend, a picture book can provide personal testimony to help students develop empathy and understanding. The use of global literature, such as *Your Name is a Song* (Thompkins-Bigelow, 2020), *Where Are You From* (Méndez & Kim, 2019), and *I Am a Story* (Yaccarino, 2016), enables young children to gain a global awareness of cultures, languages, religion, war, displacement, and other essential topics.

International policy documents show that, since 1970, education has been a tool in an international political effort to ensure a sustainable future (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972), and, since 1990, children have been seen as critical stakeholders with the right to participate in the learning process (UN, 2015; UNCED, 1992). This drive to increase children's participation rests on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), particularly article 12, which states that children have the right to be involved and be heard in matters that affect them. This transition toward a child-centred approach has been a lengthy process in research and policymaking (James & James, 2004; UNCRC, 1989). It has reconceptualized the understanding of children and childhood, and young

children are now understood and viewed as social agents with the ability to contribute ideas, experiences, and creativity and also to influence change both as unique individuals and collectively as a group (Davis, 2014; James & James, 2004).

We can benefit from place-based narratives in our classrooms to help students feel involved in society, especially the school community. Sobel (2004) explains that this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances their appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active contributing citizens in their community.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

In the current study, we explore children's views of attachment to their schools and identify factors for considering the facilitation of children's voices in the classroom. This study draws on a theoretical approach, namely Place Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1958; Giuliani, 2003). There is a developing trend to explore children's views of inclusion in their schools and communities and their understanding of what being connected and included means in these places, as children's voices are being recognized as influential factors in enhancing educational research (Bowlby, 1958; Norwich & Kelly, 2004).

However, systematic investigation and formulation of theories and systematic investigation of relationships that individuals develop with places took a long time to emerge in studies (Altman & Low,1992; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). Giuliani (2003) expressed that the fact that affective bonds with places are referred to in such a wide variety of ways seems to indicate not so much a diversity of concepts and reference models as it does ambiguity in the phenomenon's identification.

Developments in research on attachment to places started from Bowlby (1958) and resulted in the accumulation of a significant corpus of theoretical and empirical research regarding attachment theory. In this study, we have benefitted from those aspects of attachment theory that appear most relevant to the present context. One of the first studies that addressed this aspect of attachment theory was done by Fried (1963). He proposed that the dislocation of people by force or, in the context of this study, immigration, will cause an interruption in these individuals' sense of community, resulting in two significant components of identity: spatial identity and group identity. The issue of identity regarding places was also studied by Proshansky (1978).

Attachment to place is considered a fundamental need for humans (Relph, 1976), and we form this feeling of attachment to places by the emotional significance they take on (Tuan, 1974). To apply attachment theory to places, there is a need to elaborate on whether bonds with places meet the same definitional criteria for attachment or not. Giuliani (2003) clarifies this and provides four criteria for why the theory of attachment in interpersonal relationships can be applied to the attachment to places (figure 2).

First, "persistency over time of the bond is a characteristic that also seems to apply perfectly to bonds with places" (Guiliani, 2003, p.155). The longer we stay or live in a place, the deeper the possibility of forming an attachment to that place. Giuliani et al. (2000), in a study on place attachments in a high-mobility population, found that an individual's birthplace takes on the highest affection, but that this affection is influenced by the movements they experience in their life. These movements can include internal migration such as moving within a country or

continent, external migration such as moving to a different country or continent, emigration and lastly immigration which is the scope of this study.

The second criterion is the uniqueness of the attachment figure, which can be used to distinguish satisfaction from the attachment that indicates the particularity of the figure (Giuliani, 2003). Rivlin (1982) postulates two significance levels for places and suggests that each level corresponds differently to the level of attachment. In the first level, the individual does not need a direct experience of places, and that place evokes the person's feelings by acting as a symbol, as opposed to the second level, which develops from direct contact and through experiencing life in the place.

The third criterion is the individual's desire to stay in touch with the attached figure. This resembles the desire for residence stability and can be seen in the urge to visit sacred places as a religious ritual (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993), the desire of immigrants to travel back to their home country (Giuliani & Barbey, 1983; Hay, 1998), and the feeling of homesickness (Eurelings-Bontekoe et al., 2000; Van Tilberg et al., 1996).

The final and vital criterion is the feeling of security, the familiar feeling that people usually have toward home as "a relationship or experiential phenomenon rather than the house, place, or building that may or may not represent its current manifestation inbuilt form" (Dovey, 1985, p. 34).

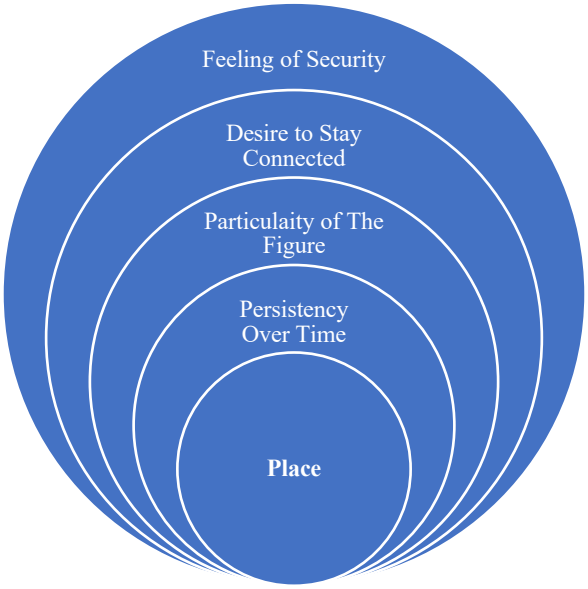
The feeling of safety experienced in the home does not come from the physical aspects and comfort offered by the house; instead, it derives from the experiences and memories shaped

there (Chawla,1993; Giuliani & Barbey, 1993; Horwitz & Tognoli,1982; Rowles, 1984), which forms such an attachment to that place.

Figure 2

A Conceptual Model Showing Key Criteria for The Theory of Place Attachment

Source: The Researcher's Construct



In the theory of attachment to place and the theory of attachment, we may witness different functions, which may change over time following cultural context, relocations, and personal experiences (Giuliani, 2003). Marris (1982) states, "the relationships that matter most to us are characteristical to particular people whom we love and sometimes to particular places that we invest with the same loving qualities" (p. 185).

This theoretical framework provided the researcher with a lens through which to view the participants in this study and offered a better understanding of the attachment to a place that students may or not feel in their classroom.

2.6 Summary of The Chapter

As the demand to respect diversity and develop confidence in students' cultural and racial identities increases worldwide due to immigration and relocation, academic institutions need to understand and respond to the experiences of diverse groups and reflect the diversity of the broader educational community. While moving toward the forgoing step, academic institutions must recognize the challenges this diversity brings into the classroom and align the environment, curriculum, pedagogies, skills, and capabilities. This study is framed by the place attachment theory, which may be broadened to see educational institutes as more suitable places for students to create relationships with and feel secure enough to air their views and express their culture and identity through feelings of safety and connectedness. Providing a place for diverse students with diverse experiences in life and different needs requires looking at these places through their lenses. The next chapter presents the research methodology of the study.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study based on the research questions and process characteristics. In a qualitative study, the researcher can explore a problem and gain a detailed comprehension of a phenomenon. Corbin and Strauss (1998) state that "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods" (p. 11). In this study, the phenomenon under inquiry was place attachment within the scope of an inner-city school. My search of seminal and recent literature justified the existing problem and the need for deeper insights into children's voice and place attachment. As stated, the research questions and purpose of the study are set in an open-ended format to better elicit participants' experiences (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019). In particular, in a qualitative study, the participants' views are vital and acquired through word-based inquiry or images, as well as interviews and observations. In this case, the data are analyzed for the purpose of delving deeper to find more significant meanings from the participant and common themes. Finally, the report is written using the structures and criteria that have emerged, including “researchers’ subjective reflexivity and bias” (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019, p. 16).

3.1 Research Design

In qualitative studies, researchers explore and uncover the experience of participants through their real-life and genuine interaction with the world, and then interpret these experiences based on their knowledge (Merriam, 1998) to gain a deeper understand of the participants in their natural setting (Hatch, 2002). To situate philosophy and interpretive frameworks within the research process, a researcher must assess where and how this assumption

relates to the study and why these understandings of philosophy and interpretative frameworks are elemental and, thus, vital to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The two philosophical assumptions that underpin the study are ontology and epistemology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), within an ontological assumption, different perspectives are brought into the study by reporting multiple realities, as reality is not seen as one fixed form but is seen through many views. The central phenomenon of children's voice and attachment in this study was enriched with different views and perspectives.

On the other hand, from an epistemological perspective, the researcher aims to figure out how these pieces of knowledge and perceptions are legitimized through people's subjective experiences. Therefore, this study takes both a subjective and interpretive stance, as it is built on participants' experiences. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), for a detailed assessment to be characterized by participants' experiences in life that lead to a deeper insight into the understanding of a phenomenon, the right approach is subjectivism.

In particular, action research is a valuable tool for solving real-world, practical problems (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Action research is an ideal investigative approach for teachers to gain knowledge about students' learning process (Miller, 2018). Moreover, in this study, we can define action research in education as the process of studying a school situation to understand and improve the quality of the educative process (Hensen, 1996; Johnson, 2012; McTaggart, 1997). This particular methodology provides practitioners with new knowledge and understanding about improving educational practices and resolving significant problems in classrooms and schools based on their own research inquiry (Mills, 2018; Stringer, 2008). Action research uses a systematic process (Dinkelman, 1997;

McNiff et al., 1996), is participatory in nature (Holter & Frabutt, 2012), and offers multiple beneficial opportunities for those professionals to learn and gain insight while working within the teaching profession (Johnson et al., 1997). These opportunities may include facilitating the professional development of educators (Barone et al., 1996), increasing teacher empowerment (Book, 1996; Fueyo & Koorland, 1997; Hensen, 1996), and bridging the gap between research and practice (Mills, 2018).

A participatory action research (PAR) design approach is useful in addressing the existing gaps in this field, as it is argued that PAR aims to improve the quality of people's communities and lives (Stringer, 2008). In particular, it is the stakeholder who participates in the study. In this case, the stakeholders participating in the study are the teacher, children and school community.

3.2 Context and Sampling

The central research goal of the research questions is to understand students' attachment to place, with a focus on immigrant students. New immigrant children have had much less time to develop attachments to their new school and home.

St. John's, NL, was chosen as the study location due to the accessibility and convenience of the site to the researcher, as she resided in the same neighbourhood as the school where the study took place. NL is a developing multicultural society with a growing population and a growing number of immigrants. **Immigration has been increasing in the NL context for some time**. With these growing numbers, it is thought that the province's educational system will witness the same increase in the cultural diversity of students in the next three to five years. As such, the growing number of newly arrived immigrant children in the classroom requires greater

preparedness on the part of the province's educational system. Given the aforementioned statistics and information, it is comprehensible that cultural diversity is inevitable in the NL educational system. Thus, acknowledging this growing body of diverse students' needs is imperative.

The sample for this study was drawn from one school with the most racially diverse student population in NL: St. Boniface's (pseudonym). The employment of purposeful sampling at St. Boniface's allowed the researcher to invite participants' perspectives within a place that best helped the researcher and participants better understand the study's central research questions (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, Creswell and Guetterman (2019) argue that by using a purposeful sampling method, researchers may seek out suitable candidates whose life experiences might throw important light on the central phenomenon of the study. Prior to this study, a professional relationship existed between the principal investigators of the larger project, which this study is a subset of, and a teacher (Janet, pseudonym) at St. Boniface's. The researcher visited Janet's classroom, accompanied by her supervisor, as the presence of the researcher was also approved by the school board. All the necessary permissions were acquired through the school administration team and addressed the research and ethics requirements of this study. The recruitment email was first sent to Janet and the school principals. Upon approval, the researcher met with Janet, and the study was explained to the students and their questions were answered. The class was a mixture of children in grades 3 and 4. The age range of the students was between 8 to 10 years old. The total number of students was 18; ten students were Canadian, and eight were immigrants.

The designed lesson plan was implemented both virtually and in person in the classroom throughout eight sessions over the course of three weeks. Each session was four to five hours in

length and occurred each week on days when the class schedule was sufficiently flexible. The teacher and researcher applied the lesson plan through both Google Classroom and the actual classroom environment. Designed activities were used in the classroom by Janet and the researcher. For example, for one session, the researcher read the story books virtually and led a discussion with the students before and after the read-aloud; Janet then helped students make creative art pieces in the classroom based on the theme of the story (see Appendix III).

3.3 Data Collection

To provide deeper insight into the research site and to collect rich data that would answer the study's emerging research questions, the researcher followed a series of interrelated activities postulated by Creswell and Poth (2018) in collecting data. These steps include attending to ethical considerations, locating sites and individuals, gaining access, developing rapport, sampling purposefully, collecting data, recording information, minimizing field issues, and securely storing data. The two main data collection approaches used in this research are discussed below: art-based practices and semi-structured interviews. As stated earlier, before beginning, ethics approval was granted for this study by MUN's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (See Appendix II).

Intervention and participation by the teacher, Janet, were imperative in this action research study. Moreover, such participatory data collection methods provide a method of analyzing and integrating data through collaborative, problem-solving discussions and cooperation between the researchers and classroom teachers. To achieve this purpose, a suggested lesson plan and proposal were designed and forwarded to Janet for consideration and to be applied in the classroom. The lesson plans were primarily based on six popular picture storybooks (See Appendix I) read aloud to the students, raising awareness of the characters'

identities and places. The classroom setting and content of the books provided a wide platform for the use of art-based practices in the classroom for the purpose of data collection. The lesson proposal was based on the work of Wall et al. (2019), emplacing with the teacher the use of eight factors as an intervention with the help of picture book resources to elicit young children's voices, with a focus on diverse populations and place attachment.

3.3.1 Interviews

An interview is a form of social interaction that happens in a conversation format (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Warren & Xavia Karner, 2015). The interviews employed for this study were semi-structured and open-ended to allow participants to converse and to help “identify any comments people might have that are beyond the responses to the closed-ended questions" (Creswell, 2012, p. 220). Interviews are good sources of data and are necessary when studying an individual's feelings, behaviour, experiences, and interpretations of the world (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews provide a space for participants to air their thoughts and opinions and give them the freedom to express their perceptions while allowing the researcher to move toward addressing the study's goals.

For the recruitment of the interview participants, the researcher used convenience sampling. With schools having significant closures due to COVID-19 in the early stages of the main study, the adoption of non-probability sampling for interviewing children was based on the class schedule timing and willingness of the student to participate in the interview component. Using this sampling technique, the researcher recruited Canadian and international students for the interview. Also, one interview was conducted with Janet at the end of collecting data and applying art-based practices in the classroom.

These face-to-face interviews with two international students and two Canadian students and an individual interview with Janet provided detailed insights into their experiences, feelings, and perceptions regarding the feeling of place attachment, the use of art-based practices, and how place-based narratives emerged in the classroom. Interviews invite participants to express their thoughts and experiences freely. They also invite participants to express their ideas with enhanced voice with a deeper insight into if the picture book resources and arts-based practices were helpful or not as an intervention to increase understanding of place and identity with participants' voices. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The interviews with students were conducted in the classroom after each eight-day session and were about 30 minutes in length. The interview questions were open-ended and focused on what had happened during the arts-based lesson. The interview with Janet was conducted at the end of the school day of session eight. Per expectations for ethics, a further consent email beyond the written permission obtained at the beginning of the study was sent to Janet along with the interview guide a week before the interview. The length of the interview with Janet was 60 minutes. Handwritten notes accompanied field notes taken during the day, and both were documented to ensure clarity of any points raised by the interviewees during their interviews.

Each interview was recorded using the researcher's voice recorder, transcribed by the researcher, and read by her supervisor. All data were safely stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's laptop with the written consent retrieved from the caregiver/parent.

3.3.2 Art-based Practices

Researchers have shown that drawing, making crafts, and story writing will present multiple meanings, unsettle dominant ways of thinking, evoke emotional responses from

participants, raise new questions, prompt dialogue, access the voices of marginalized people, and cultivate awareness and empathy; they are also easily accessed by public audiences (Eisner, 2008; Leavy, 2018). These researchers argue that drawing, making art and crafts, and storytelling empowered children's voices and cultural expression through arts-based and place-based initiatives (Eisner, 2008; Leavy, 2018).

McNiff (2018) states that the term "art" is "inclusive of every possible form of creative expression and practice" (p. 23). According to Leavy (2018), "Arts-based practices may draw on any art form and representational forms that include but are not limited to literary forms (essays, short stories, novellas, novels, experimental writing, scripts, screenplays, poetry, parables); performative forms (music, songs, dance, creative movement, theatre); visual art (photography, drawing, painting, collage, installation art, three-dimensional (3-D) art, sculpture, comics, quilts, needlework); audiovisual forms (film, video); multimedia forms (graphic novels), and multimethod forms (combining two or more art forms). (p. 4)."

Based on the lesson plan for this study and the context of the place-based storybook selected for the session, art-based practices were completed by students before and after the place-based storybook read-aloud. A series of pictures were taken to document the data within the timeframe of activities and to collect further pictures of the classroom activities for analysis (See appendix III).

3.4 Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data can prove difficult as it requires an understanding of how to make sense of the collected data, in this case, how children's creation of text and images form to make meaning and provide insight into the research questions. For the purpose of analyzing data

in this study, the researcher followed six steps in analyzing and interpreting qualitative data suggested by Creswell and Gutterman (2019). The first three steps will be discussed in this chapter, and the remaining steps regarding the presenting and reporting findings will be addressed in the following chapters.

3.4.1 Stage 1: Preparing and Organizing the Data

The purpose of phase 1 is to manage and organize data by preparing files and units and creating a file naming system. In this stage, the researcher developed a matrix of potential sources that could help organize the materials. The data were classified by dates collected, photographs taken, observations of the lessons, and types of interviews, whether with children individually, children working on an arts-based artifact, or with the teacher. The researcher kept duplicate copies of all the collected data and stored the data in a password-protected folder on her password-protected laptop. All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into texts and then converted to a computer document for the purpose of analysis. The researcher transcribed interviews verbatim using a speech recognition feature on her MacBook. Secondly, the researcher played the audio files and checked for possible mistakes or errors in the created file.

The researcher used both hand and computer analysis of the qualitative data to analyze the accumulated data. The qualitative data analysis program used in this study was NVivo. This software helps uncover rich insights in the data and produces clearly articulated strands that may then be considered themes. The program is used frequently in educational research showing defensible findings backed by rigorous evidence.

3.4.2 Stage 2: Initial Exploration of The Data Through the Process of Coding

The first steps in this stage were exploring the general sense of the data, getting familiar with it, and figuring out if there is a need to collect more data by reviewing the files coherently and in a systematic way. To fulfill this exploration, the researcher started by reading all the data and going through them several times, adding notes or ideas that came to mind and coding them. In this stage, a researcher can look for meaning-making connections through coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher used NVivo 12 to generate the codes for the data. After this step, and after coding all participants as separate cases, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis to compare the codes between the participant cases, categorize the similar codes, reduce any possible overlap codes, and collapse the codes into final generated themes.

3.4.3 Stage 3: Using the Codes to Develop a More General Picture of The Data

Using the generated codes and detailed examination of the data, the researcher developed broad categories of the collected data and framed themes by noting keywords and ideas. The framed themes in this qualitative data analysis comprise a core element (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019) for the researcher to see the dataset as a whole, but also, more importantly, to help with framing answers to the research questions.

The final stage of the process is analyzing the data using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach was employed to enhance the accuracy of the final themes. Moreover, code-to-code and theme-to-theme comparisons of the data were completed to avoid redundancy (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

3.5 Trustworthiness

To improve the study's trustworthiness and validate the accuracy of collected data, the researcher followed three procedures postulated by Creswell (2012) to improve the credibility of findings in qualitative studies: triangulation, member checking, and external audit.

Creswell (2012) describes triangulation as "the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (p. 259). This study conducted interviews in various capacities, such as before and after reading children's books, during circle time discussions and during arts-based practices with different individuals and conducted a comparison of multiple data collection such as interviews and art pieces.

Member checking was also employed to ensure the accuracy of data transcribed for interviews and the children's created art after the art-based lesson given by the researcher. Students were asked if they were happy with the result of their work and if they would like it to be included in the data set. Children were also asked to clarify ideas after their interviews. The transcribed interview with Janet was also sent to her to verify the accuracy of the answers. (Creswell, 2012).

The final strategy for the accuracy of the collected data was asking for an external audit, which means "asking a person outside the project to conduct a thorough review of the study and report back" (Creswell, 2012, p. 260). My supervisor played the role of an external auditor, reading and checking the data at each stage and the end of the data collection.

3.6 Summary of Chapter

This chapter describes the research methods used in this study to address the research problem. Initially, it describes the interpretive philosophical stance and how these assumptions inform the study. Next, it shares the setting of the study, which was Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Further to this section, the following describes the data collection and thematic analytical processes, followed by an explanation of the trustworthiness of the data and study. The next chapter presents the results and discussions for each research question.

Chapter 4

Results

The results for each session at the school will be presented separately. Presenting the results in this format separately aims to demonstrate the unique findings of each session independently. Table 1 outlines the pseudonyms used for the participants, which were created by an online pen name generator program. Each group of participants attended seven sessions in total. The results will be presented from each session that took place.

The themes used for the data analysis were retrieved from Wall et al. (2019) to elicit young children's voices. The approach proposed by the authors can "work well in other circumstances where voice is to be supported" (Wall et al., 2019, p. 275). The themes were articulated to be more compatible with the specifications of the study settings.

Table 1
Pseudonym Used for The Participants

Pseudonym Names for Participants		
Immigrant Students (8)	Canadian Students (10)	Teacher
Ali Panbe Mohammad Rajesh Majed Shekar Emran Mahya	Bentley Mathew Samantha Liam Scott Britney Ruby Maggie Anthony Josh	Janet

4.1 Classroom Sessions

The researcher's first session served as an introductory session in which the participants were introduced to the researcher and vice versa. Meetings took place virtually in the google classroom format for the first five-hour session to become familiar with the children and to closely observe the routine and pace of the classroom. This initial observation was needed to ensure that the preparations made for the designed lesson plan were applicable to the age of students and interests and compatible with the classroom schedule of curriculum and events. For the second session onwards, the school board approved of the researcher's presence in the classroom to collect data.

Session two in the classroom, with the presence of the researcher accompanied by her supervisor, began with a classroom discussion about students' names and meanings; afterward, the related storybook was read aloud, and the activities based on the book were completed.

The concept "thinking stems activity" was applied in the third session to focus on students' experiences, and related activities were completed after the read-aloud. Next, a group discussion was held regarding the students' experiences and feelings while accomplishing activities.

Session four involved completing warm-up activities followed by the storybook read-aloud and a set of activities related to the discussed topic of the picture book.

Session five included the storybook read-aloud, completing designed activities before and after reading the storybook, and interviewing selected students by the teacher based on their availability and schedule.

In the sixth and seventh sessions, the selected storybooks were read aloud in the classroom as in the previous sessions, and related activities were completed based on the lesson plan.

Session eight involved taking pictures of the classroom without students present, due to confidentiality purposes, and an interview was conducted with Janet.

The data were collected through eight sessions in the classroom, 53.5 hours in total. The data in the classroom were collected through interviews and art-based practices.

Table 2
Data Collection Sessions' Information

Session	Date	Hours	Story Books	Activities
1	June 8, 2021	9-15:30	N/A	-Getting familiar with children. -Applying alternations to the designed lesson plan based on the specification of the classroom and pace.
2	June 9, 2021	8:30-15:30	Your Name Is a Song	-circle discussion around students' names before reading the picture book. -Picture book Read aloud. -Completing designed activities based on the picture book Conducting an audio interview with three of the students. -Group Discussion with students addressing their cultural identity and their relation to their culture.

3	June 10, 2021	8:30-15:30	I Am a Story	-Use of thinking stems from focusing on the student experience and connection with the book. -Picture book read aloud. - Completing designed art-based activities and practices based on the picture book. -Group discussion with students about their experiences and feelings during activities.
4	June 15, 2021	8:30-15:30	Where Are You From	-Warm-up activities based on the lesson plan. -Picture book read aloud. -Completing designed activities and creative artworks based on the picture book. -Group discussion with students about their experiences and feelings during activities.
5	June 17, 2021	8:30-15:30	The Cool Bean	-Warm-up activities based on the lesson plan. -Picture book read aloud. -Completing designed activities based on the picture book. -Group discussion with students about their experiences and feelings during activities.
6	June 18, 2021	8:30-15:30	The Couch Potato	-Warm-up activities based on the lesson plan. -Picture book read aloud. -Completing designed activities based on the picture book. -Group discussion with students about their experiences and feelings during activities.
7	June 24, 2021	8:30-15:30	The Good Egg	-Warm-up activities based on the lesson plan. -Picture book read aloud. -Completing designed activities based on the picture book. -Group discussion with students about their experiences and feelings during activities.

8	June 25, 2021	10-15	N/A	-Interview and conversation with the teacher (addressing questions based on LWT posters). -Taking pictures of the classroom.

4.1.1 Session One- Definition of Voice

The central theme that emerged from the first session was the definition of voice. The researcher observed the classroom and took field notes regarding students' verbal and nonverbal expressions in the classroom.

As Wall et al. (2019) postulate, voice is viewed as "more than verbal utterances; rather, it allows us to express who we are in ways we choose" (p. 268). This definition takes into account more than words and sentences, since, for immigrant children, verbal language is not primarily privileged, and English may not be their first language; therefore, their expressions of voice can be in terms of their silence and nonverbal expressions such as artistic expressions.

Given that immigrant children may not be able to verbalize their sentences proficiently due to their limited knowledge of the English language, such as limited vocabulary or grammar and lack of attachment to the place for them to feel safe, researchers and educators may need to look for other ways through which these children can present their voices such as culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum and environment.

The first factor that was notable during the first session, regarding the facilitation and expression of voice, considering the nationalities of available students in the classroom, was the difference in the meaning of voice expression in the present classroom as compared to the classroom environment that the immigrant students in this study were used to. The immigrant students in the classroom were all coming from developing countries (Eritrea, Nigeria, Albania, Sudan, Iran, Syria, and Bangladesh), where most of the classrooms are still teacher-centred, and

students have minimal opportunity to genuinely express themselves due to employed power relations in the classroom.

Wall et al. (2019) state that voice is context-specific and depends on various factors, such as the audience, the interaction time, how interested the child is in the conversation, and how familiar they are with this process. Another element that can be added is the attachment to place. The level of attachment to a place, such as their classroom, school, or society, can affect and be affected by these dependants. Shannon and Galle (2017) define place as a socially constructed and negotiated setting bounded by time and space and tied in intimate ways to our sensory experience. When children are in a context that they are familiar with and have ties to, it is more likely for them to express their voices and feelings.

The researcher could observe how students were all able to talk and participate in the classroom. The relationship between Janet and the international students was as cheerful and robust as her relationship with the Canadian students. This is unlike what immigrant students have experienced in their previous study environment.

As the sessions progressed, students started building relationships with the researcher as well, and they were becoming more familiar with her and felt more comfortable speaking.

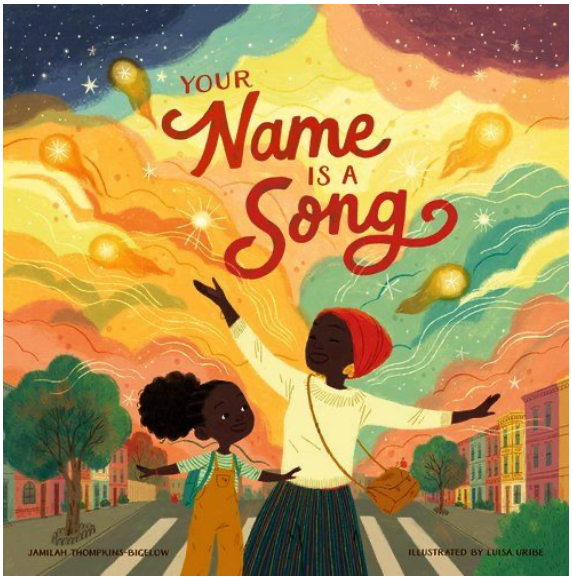
4.1.2 Session Two- Cultural Inclusion

Children with cultural and ethnic differences from the dominant group around them, as explained by Wall et al. (2019,) are at risk of not being listened to or even invited to contribute due to their otherness. Not feeling included in the classroom, school, or society may make children feel "existential" or "objective" outsideness. In the case of existential outsideness, they may disengage self-consciously and reflectively and feel alienation from people and places, homelessness, or a lack of belonging. They may also feel objective outsideness, resulting in a

deliberate adoption of dispassionate attitudes toward people or places (Relph, 1976). To be truly inclusive, teachers must be culturally and politically literate to recognize "that all children, including those traditionally viewed as too young, disabled or too disengaged to, have a voice" (Wall et al., 2019, p. 271).

For this purpose, a storybook was selected depicting a character with a different name and culture than that of other students in her school (figure 3). The character was an immigrant student in a school with other Caucasian students. The researcher read the book, followed by a brief story discussion. Students were asked how the character was included or excluded in the story and her classroom. They were also asked about their understanding of inclusion. Prior to progressing into the designed activity for the session, a discussion took place to ensure that students understood the keywords inclusion and cultural diversity. Understanding these key terms was essential for the students to reflect on their experience in the activities and discussions. Based on the comments made by the participants, the researchers felt that the participants had a clear understanding of the meaning of the mentioned terms.

Figure 3
Your Name Is a Song *by Jamilah Thompkins- Bigelow*



After the book's read-aloud, students' attention was brought to their classmates' names. The students started to ask about the meaning of each other's names. One of the participants noted, "my name does not have any meaning. It was just a name of a very famous person"; he paused for a second and continued, “oh, he is not famous in Canada; no one knows him here" (Panbe). Another participant commented, "his name (pointing to another student) is not [his name]; his real name is [his name]" (Mahya). She talked about an immigrant student whose name was pronounced differently by the teacher and other students in the classroom. The name was pronounced differently in his mother tongue than in English. Immediately after, another immigrant student stated, “my real name is [his name], but here everyone calls me [his name]" (Shekar). In building confidence and inclusion, we asked all the students to sing a song with their name and any pronunciations of their preferred name. The students joyfully sang a song with the name used for them in the classroom, even in the cases where the name was pronounced differently in their language. The children really enjoyed the experience, and there was smiling and much laughter. Names are an important form of identity and hold much meaning. We observed that the pronunciation of one’s name is also a part of acceptance, trust and understanding of how our names hold one’s voice as well. Like Canadian children, immigrant students may be called differently in their home than in their school. However, we observed that immigrant students’ names were often mispronounced, and they often wished for their names to be more accessible in pronunciation.

To address this misunderstanding of cultural identity associated with one’s name and the mispronunciation of names, students were asked to complete an activity (see Figures 4 and 5). Students would interview each other, learning the correct spelling and pronunciation of all their classmates’ names, even if it took a few tries for children to pronounce them correctly. We

observed that some students did not know the names of their classmates, although they had been in the same class for the whole academic year. This activity further cemented the discussion of inclusion and understanding of cultural identity, as children were empowered to call each other by their preferred name and pronunciation (see Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 4
Students Completing Activities

Figure 5
Students Completing Activities

To further augment their voice and agency, children made name tags for themselves, including identity characteristics. Students created a name tag and decorated it with crafting materials (Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8). Students placed the decorated name tags at their designated seats in the classroom. Students were invited to interview each other as researchers about the drawings, text, stickers, or pictures on their name tags.

Figure 6
Nametag Made by Student (Canadian)

Figure 6
Nametag Made by Student (Canadian)

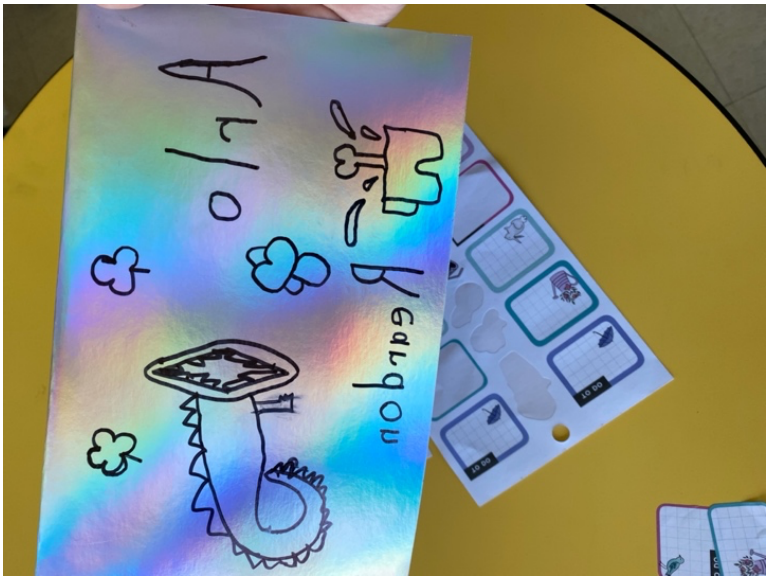


Figure 7
Students Creating Nametags

As seen in the photos of the artwork, the name tag made by students includes some elements specifically related to the student. After placing the name tags in front of them, students would go to each other and ask about the drawing, texts, stickers, or pictures on their artwork. The researcher could hear students make comments referring to others' nametags; one student pointed to a name tag with a student's name on it and cupcake stickers next to her name and called her "the cupcake lover." This cultural activity focusing on traits of the children helped students get to know each other and engage in deeper conversations about their interests. There were empowering voices and conversations shared in this session. "What does your name mean?" Mathew asked the researcher. The researcher replied by explaining the meaning of her name, and Mathew asked again, "what is your Canadian name?" The researcher explained that this is her only name and how it would make her happy if everyone called her by this name, and how much she liked her name. Mathew nodded in understanding.

Figure 9
Name Activity Completed by Student (Canadian)

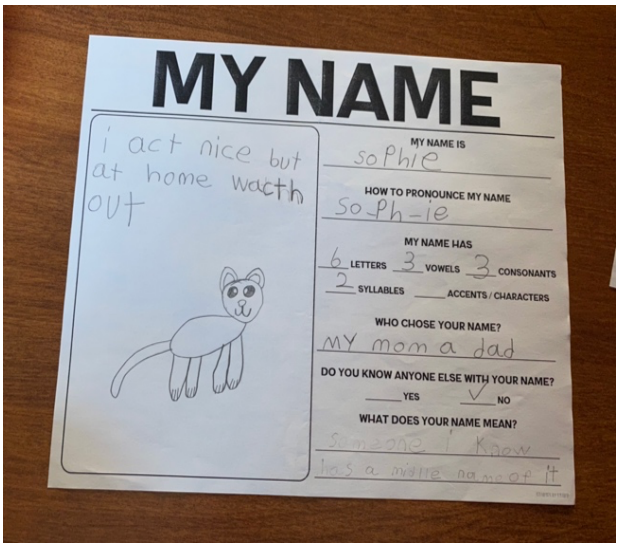
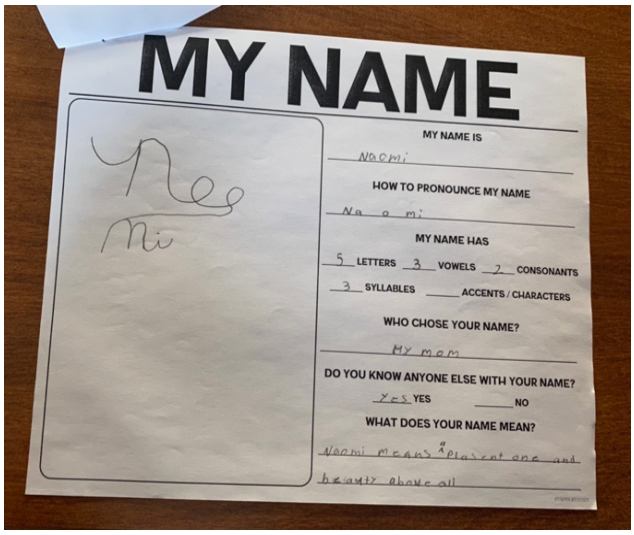


Figure 8
Name Activity Completed by Student (Immigrant)



The researcher observed that all students, including immigrant children, enjoyed the activity, building connections through the discovery of shared interests. The semi-structured interview affirmed that the activities were inclusive and supported students' cultural identities.

The data collection continued with a semi-formal interview with three students regarding their feelings and experiences with the storybook and performed activities. The students were chosen by the teacher based on their availability and willingness. The students completing the interviews pointed out that they enjoyed the experience and would like to have more similar read-aloud activities in their classrooms. All the students highlighted that it helps them get to know their classmates better: "I feel like now I know them better when I know the meaning of their name" (Anthony).

We noted that the details added to the nametag brought forth stronger voices. The increased inclusion and growing understanding of cultural identity was clearly built around trust.

This shows how representing voice in multimodal forms could lead a classroom forward in acknowledging that identity exists in different forms and that raising awareness of inclusivity empowers all voices.

The themes that emerged from the story, interviews, and activities in this session were including everyone, accepting differences, expressing who we are, and making others feel happy and welcomed. The discussed themes emerged in most artworks, and in the students' discussions. Students could not discuss every detail they added to their artworks and how it could help them express their voices. However, they understood how including everyone and expressing everyone's voice can lead to positive feelings and outcomes. The drawings aided the researcher in understanding what inclusion and cultural differences mean to the students and how much they would be able to explain it based on their age and development.

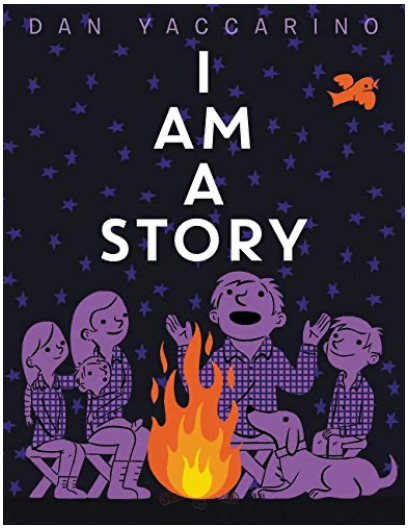
4.1.3 Session Three- Authentic Interpretation

Wall et al. (2019) postulate that the term voice means "an act of two-way communication" (p.271), which could be nonverbal on one or both sides of the conversation. This highlights a problematic situation in the traditional educational system that many immigrant children have gone through in their home countries. The researcher noticed, during years of teaching in a developing country and from available studies, that the predominant teaching approach in many of the students' home countries is, unfortunately, still a teacher-centred approach and a curriculum that avoids discussions in the classroom. Students in a teacher-centred classroom are not invited to express their voices or feelings. Teachers play an important role in listening to these students since they are new to learning to develop their voices. The power of

their reception can advocate for these children's voices and support them in feeling safe enough to speak, unlike the feeling they had experienced in teacher-centred classrooms.

The storybook selected for session three was about how stories about different people have been told differently at different ages and how it can help bring people together and make them happy.

Figure 9
I Am a Story *by Dan Yaccarino*



Before starting the session, the researcher greeted students and completed a warm-up activity, and asked the students to express their feeling and experiences after the last session. All the participants stated that they had fun, which helped them learn the meaning of their friends' names. While having the conversation, one of the participants shouted, "[his name] means spring" (Josh). Another student added, “[her name] means peace and calm" (Maggie), and another said "[his name] means strong" (Scott). Students were happy about learning the meanings of each other's names, and the researcher observed that the addressed students would smile while others mentioned their names and meaning.

To begin session three, thinking stems were used again, focusing on the student experience and connection with the book. Then the storybook was read aloud to the students by the researcher through google classroom as they were sitting on the floor. During this session, the students were more familiar with the process of reading the storybook and doing activities and artwork before and after the storybook was read aloud. After completing the read-aloud, students were asked to write a story about themselves and how they felt in the school and then read it aloud to their classmates, if they were willing, to practice telling stories and using narratives forms, which are essential forms of everyday communication. During this session, students had the opportunity to develop their accuracy and fluency by creating and then telling a story. They then had the chance to develop their understanding of various stories and cultures present in their classroom. This allowed students to air their voices and express themselves. When their stories are heard, students feel they are being valued, listened to and authentically heard and interpreted.

Figure 10
Activity Completed by Student (Canadian, Male)

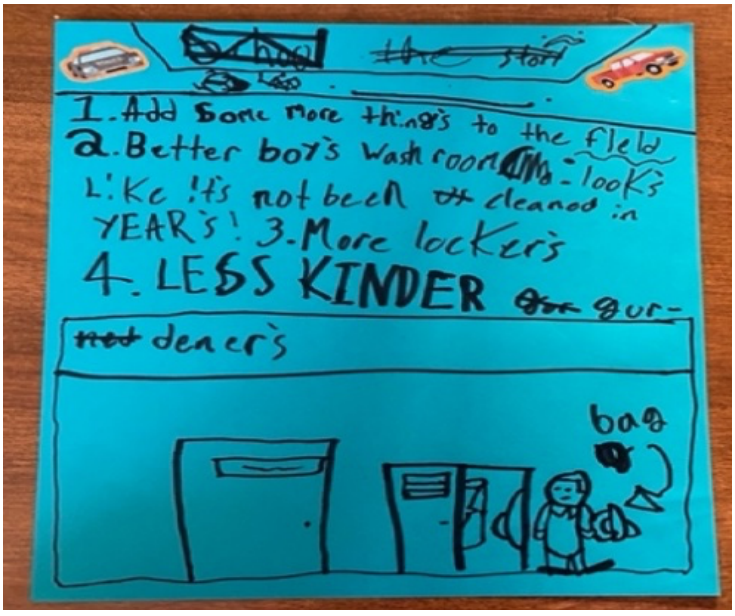


Figure 12
Activity Completed by Student (Canadian)

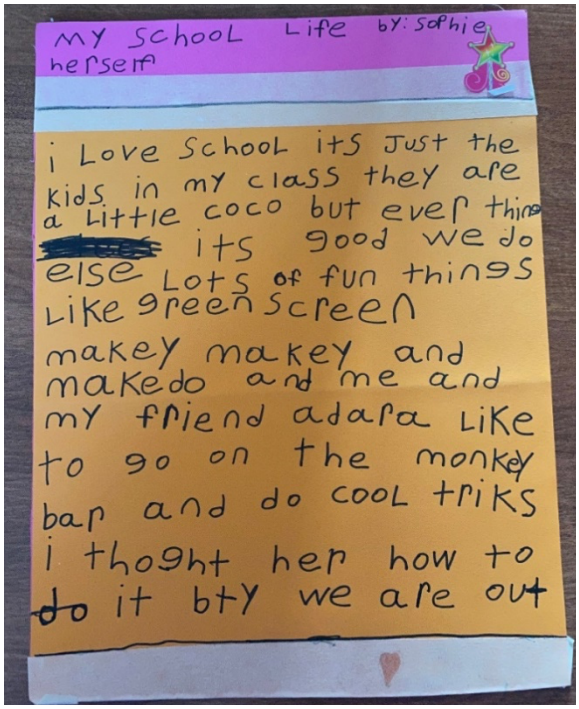
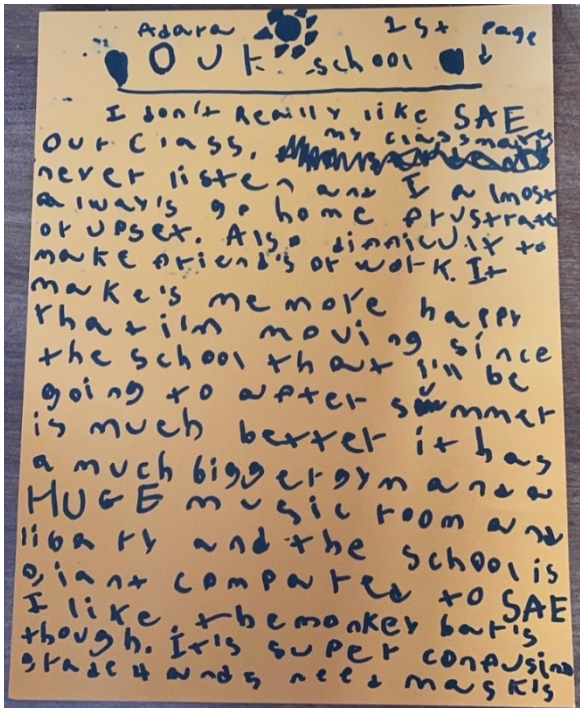


Figure 11
Activity Completed by Student (Immigrant, Male)



Almost two-thirds of the students mentioned “school” in their stories, which signified the importance of their school as an essential element in their life. In the statements made about school, participants were voicing what they wanted to be changed, although it was not asked by the researcher nor the teacher, and the participants were solely asked to write their stories. The statements included topics such as reduced bullying, less crowded and bigger classes and playgrounds, cleaner washrooms, and longer summer breaks. The researcher understood that the students used this opportunity to air their views on the school as they were writing the story in the school's environment, and their attention was around the place they were at the time.

The other element present in one-third of the stories was the participants' favorite video game or character. This factor was also noticeable in the name tag activity completed in the classroom during the previous session.

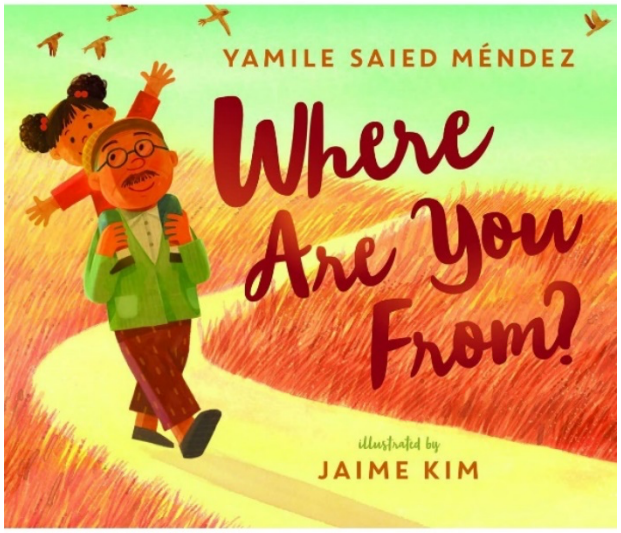
At the end of the session, eight students asked Janet and researcher to read out their stories to their classmates, and the other participants handed their stories to Janet.

When the researcher read each story individually and asked the students about the details of their story, it could be observed that they became happy and excited to talk about the topic. When talking to one of the students who had written about bullying in her story, she stated, “I want the bullying to stop in the school” (Samantha); the researcher used active listening and acknowledged the participant's feelings simultaneously. When asked what she meant by bullying, she responded, “everyone talks very loudly in the classroom to each other” (Samantha). Allowing the students to express themselves in the form of a story, artwork, or any activity helped them express their feelings. The discussion about it provided the researcher with an authentic interpretation of the stated experiences and feelings of the participants.

4.1.4 Session Four- Place and Facilitating the Voice

The storybook selected for session four was about a little girl who has been indirectly questioned about her identity by her friends and peers, and, as a result, she was feeling left out. One of the necessities of promoting children's voices and facilitating the expression of self and identity is the feeling of belonging. Feeling safe and welcomed is a vital factor during the process of voice facilitation. Wall et al. (2019) noted that voice must be fostered in a positive environment.

Figure 13
Where Are You From? *by Yamile Saied Méndez*



It is much more likely for children to express their voice in a place they have an attachment to and where they feel safe. This attachment can be made by prioritizing voices, being patient, and helping them shape their voice by giving them enough time. As mentioned in this research, many of these children may have experienced a curriculum that avoids those discussions and activities to move more quickly through the curriculum. Changing this mindset and building a positive environment by making time and space for students' voices to flourish is essential.

The character in this story feels different from her peers due to them questioning her identity and her appearance. The same issue can arise for immigrant children with different appearances or languages from their classmates. The purpose of promoting children's voices is to avoid inequalities and unfair subjectivities in society. For example, we will produce more inequalities by paying more attention to a student who speaks English efficiently than to a student who is less verbal due to language barriers or cultural differences. Wall et al. (2019)

stated, "Developing a community of voices necessitates a culture of consistent listening, hearing, understanding, and action" (p. 274). By looking through one lens to promote children's voices, we can overcome the inequality regarding their speaking skills or cultural differences.

The activity completed during this session was to create a safe place for students where every student, no matter their nationality, feels safe and welcomed. In this section, students were asked to draw a picture of a place to which they feel connected or that is unique to them. Then they were asked to write down how they felt in these places.

Figure 15
Activity Completed by Student (Immigrant)

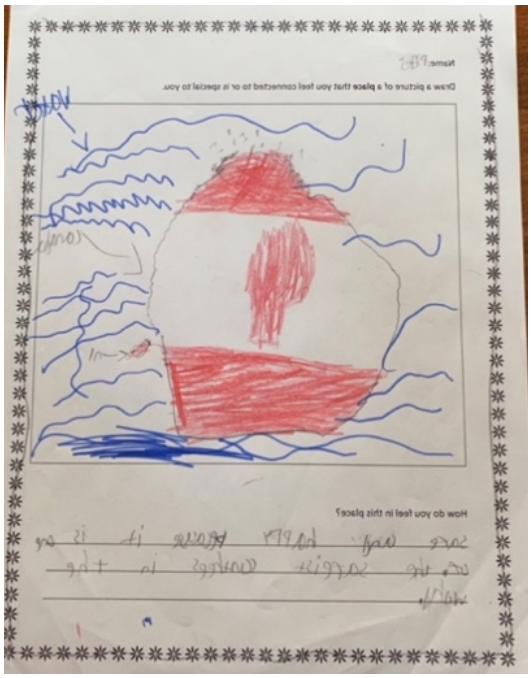
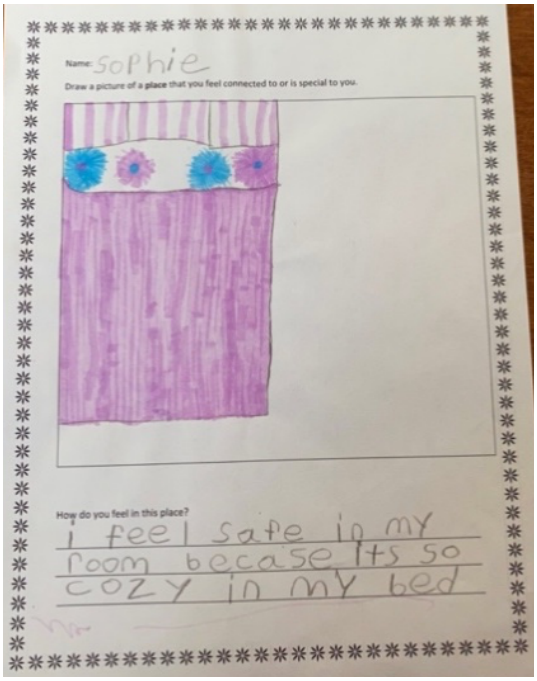


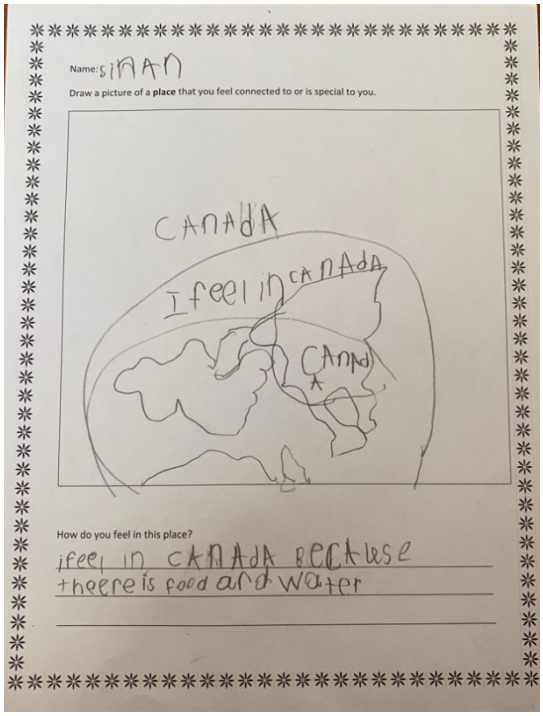
Figure 14
Activity Completed by Student (Canadian)



The statements and drawings made by the participants highlighted the importance of having a safe place for the children and how safety can have different shapes and forms.

When the researcher asked one of the participants, who was drawing a female figure, what he was drawing, he replied, “My mom. I feel safe with her” (Mohammad). This indicates how vast and deep an individual’s feeling of connection to a place can be. According to Mitchell (2011), studying the presence or absence of visual images allows researchers to understand the issues they are exploring. The drawing made by one of the other students was a picture of the Canada Flag, stating that the participant feels happy in Canada because it is one of the safest countries in the world (Mathew). One of the immigrant students had drawn Canada as his happy place, stating, "I feel [safe] in Canada because there is food and water” (Adobi).

Figure 16
Activity Completed by Student (Immigrant, Male)



We asked students to sit and have a conversation about their feelings and experiences regarding the activity and storybook. Students were asked if they would like to talk about their drawings and their meanings. One of the students shared the drawing of her bedroom, saying, "It

is a quiet place, unlike our classroom. No one is screaming and talking all the time loudly in my room" (Samantha). The conversation was continued by statements like, “I love my house, I love my Roblox, I want to get home very fast to play” (Majed), and “the place that I love the most is Russia because it is very powerful” (Liam). Another student said, “I feel safe in Canada because it has lots of water and food, and I have a room just for myself” (Rajesh). These drawings and discussions can highlight how varied the meaning of connection to place and placelessness is among students, and that a wide range of feelings and experiences are involved in the forming of a connection to a place.

Participants drew different elements, such as their imagination, bedroom, house, and family, as places where they feel safe, highlighting the different perceptions of safety for different individuals. During this session, the sub-themes that emerged from the drawings, conversations, and observations were feeling safe, how feeling safe in a place can help facilitate voice and identity, and place and identity. The central theme used for the data analysis was place and facilitation of voice.

4.1.5 Session Five- Power Over or Power With

Another pivotal factor in facilitating children's voices is power. Forming power relationships in the classroom is critical to success in our student's educational or personal aspects. As instructors, we should use "power with," not "power over" in our classrooms. Wall et al. (2019) note the following, for instance:

> If young children are to be supported to 'have a voice,' efforts must be made to break down, or at least to recognize, situations where the internalized unstated assumptions young children may hold position them as lacking power compared to adults. A

> culture that is both supportive and enabling in age-appropriate ways for all children needs to be created. Similarly, adults in the same context must be alert to their assumptions about this power relationship and should be aware of how they position children in relation to themselves. (p. 270)

Immigrant children may feel that they lack power, or experience "outsideness" or "other-ness" in the classroom. Teachers and educators must create a culture that supports and engages all children. Students should be able to see people like themselves in the books they read, in the movies they watch, and in the games they play.

Lee (2016) uses the metaphors of the term “windows” to represent opportunities for connections between cultures in literature and the term “mirrors” to portray the importance of representation for all people in the books they read. She suggested we look at the children's bookshelf to see whether all the books are mirrors or windows. And it is vital to make sure that both opportunities are available for children, since it helps set a path for self-worth and empathy, which is a direction worth following.

Moreover, sometimes children need to see these mirrors on the other side of their open windows. Mirrors alone show themselves in their room and their world, as windows alone show them in a world different from theirs or with no one like them. It should be mentioned that these children need to open the windows and see a mirror on the other side. This is how they feel they belong and are connected to a world other than theirs; when they see themselves in it; when they see people like themselves in it; and when they see people like themselves in their books. It should also be highlighted that power can influence the relationship between students and persuade or dissuade them from having their voices and how they feel about their voices heard.

To pursue this path, during this section, students read a story about how strong relationships are and how power can affect fitting into a group. The character in this story feels powerless by being left out of the group of students in their classroom.

Figure 17
The Cool Bean *by Jory John and Pete Oswald*

Students were asked to participate in a set of activities before and after the storybook read-aloud. Before the read-aloud, students were engaged in a conversation about concepts such as fitting in, being a member, and feeling welcomed in a place or a group. The statements made during this conversation were conducive for the researcher to gain a more concise understanding of what these concepts mean for children at this age and development. One student, who was very interested in Russia, said, "no one can enter our group. We all love Russia. Anyone from a weak country cannot enter our group" (Bentley). The students' appreciation for Russia was noticeable in all their art, crafts, and activities. When the researcher asked the student about Russia, he replied, "Russia has a powerful army and is very big. It is also a very dangerous country" (Bentley). The researcher continued by providing some information on countries and

how every place on earth can be safe. The conversation formed between students and researcher was an indicator of how the concept of power can be different for different participants and how they use it to form relationships around them. After reading the storybook, the researcher talked about how we should help each other feel welcomed and how differences should help people get closer to each other. Students then completed an activity about the book that related to the feeling of fitting in.

Figure 18
Activity Completed by Students

By analyzing the data from the session, it was highlighted that most participants mentioned "helping each other" and "being nice" as factors that make them feel cool and powerful. Other factors, such as physical abilities (running fast, riding a bike or scooter) and physical appearances (wearing a hat or cool shoes), were also mentioned by students completing the activity.

4.1.6 Sessions Six and Seven- Diversity of Students Leading to Diversity of Approaches

The creative art craft-making activities designed for the purpose of data collection during these sessions were based on two popular books.

One of the books, *The Couch Potato*, was a story about a character that had to get out of his comfort zone and step out of his living room and venture outside. He finds what he needs when he gets out of his place. The second book read aloud was *The Good Egg*. The character in this book struggles with forming healthy relationships with the eggs that are different from him.

Figure 20
The Couch Potato *by Jory John and Pete Oswald*

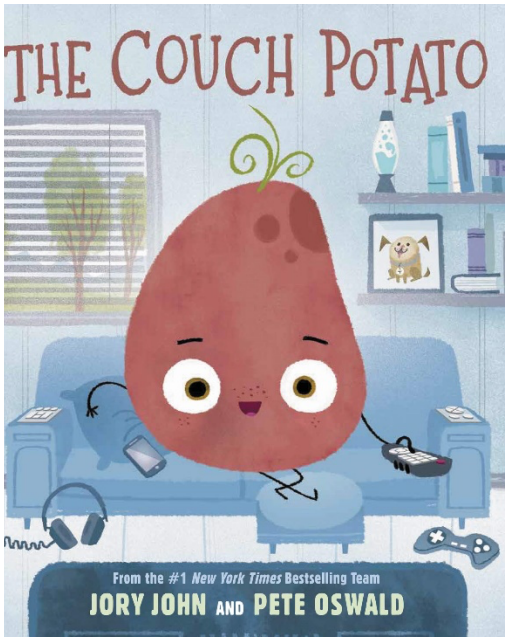
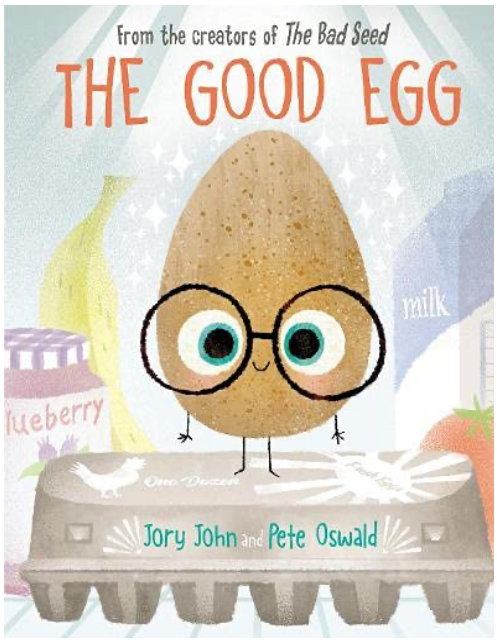


Figure 19
The Good Egg *by Jory John and Pete Oswald*



After the storybook was read aloud during the sessions, students were given real potatoes and eggs. The researcher had inquired about any possible allergies in the class, and no students were allergic to the provided items. Participants were asked to choose the item from the basket, potatoes in the sixth session and eggs in the seventh session, put themselves in the role of the objects' characters, and then write their own stories. The appearances that participants would give to their artwork were engaging in the point of the similarity between the participant and the

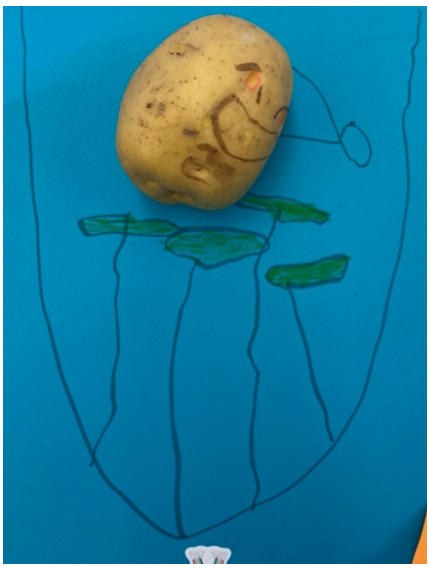
artwork. All the participants tried to give their physical features, such as skin colour, eyeglasses, length of hair, and clothing colour, to their character.

Figure 21
Student Completing the Activity

Figure 22
Student Completing the Activity

Figure 24
Activity Completed by Student (Immigrant)

Figure 23
Activity completed by a student (Canadian)



The students' variety of ideas and creativity while completing the artwork and their written story was significant to the researcher.

As Wall et al. (2019) stated, open dispositions support voice. When we have a classroom with immigrant students, we have more diverse voices; therefore, we will have more ways to

communicate successfully, and there is more room for creative approaches. As educators, we should be aware of this and reflect on our practices and strategies in designing approaches. They postulated that, while the adopted approaches are very much related to the individuals within the context, processes are the structures and conditions under which they operate. These structures should facilitate the action of eliciting voices by providing opportunities for collaboration, dialogue, and consultation.

Processes in this session involved a direct focus on how to draw attention to power imbalances. When students read storybooks or have a curriculum that does not represent their identity or culture, they may feel marginalized. We should use a process to balance the power relation and advocate for their voices by gaining their trust and respecting them. Practitioners can use the processes that boost group morale and establish the group's credibility in the broader context by using school assemblies, creating posters, having outside officials attend meetings, and gaining media coverage (Wall et al., 2019). We should remember that we use all these examples of visible victories in a way that represents immigrant students and creates a sense of shared identity and confidence among them.

4.1.7 Session Eight- Reflect and Enable

The importance of having a purpose for promoting children's voices is to avoid any inequalities and subjectivities in society. We create inequalities by paying attention to different students disproportionately. Wall et al. (2019) state that developing a community of voices requires a culture that includes consistent listening, hearing, understanding, and action. By looking through one lens to promote children's voices, we can overcome the inequality regarding their speaking skills or cultural differences. Conducting an interview with Janet during session

eight was very helpful in getting familiar with the practices available in the classroom to avoid inequalities and build a safe place for the diverse population of students. During this session, an in-depth interview was conducted with Janet about how we can reflect on and enable the facilitation of children's voices and how it can affect their expression of culture and identity. The questions for the interview were designed along with the themes selected based on the analysis of the gathered data. The following questions are categorized to address the main research questions of the study:

Table 3
Categorized Interview Questions

Topic	Guiding Question	Follow-Up Questions
Voice	How do you value different voices in the class? i.e., Refugee students and Canadian students.	• What are some creative ways of eliciting the voices of students in class? • Do you believe the activities undertaken in the class during my time in your class (story read aloud and related activities) could be helpful in this regard? • How do you know if the voices of different groups of students, such as immigrant and Canadian students, are balanced in the classroom? • Are voices, perspectives, views, ideas, reactions, and perceptions able to flourish in the classroom? How? • Do these voices lead to a collaborative understanding of different cultures and identities?
Culture	How can we benefit from place-based narratives exploring children's cultural and identity expressions?	• How can we remove barriers to inclusion and social justice in the class? • How can we build a culture of compassion? • How do we lead our classroom in the direction of creating communities where children converse with each other? • How can we value children's contribution to expressing their culture and identity? • How can we benefit the expression of culture to address place attachment in students?
Build Capacity	What is your opinion about using storybooks from different cultures	• Is our classroom and environment of mutual respect?

	to empower children to use their voices?	• Do we involve our children in our curriculum so they can lead voice? • How can we create openings for conversations to take place? • Do we encourage critical thinking in our classroom? • How can we show our different groups of students that we listened? • Can we facilitate the ability of students to participate in the conversation around their attachment to places? i.e., their school, their classroom, their community.
Democracy	Are teachers culturally and politically literate as practitioners of students with different nationalities?	• How can teachers ensure that everyone has an equal voice in the class? • How do we empower children to change their world and contribute sustainably to a democratic society? Considering their different backgrounds and their traumas in this regard.
Enable	What are examples of compelling place-based narratives in multimodal forms to be used in the classroom to enable students to express the feeling of place attachment? Especially the immigrant population.	• Is there any way to explore different ways of cultural awareness for students? • Do we foster a participatory culture in the classroom? • How do we get students together to achieve a collegiate community? • What are ways to reward students in a meaningful way? • Do we provide an opportunity to change the course of a child's life?
Listen With Purpose	How can teachers be supportive of conversations where children express themselves?	• Do we have enough self-respect and trust to create genuine engagement? • Do we let the children say when they feel they have been listened to? • How can we facilitate the expression of culture and identity in this regard?
Skills and Tools	Do teachers have practical tools to face the fast-paced appearance of students of different nationalities in the schools?	• Are we open to a range of practices and use multiple ways of participation? • Are we open to using resources creatively? • Do we equip students with metacognitive skillfulness? How? • Do we develop skills for dealing with assumptions, dissent, challenges, silences, and uncomfortable topics? How?

Space and Place	How can we use narratives to facilitate children's attachment to a place?	• Do the voices in our classroom have the space and place they need? • How can we elicit communications through play? • Do we actively shape our place in our classroom? How? • How can teachers create space for multiple voices to come together respectfully?

Eliciting children's voices is a process that requires professional knowledge, and this process can be more delicate for immigrant children since many of them may have experienced traumas in their life, such as war, violence, placelessness, and racism. The teacher of the classroom was very knowledgeable, educated and trained on the related pedagogies. Looking through her lens using the interview helped the researcher gain a wider perspective of the actions that can be taken to facilitate the expression of voices and culture in students, as the example Janet provided in the interview:

> As a whole school, we embrace [different voices and cultures] and value it, and we promote it so we, we… we just focus on all the different activities we had, like festivities in the world, we focus... we have maps of the world, and we have children constantly showing where they're from and talking about their culture, and I kind of open my school year by… we have a book. It's called "Way to School," and these kids are from all over the world and different ways that they come to school so on their first-day school, so it's kind of, I guess it's just we value it, and we kind of promote it from the very beginning, as soon as they walk into the building.

Educators need to be educated about these facilitations and should pay attention to their actions and their implications. During the interview, all the themes acquired from the data collection were addressed, and the central theme highlighted during this session was reflecting on voices

and enabling them. Through this reflection, educators can facilitate forming attachments to place in students: “we're so focused on social-emotional learning… but it not going to do a thing until the kid feels comfortable and good about themselves… they need to feel connected and safe in their school to be able to express themselves” (Janet).

Although the focus of this study is children’s voices and cultural identity, in this particular session, the researcher discussed how pedagogical practices could be more practical and more frequently practiced in the classroom environment to reach this goal.

4.2 Summary of Chapter

This chapter provided results and thematic analysis directly related to the study's research questions for each research session of data collection. It showed how true definition of voice, cultural inclusion, authentic interpretation of voice, connection to place, power balance, diversity of approaches, and reflecting on voices and enabling them are vital for facilitating voice in students. The next chapter provides a summary of the study as well as recommendations and limitations associated with the study.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This study explored the phenomenon of placelessness among Canadian and immigrant students. It then explored how place-based narratives can be used as spaces of cultural identity and voice facilitation. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter also includes discussions of limitations and future directions. Before presenting the study conclusions in this chapter, the research findings will be summarized.

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

***5.1.1 Research Question 1*:** What does placelessness mean for Canadian and immigrant students?

As it was thoroughly elaborated in the literature review section, to have a clear understanding of placelessness, there is a need to clarify the concept of place. In this study, the researcher first tried to understand the meaning of place based on students' perspectives without inlaying the idea of placelessness in students' minds to avoid implicit effects on the outcome and collected data.

The main theme that emerged from the participants' statements and artworks was the relationship between place and feeling safe and happy. All the participants defined the meaning of place based on their feelings and orientation around family. The first difference between the opinions of Canadian students and immigrant students was that, for most of the immigrant students, the connection to place was tied with the feeling of safety, while for Canadian students, it was associated with the feeling of happiness. The second difference was in the form of the place to which they felt connected. For most Canadian students, the place to which they felt most

connected was their house, while for immigrant students, it was their house, country, or even a person.

The meaning of placelessness was primarily defined as being homeless for Canadian students, while it was also a feeling of not being welcomed or included for immigrant students. Although teaching the acceptance of other students and embracing diversity within the classroom has been found to be a vital aspect of inclusive education (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012; Lindsay et al., 2013) and was very well implanted in the studied classroom, we need to invest more in it to ensure that all students feel welcomed and included in their homes, schools and classrooms.

5.1.2 ***Research Question 2:*** How might children's place-based narratives be used in the classroom to address the phenomenon of placelessness and expressions of culture and identity?

The use of children's books was instrumental to this study. Children and teachers benefit from using storybooks in the classroom almost daily. Children usually identify with the books' characters or certain character features. These stories can be about individuals like them, showing children that stories about their experiences are worth telling and that other children have felt just like them. For this study, the researcher reflected on how students address feelings such as belonging, acceptance, and equality to facilitate the expression of their voice and how well books build a sense of connection to place. With the absence of understanding of such feelings, our students can be at risk of initiating a distinction between themselves and others (Monobe & Son, 2014) that can lead to the feeling of "otherness" (Relph, 1976).

The use of global children's literature in this study, such as *Your Name Is a Song, Where Are You From?,* and *I Am a Story,* supports young children in gaining a global awareness of

cultures, languages, religion, war, displacement, and other topics. It also led to children feeling comfortable airing their voices and sharing their stories, since they felt the similarity between themselves and the characters in the books. It not only facilitated the expression of students individually but also helped students to understand each other and accept their differences.

By using educational approaches and materials that reflect students' diversity, we have the chance to fade the borders that may be present in our classroom and avoid the feeling of placelessness among the students.

5.1.3 Research Question 3: What examples of compelling place-based narratives in the classroom enhance the feeling of place attachment in the student population?

How we view the world, the way we think about it, and our understanding of it fill the pages of our life book. As it is stated by O'Sullivan and Taylor (2004), "The process of knowing is the process of life" (p. 34). The type of knowledge that we provide for our students in school plays a significant role in shaping their identity at many levels.

In order to inspire students to be the change that society needs, authors must show great care and concern for their intended audience and offer hope for world peace, as children are considerably more capable of coping with reality than adults frequently give them credit for, being resilient, hopeful, and capable (Minslow, 2017). Children's literature is vital for encouraging students to view things from other perspectives and for developing empathy. No system of education can function in isolation from the social surroundings in which it exists. Education is primarily a social system, and education and society are mutually interdependent institutions. In this sense, Durkheim (1956) referred to education as the methodical socialization of the young.

By using narratives regarding the immigrant children's experiences and perceptions of place attachment in the classroom, we can address the issue of placelessness that these children may experience. Relph (1975) states, “within one person, the mixing of experience, emotion, memory, imagination, present situation, and intention can be so variable that he can see a particular place in several quite different ways" (p. 43). Therefore, it can be concluded that immigrant children have a different view of their new living place or new classroom than other Canadian students in the class. By using stories that students can see themselves in, we can provide a space for students to feel included. Picture books allow children to explore their cultural identities and understand new cultures; they also help them to develop awareness of and respect for diverse cultural perspectives. This happens when teachers include stories about other cultures in the curriculum. These narratives can be used in the classroom to enhance the feeling of place attachment among students and to help facilitate their understanding of diversity.

5.2 Conclusion

Through the design and implementation of three place-based sessions with a class of Canadian and immigrant students, we gathered observations and data that led to valuable insight into students' feelings of placelessness. Children's literature, multimodal storytelling, and hands-on activities aided students in expressing their agentic voices. In the follow-up interviews with students and teachers, we learned that students felt they knew each other better after these sessions and felt safer and more included in their classroom overall. Our data analysis found that children felt a sense of belonging in places like their country or home or with a significant person in their life, such as their mother, and that these places made them feel safe and happy. As one immigrant student said, "I feel safe in Canada because it has lots of water and food, and I have a room just for myself." The words that students most commonly used to describe places they felt

connected to are depicted in Figure 27. By contrast, students identified placelessness with a lack of happiness and safety, in addition to separation from their safe places and families. Students also related this feeling to the storybooks they had read (Figure 28).

Figure 25
Word Cloud Generated Based on Students' Definition of Place

Figure 26
Word Cloud Generated Based on Students' Definition of Placelessness

Although this is a small PAR art-based study of only one classroom, this chapter shows how children's literature can effectively facilitate difficult conversations and improve feelings of inclusion and cultural diversity. Future research could apply children's literature to other settings,

age ranges, and topics. Scholars examining placelessness should extend our findings by studying immigrant children of different ages and from other places.

5.3 Recommendations

The data analysis in this study has yielded exciting findings with several implications for practitioners. In this section, the researcher draws on the study findings to recommend ways to improve the feeling of connection to the place, resulting in the facilitation of the studens' voices and expression of their culture and identity. Details of the specific recommendations are provided in the following subsections.

5.3.1 Implications for educators

The focus of the study was on children's voices, and the purpose of the conducted interview with the teacher was to understand more about the expression of students' voices in the classroom and ways to facilitate them. Participants expressed that they became more familiar with their classmates after listening to their stories and learning the meaning of their names, where they are from, and their interests. They were also more open to air their voice and their cultural background. Therefore, providing a space for students to feel safe enough to express their identity should be encouraged and promoted in schools to encourage peer support systems and friendships and to combat placelessness (Lindsay & McPherson, 2012; Lindsay et al., 2013). The opportunities in this study were provided using proper addressing of the placelessness that Canadian and immigrant children experience in the classroom. Compelling place-based narratives were used in the classroom alongside pedagogical approaches that can lead to equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning practices. Likewise, the findings of this research may prove helpful to teachers by heightening their awareness of learning practices that are well

developed and will value the stories and narratives of children from diverse backgrounds. This study will also aid parents in learning about their children's needs regarding classroom inclusion and how they can work with teachers to meet these needs.

The results of this investigation may encourage administrators and supervisors to help their teachers upgrade their teaching performance regarding this phenomenon in their classrooms through closer supervision, faculty development, and training programs. The findings of this study may assist curriculum planners in properly selecting materials, methods, techniques, and strategies to improve inclusion and the understanding of cultural inclusion in classrooms. Community members may also benefit from knowing that their children's teachers are equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, and competencies to teach them. The information and insights that researchers can gain from this study may guide other researchers in framing their studies of placelessness and cultural inclusivity in classrooms.

5.4 Limitations of the study

It is important to note that this study had a few limitations. First, this study did not have a large number of participants. Therefore, readers should be aware that the findings are not necessarily generalizable to other grade 3 and grade 4 students. Further research is needed to discover the opinions of primary and elementary students surrounding the concepts of connection to place, placelessness, and students' voices (Wall et al., 2019).

It should also be noted that it is challenging to account for what constitutes academic aspects of connection to a place because it is broad in nature and involves human individual differences, experiences, and memories. The present study attempted to expand the current understanding of this phenomenon using qualitative methodologies. Subjective aspects of

placelessness and connection to place may be immeasurable because the feeling of a place is rooted in the past and is often oriented around memories and traditions (Corcoran, 2002).

Additionally, one of the limitations of this study was focusing on children's voices and not thoroughly studying teachers' perspectives in the classroom; therefore, studying the concept with more in-depth attention and focus on teachers' perspectives and through their lenses could be highly constructive for further studies.

It should also be noted that this study was a subproject of another study that was approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at MUN; otherwise, the recruitment process for the study would have been much more challenging for the researcher due to the pandemic.

5.5 Future research suggestions

Given the above limitations, future research can add value to this study by utilizing a more significant number of participants, including more nationalities and also more focus on teachers' perspectives toward the concepts. Such studies can provide specific details on the responsibilities of schools in NL regarding the diversity they have in the province and how to make education more inclusive. In other applicable contexts, future researchers could conduct this study as a phenomenological qualitative study. In this vein, a focus-group data collection approach may suffice.

The model utilized in my study welcomes further exploration, as it contributes to efforts that promote a feeling of connection to place in schools. Future researchers may pursue this study's objectives by using other research methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and analytical

processes. As such, research findings from this study and future research in this area can remove barriers to education, such as placelessness, in Canada and beyond.

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