CANADIAN EDUCATION ABROAD:
EXPLORING THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF TWO DISTINCT MODELS

Thesis
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March 13, 2017
Brandon University

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Senate for acceptance, a MASTER'S THESIS entitled:

Canadian Education Abroad: Exploring the Strengths and Weaknesses of Two Distinct Models

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In partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Date: March 13, 2017

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For my wife, Brittany,
my patient and trusted partner
in the dance of life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My wife. To my beautiful wife, Brittany Hilton, thank you so much for your understanding, patience, and support. Throughout this epic journey, you have travelled by my side as a reliable navigator, an unrelenting advocate, and a dear friend. I love you.

My family. To Al and Lesley Hilton, thank you for your positivity and kindness. To Rain Hilton, our cat, for being so darned cute! To my dad, my sister and her growing family, and my brother and his partner, I want to express my love and thankfulness for just being the wonderful people that you are. To my mother, Judy Marvin, for lending a second set of eyes. Throughout my entire life, you have always been my best teacher and strongest advocate. I could not have done this with you.

The faithful Starbucks baristas. Thank you for the comfortable workspace, the delicious coffee, and the kind words of encouragement.

My committee members. To Dr. Arnold Novak and Dr. Jacqueline Kirk, I want to express my sincerest gratitude for reviewing my work. Your feedback helped to strengthen this research.

My critical friend. To Dr. Ken Horton, thank you for reviewing my writing, for sharing your insight and interesting experiences with offshore Canadian education, and for connecting me with key individuals who were critical to this research. This research would not have been possible without your guidance and support. Also, a fond hello and thanks to your wife, Mabel, and your adorable cat, Mukluk.

My thesis advisor. Most importantly, I would like to thank Dr. Marion Terry. I can not even begin to express my gratitude for all your help throughout this research process. You were always available to answer questions when I was curious, to nudge me forward when I was stalled, and to reassure me when I was discouraged. As an educator, I am inspired by your commitment to high-quality academic writing, your dedication to the research process, and your ability to instill the pursuit of excellence. Thank you.
ABSTRACT

CANADIAN EDUCATION ABROAD:
EXPLORING THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF TWO DISTINCT MODELS

A growing number of schools around the world are using different models of Canadian education. There is a dearth in research that examines how each model operates and how their policies, processes, and programming are implemented in foreign contexts. This mixed method thesis study explored the strengths and weaknesses of two distinct models of Canadian education implemented abroad: educational franchise schools and provincially affiliated schools (PA).

Educational franchise schools contract experienced Canadian educators to train local teachers to implement Canadian curriculum and pedagogy in their country of origin. Canadian Educational Services Latin America Inc., otherwise known as Maple Bear, is the educational franchise presented in this study. There were 28 participants from 10 different MB schools. MB stakeholder groups consisted of franchise administrators, teacher-trainers, curriculum writers, school owners, academic coordinators, and classroom teachers. PA schools require provincially certified teachers and administrators to provide an education for local students using Canadian curriculum. There were 48 participants from 12 different PA schools. PA stakeholder groups were government liaison officers, schools principals, and teachers.

Quantitative data were gathered through an online survey consisting of 15 Likert-scale questions. Qualitative data were collected through 5 open-ended survey questions and one-to-one interviews. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each distinct model was organized into 11 themes: systems and structures; staff profile; recruitment and retention; community perspective; school climate; cultural and professional preparation; professional development; curriculum, resources, and materials; methodology; English language learning; and student as a learner.
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CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

A brief description of schools that use a Canadian model of education in an international setting established a contextual starting point. Two specific school systems that use distinctive models for the implementation of Canadian programming are described: (1) provincially affiliated offshore schools and (2) educational franchise schools. The background to the research concludes with a description of how each of these schools uses a Canadian model of education and what makes each model distinct.

Introduction to Canadian Schools Operating Outside of Canada

Around the globe, a growing number of schools, from preschool to university, are choosing to use a Canadian model of education. How each of these institutions uses a Canadian form of education varies from school to school. Many of these institutions outside of Canada use Canadian programming and instruction, while others simply adopt and modify a Canadian curriculum. In some cases, Canadian educators are imported and employed to work in these foreign contexts; in other cases, Canadians design policy and curriculum and help to train local educators to implement this model in their designated foreign school. The scope and breadth of the industry involving Canadian education abroad is extensive, and the different models used for programming, policy, and implementation are extremely diverse.

To probe the broad topic of how Canadian education is used in a foreign setting, one can begin by narrowing the vast spectrum of models employed by Canadian schools abroad, by concentrating on two specific models of Canadian education. After establishing this contextual framework, the complex task of examining exactly how these two distinct and specific models of foreign Canadian schools actually implement and operationalize a system of Canadian education abroad becomes more manageable. To begin, one must elucidate and define each of the
distinctive models that form the subject matter of this thesis research. Educational franchise schools and provincially affiliated offshore Canadian schools are the models of Canadian education that are examined.

Another distinct model used to incorporate an element of Canadian education can be described as educational franchise schools. In this particular model, local proprietors purchase the rights to operate a Canadian education franchise. The school owners are responsible for the operation of the school. The parent company provides trainers to assist schools in preparing educators to use Canadian teaching methodologies, resources, and a Canadian-style of curriculum.

Provincially affiliated schools enroll students who are predominately local citizens from the host country, with a limited number of students from a different nationality (Cosco, 2011; Schuetze, 2008). These schools are most often owned by local business proprietors, who tightly control and regulate the operations of the school. Curricula in provincially affiliated schools are often a hybrid of local and Western-style programming, instruction, and curriculum. Graduates of provincially affiliated schools often leave school with a diploma that is recognized by the country with which the school is affiliated.

*Educational Franchise Schools*

Two examples of educational franchises are Maple Bear Global Schools Ltd. and Canadian Educational Services Latin America Inc (LACES). These companies are not totally independent from one another. The umbrella franchise, Maple Bear Global Schools Ltd., is Canadian-owned company that has schools all over the world that use a Canadian/ Manitoban French immersion model of curriculum and pedagogy. LACES – half owned by Maple Bear Global Schools Ltd. – operates exclusively in Brazil and Mexico. Although both educational
franchises use a similar model of Canadian programming, LACES has incorporated rigorous training and quality assurance processes that have been particularly successful in Brazil. For this reason, LACES is the educational franchise model that has been explored in this thesis research. Furthermore, it is important to note that both Maple Bear Global Schools Ltd. and LACES require school owners to call their schools Maple Bear. For the purposes of this research, Maple Bear is the title used to describe the LACES franchise.

In 2006, Brazil opened its first Maple Bear school and was the first Canadian bilingual (English and Portuguese) pre-school to enter the Brazilian market; by 2008, the number of schools had grown to nine (Consulate General, 2009). As of 2014, there were 66 Maple Bear Schools open across Brazil (“Maple Bear,” n.d.). Under this model of Canadian education abroad, local Brazilian entrepreneurs purchase the rights to the Maple Bear name, in order to open and operate their own private international school in Brazil. The schools function independently and are under the control of the owner. The parent company, LACES, provides schools with resources, training, and curricula that is consistent with Canadian pedagogy and practice.

\textit{Provincially Affiliated Schools}

Many elementary and secondary schools offer a curriculum consistent with one of Canada’s provinces (\textit{CICIC}, 2014). Agreements have been established between several of the provincial governments of Canada and privately owned independent schools abroad, to allow the use of a provincial model of programming and curriculum. Manitoba, for example, is affiliated with seven offshore schools in various locations including Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Most schools that are affiliated with Canadian provinces are located in China. In 2008, the total
student body of Chinese students preparing to graduate with Canadian diplomas overseas was larger than that of most public school divisions or districts in Canada (Cosco, 2009).

Although each province has independently initiated and developed its own unique offshore affiliation and accreditation program, there are a number of transitive properties between the policies of these provinces that allow these schools to be clustered and studied as one culture-sharing group. Prospective schools must meet a strict set of guidelines and requirements before an agreement can be made for provincial accreditation. The agreement is contingent upon approval from the governing body in the host foreign country and the department of education for the respective Canadian province. If a foreign school qualifies and is approved for provincial affiliation, it will be subject to annual inspections. Provincially affiliated schools are owned by local proprietors, but are often operated by Canadian administrators and educators. It is a requirement of these schools that all teachers have the appropriate teaching certification from the province with which the school is affiliated. As a result, teaching methodology, programming, and curriculum are often reflective of schools that operate in Canada.

**How Are Canadian Models of Education Used Abroad?**

Despite minor differences in how each province accredits offshore schools, monitors and regulates their adherence to provincial standards and quality, and promotes their existence in the international education community, the overall model of how each province actually implements a Canadian-style of education is fairly consistent. The curriculum used by the school must be a direct reflection of the document provided by the province with which it is affiliated. Additionally, all educators, from teachers to administrators, must be certified and recognized by the respective province. Upon graduating from provincially affiliated offshore schools, students
receive a diploma that is recognized by Canadian universities, under the same requirements and standards that are designated to each province and university.

Individual Maple Bear schools in Brazil are owned and operated by local proprietors. With a few exceptions, all staff members at Maple Bear schools are of Brazilian nationality. The schools operate using a Canadian-style of curriculum that was created and written by Canadians. Experienced Canadian teachers and administrators are hired as trainers to work in schools for a few months at a time to oversee the programming, policy-making, and daily operations of the school, in order to ensure and facilitate its adherence to Canadian pedagogy, programming, and practices. Trainers work directly with teachers to teach, foster, and coordinate Canadian teaching methodologies in the classroom.

**Introduction to the Research**

The following section provides a general overview of the purposed research by introducing the research question, offering insight into the researcher’s motivation, highlighting the significance of this thesis research to the field of international education, and identifying the methods by which data will be collected.

**Research Question**

The study’s primary research question is “What are the strengths and weaknesses of two distinct models of Canadian education used in an international setting?” In order to answer this question effectively, it is helpful to break down the primary research question into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the perceived strengths of each model of Canadian education, as identified by the individuals responsible for program implementation, development, and administration?
2. What are the perceived weaknesses of each model of Canadian education, as identified by the individuals responsible for program implementation, development, and administration?

3. How can programming and policy be enhanced, in order to support program strengths, eliminate/mitigate ramifications of identified challenges, and facilitate improvements associated with implementing Canadian education in an international setting?

**Researcher Motivation**

An interest in international teaching and the models of implementation that are used by foreign schools was sparked by a first-hand experience in teaching middle-years boys in a privately owned American school in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The first of two contracts with an American international school commenced immediately after graduating with a Bachelor of Education. The time spent teaching overseas has shaped each of the classroom teaching roles that I have encountered since returning to Canada eight years ago. Reflecting on those experiences often invokes a mix of positive nostalgia and professional uneasiness. There are some overwhelming feelings of inadequacy that color the overall professional experience, as well as a driving sense that teachers, such as me, could have been prepared more adequately for the role.

On arrival to Kuwait, an unanticipated set of challenges were confronted by the group of predominantly novice and retired Canadian teachers, who had landed just a week before classes were beginning. Learning to navigate a country and a culture that was new and remarkably different, while simultaneously preparing to teach a group of students whose world-view was greatly divergent from ours was a daunting task, to say the least. Prior to our arrival, no informal or formal training was provided to help prepare the new group of teachers for living and teaching
abroad. After arriving, a four-day orientation to the school, their policies, and the country’s distinctive culture was provided. The information presented came as an overwhelming confirmation of just how little we knew about the country and the culture, a phenomenon often known as culture shock.

This experience fostered professional learning opportunities that influenced my practices and philosophies of teaching and learning. Teaching students from another culture and living among the same people cultivated an appreciation and understanding of the Middle-Eastern way of life. Additionally, I assumed the role of a full-time classroom teacher. After returning to Canada and working in the Manitoba school system, some deficiencies of the American international school came to light: gaps that I had not recognized because of inexperience and the naivety of being a novice. In hindsight, there was a woeful lack of resources and support for classroom teachers; professional development opportunities were lacking, and the curriculum was a document that was rarely, if ever, discussed. Consequently, teachers’ adherence to the curriculum was minimal at best. It became apparent that textbooks and other local resources were substandard and/or not age-appropriate. With such a minimal orientation to the country, culture, and curriculum, educators tended to feel unprepared and even unqualified to teach students in a way that would be culturally relevant or appropriate.

Despite these shortfalls, the international teaching experience made a significant impression on my life. The encounter has undoubtedly changed me as a person and as a professional. In interesting ways, the students who learned from our group of Canadian teachers also benefitted from the opportunity to learn from international educators, despite our inexperience and/or lack of cultural insight. The overall experience of teaching in the Middle-
East reinforced the idea that international schools using a foreign model of education can have the potential for a win-win outcome for all stakeholders.

**Significance to the Field**

A review of literature on international education revealed that there is lack of relevant research that pertains to how Canadian education at an elementary and high school level is being used abroad. Most research regarding international education refers to higher education institutions, focussing on students’ perspectives, cultural ramifications of transplanting pedagogy and practices in foreign settings, and institutional or political policy. This thesis research is unique in its attention to the perceptions and experiences of the individuals responsible for program implementation, development, and administration; the merits and challenges of educational programming at an elementary or high school level in an international setting; and the specific policies and practices of Canadian schools in an international context.

Not only does this thesis research function to fill a gap in the current academic literature, it also provides recommendations to policy-makers and school owners of institutions that use a Canadian model of education in an international setting. These recommendations will improve the international school experience for all stakeholders by offering first-hand insight into the perceived issues and challenges that face international educators, highlighting program strengths, and suggesting strategies for improving the processes of implementing and operating Canadian schools in foreign contexts.

**Overview of the Methodology**

This study used a mixed methodology to examine the strengths and weaknesses associated with schools that use Canadian education in international settings. Quantitative data were gathered from a cross-sectional survey administered to individuals involved in both models
of Canadian education operating in foreign contexts. This survey was a combination of Likert-type scale questions, with follow-up open-ended questions that gave the participant an opportunity to further explain their answers. Survey results informed the researcher about individuals’ perceptions and experiences with each model of Canadian education abroad.

The researcher then used the information gleaned from the survey results to generate interview questions. The interviews provided participants with the opportunity to explain or elaborate on their responses to survey questions. Additionally, these interviews enabled the researcher to probe deeper into relevant issues that emerged from the analysis of the survey. Organizing and analyzing the interview responses developed a greater understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the individuals associated with each model of Canadian programming. Furthermore, participants had an opportunity to provide suggestions for enhancing current policies and practices of their respective model of Canadian education being used abroad.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions apply to the research:

**Educational Franchise.** A model of Canadian education used abroad that follows a typical franchise business model. When local business proprietors purchase a franchise, they are buying an established and marketable product. This education product consists of a franchise name, resources/materials, and ongoing support. Two examples of educational franchises are Maple Bear Global Schools Ltd. and Canadian Educational Services Latin America Inc. (LACES).

**Provincially Affiliated** - A model of Canadian education used abroad that occurs when a foreign school owner acquires a contractual affiliation with a specific Canadian province. These affiliations offer schools a marketable educational service and a reputable curriculum.
Additionally, provincially affiliated schools are obligated to employ teachers and administrators who hold a certification recognized by the affiliating province.

**Offshore School** - Any school that uses or advertises the use of a Canadian model of education outside of Canada. Students attending offshore schools are from the country with which the school is located.

**Educational Transfer** - The process of implementing educational policy or pedagogy in a context that differs from where it was originally designed or intended for use.

**International Student** - Individuals who attend educational institutions that are located outside their country of origin.

**English Language Learners (ELL) and English as an Additional Language Learners (EAL)** - Students who are actively learning the English language. ELL and EAL are terms that are used interchangeably in this thesis research.

**Foreign Native English Teacher (FNET)** - Teachers who travel from English-speaking countries to work in schools located in non-English-speaking countries.

**Local Non-Native English Teacher (LNNET)** - Offshore school teachers who are not from an English-speaking country and who speak English as an additional language.

**Affiliation** - Two institutions that establish a contractual and mutually beneficial relationship.

**Association** - Two institutions that establish a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship.

**Privatization** - The process of establishing a privately owned (non-government) institution.

* * * * *

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and overview of the research topic and methodology. Chapter 2 delves deeper into the research topic by summarizing academic research and policy documents related to the general proliferation of Canadian and Western education abroad; the
policies, practices, and issues associated with two specific types of Canadian international schools; and the relevant issues, challenges, and potential implications of implementing a foreign education program in an international context.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins from a global perspective. The first section opens with a big-picture summation of the literature regarding the proliferation of educational institutions, policies, and practices from the West to countries around the world. The second section provides a brief overview of the educational contexts of six different countries that form the backdrop of this thesis research: Brazil, China, Egypt, South Korea, Thailand, and Turkey. The scope of this review continues to narrow in the third section by examining two specific models of Canadian education that have been adopted in these international contexts. The two models that are individually explored have been described by this researcher as educational franchise schools and provincially affiliated schools. Within these models of Canadian education, a variety of factors have had an impact on their success as educational institutions. The fourth section explores the broader influences of language and culture on the processes of teaching and learning in these foreign educational contexts. The final section focuses on five emergent themes that are directly relevant and unique to offshore Canadian education: school climate, inclusive education, teacher-training, curriculum design, and teacher retention.

The Proliferation of Western Education Abroad

Internationalism and globalization are two terms that are often discussed in relation to international education (Cambridge & Thompson, 2010). The global migration of educational ideology and practice, usually moving from Western to Eastern nations, has been a contributing factor to this international phenomenon. Since the 1990s, a large number of offshore and international institutions have emerged in varying contexts around the world. Britain, Australia,
and the United States are among the many world nations that have exported a form of education that resembles their own (Castle & Kelly, 2004).

Not to be exempt from this transient practice, Canadian education has also become increasingly prevalent around the world, most notably in Asia (Cosco, 2011). According to the Canadian Information Center for International Credentials (2016), 127 offshore Canadian elementary and secondary schools have been officially authorized. Not included in this list are schools that have not been officially recognized or affiliated with Canadian provincial governments, and schools that use Canadian pedagogy or practices without bearing the official identity of a Canadian institution.

A number of studies have examined the trend of educational borrowing from the West to the East (Ryan, 2011; Seah, 2011). The result of such policy transfer is that many non-Western countries are adopting and implementing Western pedagogical approaches (Grigorenko, 2007). Aydarova (2012) explored the transfer and implementation of an American teacher education curriculum in the United Arab Emirates. Sperandio, Hobson, Douglas, and Pruitt (2009) conducted two case studies in non-Western educational systems that borrowed educational policy or programming from the Western world. One case examined the importation of a teacher leader preparation program that was designed by an American university and was transferred to an international school system in Colombia. The second case study explored a character education program that was designed in the United States and was implemented by an international school in Kuwait.

Educational borrowing is particularly prevalent in post-secondary education. In the Middle East, for example, countries are seeing a rapidly growing number of transnational universities from the Western world (Lemke-Westcott & Johnson, 2013). In this situation, not
only is educational policy or programming borrowed from the Western world, but institutions are setting up shop in foreign countries and are operating as offshore campuses for the same Western college or university.

Whether flying the Canadian flag at an offshore school campus or simply applying principles of Canadian pedagogy in non-Western schools, it is clear that Canadian education has had an impact on, or perhaps should be thought of as part-in-parcel with, globalization and internationalism. The following section explores factors that have prompted and influenced the transfer of Western educational institutions and/or policy around the world. Educational transfer, however, does not occur without challenges. Risks associated with educational transfer and the perils that result are also explored. In the face of these challenges, researchers offer a wide array of recommendations and/or potential considerations for policy-makers involved in educational transfer and policy-borrowing.

**Factors Influencing Transfer of Educational Policy and Pedagogy**

A significant body of study has examined factors that have influenced this international trend. The themes that emerged from the literature help to make sense of why this international movement continues to occur. Educational policy-makers and foreign governments of non-Western countries have felt mounting international pressure to reform. The role of education is perceived to be increasingly important in preparing students with 21st century skills. Among these skills lies the value of knowing the English language in preparing students for a global economy. Parents have come to expect educational options for their children, and Western educational policies and practices have become an international symbol of quality education.

As a result of perceived pressure to modernize education in order to address high international standards, educational policy makers in many Asian countries are looking to the
Western world to inform their decisions in reform (Ngugyn, Elliot, & Pilot, 2009). International assessment scores such as PISA serve as a tool to compare the policies and practices of various systems of education in different countries around the world. Additionally, international school accreditation agencies are using increasingly standardized criteria, prompting non-Western systems of education to look Westward for successful educational practices (Sperandio, Hobson, Douglas, & Pruitt, 2009).

In an effort to better prepare its students for the challenges of the 21st century, China has introduced a wide range of educational reforms since the 1980s (Tan, 2014). Since then, many changes in the Chinese system of education have been borrowed or imported from Western nations. English language is perceived by many non-Western countries as a critical skill that needs to be learned and practiced. In the past, only the wealthiest people from non-English-speaking countries were privileged enough to learn English; currently, there are more than two billion English speakers worldwide (British Council, 2013).

Countries and educational institutions actively pursue policy transfer through political or economic alliances as a means to attain symbolic power and prestige (Aydarova, 2012). In addition to the transfer of educational policy, Western educational programs, and in some cases entire schools, are often imported by the non-Western world for symbolic qualities. That is, program importers perceive that by projecting an international image of the school, parents considering schools for their children would find this image appealing (Sperandio et al., 2009). This is especially true when parents believe that speaking English is an important skill to learn in order to be successful in their future. In a study conducted in 2013, Jung Song reported that many South Korean parents select English-medium schools because they believe this will
provide their children with an advantage, under the assumption that Koreans cannot effectively teach proper English.

*Risks Associated With Educational Transfer*

Many studies have explored the process of educational borrowing in terms of its effects on the system, institution, or culture group receiving this change. Phillips and Ochs (2004) developed a framework for understanding four stages of the policy-borrowing process as adopted by the importing country or institution: cross-national attraction, decision, implementation, and indigenization. What is particularly relevant to this thesis study is the implementation and indigenization stages of educational transfer. Exactly how Western policies or practices are implemented in non-Western schools differs profoundly and has directly affects the success of the educational transfer. Additionally, how this change is received and internalized by the local culture group is particularly important. Researchers have identified several risks or challenges that emerge from the processes of implementation and indigenization (for example, see Aydarova, 2012; Forlin, 2008; Schuetze, 2008). In many cases, policy is transferred, but this transfer may not be reflected in practice. Accordingly, educational policies and practices may not be assumed universal or easily implemented and indigenized in any context.

Governments or institutions may engage in borrowing educational policy that does not effectively transfer to practice. The critical individuals such as administrators and teachers will have their own interpretations of the local context, which play a role in the implementation and indigenization stages of educational policy borrowing and transfer. When an educational policy is borrowed or implemented in a foreign context, the local individuals involved in its implementation can theoretically indigenize the policy in such a way that it has the potential to morph from its original intent. The longer the educational model has been implemented, the
greater the likelihood that the program will be indigenized (Aydarova, 2012). For example, in a study that compared Canadian offshore schools with Chinese schools, Schuetze (2008) found that Canadian schools teach young people the value of a democratic and pluralist society, whereas Chinese teachers seek to promote patriotism, collectivism, and socialism. In this case, there was a clear distinction between the purpose of the borrowed program and the philosophical and cultural realities of the individuals implementing the change. This study sheds some light on a larger issue that is a recurrent theme in the Asian-Pacific. Although pedagogy in developed countries around the world has moved toward social constructivism, Asian-Pacific countries have resisted this change, continuing to use a didactic pedagogy (Forlin, 2008).

Clearly, culture needs to be taken into consideration when implementing educational policy or pedagogy in foreign contexts. Non-Western countries that import pedagogical policies or practices from the Western world are putting themselves at risk of academic ineffectiveness, neglect of their own cultural assets, and dependency on the Western educational practices (Ngugyn et al., 2009). Educational practices that operate in the Western world do not always work effectively in non-Western cultures (Grigorenko, 2007). In a 2012 study, Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, Terlouw and Pilot explored what happens when cooperative learning, a Western-based pedagogy, is employed by a Vietnamese school. These researchers found that cooperative learning was introduced as a result of false universalism, and they cautioned policy-makers to avoid assuming that educational policy and pedagogy are universal.

**Considerations for Offshore Educational Policy Makers and/ or School Owners**

In light of the risks and challenges identified above, research points to a number of factors that need to be considered before engaging in educational borrowing or educational transfer. Research has been consistent in the message that culture and context are key factors in
the successful transfer of educational policy or pedagogy. This means acknowledging not only the epistemological culture of the group, but also the influence of the cultural climate of the school. The effects of transnational educational institutions at elementary, secondary, or post-secondary levels highlight the importance of transparency, communication, and collaboration between all associated stakeholders.

As Sternberg (2007) explained,

When cultural context is taken into account, (a) individuals are better recognized for and are better able to make use of their talents, (b) schools teach and assess children better, and (c) society utilizes rather than wastes the talents of its members. Instruction and assessment can only be improved by taking cultural context into account. (p. 18)

It is critical that school owners think carefully about the cultural realities of importing Western pedagogies or transferring educational knowledge (Sperandio et al., 2009). Countries outside of the Western world should work to reconstruct pedagogical policy and practice so as to reflect the cultural values and norms of their own country (Ngugyn et al., 2009). Tan (2014) emphasized the importance of exploring the epistemological foundation of culture in framing our understanding of how educational policy and practices converge in the process of policy transfer. Westcott and Johnson (2013) suggested that transnational institutions and staff would benefit from a recognition of differences in cultural context, by exploring local expectations and students’ unique learning styles.

The culture of the school climate also needs to be considered when engaging in educational borrowing and/ or transfer. Sperandio et al. (2009) found that if the importing organization is flexible enough to accommodate innovative practices and the organizational culture is open enough to receive and embrace an unmodified program in the expectation that it will prompt change, program transference does have the potential to empower and initiate change. (p. 720)
The assertion here is that staff need to embrace educational change before educational transfer has the potential to be successful.

In the case of education transfer or transnational education, collaboration among stakeholders who are involved with the administration of the program is critical. At the post-secondary level, it is imperative that the partnership between universities and associated schools involve effective collaboration for transnational schools to be effective (Yang, 2011). At the elementary and secondary level of offshore schools, Schuetze (2008) advocated stronger collaboration between Canadian provinces to ensure a high standard of quality for offshore Canadian schools. Cosco (2011) found that Canadian educators in offshore schools desired improved communication, support, integration, and recognition from Canadian provinces and federal government strategies in international education.

**Educational Contexts of Offshore Canadian Schools**

Offshore Canadian schools exist in various contexts around the world. This thesis research focuses on six distinct countries that have imported Canadian education: Brazil, China, Egypt, South Korea, Thailand, and Turkey. The educational contexts of these countries are explained in the following section.

**Brazil**

In Brazil, public education is free and compulsory from pre-school to upper-secondary (INEP, 2016). Schwartzman (2004) found that Brazil has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, with education as a contributing factor. Akkari (2013) found that the private education sector in Brazil is comprised of educational institutions that act as reproduction factories for the privileged elite at secondary and elementary levels. Public schools in poor regions are often worse in quality. As a result, upper and middle class parents send their children
to private schools. These schools are of a stronger quality and are often better at preparing students for more prestigious post-secondary institutions. Students from poorer families often do not receive post-secondary education at all; those students who do pursue post-secondary education attend private institutions that are also considered to be low in prestige and quality.

Nevertheless, students work diligently in secondary schools to prepare for the public university entrance exam called the “vestibular.” Knobel and Schwartzman (2016) asserted that the university entrance exams used in Brazil are similar to those being used in China and Turkey. Despite the low number of students who are accepted into public universities, secondary schools focus almost exclusively on exam preparation, which can have very negative effects on student learning (Knobel & Schwartzman, 2016). McCowen (2007) found that there has recently been rapid growth in private education in Brazil at the university level. Higher education in Brazil is comprised of two distinct forms of education: a small network government funded universities that offer free tuition and enroll approximately 1.1 million students each year and a larger private sector that enrolls around 5.4 million students (Knobel & Schwartzman, 2016).

Aguiar (2007), Aguiar and Nogueira (2008), and Aguiar, Nogueira, and Ramos (2008) found that a relatively large part of the middle and upper classes are investing in educational resources that are internationalized. Families seek schools that will better prepare their children for a successful future in a globalized world. This investment includes English language learning and knowledge of different countries and cultures. Aguiar and Nogueira (2012) found that internationalization strategies emphasize foreign language learning, bilingualism as an educational project, and the promotion of international travel. Approximately 4.1 million Brazilian students attend private international schools (Consulate General, 2009). Revenues
gleaned from bilingual and international Kindergarten to grade 12 institutions are estimated to be approximately $906 million (Consulate General, 2009).

Many students who attend international schools in Brazil travel to Canada to attend Canadian universities. A document prepared by the Consulate General of Canada in Sao Paulo and the International Education and Youth Division (2009) stated that the number of Brazilian students traveling to Canada for educational purposes rose from 7,300 in 2004 to 17,000 in 2008. According to the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) (2016), this makes up 3% of Canada’s total international student population. Canada is now considered one of the most attractive destinations for international language studies by Brazilian students.

**China**

In terms of the number of students, China boasts one of the largest systems of education in the world. In 1998, there were 289,859,000 students enrolled in schools from grades 1 through 9 (State University, 2016). These nine grades comprise China’s formal basic education. The quality of education in China varies greatly; however, there is a standard curriculum that emphasizes a strong nationalist message. Teachers ascribe to a style that emphasizes authority of the teacher and employs a high degree of rote learning and memorization (State University, 2016).

In the early part of the 19th century, China engaged in massive educational reform, modeling its system of education first after the Japanese system of education, then later directly reflecting the Western system. By the middle of the 1900s, American missionary schools began to establish institutions in China, further “Americanizing” the Chinese system of education. Gaps between Chinese society and American missionary schools began to emerge as a result of missionaries’ unwillingness to learn Chinese or to address Chinese cultural heritage. Despite
these challenges, missionary schools prompted a desire of many Chinese people to travel to the West to pursue post-secondary education (State University, 2016).

By the 1980s, private education began to emerge as a viable solution to the challenges of China’s growing market economy. These schools offered students courses in foreign languages, accounting, bookkeeping, home economics, and other vocational subject areas. There are three primary types of private schools in operation in China. One type is founded and controlled privately by businessmen or former educators. The second form is established by Chinese investors in collaboration with foreign investors. The third type, in the tradition of minban schools, are owned and operated by Chinese enterprises. Private schools have enjoyed strong financial support since the 1990s and have become better resourced than public schools (State University, 2016).

A large number of Chinese students travel to the Western world to attend school, predominately at the post-secondary level. According to the CBIE (2016), there were 110,918 Chinese international students attending various levels of education in Canada in 2014. This makes up 33% of all foreign student population in Canada.

**Egypt**

Pedagogy and educational theory in Egypt is a product of three cultural influences: British, secular (Westernized) Egyptian, and Islamic (traditional) Egyptian. Egyptian education is a reflection of the status of its own people and the historical conflicts that exist within Egyptian society. Religious and secular leaders, tradition and innovation, and foreign and national interests are societal discrepancies that influence the system of education. Tensions between Islam and Western-based science have created challenges and have sometimes conflicted with efforts to democratize schools. Despite its challenges, education is viewed as
vital for the transmission of cultural values and the individual development of students (State University, 2016).

Public education is comprised of three phases: basic education for 4 to 14 year-old students, secondary school for 14 to 17 year-old students, and post-secondary institutions. Education is considered compulsory for 8 years between the ages of 6 to 14. Tuition is free at all levels of public education (State University, 2016).

Whether privately or publicly run, all preschool institutions are under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has control over resources. Each class is required to have two teachers and one helper. Primary schools have about 60% of the total number of students attending schooling in Egypt at all levels. Students are permitted to attend non-government private schools. Privately owned and operated English and French schools continue to grow in popularity. Fewer than half of the students attending primary schools go on to attend secondary schools.

Higher education in the Middle East has seen a dramatic boom in foreign or offshore educational institutions and programs in the region (Miller-Idriss & Hanauer, 2011). In many cases, branch university campuses set up in the Middle East are governed and operated by home campuses, employing the majority of their faculties with foreign teachers and administrators. Furthermore, the curriculum used is often developed and standardized to meet the needs of a Western population (Lemke-Westcott & Johnson, 2013).

Foreign influence is evident in all areas of Egyptian education. UNESCO and Fulbright are two agencies that support overseas teacher-training. UNICEF supports the government in the development of educational materials and teachers are often sent to Western countries for professional training (State University, 2016).
South Korea

In South Korea, education is free and compulsory for students in primary education. Middle school education is also compulsory, but a limited number of students receive free schooling. Enrollment in both primary and middle school is 99-100%.

There are more than 220 days of school per year for students in South Korea. If one were to include after-hours instruction time, the sheer quantity of time that South Korean students spend on their education is staggering. There is an unwritten expectation among the South Korean culture that students will study very hard and prepare very rigorously for college entrance examinations.

Education has been growing at rapid rates in South Korea. Enrollment rates have gone up at all levels of education. South Korean literacy rates are close to 100% and it consistently achieves some of the highest scores in the world. Ninety-nine percent of students transfer from primary to middle school and 98.6% of students’ transition from middle school to high school. In 1996, 79% of students transitioned into post-secondary institutions. The general culture among parents in South Korea is one that firmly expects their children to achieve nothing less than a college degree. Therefore, students who do not successfully pass the university entrance exams often travel abroad to attend university or college.

Education plays a critical role in Korean Society. A great deal of pressure is placed on Korean children, bearing a critical influence on one’s career, social standing, and quality of life. It is the social norm for Korean parents to force children to spend the bulk of their day studying at school in order to prepare for elite universities in the country (Jung Song, 2013).

There is very little difference between public and private schools, other than the ownership. Public education has a shortage of fiscal resources as a result of the increasing
number of students. As a result, the number of private schools has continued to grow. Jung Song (2013) stated that English-medium international schools in South Korea are a legal component of the national system of education known as oikwukin hakkyo, meaning foreigner schools. The original intention of these schools was to provide an educational setting for international students who were foreign residents. However, in recent years these schools have opened their doors to South Korean nationals that have now often become the majority population. As a result, these schools have transformed into educational institutions for privileged classes of students with a South Korean nationality (Jung Song, 2013). English-medium educational institutions operating in South Korea offer local students an option to gain valuable skills for a globalizing world, which was previously only available to students who traveled abroad to gain an education in English-speaking countries (Jung Song, 2013).

The number of international private schools also continues to grow. As of September 2011, there were reported to be just over 50 international schools in South Korea (Cosco, 2011). Twenty-six international schools designated as English-medium schools were said to be opening soon. In 2011, South Korea had approximately 45 Canadian international schools (Cosco, 2011). Children who attend Western-style international schools in South Korea tend to find these schools easier to cope with the rigorous examination-driven system of education prevalent in South Korea. South Korean students who graduate from international schools can have their degrees recognized not only in South Korea, but also in higher educational institutions in the Western world (Jung Song, 2013).

**Thailand**

Students in Thailand receive a guarantee of 12 years of free education, of which 9 are compulsory (Tanielian, 2014). Thailand’s system of education is large and complex. Primary
education is comprised of students aged 6 to 11; secondary education serves students ages 12 to 17. There are both public and private schools in the primary and secondary streams of education. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the oversight and supervision of public education, while the Private Education Commission controls private primary schools. Thai universities are highly selective. Students who wish to be admitted into these universities often attend private coaching schools or private international schools. These institutions are under the control of the Private Education Commission.

Tanielian (2014) articulated that in Thailand, English is a core subject in the curriculum. This can create financial and logistical issues. For example, instruction from foreign educators is at the expense of the school. As recent funding changes have made English language more accessible to the public, more Thai and native English speakers from abroad are needed. Additionally, an increasing number of schools and school districts have recently adopted parent-funded English language programs as separate foreign language departments within the public or private institutions. There are many different models of foreign language programs in the primary and secondary levels. In the most common model of English programming, foreign teachers teach English language lessons and sometimes other subjects for one to three hours per week. Immersion programs also exist, which offer students English-medium instruction in all subject areas (Tanielian, 2014). In Thailand, the national special education plan was established in 1995 to develop educational services to students with disabilities, in order to provide them with a right to education. Inclusive education has continued to gain prevalence in Thailand (Kaur, Noman, & Awang-Hashim, 2016).
**Turkey**

Turkish formal education includes pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. Primary education serves students ages 6 to 14. Primary education is free and compulsory for all Turkish citizens. Secondary education covers general, vocational, and technical high schools that offer three years of education. All students who complete primary education are entitled to attend secondary education. The multiple types of private education institutions in Turkey include private general courses, vocational, and technical courses (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2005). Cemalcilar and Gökşen (2014) explained how recent policies have led to major education progress in Turkey. However, these changes have not necessarily resulted in high retention of Turkish students. Research regarding Western education in Turkey is extremely limited.

**Two Models of Offshore Canadian Education**

Chapman and Pyvis (2005) identified many different models of offshore program delivery. These models include online programs, twinning programs, offshore campuses, moderated programs, and franchise programs. Each model of delivery can, in a sense, create its own form of culture. Schuetze (2008) explains the distinction between offshore schools and international schools. In offshore schools, the composition of the student body is primarily local, rather than made up of expatriate students. Additionally, although offshore schools offer a curriculum that is foreign, there are usually mandatory subjects that are taught in the local language.

Many of these schools are considered English-medium schools, which deliver global education in the English language for foreign students (Jung Song, 2013). The following two models of offshore Canadian education are examined in this section: educational franchise
schools and provincially affiliated schools. There is a dearth of research that specifically studies either of these models of Canadian education.

**Educational Franchise Schools**

Aurini and Davies (2004) argued that a climate of educational competition creates contexts wherein parents are clients. In these contexts, these “clients” are becoming increasingly concerned with boosting their children’s educational opportunities. This environment fuels a market for private education. Kuehn (2002) was highly critical of British Columbia’s offshore school plan, suggesting that commodification and privatization is a problem. Through privatization of offshore schools, social and economic inequities are exacerbated in the local communities where these schools are situated. Although profit motive and competition for students/clients are powerful incentives for the improvement of educational services, market competition of education focuses on profit seeking, rather than on the specific needs of its students.

For privately owned franchise schools, it is important to establish schools close to public institutions. According to Aurini and Davis (2004), private schools are more successful when they avoid direct competition with public schools, and instead secure a niche in the educational market. In foreign contexts, this niche market consists of parents looking for a Western education. Additionally, local owners of franchised businesses benefit from selling established and recognized products, receiving marketing services, training and developing leadership, and incorporating product assessment tools. These advantages provide franchisees the opportunity to kick-start their enterprise with greater ease than a small business (Aurini & Davies, 2004).
Provincially Affiliated Schools

In Canada, provinces are responsible for the operations and oversight of public education. For more than 20 years, Canadian provinces have been establishing affiliations with foreign institutions overseas (Schuetze, 2008). Cosco (2011) found that Canada is the only country in the world engaging in this enterprise. Each Canadian province has set up distinct accreditation, quality assurance, and training processes with the offshore institutions. British Columbia, for example, opened its first offshore school in China in 1995. This school was staffed with Canadian teaching and administrative personnel and used a British Columbia curriculum (Schuetze, 2008). This first school was an immediate and overwhelming success.

Over the years, the number of provincially affiliated schools overseas has grown exponentially, particularly in the Asian Pacific. Cosco (2011) found that more than 77% of all offshore Canadian schools were situated in the Asian Pacific region, with at least nine more schools in the initial stages of accreditation (Cosco, 2011). The number of graduates from offshore Canadian institutions is greater than most public school divisions or districts in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba (Cosco, 2011). Not all offshore schools are private schools. In many cases, provincially affiliated schools are an English component of a public school. It is important not to equate globalization and the increasing prevalence of offshore Canadian education with the privatization of education (Schuetze, 2008).

The section begins by exploring the benefits to Canada, to the local context, and to international students. The challenges and issues that offshore Canadian schools face are outlined. The processes of quality assurance are explored and researchers’ recommendations to policy-makers are presented.
Benefits to Canada

Values that are inherent in Canadian education are being taught outside of Canadian borders. Garii and Schlein (2011) asserted that Canadian schools serve to promote multicultural educational beliefs by fostering a common national identity and bringing together cultural identity factors with educational initiatives that promote Canadian multicultural ideals. These valuable cultural linkages are developed in future leaders who may remain in Asia or may travel to pursue post-secondary education in Canada (Asian Pacific Bulletin, 2008).

Cosco (2011) found that a large proportion of students who graduate from overseas schools end up pursuing post-secondary education in Canada. In a survey of international students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada, over half of the participants indicated that their first choice of destination was Canada (Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., 2012). Approximately 56 000 non-Canadian students travel to Canada for post-secondary education each year. With absolutely no cost to Canadian taxpayers, there are many long- and short-term benefits that these offshore institutions provide to Canada’s economy (Cosco, 2011). Roslyn Kunin and Associates, Inc. (2012) found that in 2010, an estimated 218 200 international students who had traveled to Canada and were attending post-secondary education spent $7.7 billion on tuition, accommodation, and discretionary spending. Additionally, these students created over 81 000 jobs and as much as $445 million in additional government revenue. This had an impact of $6.9 billion to the Canadian economy. Of the 218 200 international students, it was estimated that 56 900 of these individuals were Chinese students and 24 600 were South Korean citizens (Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., 2012).

Offshore Canadian schools provide new business and other opportunities for the national economy, while concurrently initiating and perpetuating positive international relationships.
According to Cosco (2011), many Canadian manufacturers and educational service providers export textbooks and supplies to offshore Canadian schools. The income from these sales remains in Canada.

Finally, offshore Canadian schools offer hundreds of Canadian teachers the opportunity to find employment in offshore Canadian schools at no expense to Canadian taxpayers. These teachers, who are often early in their career, benefit from these valuable international teaching experiences (Asian Pacific Bulletin, 2008).

**Benefits to the Local Context**

In many developing countries, there has been an increasing demand for highly skilled teachers. As a result, offshore educational institutions have emerged, perhaps to some degree, in an effort to fill this gap. Additionally, there is a distinct demand from students for English language learning opportunities (Castle & Kelly, 2002). Importing institutions with a successful reputation, as well as skilled staff to operate these institutions, has been viewed as a quick and relatively easy way to deal with this challenge. Additionally, if students graduate from an offshore school and attend Canadian universities, they could potentially return to their home country with valuable international skills and the English language. According to Cosco (2011), many students’ families expect their children to return from Canadian universities to work or start businesses.

In China, policies have been put in place in an effort to increase the participation in upper-secondary and post-secondary areas of education. Offshore schools play a small yet important role in this issue (Schuetze, 2008).
Benefits to International Students

When students receive an education from a foreign institution, they gain valuable insight and appreciation for diversity in culture. Cambridge and Thompson (2010) explained that international students are offered an opportunity to learn about and gain an appreciation for other cultures, languages, and perspectives.

One of the benefits of studying at an international school is that these schools often provide a curriculum and diploma qualification that is recognized by colleges or universities throughout the world (Cambridge & Thompson, 2010). In China, for example, students are prohibited from attending international schools; therefore, offshore schools must operate under a dual track or blended model. Under this model of programming, students work toward achieving both a Chinese certification and one by the affiliating Canadian province (Cosco, 2011).

Challenges Faced by Provincially Affiliated Schools

Provincially affiliated schools face many challenges while implementing a Canadian form of education abroad. Cosco (2011) stated,

There are a myriad of unique challenges that Canada’s offshore and international schools. These include but are not limited to: host society regulatory procedures, private agents, distance from and communication with Canada, recruiting long-term teachers, meeting teacher certification requirements, ESL challenges, keeping abreast of curricula changes, applying a Canadian curriculum in international contexts, providing professional development for teachers, and inconsistency of inspectors. (p. 17)

Additionally, Cosco (2011) found that local owners have imposed a different set of priorities that impeded the success of offshore schools. In some cases, a lack of regulatory oversight has led to poor quality of offshore Canadian schools. Cosco (2011) recognized the inconsistency of inspectors and lack of proper professional development for teachers as responsible for the challenges faced by offshore schools affiliated with Ontario. Dual track and blended models of education make students’ schedules overly busy. It is extremely challenging...
for students to attain a proficiency in English language that adequately prepares students for Canadian university requirements (Cosco, 2011). Under a blended program, there is little time for students to put the necessary work into learning English effectively. In order to address this issue, some schools have set up agreements with universities that run ESL programs for new students (Cosco, 2011).

Schuetze (2008) found that high turn-over of foreign teachers, a lack of teacher supervision and professional development, and an absence of coordinated communication between teachers and parents were among the many challenges faced by offshore Canadian schools. Many schools were substandard in terms of the quality of their facilities (Schuetze, 2008). Additionally, offshore schools offer no academic scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged students, ensuring that only students from affluent families can afford to attend (Schuetze, 2008).

Quality Assurance

As the number of offshore schools continues to grow, quality assurance processes become a necessary feature of these international institutions (Avdjieva & Wilson, 2002). In Manitoba, for example, schools undergo a rigorous review and inspection twice in the first year, and on an annual basis in the years that follow (Manitoba Education, Advanced Education and Literacy). The province of British Columbia requires that all of its private schools inside and outside of Canada are subject to government inspections, in order to ensure regulatory oversight and quality assurance of offshore school programming (Cosco, 2011). In their research exploring the role and practices of quality assurance in offshore university programs, Castle and Kelly (2002) found that that the specific context of offshore delivery is critical to the institutions’ success. Factors of learning styles, resources, and structures may differ in various international
contexts. As a result, standardized or universal educational policies may not be universal and the quality could suffer. Therefore, quality assurance practices need to be rigorous and individualized in order to ensure that standards of quality are maintained in all contexts.

**Recommendations for Improvement**

Researchers have provided a number of recommendations to Canadian policy-makers and affiliating institutions in an effort to inform decision making and improve policy and practice. In order to maintain the positive reputation of Canadian education, Cosco (2011) and Schuetze (2008) asserted the need for increased transparency, support, and a general understanding of offshore Canadian schools.

Schuetze (2008) advocated increased transparency in policy between Canadian and Chinese governments. Cosco (2011) explained how offshore Canadian schools need to change, in order to sustain and develop school quality: “A more transparent and coordinated effort to connect and support best practices both within Canada and in regional contexts will help grow regulatory proxies for institutional monitoring and accountability” (p. 20). Cosco (2011) also recommended promoting inter-provincial communication and connectivity between offshore schools, provincial school districts, and post-secondary institutions.

Furthermore, Cosco (2011) articulated that the federal government of Canada should play a more active role in supporting Canadian overseas education. In her study, offshore school principals shared a concern for maintaining the high-quality reputation that Canada boasts around the world. More needs to be done by Canadian ministries and governments to maintain this reputation.

In terms of support, it is important that Canadian provinces regularly review schools to ensure ESL challenges are being appropriately addressed (Cosco, 2011). Canadian provinces
need to share best practices as a means to improve the quality of offshore schools; however, there has been no such communication. Additionally, researchers have advised that Canadian administrators be included in all administrative and educational decisions of the school (Cosco, 2011; Schuetze, 2008).

Cosco (2011) asserted that these inspections need to be “as full and rigorous as possible as it is the inspection process that lends credibility to Canadian programs and curricula overseas” (p. 9). It is critical that Canadian provinces continuously review regulatory and accreditation requirements in order to sustain high-quality education for international students and to maintain the high regard for Canadian education (Cosco, 2011).

The Influences of Culture and Language

In short, when it comes to teaching and learning, culture is important. The culture of the teacher matters for instruction; it matters for students’ ability to learn. The same types of statements could be made about the culture of the learner, the school community, and the cultural origins of the curriculum and pedagogy. Cultural differences have a profound impact on students’ learning and teachers’ instruction (Getty, 2011). Cultural differences exacerbate the challenges associated with teaching and learning in any environment, particularly if it is one that is new to the teacher or the learner. Issues of language may further complicate the teaching and learning process (Westcott & Johnson, 2013).

Inherent in the notion of culture is language. Language and language development are two critical factors that influence the processes of teaching and learning. Teachers’ comfort and proficiency with the language of instruction directly affects students’ learning, and teachers’ teaching; students’ comfort and proficiency with the language of instruction directly affects their
ability to learn, and the teacher’s ability to teach. There are many models by which language learning is delivered.

This literature review focuses on one particular model delivery: immersion education. This is a model of education that is well-researched to be effective in creating fluent second language speakers. Under this model, students receive instruction in content areas in the language that they are aspiring to learning. This is known as the target language.

The following section explores the research into how teaching and learning are impacted by culture and language. Research regarding the immersion model of instruction is also presented.

**Pedagogy, Language, and Culture**

Depending on the model of education being employed by the institution, the cultural differences between teacher and student could be profound. In some cases, foreign teachers are imported from Western countries to provide instruction to local students. In other cases, local educators are hired to implement a foreign curriculum that differs in the pedagogical approach to teaching. Regardless of the context, these gaps in cultural continuity can act to hamper teaching and learning. Researchers have explored the implications of foreign teachers working abroad and local teachers implementing a foreign curriculum. The strengths and challenges of foreign versus local teaching staff are presented in this section. Pedagogical implications of student-centered and teacher-centered instruction are examined through a cultural lens. Additionally, other specific instructional considerations and their associated cultural implications and/or consequences are unpacked and discussed.
Foreign, Native English Teachers Versus Local, Non-Native English Teachers

Arva and Medgyes (1999) and Ma (2011) researched two different culture groups of teachers that differed not only in their English language proficiency, but also in their teaching qualifications and professional experience. Differences in their approaches to curricular implementation, their cultural understandings of students, their methods for language instruction, and their relationship-building were found between foreign, native English teachers (FNETs) and local, non-native English teachers (LNNETs) (Arva & Medgyes, 1999; Ma, 2011).

Teachers from offshore international schools are often tasked with the challenge of implementing a foreign curriculum to local students. Ma (2011) found that LNNETs used a step-by-step approach to teaching and were more likely to follow a textbook closely, while FNETs continued to push their students through a more flexible and differentiated approach to the curriculum. FNETs generally used a variety of resources and materials. Additionally, while LNNETs implemented a foreign curriculum, these teachers often had an insufficient cultural understanding of the English-speaking country where the foreign curriculum had been created. This interplay had implications for the teachers’ transference of cultural understandings that may be critical to the curriculum and to students’ learning.

FNETs often lacked a clear understanding of student learning difficulties and needs compared to their LNNETs (Ma, 2011). Before non-Western educators attempt to use a Western pedagogy, indigenous culture and local practice needs to be considered (Nguyen et al., 2012). Westcott and Johnson (2013) asserted that learning styles and teaching styles are influenced by culture: “Faculty and students may have different learning styles and expectations, reflecting their own cultural backgrounds and values, and this discrepancy may result in a mismatch between teaching methods and students’ learning styles” (p. 67). Garii and Schlein’s (2011)
research reinforced this notion in relation to Canadian identity. They suggested that multiculturalism may be embedded in the Canadian teachers’ culture and is therefore an inherent component of Canadian pedagogy and practice.

Ma (2011) found that the primary strength of FNETs was their strong linguistic skills. FNETs were fluent in English and could make adjustments to students’ grammar, pronunciation, and fluency very easily through modelling. LNNETs also used students’ first language to support their instruction. There were both strengths and weaknesses to the use of first language by LNNETs when teaching English. Using students’ first language in instruction helped students to improve comprehension and communication with teachers. Too much use of students’ first language resulted in less frequent opportunities for the use of English. Findings also revealed that LNNETs developed very close teacher-student relationships that involved good communication.

One interesting finding from Arva and Medgyes’ (1999) research was that when foreign students learned from FNETs who represented a drastically different cultural heritage from their own, students were more motivated to learn and moved between the two cultures more fluidly. In this case, the differences in culture within an immersion context facilitated cultural and linguistic transfer.

**The Relationship of Pedagogy and Culture**

Pedagogy is also shaped by culture. Traditionally, classroom instruction has tended to be very teacher-centered in most countries around the world. Western educators have come to realize the value of creating a classroom that is student-centered. It is a pedagogy that emphasizes student discussion, inquiry learning, and a constructivists approach to teaching and learning. This philosophy of education mirrors many of the belief systems of Western society,
but it may not fit so neatly into the belief systems of other cultures. Tan (2014) described how ancient Chinese views on the teaching and learning of knowledge emphasize the value and indispensability of teacher-dominated pedagogy. He argued that cultural factors that are inherently associated with education, such as students’ respect for the teacher, students’ attention and discipline in class, and the importance of practice can be understood through their Confucian worldview and cultural origins. This cultural mismatch between pedagogy and cultural ideology affects the learning process. Cummings (1998) found a high rate of student drop out in immersion programs due to academic or linguistic challenges. He surmised that this resulted from primarily teacher-centered pedagogical practices, whereby students have few opportunities to use expressive language to be creative or to solve meaningful problems.

Hu (2002) found distinct differences in the cultures of teaching and learning between traditional Chinese culture and communicative language teaching. Sociocultural mismatches are identified as primary differences between systems. Traditional Chinese schools maintain the assumption that learning should be teacher centered; while communicative language programs encourages student-centered learning. Traditional Chinese schools encourage verbal activeness over mental activeness. Each group rewards different qualities in learning. Traditional Chinese schools, for example, reward conformity to Chinese culture, while communicative language teaching rewards independence. Some of these factors make some Western teaching approaches, such as communicative language teaching, challenging to implement effectively. It is critical that policymakers and educators cautiously approach pedagogical choices that are founded in a thorough understanding of the various sociocultural differences.

Teachers need to be cognizant of many instructional considerations, in order to attend appropriately to the cultural needs of their students. Ultimately, it is critical that foreign teachers
have at least a basic understanding of the moral and educational dimensions of their learners, so as to make teaching effective (Getty, 2011). Using developmentally appropriate activities in early years’ immersion programming is very demanding for teachers, particularly in differentiating their teaching for a broad range of student needs. It is ineffective for teachers to apply a one-size-fits-all approach; therefore, teachers need to be flexible in lesson planning and delivery to meet the students at their language proficiency level (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014).

Research regarding the incorporation of cooperative learning in a non-Western classroom is still unclear. Cummings (1998) recommended that teachers implement a pedagogy that involves cooperative learning and project-based strategies. He asserted that teachers often steer away from this form of pedagogy because they believe that students will not use the target language, but will resort to speaking to partners in their primary language. Immersion programs that require students to speak exclusively in the target language sometimes result in pedagogy that is less creative and cognitively productive. Other research, however, offers an alternate perspective. For example, Nguygen, et al. (2006) stated that although group work may be appropriate in Confucian heritage culture, Western models, such as cooperative learning, may be inappropriate.

It is understandable, therefore, that teaching practices that work in the West may not necessarily be universally applicable in the East. In his exploration of the teaching practices of LNNETs in Thailand, Hayes (2009) found that teachers adapted their classroom practices to meet the locally situated needs of their students. He suggested that sometimes teachers used traditionally Eastern methods of teaching to meet the sociocultural and learning needs of their students. These needs may have emerged as a response to the lack of available subject resources, inadequate institutional facilities, quality of teaching profession due to governmental
professional teaching requirements, students’ access to English beyond the school, and differing perspectives of the economic and social value of English.

*Learning, Language, and Culture*

Ethnic and cultural dispositions may affect mood, emotion, and behavior of students, which could lead to higher levels of anxiety, hence impairing learning (Tanielian, 2014). Sternberg’s (2007) report supported this claim, stating that when teachers use culturally appropriate models of teaching, students’ achievement increases. Nguyen et al. (2009) also found that when cooperative learning was implemented in ways that were considered culturally appropriate, students had higher work rates than those involved in a traditionally Eastern program. It is imperative, therefore, that teachers understand the cultural factors that may hinder student learning. Students who attend schools that use a foreign curriculum and/or whose teachers are foreign are at risk of a form of culture shock. Learning context has a critical impression on student learning. It is important that students are provided time to acclimatize to their learning environment. The learning process can be particularly challenging for students who are learning from foreign language teachers who have a culture and linguistic background that is different from their own. Whether the cultural gap between students and teachers results from a foreign curriculum, a foreign context, a foreign language, or a foreign teacher, the ultimate challenge for teachers is to know the factors that are detrimental to student learning.

**Context**

Educators’ knowledge of teaching contexts is critical to successful teaching and learning (Ma, 2011). Students learn and develop skills that are contextually important and relevant to their own environment (Sternberg, 2007). Factors such as social contexts, educational and examination systems, local curriculum, and local pedagogy are specific content areas that could
be explored by non-native English-speaking teachers during induction programs or in-service professional development. Chapman and Pyvis (2005) explored the cultural acclimatization of international students attending foreign programs in their country of origin. Students who attended an offshore campus at a locally situated university were susceptible to a form of culture shock. Furthermore, this research explored offshore international students who were studying in their home country and were being educated in a learning environment where approaches and values may have been at odds with their own prior learning experiences. This created friction with their educational expectations (Chapman & Pyvis, 2005).

It has also been found that when students are involved in immersion programs where the school itself is immersed in a context rich with the target language, they tend to develop stronger expressive skills. Students in these immersion contexts usually engage in interactions in the language they are learning with native speakers (Cummings, 1998). However, the experience of immersion education in a target language while living in a first language environment produces recognizable patterns of language development found in fully bilingual children (Hermanto, Moreno, & Bialystok, 2012).

Assessment, problem-solving, and the shared cultural understanding of what constitutes intelligence differ from one culture to the next. The act of assessing cognitive and educational performance has, in itself, a differential impact on student performance from one culture to the next (Sternberg, 2007). Culture is predicated on how students think about or interpret problems; this may result in a gap of understanding between teachers and students from different cultural groups. Interpretations of what constitutes intelligence often differ across cultures (Sternberg, 2007). When teachers’ methodology and the curriculum are subjugated by a culture that is different from that of their students, then assessment, problem-solving, and a shared
understanding of intelligence need to be considered to inform teaching practices and curriculum design.

**Foreign Language Instruction**

As a result of this relatively recent phenomenon of students being taught by foreign language teachers, new challenges have emerged. Among these challenges are fear and anxieties in ESL students. Foreign language classroom anxiety has an almost debilitating effect on language development. Tanielian (2014) found that foreign teachers were a predictive factor in students’ language learning. It should be noted that immersion education was not correlated to foreign language classroom anxiety. This anxiety may be a result of a form of culture shock. In their study, Chapman and Pyvis (2005) found that a group of Singaporean students experienced culture shock in part from their immersion into a particular model of program delivery. Immersion in a foreign language and/or culture can cause a form of culture shock, which can instill fear and anxiety, and directly impact student learning.

It is important that teachers not automatically assume that reluctant English speakers are weak students. Nussli and Oh (2014) found that when teachers experienced students who were reluctant to engage in learning opportunities, foreign teachers often assumed that it was a result of students’ weak language ability. There are many other factors that could influence a student’s willingness to use language in school.

**Immersion Education**

An immersion environment is a setting where the second language is used for instruction in other academic content areas (Nicolay & Poncelet, 2013). Learning a new language through content and language-integrated methods is particularly effective (Comblain & Rondal, 2001). In offshore education, the degree to which immersion education is implemented differs from school
to school. Models of immersion include dual-language immersion, blended immersion programming, and comprehensive immersion education. Dual-language immersion offers children the option of learning two languages in the same school setting. One language could be the primary language of some or all of the students, and the other may be the dominant language of the community outside of the school. The goal of this model of immersion is to support students in developing their mother tongue while developing bilingual competence. Under this model, some subjects are taught in one language and others are taught in another language (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014). Blended programming, though similar to dual-language immersion, differs in that students learn all subjects in both languages. That is, students will receive a lesson in math, for example, from one teacher who speaks one language, then receive another math lesson from another teacher who speaks the other language. In a comprehensive immersion school, all subjects are taught in the target language that is not the primary language of the students.

This section presents research on the benefits of immersion education. A number of challenges are related to immersion education, with commensurate pedagogical considerations. When offshore schools employ an immersion model, the teachers who are charged with the responsibility of delivering instruction are either local, non-native English teachers (LNNETs) or foreign, native English teachers (FNETs). Some research suggests that there are benefits to LNNETs providing some instruction in students’ first language. Findings from this research are presented (Ma, 2011).

**Benefits**

The literature strongly suggests that there are benefits of immersion education to both teaching and learning (for example, see Cummins, 1998; Pence & Macgillivary, 2008; Willard-
Hold, 2001). For instance, teachers who are working in a foreign context benefit from immersion education through their unique experiences of being immersed in a foreign culture. When student teachers participate in immersion experiences in foreign contexts, they often undergo personal experiences that cultivate a unique cultural perspective and a deeper understanding of other cultural realities (Pence & Macgillivary, 2008; Willard-Hold, 2001).

Immersion education provides students with opportunities to practice the target language in meaningful ways. For immersion education to be effective, students must have opportunities to communicate meaningfully in the target language, if they are to integrate this language with their personal identities and their cognitive development (Cummings, 1998).

Immersion education provides students with a unique opportunity to gain language fluency and literacy, while simultaneously learning in content areas. Cummings (1998) found that immersion programs promote gains in students’ language fluency and literacy in their second language, with no detriment to their first language academic skills.

Bilingualism has also been found to enhance linguistic and intellectual processes. Cummings (1998) concluded,

The development of additive bilingual and biliteracy skills entails no negative consequences for children’s academic, linguistic, or intellectual development. On the contrary, although not conclusive, the evidence points in the direction of subtle metalinguistic, academic, and intellectual benefits for bilingual children. (p. 39)

**Pedagogical Considerations**

Teachers face a number of challenges when working in an immersion education environment. In most early immersion programs, students are at the same level as their indigenous peers by grade 6 in the areas of understanding and reading; however, there are distinctive gaps when it comes to speaking and writing (Cummings, 1998). It can often be a challenge to ensure that students are engaged in meaningful conversation in the target language.
In some cases, parents may not speak the target language of their children who are attending immersion schools. This often results in parents feeling marginalized or lost in how to support their children’s learning.

Research evaluating the commonalities in identifying effective early years’ immersion models has identified the following provisions to improve immersion pedagogy and practice: suitable pedagogies and objectives; pedagogy and curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive well-being and development of children, and that implements routine assessment of that curriculum; high-quality teachers with high-quality mentors; small class sizes; play and talk as central pedagogical practices; and rich and authentic participation with and by parents (Early et al., 2007; Jalongo et al., 2014).

Supporting students in an immersion classroom requires classroom management and organization, in order to facilitate meaningful target language interaction between students (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014). Effective immersion schools play a critical role in helping parents to develop language- and literacy-rich home environments (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014).

LNNETs struggle to motivate their students to speak English consistently, which is an important quality of a language learner (Ma, 2011). These teachers may be more likely to resort to their own primary language, which may make communication and connections students easier. This finding has not been well researched, however, because there are few contexts where teachers and students in immersion education share the same first language.

**Critical Factors and Emergent Themes in Offshore Canadian Education**

In an exploration of the literature on offshore Canadian education, a number of themes emerged that are unique to offshore education and critical to the success of schools. Schools that operated under a positive school climate were found to be effective. Inclusive education is a
philosophy of education that is a ubiquitous and inseparable component of Canadian schools; how it manifests itself in the non-Western world is predispositioned by the cultural context in which it exists. Critical to the success of offshore Canadian schools is how teachers are trained prior to and throughout their employment with the educational institution. Curricular design and implementation are also key to offshore schools’ success. The section concludes with an examination of the factors that influence teacher retention, which is a unique challenge that offshore schools often face.

**School Climate**

The climate or culture of the school can have a dramatic impact on student learning, staff morale, teacher retention, teachers’ mental health, and (directly relevant to this thesis research) professional development. Schools that have strong school climates and cultures have teachers who are more motivated to improve their professional practice. Additionally, highly motivated teachers are more successful in terms of student performance and outcomes (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). In order for schools to foster positive school environments, school leaders and policy makers need to think creatively about how they support teachers. When teachers work in schools that promote collaboration, information sharing, and professional support, teachers develop positive attitudes toward teaching and become more strongly committed to personal professional development (Flores, 2004). The role of the leader in fostering a positive school culture is explored in this section.

Offshore international schools often use a blended program or a dual language model. Under these models, there are usually both foreign, native-English-speaking staff and local staff who speak the local language. Research presented in this section reveals that this dichotomy of culture among staff has the potential to create tension and friction.
Leadership and School Climate

The role of an instructional leader in the school is vital in the process of transforming the teaching and learning culture of the school (Fullan, 2001). When principals or instructional leaders interact with the climate of the school by increasing goal focus and building structures that support, then the learning environment will improve for both teachers and students (MacNeil et al., 2009). It is safe to suggest, therefore, that the quality of school leaders is a key factor in developing the nature and process of learning in schools (Flores, 2004). Equally clear is the interdependent relationship between a positive school culture and the accompanying desire for professional improvement and growth.

Conflicts Between Local and Foreign Staff

An issue of school culture that occurs in offshore schools is the unique dynamic between differing culture groups working under the same roof and with the same students. In a 2009 study, Sperandio et al. found that when a Western program was introduced in a Kuwaiti school, issues of culture arose. Foreign staff who were from the Western world were hired to teach the Western component of the program. Conflicts arose between local and foreign, Muslim and non-Muslim teaching staff. Schuetze (2008) found that because offshore schools in China operate using a blended program, there are two different culture groups of teachers in the school who use a different pedagogy, speak a different language, receive a different salary, and are tasked with different workloads. This often creates friction among staff. In both cases, this tension between foreign and local staff has a detrimental effect on the overall culture of the school.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a philosophy of teaching that insists that all students can learn and should be a regular part of the classroom, regardless of ability or disability. This is a philosophy
that has been adopted by much of the Western world; however, it is a philosophy that has not necessarily been fully embraced around the world (for example, see Engelbrecht, 2012; Peters & Forlin, 2011; Kim, 2012; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Although inclusive education in Thailand has been in the works for more than two decades, there are still many notable issues to address and it remains in the early stages of full implementation (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). As Peters and Forlin (2011) pointed out, very little research has been conducted into what exactly constitutes best practice for the inclusion of Chinese students with special needs. The inclusion of students with special needs in classrooms has been an important item on the South Korean national agenda since the middle of the 1900s. Despite its attraction to the philosophy, the country has run into a number of barriers that have stalled its implementation (Kim, 2012). In a 2012 study, Engelbrecht highlighted multiple barriers and a few recurring challenges to the implementation of inclusive education in countries around the world.

A number of barriers have negatively affected the implementation of inclusion education. Teachers have received insufficient professional development and skill training to prepare them for working with students with special needs (Engelbrecht, 2012). Additionally, human and physical resources are scarce and often too expensive for schools or families to afford. Of particular interest to this thesis research is the degree of compatibility of inclusion with the local culture.

**Human and Physical Resources**

Large class sizes, system challenges such as a lack of time for collaboration, limited resources, and lack of teacher assistants as classroom support have all contributed to the challenge of educational reform to an inclusive model in China (Onbun-uea & Morrison, 2008; Forlin, 2008). In Vorapanya and Dunlap’s (2014) study, 7 out of 10 school leaders reported
having teacher assistants in classrooms with students who had special needs. These leaders, from both public and private schools, indicated that the salary of these teacher assistants were paid by the families of the children with special needs. Schools that did not have teaching assistants reported that neither they, nor the parents of their children, could afford to pay for a teacher assistant’s salary.

**Professional Development**

For any educational change to occur, sufficient professional training and development needs to be provided to the individuals responsible for implementing this change. The implementation of inclusive education in Thailand has been fraught with challenges. Insufficient professional development and skill development are critical factors lacking in the implementation of inclusive education in Thailand (Onbun-uea & Morrison, 2008; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). As teachers learn and become more comfortable with inclusive education, they are more likely to implement it with a greater degree of success. As a result, the move to a more inclusive pedagogy will significantly change the role of teachers by stretching their professional capacity and challenging their time-honored beliefs (Forlin, 2007).

**Attitudes and Cultural Beliefs**

As Lim and Thaver (2012) pointed out, it is difficult to implement inclusive education across different countries in the world. Each country needs to consider its cultural context and climate, as well as particular indigenous issues and solutions that are unique to the region. For example, teachers’ attitudes toward inclusive education are critical to the success of program implementation in Thai schools. Attitudes toward inclusion are embedded in the teachers’ belief system, which is influenced greatly by the local Thai culture (Kaur, Noman, & Awang-Hashim, 2016). Ninety percent of Thai people are Buddhists who believe that that disability is a deserved
failure from negative actions from a previous life. Therefore, to have a disability is shameful. This negative view of disabilities may influence teachers’ initial attitudes toward including students with special needs in the classroom (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Similar studies in South Korea have garnered similar findings. Inclusive practices have been adapted from Western countries without appropriate consideration of Korean educational culture and local environment, which may account for some of the challenges faced in inclusive education implementation (Kim, 2012).

The attitudes of the students toward children with disabilities also impedes success of inclusive education. In a 2008 study, Kim and Kim found that children in early years’ classes had relatively positive attitudes toward sharing a classroom with students with disabilities, but as children grew older, this positive attitude shifted due to increasing pressure to achieve high grades academically. Kim (2012) noted the perils of high-stakes testing and educational competition as the source of such intolerance of inclusive practices as students enter the later years of their secondary education. Implementing inclusive education in Korean schools will continue to face limitations as long as an excessive competitive educational culture prevails. For inclusive education to become more successful in South Korean schools, the entire system of education needs to engage in a paradigm shift, moving from a system of intense educational competition to one that promotes cooperation and human-centered traits (Kim, 2012).

**Teacher-Training**

Teacher-training, education, and ongoing support for teachers in immersion settings appears to be a critical factor. Raising the effectiveness of teachers in early years’ immersion schools requires a wide range of professional development supports and activities that focus on improving teachers’ interactions with their students. There is significant value in combining
high-quality and systematic ongoing training that is provided by effective and experienced practitioners (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014).

Effective teacher-training starts with pre-service education. Many teachers choose to participate in overseas teacher education programs that provide student teachers the opportunity to live, work, and learn abroad. These programs present both strengths and challenges. Cultural orientation and teacher induction programs are also critical to the success of Western teachers who travel abroad for offshore employment. Researchers expound on the importance of ongoing, in-service professional development, in order to ensure that teachers continue to hone their craft (for example, see Cosco, 2011; Garii & Schlein, 2011; Ma, 2011; Schuetze, 2008). The professional learning opportunities and cultural experiences of offshore teachers are explored.

**Pre-Service Teacher Education**

In most cases, offshore Canadian secondary schools have established teacher exchange programs for practicing teachers and for student teachers who seek a placement abroad (Cosco, 2011). These teachers are provided opportunities to learn in multicultural and international contexts that have the potential to prepare them on both a personal and a professional level. Teachers involved in overseas teacher education programs gain valuable experience and professional development in three distinct areas: (1) instructional pedagogy, (2) self-learning, and (3) authentic multiculturalism (Alfaro & Quezada, 2007). Additionally, pre-service teachers engage in authentic experiences that give them a first-hand exposure to the realities and frustrations – in some cases, oppression – that language learners often experience in the early stages of their education (Nussli & Oh, 2014).
Teacher Orientation/ Induction Programs

Yang (2011) found that teachers benefit from induction training prior to traveling overseas, in order to prepare them for the differences in the educational system, school culture, teaching methodology, and learning styles of that particular country. Institutions need to be honest about the political, social, and institutional conditions, in order to prepare incoming foreign faculty for their experience abroad. Teaching staff in foreign contexts need to be prepared for the local politics of their educational institution, including management styles that may hinder their acclimatization to their new role (Getty, 2011). Policy-makers, school leaders, and teacher-trainers need to recognize teacher induction as critical component of professional success in their offshore experience and as a key phase of a teacher’s career (Flores, 2004).

Quezada (2004) recommended that pre-service teachers engage in cross-cultural coursework and a comprehensive orientation program prior to travelling to another country, in order to avoid culture shock. Accordingly, Ma (2011) suggested that more research is needed into the specific learning needs and challenges of students attending offshore secondary schools, so as to inform the professional development or induction programs for new teachers.

In-Service Professional Development

In-service professional development is a component of teacher-training that is often overlooked. Professional development experiences need to be made more available for Canadian educators working in offshore schools (Cosco, 2011; Schuetze, 2008). In a 2011 study, Getty found that teachers from an American study-abroad program operating in a Chinese context received little to no specialized training as a result of the assumption that teaching is the same regardless of the context or the learners. In her 2011 study, Cosco found that many school principals from offshore schools recommended that Canadian provincial ministries become more
actively involved with establishing professional development and educational opportunities with Canadian schools and communities. The research exploring why there is a lack of professional development is limited; however, the remoteness of Canadian schools to professional development providers may be a logical rationale. As a result, contractual agreements with provincial departments of education have been established to provide on-line professional development to offshore teachers (Cosco, 2011).

In an examination of the literature that explores what offshore professional development should focus on, Ma (2011) and Garii and Schlein (2011) suggested that that professional development in offshore contexts should concentrate on cultural education and curriculum implementation. Teachers who routinely work in schools where the student population is culturally distinct from their own, need to undertake professional development that promotes the acquisition of knowledge about culture and culturally related models of teaching and learning. Ma (2011) also recommended that local, non-native English-speaking teachers would benefit from professional learning in cultural knowledge and ongoing English language development.

Grossman and Thompson (2008) commented that new-teacher training should focus on teaching teachers how to make sense of and use the curriculum materials provided. Shawer (2010) recommended that teacher-training should introduce pre-service and in-service teachers to approaches to curriculum. Not only does curriculum outline the subject matter for teachers to teach, but it also predicts how teachers develop the skills and knowledge required to teach students well and think about instruction (Kauffman et al., 2002).

**Benefits to International Teaching Experiences**

International teaching provides teachers with a globalized perspective and approach to teaching and learning. Teachers grow both personally and professionally in these international
contexts (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010). In Cosco’s (2011) study, many teachers spoke positively about the personal and professional benefits of teaching at offshore Canadian schools. They stated that their international experience provided them with a global understanding. Quenzada (2004) also found that student teachers traveling overseas for international teaching experiences grew personally and professionally. Transnational teaching experiences promoted personal and professional reflection, which is important for change initiatives. Smith (2009) recommended that teachers be provided with space and time to reflect on and discuss experiences, premises, and processes of transnational teaching. Teaching abroad provides teachers with opportunities for cultural and professional development; however, there is limited research exploring the long-term impact of foreign teaching experiences for teachers (Garii & Schlein, 2011).

Experience working at offshore schools motivates teachers to develop stronger personal and professional identities. Teachers at offshore schools “learn more about themselves, international communities they lived in, and the children they worked with. They developed clarity about the teaching ideology that drives their work with diverse student populations” (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010, p. 57). Foreign teaching experiences offer teachers the opportunity to see their professional practice from a multicultural perspective and to reflect on their own personal experiences, in order to develop their identities as educators (Garii & Schlein, 2011).

Offshore teaching experiences motivate teachers to learn new methods and strategies of instruction. Rodriguez (2011) examined the manner in which student teachers’ understandings of education and their role as future teachers changed as a result of a short immersion trip to Bolivia. Student teachers developed a community-based understanding of education and adopted new pedagogical tools that encouraged a sense of agency as teachers. Yang (2011) found that teachers involved in an overseas teaching experience developed valuable teaching strategies and
methods, while becoming better prepared for their role. Through classroom experiences and personal interactions with EAL learners, pre-service teachers developed a stronger cultural awareness and understanding of appropriate pedagogy. Additionally, these international experiences provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect critically on the strengths and weaknesses of their own system of education as it compares to international systems. In their 2015 research study, An and Wu found that the incorporation of an East Meets West Program broadened the views of graduate students in the manner in which different education systems and cultures teach and learn math in diverse ways. Additionally, teachers discovered that when pedagogy is culturally adapted, students learn more successful in different educational contexts.

Teachers in offshore schools are exposed first-hand to the challenges that language learners face when they are immersed in a new language and culture. International teaching experiences offer opportunities for “pre-service teachers to experience the impact of a language barrier, what it feels like to be a minority in a foreign environment, and to go through culture” (Nussli & Oh, 2014, p. 82). Through these experience, teachers broaden their understanding, awareness, and appreciation for diverse cultures. Feelings of frustration about trying to communicate with others in another language, as well as feeling unaccustomed to a different culture, are likely to be a valuable learning experience for pre-service teachers.

Some research has indicated that teachers traveling abroad for professional experiences will return to their home country with international conceptions that will color their students’ curriculum and learning with international perspectives (Smith, 2009). Nussli and Oh (2014) found that international teaching experiences caused teachers to recognize different pedagogical approaches and to develop a greater sense of confidence in their abilities as teachers.
Curriculum

Offshore Canadian schools use a form of curriculum that is designed by Canadians, and is intended for implementation with Canadian pedagogy. Teachers encounter many challenges while teaching in a foreign context or implementing a foreign program. International student teachers are often expected to adapt their teaching style to that of the local curriculum (Quezada, 2004). Under the provincially affiliated model of Canadian education, however, curriculum is borrowed directly from Canadian provinces’ ministries of education and is meant to be implemented as it was written. Divergent from this model, one educational franchise known as Maple Bear hires experts to write curriculum specifically tailored to international contexts all around the world. Local, non-native English teachers (LNNETs) are trained by Canadian education experts to implement the curriculum and are encouraged to follow it exactly as it was written.

When a curriculum that has been designed by and for educators and students in the Western world is used in Asian contexts, there is a risk of potential cultural conflicts and mismatches (Ngugyn et al., 2009). Grigorenko (2007) asserted that if Western educational approaches are adopted smartly and modified appropriately, they can be productive in the non-Western world. Cosco (2011) recommended that offshore Canadian schools ensure that all curricular and learning outcomes are culturally and contextually relevant. The impact of implementing foreign curriculum in an offshore school immersed in a different culture is explored in this literature review. Curriculum design and its implications on implementation are also be explored.
Implementing a Foreign Curriculum

In many different contexts around the world, schools are imposing unmodified learning objectives from a foreign mother tongue curriculum, as a means to emphasize on content in early years’ language development (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014). As has been discussed throughout this chapter, culture has a definite impact on how concepts and constructs are interpreted during program implementation. When educators implement a foreign curriculum, they run the risk of intentional or unintentional program modification (Sperandio et al., 2009). This could be as a result of ignorance or apathy. In order to avoid the potential consequences of these changes, Aydarova (2012) found that the individuals responsible for program implementation need to be involved in process of making sense of the transferred curriculum and how it could be integrated in the local environment.

In addition to culture, other factors need to be integrated in the curriculum. Students in the 21st century require skills beyond content-area knowledge. Problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity are among the many necessary skills that need to be incorporated in schools today. For this to occur, schools’ curriculum must be open and flexible enough to conform to these perspectives (Costa, 2005).

Curriculum Design

Curriculum is a dynamic and multi-dimensional document that serves many functions. It outlines content, topics, and specific skills that teachers are assigned to cover. A timeline is often provided. It usually identifies a particular approach and suggests a catalogue of instructional materials (Kauffman et al., 2002). The manner in which curriculum has been designed has a distinct impact on how it is interpreted, utilized, and understood by educators.
In a 2010 study, Shawer found that teachers implemented curriculum in three different ways: curriculum development, curriculum making, and curriculum transmission. Curriculum makers and developers filter the curriculum, creating conflict between the prescribed curriculum and the specific context. These individuals attempted to improve the curriculum through good training and experience. Curriculum transmitters, however, delivered the curriculum exactly as it was presented in the curriculum materials (Shawer, 2010). Some curricular theorists suggest a curriculum that is very detailed in that it prescribes teachers’ behavior and ensures effective instruction through proven pedagogical approaches, while other theorists suggest that this form of curriculum constrains professional creativity and discretion, resulting in less effective instruction (Kauffman et al., 2002).

Teachers who are early in their career begin by strictly adhering to the curriculum that they have. As they gain experience, teachers learn more about both students and curriculum; they also learn to make adjustments for using the curriculum effectively. New teachers require a curriculum that is highly specific and ongoing high-quality professional development. A curriculum should provide new teachers with a set of instructional structures, teaching strategies, and support materials that will enable them to refine their own pedagogy in order to meet the diverse needs of their students (Kauffman et al., 2002).

Curriculum, when designed strategically, can serve as a valuable tool for professional development and pedagogy. The role of the teacher is complex and dynamic. Teachers are tasked with managing the classroom, determining what skills and content to cover, developing lessons and delivering them effectively, assessing student learning and understanding with accuracy, and differentiating to meet the needs of all students. New teachers require support to carry this out effectively. The curriculum is one potential source of support (Kauffman et al., 2002).
Furthermore, curriculum materials used by beginning teachers have a profound impact on how they perceive and teach the content. What is critical is that new teachers benefit from opportunities to analyze and critique curricular materials, under the support and guidance of experienced colleagues (Grossman & Thompson, 2008). Curriculum materials that are comprehensive and include facets of instruction are valuable for beginning teachers because they may provide structures and learning opportunities (Grossman & Thompson, 2008).

**Teacher Retention**

Hickey and de Mejia (2014) found that the single most profound challenge of immersion education is training and retaining teachers who are experienced and effective, who hold the necessary credentials and qualifications for the role, and who have fluency in the target language. Both teacher attrition and migration are very costly and have a variety of negative effects on schools (Brown & Winn, 2009; Carboni, Patall, & Wynn, 2007). Brown and Wynn (2009) found that “the first line of defense in raising student achievement is recruiting and retaining a critical mass of high-quality teachers” (p. 39). Causal factors of teacher turnover are explored in this section. This section also focusses on the value of supportive leadership and a collaborative school culture in teacher retention.

**Causal Factors**

The highest rates of teacher turnover have been found to occur when teachers were in the first few years of their career and when they are at the impending end of their career (Brown & Wynn, 2009). According to Carboni, Patall, and Wynn (2007) and Hughes (2012), teachers who are early in their career consider low salaries to be the primary reason for leaving the profession. Hickey and de Mejia (2014) found that pre-school education teachers in immersion schools in foreign contexts received lower pay than primary school teachers. Schuetze (2008) also reported
that LNNETs often receive lower pay than FNETs. Due to the high cost of teacher attrition, policy-makers need to consider making teaching salaries more competitive with other professions (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Carboni, Patall, & Wynn, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001) and more equitable among institutions (Hickey & de Mejia, 2014; Schuetze, 2008).

Another causal factor that influences teacher retention in offshore Western schools is culture shock. Schuetze (2008) and Cosco (2011) found that teachers traveling abroad to work in international schools were often new to the profession. Teachers traveling abroad for international teaching experience often experience culture shock. These individuals are less likely to engage in the local community outside of the school context because they struggle to deal with language barriers (Quezada (2004). Accordingly, teachers who are of a cultural minority within their student community are more likely to leave their job (Carroll, Reichardt, & Guarino, 2000).

**Value of Supportive Leadership and a Collaborative School Climate**

Supportive leadership is a critical factor for attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. Brown and Winn (2009) found that when administrators provided conditions and resources that supported new teachers in their professional growth and development, they were more likely to stay involved in teaching. Ingersoll (2001) found that dissatisfied teachers pointed to a lack of administrative support as the critical factor in their decision to leave the profession.

Additionally, Carboni, Patall, and Wynn (2007) found that teachers were more likely to stay in their job when administrators promoted unofficial professional learning communities (PLCs), wherein teachers felt supported by their peers, while feeling morally and professionally committed to the team. PLCs promote a general satisfaction and professional coherence and commitment among teachers.
Conclusion

Whether through the importation of policy, people, or institutions, Western education continues to proliferate around the world today. The contextual intricacies and realities of each country has the potential to impact policy development and pedagogical integration of Western education abroad. Culture and language are two factors that have distinct implications for the success of this educational transfer. Additionally, other critical factors and emergent themes such as school climate, inclusive education, teacher-training, curriculum, and teacher retention have a clear influence Canadian education being implemented abroad.

* * * * *

Chapter 2 provides a summary of the literature related to offshore Canadian schools. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methodology used in this thesis study.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines, describes, and provides a rationale for the methods that were used in this thesis research study. Ethical considerations are also provided.

Introduction to the Methodology

This mixed method research study compared two different models of Canadian education in international settings by exploring the perceptions and experiences of the individuals responsible for program implementation, development, and administration. One model of program implementation (provincially affiliated offshore schools) insists that provincially certified teachers enact a provincial curriculum in offshore schools; the other model (educational franchise schools) places an emphasis on training local teachers to implement a Canadian-style program in their country of origin. The researcher collected data by administering an online survey and conducting follow-up, one-on-one interviews with participants from a diverse range of roles associated with their respective programs. The study identified the strengths and challenges of both models by focusing on the perceptions and experiences of individuals who were integral to the implementation, development, and administration of each program. By uncovering the strengths and weakness of both approaches to Canadian education abroad, this researcher intended to improve the practices, policies, and programming of schools using or planning to use a Canadian model of education in an international setting.

Research Problem

As a result of Canada’s positive reputation in the field of education, the use of Canadian education has become increasingly prevalent in countries around the world. Several models have been used to support Canadian education abroad. There is a lack of research that would help to
identify exactly how schools are using various models of Canadian education in international contexts. Furthermore, no comprehensive examinations or comparative studies of the various educational models have been conducted to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This thesis investigation should act to improve the efficiency and the quality of the design, development, and operation of new and/ or existing Canadian educational institutions in foreign settings.

**Research Question**

The study’s primary research question was “What are the strengths and weaknesses of two distinct models of Canadian education used in an international setting?” In order to answer this question effectively, the researcher broke down the primary research question into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the perceived strengths of each model of Canadian education, as identified by the individuals responsible for program implementation, development, and administration?
2. What are the perceived weaknesses of each model of Canadian education, as identified by the individuals responsible for program implementation, development, and administration?
3. How can programming and policy be enhanced, in order to support program strengths, eliminate/ mitigate ramifications of identified challenges, and facilitate improvements associated with implementing Canadian education in an international setting?

**Mixed-Method Research Paradigm**

Mixed-method research designs ensure that a research problem is examined in a way that neither a quantitative nor a qualitative research design could do on its own (Creswell, 2012, p.
Both research paradigms are used in combination, in order to discern exactly what the researcher is seeking to investigate. While quantitative research is effective in yielding data that can be statistically analyzed to assess the frequency and magnitude of trends about a large number of people, qualitative data offer different perspectives and personal opinions related to these trends. Both forms of data, numeric and experiential, can be crucial in constructing a holistic understanding of the research participants’ attitudes, experiences, and beliefs.

This thesis research study used a mixed methodology to examine the strengths and weakness associated with two distinct models of Canadian education used in international school settings. Quantitative data were gathered from a cross-sectional survey involving closed- and open-ended questions administered to individuals involved with both models of program implementation, development, and administration in Canadian schools operating in international contexts. Survey results informed the researcher about individuals’ perceptions of and experiences with their respective model of Canadian education. Using the information gleaned from the survey results, the researcher further investigated the issues, challenges, and merits of both models through qualitative one-on-one interviews. These interviews gave insight into aspects of policy, program intentions, background information, and future plans for program and policy improvement. The interviews provided participants with the opportunity to explain and/or elaborate on their responses to survey questions. Additionally, these interviews enabled the researcher to probe deeper into relevant issues that emerged from the survey results. The organization and analysis of the interview responses developed a greater understanding of the collective perceptions and experiences of individuals associated with each individual model of Canadian education. These interviews comprised the qualitative portion of the mixed-method research design.
The Research Design

An explanatory sequential research design is a form of mixed-method research. In this design, data are collected at different points in time (Creswell, 2012). The first stage of explanatory sequential research involves collecting quantitative data. After the quantitative data have been collected and organized, qualitative data are gathered, in order to explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. A cross-sectional survey is a quantitative data collection instrument that is administered at one point in time and functions to examine the perceptions, opinions, experiences, and current practices of the participants. Realistic ethnography is a form of qualitative research whereby the researcher offers an objective account of a specific culture-sharing group by describing, interpreting, and analyzing shared patterns of behavior, practices, beliefs, and attitudes.

This thesis study’s explanatory sequential research design drew on data gathered at two points in time. The research used two phases of data collection, in order to answer the research question “What are the strengths and weaknesses of two distinct models of Canadian Education used in an international setting?”

The first phase of data collection involved a cross-sectional survey, comprised of open- and closed-ended questions. The researcher analyzed the results of this survey quantitatively, in order to determine the perceptions and experiences of individuals who were associated with implementing, developing, and administering each model of Canadian programming in international settings. Data were further organized and analyzed as a means to examine whether individuals associated with each model of implementation evinced similar or differing experiences.
The second phase of data collection comprised the qualitative portion of this mixed-method study. This phase of data collection was a form of realistic ethnography in that two culture-sharing groups of individuals were examined, in order to explore relevant issues from different perspectives.

One culture-sharing group included school administrators, government liaison officers, and school inspectors who were associated with provincially affiliated overseas schools. Additionally, this culture-sharing group included teachers who were from Canada, who had been educated and trained to implement a Canadian form of education, and who had traveled abroad to teach a Canadian education program in a foreign country.

The other culture-sharing group was involved with Maple Bear. This group included experienced Canadian educators who traveled to Brazil to facilitate programming and train local teachers, academic coordinators (principals), and curriculum writers. Additionally, this culture-sharing group included teachers who were native to Brazil, who had been educated and trained by Canadian education professionals, and who were teaching a Canadian education program in their country of origin.

The phase one survey responses revealed both collective and individual issues that were unique to each educational model. When the researcher organized these results into common themes, they became a framework for the phase two interview questions. The interview questions thus explored issues that emerged from the survey responses. Knowing these issues before engaging in the interview process provided the researcher with deeper insight and background information that helped to make the interviews more focused and efficient. Exploring the respondents’ diverse perspectives provided deeper insight into the strengths and weaknesses of each model, and identified potential areas for programming improvement.
Sampling of Participants

Survey and interview respondents were invited to participate in this thesis study by means of an electronic message. This message contained the official invitation to the research, the letter of consent, and a link to the online survey. Individual participants’ names and email addresses were ascertained from a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper at each offshore school was the school principal, academic coordinator, school owner, or franchise owner. The researcher sent these individuals an initial contact letter (Appendix A), asking them to provide the researcher with the contact information of the individuals who fit into the stakeholder categories in this thesis research.

In explanatory-sequential, mixed-method research, sampling occurs at more than one stage of the study. In the quantitative component of this thesis research, non-probability convenience sampling (Creswell, 2012) occurred when the researcher selected participants because they were available and willing to be involved in the study.

The qualitative portion of the thesis research consisted of ethnographic, one-on-one interviews. Sampling included a minimum of seven participants who had been intentionally selected from both culture-sharing groups participating in the quantitative survey portion of this thesis research. The last question of the survey asked participants to include their email address if they were willing to take part in a follow-up interview. Although the researcher attempted to conduct interviews with an equal number of respondents from each culture-sharing group, there were not enough participants from each subcategory to achieve parity.

Furthermore, it was important in this thesis research that at least two individuals from each stakeholder group were selected to engage in a one-on-one interview. In a few stakeholder categories (government liaison officers, school owners, and franchise administrators), a limited
number of individuals expressed an interest in participating in an interview. In these cases, the selection process became purposeful opportunistic (Creswell, 2012). This form of sampling occurred because the researcher selected a specific group of individuals or individuals from a specific site, in order to investigate a central phenomenon.

The target population of participants was selected because of their association with program implementation, development, and/or administration from one of two different culture-sharing groups occurring in different international settings: educational franchise schools and provincially affiliated schools.

_Educational Franchise Schools_

One culture-sharing group was comprised of teachers who were from Brazil, who had been trained by Canadian education professionals, and who were teaching a Canadian education program in their country-of-origin. In addition to teachers, this culture-sharing group also included experienced Canadian educators who had travelled to Brazil to facilitate programming and train teachers employed by Maple Bear Schools. (See Table 1).

_Provincially Affiliated Schools_

The other culture-sharing group in this thesis study consisted of teachers who were from Canada, who had been trained to implement a Canadian form of educational programming, and who had traveled abroad to teach a Canadian education program in any foreign country. In addition to teachers, this culture-sharing group also included school administrators, government liaison officers, and school inspectors, who were associated with provincially affiliated overseas schools. (See Table 2).
Table 1. Stakeholder Groups for Maple Bear Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maple Bear Schools</th>
<th>Survey Participants</th>
<th>Interview Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maple Bear Franchise Administrators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Bear Teacher-Trainers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Bear School Owners</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Bear Academic Coordinators</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Bear Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Stakeholder Groups for Provincially Affiliated Offshore Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincially Affiliated Offshore Schools</th>
<th>Survey Participants</th>
<th>Interview Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Liaison Officers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Owners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethical Considerations**

The original message that was sent to prospective participants consisted of an official invitation and letter of informed consent (Appendix B), and a link to the online survey. The message of invitation detailed the relevant information pertaining to the research goals, the
participants' role, and how the data would be used. This letter also included the contact information for both the thesis supervisor and the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). The conditions for informed consent were clearly outlined for each participant in the invitation that accompanied the link to the electronic survey. Participants of this study were invited to submit the completed survey as confirmation of giving their informed consent. Additionally, the title page of the survey itself included the following statement: “Clicking ‘Proceed’ will confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to the conditions for my informed consent.”

The initial contact people had no knowledge of which stakeholders responded to the survey or participated in the interviews. There was no follow-up correspondence with those initial contact people, except a promise to provide access to the final report. Therefore, there was no coercion for stakeholders to participate or to provide only positive responses to the survey or the interview questions.

Strict confidentiality was maintained throughout this thesis research. No identifying information could be ascertained from the survey data. Except for those individuals who volunteered to be interviewed, there was no way of knowing which stakeholders responded to the survey. The identities of stakeholders who were interviewed were also kept confidential. It was, however, beyond the researcher’s control to keep individual survey and interview respondents from communicating with each other, if they so chose to do so.

All school names were kept confidential. Within the report, the countries, provinces, and school names associated with the provincially affiliated offshore model were replaced with “[name of country], [name of province], and [name of school],” in order to ensure that no connections could be made between individual participants and specific school contexts.
Additionally, the individual Maple Bear schools in Brazil were not identified and their specific names / locations were kept confidential.

The use of the Survey Monkey platform ensured respondent anonymity. Submitting the survey constituted informed consent. The last survey question asked whether the participant wished to be considered as a candidate for the interview portion of the research and, if so, to provide “name” and “email” contact information. As soon as the interview respondents were selected, their names and email addresses were removed from the surveys. Participants who were contacted were encouraged, but not obligated, to participate in the interview, and they had the opportunity to withdraw their interview information if they so wished.

Whenever possible, the one-on-one interviews took place in person in a private location of each interviewee’s choosing. Those participants who were not accessible for in-person interviews – because they resided outside of Canada – participated in interviews over the telephone or by an internet-based telecommunications technology (i.e. Skype). All interview responses were coded with pseudonyms, in order to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of individual participants.

Before each interview, individuals were reminded of their right to refuse to answer any questions. The researcher ensured that the same interview protocol was used for each respondent. Additionally, the researcher respected the participants’ individual perspectives in the final report. All participants were given the opportunity at the end of their interview to add any additional comments, to voice any possible concerns or suggestions, and to ask any questions they may have about the study.

All survey results and interview responses were kept in a locked and secure location, accessible only to the researcher (and to his faculty supervisor by request). The “real names” of
the participants were kept under separate cover throughout the study, and have since been destroyed. Only the pseudonyms appear in the final report, in order to maintain the confidentiality of the research participants. The raw data will be destroyed when the researcher convocates with his Master of Education degree in May 2017.

All consent forms and research protocols were approved by the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) (Appendix C).

**Validity, Trustworthiness, and Triangulation**

The quantitative portion of the study had face validity. The questions asked in the cross-sectional survey yielded answers that expressed the perceptions of the respondents about their experiences with program implementation, development, and administration (Hittleman & Simon, 2006). The survey questions were logical and attended specifically to the research question and objectives.

The researcher ensured trustworthiness of data through the strategic development of interview questions, careful data collection processes, and purposeful approaches to analysis. The interview questions were derived from themes that emerged from the cross-sectional survey results. The trustworthiness of data collection depended on the ability of the researcher to conduct skillful interviews and take accurate researcher notes. The researcher endeavored to remain consistent and neutral when conducting interviews with participants. Each respondent had the opportunity to check his/her interview transcripts, in order to ensure its accuracy and to make any desired additions and/or deletions. In the study’s final report, the researcher endeavored to maintain a careful balance of both the individual experiences of participants and the collective culture-sharing group’s experiences.
The researcher achieved triangulation by collecting data from different people with varying perspectives, exploring the similarities and differences of two culture-sharing groups, and using different methods for data collection. Several individuals from each of the culture-sharing groups were invited to share their perspectives during one-on-one interviews that focused on program implementation. Data were collected from three different sources: cross-sectional survey results, one-on-one interview responses, and the personal notes of the researcher.

**Data Collection**

In explanatory-sequential, mixed method design, data collection occurs at more than one stage, whereby the quantitative portion informs the development of the qualitative portion of the research (Creswell, 2012). In descriptive data collection, the researcher attempts to understand and describe of the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices of the participants. A cross-sectional survey is a form of survey design administered at one point in time, which functions to gather descriptive data used to develop a profile of the participants (Creswell, 2012). A Likert-scale is an example of a quantitative scale that can be used to measure the response options to questions with “assumed equal distances between options” (Creswell, 2012, p. 167). A one-on-one interview is another form of descriptive data collection whereby the researcher directly asks a participant specific questions and records the answers (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative research, open-ended questions are asked to ensure that the participants can “voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings” (Creswell, 2012, p. 218).
For this thesis research study, data were collected in two phases:

1. The first phase involved a cross-sectional survey of individuals associated with program implementation, development, and administration of two distinct models of Canadian education operating abroad.

2. The second phase involved one-on-one follow-up interviews with a select group of individuals who were associated with the two culture-sharing groups, and who participated in the first phase of data collection.

**Cross-Sectional Survey**

The first phase of the proposed research study used a cross-sectional survey comprised of 15 closed-ended questions and 4 open-ended questions, in order to collect descriptive data about the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and practices of individuals who were responsible for implementing, developing, and administering Canadian educational programming and policy in schools abroad. The researcher asked participants to complete a Likert-scale survey (Appendix D) that was administered using an internet-based survey program called Survey Monkey. It should be noted that the survey provided in Appendix D is a paper copy of the electronic version that the research participants accessed online.

**Interviews**

The interview portion of data collection was the most informative. In phase two of data collection, the participants answered open-ended questions, based on themes that emerged from the survey, which encouraged them to share their perspectives and experiences in a setting of their choosing. These interviews took place in person, over the telephone, and through the use of an internet-based telecommunications program called Skype. The researcher asked for each
participant’s permission to audio-record the interview. The recording was then transcribed and used for analysis.

Data Analysis

In a mixed method research study, data are collected and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data are analyzed to attend to the objectives of a research question. Descriptive statistics are used to identify and describe trends in the data (Creswell, 2012). Mode is a descriptive statistic that identifies a single variable that occurs most frequently in a list of scores. In qualitative research, inductive analysis can be used to examine individual perceptions and experiences, in order to make broad conclusions about the culture-sharing group’s collective experiences (Creswell, 2012). Using this form of analysis, the researcher looks at individual interview responses and categorizes them into common codes and themes. This thesis research process involves overlapping cycles of open, axial, and selective coding (Creswell, 2012).

In the quantitative portion of this thesis study, the researcher collected data using a Likert-scale survey. Respondents were sorted into their culture-sharing groups for data analysis. Likert-scale questions were organized into categories and the mode for each of the responses was calculated. General trends and themes that emerged from this data were organized into categories and used in the development of interview themes for the second phase of data collection.

In the qualitative portion of this thesis research, interview responses were transcribed. There were 16 interview participants from the Maple Bear culture-sharing group and 6 interview participants from the provincially affiliated culture-sharing group. The researcher used open and axial coding to organize and describe interview responses. His goal was to examine the individual experiences of participants who were associated with implementing, developing, and
administering Canadian education abroad, and to investigate the collective attitudes, opinions, and general experiences of two different culture-sharing groups.

Selective coding was used to reorganize the data, in order to determine whether the research objectives were met and the overall research question was answered. The researcher compared his research findings with the information gathered in the literature review as he wrote the final report.

**Research Limitations**

This thesis research has the following limitations:

- **Research Design** – This thesis research was broad in scope. Survey and interview questions explored a wide range of topics and themes related to each model of offshore Canadian education. Had the research question been more narrow, the researcher could have probed deeper into an individual theme.

- **Research Design** – The Maple Bear model was relatively uniform in its policies, practices, and overall system structure; the provincially affiliated offshore model, on the other hand, was less consistent. Each Canadian province has a distinct approach to offshore education. Additionally, the system structure of each school in each offshore setting was unique. Although clear trends did emerge from this model, there was less certainty that these trends could be specifically relevant to all provincially affiliated schools.

- **Sampling** - This thesis research endeavored to explore a diverse range of perspectives from all of the selected stakeholders associated with two models of Canadian offshore education. However, missing from the sample of stakeholder groups were students and parents. In order to truly capture the whole picture of the Canadian offshore educational experience, these two stakeholder groups could have provided another perspective.
• Sampling – Because of the international nature of this thesis research, accessing stakeholders was challenging. As a result, stakeholder categories could not be represented evenly. For example, no school owners from the provincially affiliated model responded to the survey and no government liaison officers agreed to participate in the interviews.

• Data Collection – In Maple Bear schools, teachers’ first language and culture was the same as their students’. No questions were included in the survey or the interviews to explore how this may have influenced instruction and student learning. Given that several stakeholders referred to this teaching context, this appears to be a topic of sufficient significance to be included in the data collection instruments.

• Data Collection – This thesis research revealed a notable absence of students with special needs in Canadian offshore schools. Furthermore, many stakeholders stated that they felt ill-equipped and unprepared to support students with special needs. For this finding to be appropriately explored, further probing would have been necessary to elucidate a clear definition of “special needs.” Background information that detailed how students with special needs were supported in each unique international setting could have further explored in the literature review, as well.

• Data Collection – For many of the participants from the Maple Bear model, English was not their first language. It could, therefore, be suggested that their responses may have been limited or misinterpreted. The researcher did not provide an opportunity for stakeholders to respond in their first language, survey questions were not provided in different languages, and interpreters were not used to support participants during a one-on-one interview.

• Data Analysis - Most of the teachers who participated in this thesis research were new to the teaching profession. In many cases, this international experience was also their first year of
working as a teacher. Furthermore, teachers who have never taught in non-offshore schools have a limited frame of reference. Many of the participants were from Brazil and had never experienced a “Canadian” school first hand. A lack of previous experience may have affected their answers to the survey and interview questions.

* * * * *

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology used in this thesis study. Chapter 4 summarizes the quantitative and qualitative results gleaned from an online survey and face-to-face interviews.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a summary of the results collected from 28 stakeholders associated with Maple Bear schools. Quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures were used. Quantitative data were analyzed first as a collective of all stakeholder groups, then further explored in subgroups based on stakeholder categories. Qualitative data were divided into stakeholder subgroups. Analysis of qualitative data was organized and articulated by themes that emerged from the research.

The second section provides a summary of the results collected from 48 stakeholders associated with provincially affiliated offshore schools. Quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures were used. Quantitative data were analyzed first as a collective of all stakeholder groups, then further explored in subgroups based on stakeholder categories. The data were further organized and explored by the country that the schools were located in. Qualitative data were divided into stakeholder subgroups. Analysis of qualitative data was organized and articulated by themes that emerged from the research.

Maple Bear Schools

Maple Bear schools use experienced Canadian educators to train local teachers to use a Canadian-style of programming, teaching methodologies, and curricular materials, in their country of origin. Twenty-eight individuals associated with Maple Bear schools participated in this thesis research. Participants are categorized into the following stakeholder groups: franchise administrators, franchise trainers, curriculum writers, school owners, school coordinators, and teachers.
Quantitative data were gathered through an online survey comprised of demographic information, followed by 15 Likert-scale questions and 5 open-ended questions. The data were organized into three distinct categories: responses from all participants associated with Maple Bear schools, responses from Maple Bear in-school staff, and responses from staff associated with the Maple Bear franchise staff.

Qualitative data were gathered through qualitative survey responses and one-to-one interviews, then organized into 10 themes that were reported according to stakeholder category. Qualitative themes are staff recruitment/retention, role of the teacher assistant, role of the teacher, role of the coordinator, professional development, school culture, immersion programming, resources, curriculum, methodology, and student learning. Qualitative stakeholder categories consist of franchise trainers, school owners/franchise administrators, coordinators, and teachers.

**Quantitative Results**

Quantitative data were reviewed and grouped into three distinct categories for reporting purposes (see Table 3). Data were organized by question and then further divided into stakeholder groups. Collective responses gleaned from all stakeholders make up the first stakeholder group. The participants associated with the Maple Bear franchise were divided into two stakeholder subgroups. The first of these subgroups is identified as Maple Bear in-school staff: teachers, coordinators, and school administrators. The second subgroup is categorized as Maple Bear franchise staff: instructional coaches, teacher-trainers, and curriculum writers.
Table 3. Quantitative Data Categories for Maple Bear Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Responses</th>
<th>28 Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maple Bear In-school Staff</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Teachers, Coordinators, Administrators, Owners)</em></td>
<td><strong>Maple Bear Franchise Staff</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Instructional Coaches, Teacher-Trainees, Curriculum Writers, Franchise Administrators)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Participants</td>
<td>11 Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Data Categories for Maple Bear Schools

The quantitative categories are collective responses, Maple Bear in-school staff, and Maple Bear franchise schools.

*Collective Responses.* A total of 28 individuals associated with the Maple Bear franchise participated in this survey. Stakeholder categories included instructional coaches, teacher trainers, curriculum writers, franchise administrators, school administrators, school coordinators, and teachers. More than 10 schools were represented in these survey responses. Of the participants from this category, 24% started their employment with Maple Bear schools in 2014; however, participants’ experience with Maple Bear schools began as early as 2007. All but two of the 28 individuals are still employed by a Maple Bear school as of spring 2016. Of the participants, 62% began their employment with Maple Bear schools with more than 10 years of professional experience. The remaining 38% held professional experience that was evenly divided between 1 and 9 years. All the participants associated with Maple Bear held a post-secondary degree or diploma. A total of 23.81% of participants held a master’s degree in education, 19.05% held a graduate diploma in education, 14.29% held a post-baccalaureate
diploma, 23.81% held a Bachelor of Education, and 19.05% held a degree in something other than education.

**Maple Bear In-School Staff.** The 17 individuals who participated in this survey consisted of school administrators, academic coordinators, and teachers. Ten Maple Bear schools were represented in these survey responses. Participants from this category had professional experience with Maple Bear that was evenly distributed from 2007 to 2016. Eleven of twelve participants were employed by a Maple Bear school when they participated in this thesis research. Of the 17 individuals who completed the survey, 33.33% began their employment with Maple Bear schools with more than 10 years of professional experience. The remaining participants held professional experience that was evenly divided between 1 and 9 years. All of the participants associated with Maple Bear held a post-secondary degree or diploma: 3.33% held a graduate diploma in education; 16.67% held a post-baccalaureate diploma; 25% held a Bachelor of Education; and 25% held a degree in something other than education.

**Maple Bear Franchise Staff.** A total of 11 teacher trainers, instructional coaches, curriculum-writers, and franchise administrators participated in this survey. Participants often worked in multiple schools each year of their employment; the number of schools represented in this stakeholder category exceeded 10 schools. From this category, 11.11% of the participants started their employment with Maple Bear schools in 2009, 2010, and 2014; 33.33% of participants from this category started in both 2013 and 2015. All but 1 of the 11 participants are still employed by LACES, otherwise known as Maple Bear, as of spring 2016. All of the participants began their employment with Maple Bear schools with more than 10 years of professional experience and held a post-secondary degree or diploma. More than half of the participants held a master’s degree in education. The remaining participants held post-
baccalaureate diplomas or Bachelor of Education degrees. Only one participant held a degree in a domain that was not education.

**Quantitative Data Responses to Individual Questions**

Quantitative data responses were organized into 15 individual questions. Data results were summarized and tables with raw data were provided (see Appendix F for Table 4.1 to Table 4.15).

**Question 1 - “Canadian teaching methodologies are effective for educating students at this school.”** Results revealed that, collectively, all staff associated with the Maple Bear model of education strongly agreed that Canadian teaching methodologies were effective for educating students at Maple Bear schools. Although both stakeholder groups responded favorably to using Canadian teaching methodologies, Maple Bear Franchise staff expressed a stronger response than Maple Bear in-school staff (see Table 4.1).

**Question 2 – “Teachers have to make many adaptations to the curriculum content while teaching at this school.”** More franchise staff felt that adaptations were needed; however, in general, the average of both groups’ responses were very close to neutral or did not agree (see Table 4.2).

**Question 3 – “I received specialized training that prepared me for my professional role in this Canadian school.”** Maple Bear in-school staff strongly agreed that they received specialized training for their role. Maple Bear franchise staff were neutral in their response to receiving specialized training for their role (see Table 4.3).

**Question 4 – “Teaching at this Canadian school is very different from teaching in a Brazilian school.”** There was a general agreement about the difference between Brazilian schools, particularly among in-school staff (see Table 4.4).
Question 5 – “If I were to redo my experience at this school, there are many things that I would do differently to improve my professional practices.” All stakeholders demonstrated a general agreement that they would not have changed what they did in their earlier years of working at their school (see Table 4.5).

Question 6 – “It is challenging for teachers to use Canadian methods of teaching at this school.” Franchise staff identified more challenges in using Canadian methods than in-school staff (see Table 4.6).

Question 7 – “Teachers routinely implement a Canadian-form of curriculum as it is written in the curricular document provided (without modification).” Maple Bear franchise staff agreed that teachers implemented the Canadian curriculum without modification, whereas Maple Bear in-school staff felt neutral about curriculum implementation without modification (see Table 4.7).

Question 8 – “I was well prepared for my professional role at this Canadian school.” There was a general consensus that all participants felt prepared overall for their role at this Canadian school. Maple Bear franchise staff were more confident in their preparedness (see Table 4.8).

Question 9 – “While working at this school, I had concerns about using a Canadian model of education.” In-school staff reported a slightly increased level of concern about using a Canadian model of education at their school. Franchise staff seemed to be committed to, and in agreement with, this model (see Table 4.9).

Question 10 – “My professional experience at this school was positive.” All participants expressed a strong endorsement of their overall experience at Maple Bear schools (see Table 4.10).
**Question 11** – “Teachers receive adequate opportunities for in-service professional development while employed by this school.” Although both stakeholder sub-groups responded positively, in-school staff expressed less satisfaction with the professional development opportunities available from this school. Maple Bear franchise staff felt strongly that professional development opportunities were adequate (see Table 4.11).

**Question 12** – “Differences in culture did not impact my ability to perform effectively in my professional role.” The general consensus was that culture did not impact people’s ability to perform effectively in their professional role. Maple Bear franchise staff felt more confident about this issue (see Table 4.12).

**Question 13** – “Using a Canadian model of education at this school has been challenging.” Both stakeholder subgroups indicated that using a Canadian model was not challenging; however, in-school staff perceived a slightly higher level of challenge in using this model (see Table 4.13).

**Question 14** – “There are many strengths to using a Canadian model of education at this school.” Collective responses indicated a positive general consensus regarding the strengths of using a Canadian model of education at this school (see Table 4.14).

**Question 15** – “This school is administered in a very similar manner to most schools in Brazil.” In-school and franchise staff had conflicting views about whether Maple Bear schools operated differently than other schools in Brazil (see Table 4.15).

**Qualitative Results**

Qualitative data were collected through two distinct methods: a combination of qualitative survey responses and one-to-one interview responses. In addition to quantitative data gleaned from Likert-scale responses to survey questions, participants were provided an
opportunity to elaborate, explain, or provide examples for their responses to survey statements. Additionally, survey respondents were randomly selected and invited to participate in a one-to-one interview. Qualitative responses were organized by stakeholder group. Stakeholder groups associated with the Maple Bear model consisted of Maple Bear trainers, Maple Bear school owners/franchise administrators, Maple Bear academic coordinators, and Maple Bear teachers. Within each stakeholder group, qualitative responses were then coded and reorganized into predominant themes that emerged from the data. Emergent themes were organized as follows: staff recruitment and retention, teacher assistants, teachers, coordinators, professional development, school culture, English language learning, resources, curriculum, methodology, student learning. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities and respect the confidentiality of interview and survey respondents (see Appendix F for detailed participant responses).

**Maple Bear Trainers**

The stakeholder category of Maple Bear trainers is divided into the following subcategories: staff recruitment and retention, teacher assistants, teachers, coordinators, professional development, school culture, English language learning, resources, curriculum, methodology, and student learning.

**Staff Recruitment and Retention.** Participants discussed how trainers are recruited for Maple Bear. Trainers outlined the necessary qualifications of both teachers and trainers. They described the challenges associated with recruiting and retaining effective teachers, and explored the importance of training teachers in a Canadian model of education. They flagged the challenges of teacher retention, and the implications and rewards of teacher training as critical change agents. The trainers also noted that teacher assistants (TAs) were often groomed to become teachers.
**Teachers.** Trainers described the role of the teacher in Maple Bear schools through the lens of instructional practices and curriculum implementation. Trainers were united in affirming the expectation that teachers use the Maple Bear program as it is written. An accountability process described by the trainers stipulates that teachers’ lesson plans are routinely submitted to coordinators. Trainers were careful to point out that curriculum implementation can be challenging, and that professional development is pivotal to implementation of the model. The trainers who were interviewed noted that professional development was strongly encouraged by Maple Bear owners and administrators. Maple Bear trainers were aware that the teachers were also required to give direction and training to teacher assistants, although that aspect of their role was less clearly defined and articulated.

**Coordinators.** Trainers compared the role of coordinators to that of a school principal in Canada. Most noted a change in this role from traditional management to pedagogical leadership, which would require specialized training. The coordinators’ administrative duties included paying bills, managing resources, and recruiting staff. Trainers affirmed that the definition of the role required some clarification. Additionally, many trainers stressed that they believed that more training should take place to further develop the pedagogical and managerial leadership capacity of coordinators.

**Teacher Assistants.** Trainers indicated that the TAs were often groomed to become teachers. Similar to Canada, TAs in Brazil took their direction primarily from the classroom teacher with whom they were working.

**Professional Development.** The trainers traveled from Canada to help Maple Bear staff and owners improve their professional practice during in-school sessions. The trainers credited their past experiences with the company and a familiarity with the Maple Bear philosophy as
factors that enhanced their ability to deliver effective professional development. They credited Maple Bear’s rigorous training model for the success of the franchise. They provided three forms of professional development to teachers, coordinators, and owners: initial training, central training, and in-school training. In-school training was emphasized by trainers as the cornerstone for advancing professional growth.

**School Culture.** Trainers attributed much of their success to the Maple Bear school culture, which they perceived as committed to professional growth and development. They felt inspired and excited about how they were treated and how their training was received. They reported that teachers embraced the training because of its practicality and its focus on Canadian methodologies. The school morale and general attitudes were reported to be predominantly positive and the staff are said to be generally happy about their jobs. One trainer described the challenge that schools would face if a member of the staff did not embrace the Maple Bear philosophy. The trainers noted that the practicality of training, the novelty of this Canadian model of education, and the sense of professional support combined to have a positive impact on school culture.

**English Language Learning.** Trainers defined English immersion education as having English as the sole language in the classroom. One trainer highlighted the challenges of using difficult academic language to teach students whose first language is not English. Although challenging to both staff and students, this immersion model contributed to the Canadian identity of Maple Bear schools.

**Resources.** Resources and materials were a crucial component of the Maple Bear program, but trainers identified difficulties associated with access from Canadian suppliers, financial implications, and the need to train teachers for their use in the classroom. Trainers
highlighted the specific materials that they believed were of value to student learning, and explained how these materials supported the program and the model of education. However, they reported that local schools lacked the expertise to choose and prioritize purchases, especially when pressured to keep up with the resources required for their expanding school programs. Teacher trainers pointed out the need to provide professional development to the Maple Bear teachers on how specific resources could be used to maximize student learning.

Curriculum. Experienced trainers created the Maple Bear curriculum, but teachers were responsible for implementing it in the classroom. All of the trainers who participated in this research and who were responsible for writing curriculum, reported that they had more than 10 years of teaching experience and a master’s degree in education. These individuals related how they generated the curriculum, why they used this curriculum design, and how they kept it current and effective. Trainers commended the curriculum for being engaging, lesson-based, and prescriptive. However, they also saw a need for continued revision and for professional development to help teachers adapt the lessons to their students’ needs. They flagged culture and language as considerations when working with teachers on instructional strategies.

Methodology. Trainers focused on the teachers’ transition from traditional Brazilian pedagogy to the current Canadian pedagogy. They noted differences in teaching and assessment, and the need to juxtapose culture and language. The traditional model is teacher-centered, focuses on memorizing facts, and aims to prepare students for a university entry exam. The Maple Bear model is intended to engage experiential, exploratory, and discovery learning. Trainers stressed the importance of play in student learning. This can be achieved through hands-on activities, centers, games, and music. Some trainers highlighted the importance of
differentiated instruction and multi-modal formative assessment. Trainers also recognized the critical role of parental acceptance when making significant changes to children’s education.

**Student Learning.** In addition to explicit academic outcomes, trainers identified implicit learning outcomes, such as character education, social skills, and 21st century readiness. They also addressed parental concerns that the Maple Bear curriculum would not adequately prepare their children for university. Trainers asserted that Maple Bear students come with a positive attitude about their learning. This attitude, as trainers pointed out, manifests itself through their respectful interactions with their classmates and responsible behaviors with teachers. Furthermore, they suggested that the program promotes a growth mindset and a desire for lifelong learning.

**Maple Bear School Owners and Franchise Administrators**

The stakeholder category of Maple Bear school owners and franchise administrators (O/FAs) is divided into the following categories: staff recruitment and retention, teacher assistants, teachers, coordinators, professional development, school culture, English language learning, resources, curriculum, methodology, student learning.

**Staff Recruitment and Retention.** O/FAs described teacher recruitment and retention challenges related to school locations, the need for specialized teachers in progressively higher grades, and non-competitive salaries. O/FAs outlined qualifications required for hiring teachers: English language proficiency, teaching experience, and teaching certification. They preferred younger teachers who were fluent in English and had lived abroad, because they assumed that these individuals would be more likely to adopt the Maple Bear philosophy of education. However, they acknowledged that these teachers required rigorous training and support, and that there was an increasing need to hire more specialized teachers for the higher grades. Competitive
salaries were flagged as a potential explanation for transient staff. Retention incentives included salary adjustments and professional development. The qualifications for hiring trainers focused on educational expertise and academic preparedness.

**Teacher Assistants.** O/ FAs identified the criteria for providing TA support in classrooms: the number of students, for example, classes over [blank] have a TA; the presence of students with special needs (who will be supported with a TA); and the presence of toddlers in class. They noted the roles that TAs played, including the potential for promotion to the role of teacher.

**Teachers.** O/ FAs spoke about the specific role of the teacher. Two O/ FAs described the importance of speaking high-quality English at all times. All three O/ FAs who participated in this thesis research highlighted the need for continuous training; however, one O/ FA pointed out the unionized necessity to make the training optional when it occurred during vacation time for teachers.

**Coordinators.** O/ FAs reported that coordinators were responsible for a variety of managerial and educational leadership tasks. One O/ FA described the role of the coordinator as comparable to what is called a principal in Canada. The coordinator’s role as instructional coach included facilitating weekly teacher meetings and special workshops. O/ FAs noted the need for specialized training to prepare coordinators in Maple Bear schools.

**Professional Development.** O/ FAs summarized the purpose for, and specifics of, training that occurred in Brazil. Specific rationales for training included facilitating the transition of pedagogy from a traditional model to a Canadian model of education, investing in the capacity of teachers, and grooming teacher assistants to become teachers. Geography created challenges for delivering equitably accessible central training to all schools.
School Culture. O/FAs outlined their mission to create a Canadian school culture that would suit the local context and directly contrast the business-first focus of other private schools in Brazil. They explained that they wanted a school that reflected the idea of what they perceived to be Canadian education. The core elements included creating an effective learning environment, instilling such positive character traits as respect, and fostering a collaborative community among all staff and students. O/FAs stressed the notion that, unlike many private schools that operate business-first, Maple Bear schools’ first priority was on student learning. Professional conferences served as evidence of the collaborative culture of the Maple Bear franchise.

English Language Learning. O/FAs identified immersion programming as the primary reason that owners opened Maple Bear franchise schools. English language proficiency was highlighted as the most important qualification of teachers. O/FAs felt that Canada’s bilingual status would translate well into providing bilingual education (Portuguese and English) in Maple Bear schools in Brazil.

Resources. O/FAs discussed the initial challenge of purchasing an appropriately-sized school building and accessing classroom resources such as books and hands-on materials, particularly during times of rapid growth when schools were adding higher grades. Franchise administrators explained that resource support for students with special needs would require attention in the future.

Curriculum. O/FAs explained that all Maple Bear schools used the same curriculum. Experts were hired to create and continually update Canadian-centric step-by-step lesson plans that were hands-on, experiential, and prescriptive. They anticipated that as teachers became more comfortable and familiar with the curriculum, training would shift to a more philosophical focus.
The Portuguese side of each school used Portuguese curriculum that incorporated Canadian methodologies. O/ FAs identified formative assessment as a necessary element in future curriculum development.

**Methodology.** O/ FAs discussed the positive reputation of Canada’s system of education as a catalyst for the franchises’ transition from traditional Brazilian pedagogy to current Canadian pedagogy. They noted the critical role of training in preparing teachers for curriculum implementation through hands-on, child-centered, and experiential learning.

**Student Learning.** O/ FAs explained that student learning outcomes included academic skills, social skills, character education, 21st century skills, and English language fluency. Standardized assessments tools were created to measure success in grades 3 and 5, and to inform curricular revision and development.

**Maple Bear Coordinators**

The stakeholder category of Maple Bear coordinators is divided into the following sub-categories: staff recruitment and retention, coordinators, professional development, school culture, English language learning, resources, curriculum, methodology, student learning.

**Staff Recruitment and Retention.** Coordinators reported that in urban centers, young English-speaking teachers were conveniently recruited through word-of-mouth. Coordinators were particularly interested in hiring individuals who were passionate about teaching and learning. Being fluent in English was considered even more important than having a teaching certificate. Challenges with recruitment and retention were related the location of schools and their non-competitive salaries.

**Coordinators.** Coordinators described their role as complex and diverse. As pedagogical leaders, coordinators were responsible for facilitating and supporting teachers’ daily practice and
continued professional development. They were primarily responsible for observing teachers, providing feedback, facilitating professional development sessions during weekly teacher meetings, and supporting teachers with report cards. They were also responsible for managerial roles: managing finances and resources, hiring teachers, coordinating communications with community, dealing with parents, organizing special events, and generally being available to “put out fires” as they emerge throughout the day. As well, coordinators identified the need for franchise support and specialized training.

**Professional Development.** Coordinators described the strengths and challenges of central training and in-school training for both English and Portuguese teachers. As pedagogical leaders, coordinators were tasked with promoting and supporting this training in classrooms. Coordinators stated that most teachers were motivated to engage in training, despite the fact that central training occurred during teacher holidays. Coordinators reported that central training could be redundant or repetitive. Classroom management, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving were highlighted by coordinators as possible topics for future central training workshops. They expressed the need for continuity across in-school training, and vocalized a desire for specialized coordinator training. Coordinators added that English and Portuguese teachers both received in-school training.

**School Culture.** Coordinators indicated that they were motivated, teachers were committed to professional growth and best practice, and students were learning happily. Staff shared respect for Canada and the Maple Bear methodology of teaching. Coordinators reported that parents enrolled their children in Maple Bear schools because of its positive reputation in the community.
**English Language Learning.** Coordinators discussed the value of learning the English language in Brazil. They reported that immersion education, a current trend in Brazilian private schools, was an effective way to learn the English language.

**Resources.** Coordinators made two points regarding resources. One coordinator reported challenges with access to Canadian resources. She said that she returned to Canada at least once a year to purchase school supplies and materials. Another indicated that on-line networks for teachers and coordinators would be helpful.

**Curriculum.** Coordinators explained why they believed the school owners decided to open a school with a Canadian curriculum. They reported that although the prescriptive nature of the curriculum promoted hands-on experiential learning, there was still some room for teachers’ interpretation. Coordinators emphasized their role in ensuring curricular fidelity. Brazilian culture was reported to be included in the science curriculum and through field trips.

**Methodology.** Coordinators asserted that the Maple Bear methodology was effective in promoting instruction that was practical, hands-on, and experiential. Principles of universal design and differentiation practices were described as important features of the Maple Bear methodology.

**Student Learning.** Coordinators reported that Maple Bears’ student-centered pedagogy promoted social skills, character education, meta-cognition, and life skills. Coordinators believed that these skills prepared students for university entrance exams, which was a concern for parents.

**Maple Bear Teachers**

The stakeholder category of Maple Bear teachers is divided into the following categories: staff recruitment and retention, teacher assistants, teachers, coordinators, professional
development, school culture, English language learning, resources, curriculum, methodology, student learning.

**Staff Recruitment and Retention.** Teachers reported that English language fluency, international experiences, and experiences in teaching EAL classes were primary qualifications for being hired by Maple Bear schools. Most teachers indicated that they were recommended to Maple Bear schools through word-of-mouth. Many teachers reported started as TAs, then being promoted to teacher after a few years. Non-competitive salaries were flagged as a recruitment and retention challenge.

**Teacher Assistants.** Teachers spoke at length about the role of the TA, frequently noting that TAs took their direction from teachers by helping with centers and working one-on-one with certain students. Teachers praised the support of TAs in schools and explained that in some cases, the TAs and the teacher worked together as a team to teach classes. Because TAs were often groomed to become teachers, teachers suggested that schools would benefit from providing specialized franchise training for both groups on the role of the TA.

**Teachers.** Teachers were expected to follow the Maple Bear program, which focused on guiding students in their learning and preparing them for the following school year. Teachers reported submitting to their coordinators annual and weekly lesson plans that included instructional strategies and TA responsibilities. Teachers were expected to maintain a clean and safe learning environment, implement the curriculum in English, communicate regularly with parents, and engage in ongoing professional development. Daily tasks for teachers included recess duty and lunch supervision. Teachers who were interviewed noted that they were strongly encouraged to attend Maple Bear training. Although central training was not obligatory, some teachers reported that they felt obliged to attend.
**Coordinators.** The teachers described schools as being administrated in a very similar manner to other private schools in Brazil. They reported that coordinators were responsible for a variety of managerial and pedagogical leadership tasks, such as hiring staff, communicating with parents, and dealing with daily ongoing issues as they emerged. They noted the need for more classroom support from coordinators, in terms of observing classes and providing feedback, reviewing lesson plans, facilitating workshops, and answering questions. Teachers recommended dividing the role of the coordinator, in order to enable one person to commit more time to supporting classrooms. Teachers also recommended that coordinators should receive specialized training in pedagogy and administration.

**Professional Development.** Teachers described the need for constant professional development. They believed that training was important because the Maple Bear model of education was a dramatic departure from what they experienced in their own education and in their professional training. Because teachers lacked experience with (and education in) Canadian pedagogy, they reported that central and in-school training were critical for teacher and school success. Although there were strengths and challenges with all forms of training, in-school training by franchise trainers was cited as the most valuable.

**School Culture.** Teachers reported being part of a team. They described a positive school environment where all stakeholders, including students, appreciated the Maple Bear model of teaching and learning. Although teachers reported a need for more support from school coordinators, they felt generally supported and were committed to professional growth. A few teachers expressed frustration with a lack of support from the coordinators; however, all but one teacher recognized this not as the fault of the coordinators, but as one of the challenges of the role. Teachers asserted that students were happy and learning.
**English Language Learning.** Teachers articulated the value of immersion education as a model for teaching and learning English. Teachers added that, by teaching language and engaging them in regular school simultaneously, students do not need to take additional courses in English on top of their regular school. However, they noted concerns about the difficulty of learning academic vocabulary and the absence of language support offered at home, which may make university more challenging. In some cases, teachers suspected that parents registered their children for Maple Bear schools because of the status of a bilingual school, rather than a true belief in the model of education.

**Resources.** Most teachers reported having the necessary resources for their job. Other teachers noted that sometimes resources were not available or they did not know how to use them appropriately. These teachers added that they made do without these particular resources, or would purchase them elsewhere with their own money.

**Curriculum.** Teachers appreciated the detailed curriculum because it was well-organized, step-by-step, and cross-cultural. Problem-solving and opportunities to collaborate and share ideas were highlighted as important qualities of the program. Teachers reported that as they accumulated more experience, they developed the skills to make adaptations due to cultural differences and/ or a lack of time and resources. The cultural adaptations included content in math, science, and life skills. Teachers remarked that most Brazilian culture was taught more specifically in Portuguese classes, while Canadian culture was the focus in English classes. This cross-cultural experience was highlighted as one of the strengths of the program.

**Methodology.** Teachers reported how Maple Bear’s constructivist methodology was different from their own traditional schooling experience, where they themselves had been students or where they had previously worked as teachers. Teachers indicated that through
hands-on, experiential, and student-centered learning opportunities, students developed social skills, life skills, and character education. Teachers explained how they used differentiation to focus on embracing students’ strengths and promoting their learning through positive reinforcement. This methodology of instruction was primarily student-centered, where students learned through games, songs, inquiry projects, and activity centers. It was through these types of learning activities that students learned important skills for life, including a respect for diverse cultures.

**Student Learning.** Teachers reported that while local Brazilian schools actively worked to prepare students for a university entrance exam, Maple Bear schools aimed to prepare students for life. Despite these different goals, teachers affirmed that Maple Bear students developed the independent, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills necessary to be successful on the university entrance exam. In Maple Bear schools, teachers asserted, students were taught lessons of respect.

**Provincially Affiliated Offshore Schools**

Provincially affiliated offshore schools are private schools that exist in various locations around the world. These schools are locally owned. Each school is unique: some schools are large and independent, some schools are small and operate as a supplementary program within a larger local school community, and some schools use a blended program, offering English and local programming. What is consistent across all of these schools is that teachers are required to use a specific Canadian province’s curriculum. Additionally, principals and teachers must receive their professional certification from the corresponding Canadian province. Forty-eight individuals associated with provincially affiliated offshore schools participated in this thesis.
research. Participants were categorized into the following stakeholder groups: government liaison officers, administrators, and teachers.

Quantitative data were gathered through an online survey comprised of demographic information, followed by 15 Likert-scale questions and 5 open-ended questions. Data were organized into 7 distinct categories: participants associated with provincially affiliated offshore school, school administrators, teachers, participants who worked in China, participants who worked in Egypt, participants who worked in South Korea, and participants who worked in Thailand.

Qualitative data were first gathered through qualitative survey responses and one-to-one interviews, then organized into ten themes that were reported according to stakeholder category. Qualitative themes are staff recruitment and retention, student profile, staff profile, school structure and administration, community perspective, professional development, school culture, immersion programming, resources, curriculum, methodology, and student learning. Qualitative stakeholder categories are comprised of administrators and teachers.

**Quantitative Results**

Quantitative data were reviewed and grouped into 7 distinct categories (See Table 5) for reporting purposes. Data were organized by question and were further divided into stakeholder groups. Collective responses gleaned from all stakeholders make up the first stakeholder group. The participants associated with provincially affiliated offshore schools were divided into six stakeholder subgroups: administrators, teachers, and all individuals who worked in China, Egypt, South Korea, and Thailand.
Quantitative Data Categories for Provincially Affiliated Offshore Schools

Quantitative data were organized into the following categories: collective responses, school administrators, teachers, China, Egypt, South Korea, and Thailand.

**Collective Responses.** A total of 48 individuals associated with provincially affiliated offshore schools participated in this survey. The stakeholder groups were government liaison officers, school administrators, and teachers. In total, 12 schools were represented in these survey responses. China, Egypt, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates were the countries where these schools were located. A total of 22% of the participants from this category started their employment with provincially affiliated schools in 2015; the remaining 78% were distributed relatively evenly between 2003 and 2014. The bulk of the participants were still employed by the associated school or had left by 2015. Only 17 of the 48 participants left their employment before 2015. Of the collective 48 participants, there were 3 government liaison officers, 9 school administrators, and 36 teachers. A total of 53% of the participants were in their first two years of teaching and 32% had more than 10 years of experience. All the participants associated with provincially affiliated schools held a post-secondary degree or diploma.

**School Administrators.** A total of 9 school administrators participated in this survey, representing 6 schools from 5 countries. Of the 9 administrators, 4 began their employment with their respective provincially affiliated school in 2013. The remaining 3 began their employment in 2012, 2011, 2010, and 2 began in 2006. Of the 9 administrators, 6 were still employed by their school at the time of this thesis research. All participating administrators had more than 10 years of experience in the field of education before starting at their provincially affiliated school.
Table 5. Quantitative Data Categories for Provincially Affiliated Offshore Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Responses</th>
<th>48 Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Collective responses from all countries)</td>
<td>(Collective responses from all countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Participants</td>
<td>36 Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **China**
  - (Government Liaison Officers, Administrators, and Teachers)
  - 11 Participants

- **Egypt**
  - (Administrators and Teachers)
  - 12 Participants

- **South Korea**
  - (Administrators and Teachers)
  - 7 Participants

- **Thailand**
  - (Teachers)
  - 11 Participants

*Teachers*. A total of 36 teachers participated in this survey, representing 12 schools from 6 countries. Of the 36 teachers, 10 began their employment with their respective provincially affiliated school in 2015. The remaining 26 participants represented a relatively even distribution.
between the years 2006 and 2014. At the time of this thesis research, 56% of the teachers were still employed by their respective school.

**China.** A total of 11 individuals who were associated with 5 provincially affiliated schools in China responded to this survey. This quantitative data category consisted of 3 government liaison officers, 1 school administrator, and 7 teachers.

**Egypt.** A total of 12 individuals who were associated with 2 provincially affiliated schools in Egypt responded to this survey. This quantitative data category consisted of 3 school administrators and 9 teachers.

**South Korea.** A total of 7 individuals who were associated with 3 provincially affiliated schools in South Korea responded to this survey. This quantitative data category consisted of 2 school administrators and 5 teachers.

**Thailand.** A total of 11 individuals who were associated with 2 provincially affiliated schools in Thailand responded to this survey. This quantitative data category thus consisted of 11 teachers.

**Quantitative Data Responses to Individual Questions**

Quantitative data responses were organized into 15 individual questions. Data results were summarized and tables with raw data were provided (see Appendix G for Table 6.1 to Table 6.15).

**Question 1 – “Canadian teaching methodologies are effective for educating students at this school.”** In general, all stakeholder groups expressed that using Canadian teaching methodologies was effective. Stakeholders in Thailand were less confident than stakeholders in South Korea (see Table 6.1).
Question 2 – “Teachers have to make many adaptations to the curriculum content while teaching at this school.” Respondents from all data categories felt that some adaptations to the Canadian curriculum were required (see Table 6.2).

Question 3 – “I received specialized training that prepared me for my professional role in this Canadian school.” Responses to this survey question were quite scattered in all stakeholder categories. The collective responses revealed that, as a whole, stakeholders were neutral in their beliefs about how specialized training prepared them for their professional role. Of all the categories, administrators were the most confident in their preparation through specialized training (see Table 6.3).

Question 4 – “Teaching at this Canadian school is very different from teaching in Canada.” There was general agreement among teachers and administrators that teaching was different from teaching in Canada (see Table 6.4).

Question 5 – “If I were to redo my experience at this school, there are many things that I would do differently to improve my professional practices.” Stakeholders from all countries, particularly those from Thailand, recognized that there were many things that they would change if given the chance (see Table 6.5).

Question 6 – “It is challenging for teachers to use Canadian methods of teaching at this school.” Generally speaking, teachers felt marginally less confident in their ability to use Canadian teaching methods than administrators. Stakeholders from China expressed a greater level of confidence in their ability to use Canadian methodology than participants from Thailand (see Table 6.6).

Question 7 – “Teachers routinely implement a Canadian-form of curriculum as it is written in the curricular document provided (without modification).” There was general
agreement that the curriculum required modification. Teachers identified the need to modify the curriculum more often than administrators (see Table 6.7).

**Question 8** – “I was well prepared for my professional role at this Canadian school.” In general, administrators identified a much higher level of confidence in their level of preparation than teachers did. Administrators indicated that they were well-prepared (see Table 6.8).

**Question 9** – “While working at this school, I had concerns about using a Canadian model of education.” Administrators collectively felt very good about the Canadian model of education, whereas about 29% of teachers were neutral or had concerns with using this model of education (see Table 6.9).

**Question 10** – “My professional experience at this school was positive.” All staff in all locations responded generally positive about their experience at their school. Only one administrator indicated the experience was not positive (see Table 6.10).

**Question 11** – “Teachers receive adequate opportunities for in-service professional development while employed by this school.” In general, teachers were not fully satisfied with the amount of professional development that they received at their school, whereas administrators provided mixed responses. Stakeholders from Thai schools were particularly dissatisfied with the amount of professional development available (see Table 6.11).

**Question 12** – “Differences in culture did not impact my ability to perform effectively in my professional role.” Cultural differences posed a challenge to a significant number of teachers, especially in Thailand. Administrators recognized some challenges in this area (see Table 6.12).
**Question 13** – “Using a Canadian model of education at this school has been challenging.” In general, the stakeholders did not find this Canadian model of education challenging (see Table 6.13).

**Question 14** – “There are many strengths of using a Canadian model of education at this school.” Both teachers and administration responded positively, indicating their belief that the Canadian model of education had many strengths (see Table 6.14).

**Question 15** – “This school is administered in a very similar manner to most schools in Canada.” About 74% of teachers thought that their school was administrated quite differently than schools in Canada, whereas administrators were divided almost equally in their belief that their school was administrated in a similar manner to most schools in Canada (see Table 6.15).

**Qualitative Results**

Qualitative data were collected through two distinct methods: qualitative survey responses and one-to-one interview responses. In addition to quantitative data gleaned from Likert-scale responses to survey questions, participants were provided an opportunity to elaborate, explain, or provide examples for their responses to survey statements. The qualitative responses from provincially affiliated schools were organized by two stakeholder groups: administrators and teachers. Within each stakeholder group, the responses were then coded and reorganized into emergent themes: staff recruitment and retention, student profile, staff profile, community perspective, system structure and administration, professional and cultural preparation, professional development, school culture, English language learners, resources, curriculum, methodology, and student learning. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity and respect the confidentiality of interview and survey respondents (see Appendix G for detailed participant responses).
Administrators

Qualitative data were collected from the principals/administrators who participated in this thesis research (see Appendix G for Table 7). Table 7 matches pseudonyms with the countries these principals worked in. Data were organized into the following categories: staff recruitment and retention, student profile, staff profile, community perspective, cultural and professional preparation, professional development, school culture, English language learners, resources, curriculum, methodology, and student learning.

Staff Recruitment and Retention. Principals reported four methods for recruiting staff: special consultant agencies, advertisements in Canadian publications, university career fairs, and recruitment websites. Local governments required teachers to have specialized education, in order to teach content area subjects. One factor that further narrowed the pool of teachers was that all staff were required to have an education degree that was recognized by the affiliated Canadian province. Recruiting and retaining adventurous teachers who met the requirements of both the provincial and the local government was reported to be a challenge.

Student Profile. Principals reported that the student profile consisted of English language learners (ELLs), many of whom exhibited a wide array of special academic and emotional needs. The attitudes and work ethic of students differed from one country to the next; for example, in provincially affiliated schools in China and Japan, principals explained that students were extremely competitive and well-behaved. Teachers reported that parents enrolled their children in provincially affiliated schools to provide easy access to Canadian universities or as a result of a dissatisfaction with the local system of education. In China, families enrolled their children in Canadian schools because their children had not been successful in standardized assessments that streamed grade 9 students on an educational path that led to attending university. In Turkey,
students who were unsuccessful on a grade 8 standardized assessments were relegated to schools that were described as “bottom feeder schools.” In South Korea, families were said to be quite transient. Some families distrusted South Korean schools because they had bad previous experiences with the public school system; others came and went simply because they had a specific expectation of the provincially affiliated school that was not being met. Provincially affiliated schools provided these countries’ students with an alternate option that allowed them to receive a quality education.

**Staff Profile.** Principals reported that most Canadian teachers were young, inexperienced, and professionally certified by the province the school was affiliated with. A lack of support-staff was highlighted as a major issue by three different principals from three distinct countries. These principals indicated that there was little to no support staff in the way of substitute teachers, educational assistants, resource teachers, school counselors, or specialized clinicians. Clinical support was not offered in China or South Korea, for example, because the culture did not recognize or acknowledge mental illness or special needs. Many schools were blended; having two cultures co-exist within the same school occasionally created additional challenges. In many cases, political tension existed between the local government and the Canadian school.

**Community Perspective.** Principals reported that although many parents viewed provincially affiliated schools as superior to their local education system, an inaccurate understanding of Canadian methodology caused some apprehension. Communication with parents was critical to combat this phenomenon, especially when dealing with new students. A principal from South Korea noted that parents did not want children with special needs attending classes with their own children, which contradicted the Canadian philosophy of inclusion. In
Turkey, one principal explained that the community was often suspicious of new schools out of a concern that the school would likely not remain open for long enough to graduate their children.

*Cultural and Professional Preparation.* Most principals felt sufficiently prepared by their university education and prior professional experience for their role as an administrator. They cited differences in culture and the specifics of the local system of education as the most challenging factors. While some principals commended the professional preparation of the Canadian teachers, others perceived difficulties related to implementing curriculum and adjusting to a new culture. Some principals believed that the open and flexible nature of the Canadian curriculum allowed teachers to transfer their skills from Canada to their new foreign contexts; while another principal indicated that this form of curriculum made implementation for teachers more challenging. Principals made several recommendations for teachers’ professional development to address these issues.

*Professional Development.* Principals from Egypt and Japan noted that they received many opportunities for professional development (PD), in contrast to principals from Turkey, China, and South Korea. The primary limitations to PD for both principals and teachers were time, money, infrastructure, access to experienced presenters, and the support of local school owners. The principals perceived a need to overcome these obstacles, particularly to support inexperienced teachers. Principals stated that they often were responsible for delivering the professional development themselves. In some cases, government liaison officers from Canada would travel to the foreign school to deliver professional development. At times, these limited opportunities were offset by specialized training through teachers’ involvement with the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. In one situation in South Korea, four schools (all affiliated with the same Canadian province) came together to engage in professional
development. Convincing these school owners that developing collaborative relationships with other schools – that were viewed as business competitors – was a challenge.

**School Culture.** All but one of the principals described their work experiences as positive. Principals described their experience working at an Offshore school as positive. Only one teacher has expressed that the experience was negative. Relationships among staff were explained to be extremely beneficial to the transition of staff into the country and in fostering collaborative professional relationships. Principals stated that students were happy with the model of education; parents were also said to be pleased with the quality of communication with staff.

**English Language Learning.** In general, principals communicated that they believed a Canadian curriculum strongly benefited students in learning the English language and preparing them for Canadian universities. Their teachers purportedly promoted English Language Learning (ELL) and supported ELL students’ needs through immersion strategies. However, some principals reported that students had English language difficulties stemming from prior learning experiences with second language instructors, and from inaccurate initial screening assessments.

**Resources.** Accessing curriculum-specific resources was a challenge, not only because the materials had to come from Canada, but because some of the content violated local culture and customs regulations. Schools also struggled to establish a quality stock of technological resources. One teacher explained that no remedial instruction kits were available for teachers to use for planning, implementing, and assessment of students with special needs. As a compensatory mechanism, teachers developed and shared instructional resources.

**Curriculum.** All principals who participated in this thesis research described Canadian curricula as effective in their respective schools. Some principals reported that the curriculum
was generally implemented with little to no modification, but most acknowledged that new teachers had difficulty doing so. They also noted that the flexible nature of the curriculum facilitated adaptations to accommodate cultural differences, linguistic barriers, and political mandates. One principal appreciated the social emotional learning that is embedded in Canadian curriculum outcomes.

**Methodology.** By comparing and contrasting Canadian methodologies with the methodologies of local educators, principals highlighted some of the strengths of the Canadian model of education. When describing the Canadian methodology, principals used words or phrases like “child-centered,” “student responsibility,” and “process rather than product.” One principal described parental misgivings about this methodology, but insisted that it was important to promote a typically Canadian ideal of multiculturalism around the world.

**Student Learning.** Principals expressed mixed reviews regarding students’ readiness for Canadian universities. One principal recommended offering Western lifestyle courses and tracking subsequent success at Western universities. The identified strengths of the Canadian model included English language learning, critical thinking, independence, respect, investigation, and social skills. A drawback was that, unlike in Canada, appropriate programming was not provided for students with special needs.

**Teachers**

Qualitative data were collected from 35 teachers who worked at provincially affiliated schools (see Appendix G for Table 8). Table 8 matches pseudonyms with the countries teachers worked in. Data were organized into the following categories: staff recruitment and retention, student profile, staff profile, community perspective, system structure, administration, cultural
and professional preparation, professional development, school culture, English language learners, resources, curriculum, methodology, and student learning.

**Staff Recruitment and Retention.** Canadian consultants often attended university job fairs on behalf of provincially affiliated schools, in order to hire new B.Ed. graduates. In one case, a Canadian university created an association with a provincially affiliated school as a means of recruiting teaching staff. Provincially affiliated school teachers reported that retention issues, related to teachers’ experiences with culture shock, often resulted in a lack of mentors and continuity in the school. Leadership roles were sometimes offered to young individuals as an incentive for them to stay at the school. Additionally, teaching experience at provincially affiliated schools was recognized as certified professional experience by the province with which each school was affiliated.

**Student Profile.** Provincially affiliated school teachers reported that the predominantly local, non-English student population usually came from affluent homes. There were very few students who had visible special needs such as mobility issues, and the parents of students with invisible special needs would deter schools from establishing appropriate programming. The behavior and work ethic of students were reported to be different in each educational setting.

**School Staff.** Teachers reported that, apart from more leadership opportunities, their role was similar to what it would be in Canada. Teachers articulated a need for additional support staff, including educational assistants (EAs), resource teachers, school counsellors, and EAL teachers. Most schools had both local and foreign (Canadian) teachers, which meant that students learned the same material in both English and the local language.

**Community Perspective.** According to teachers interviewed, culture has influenced how schools establish a positive reputation within the community, deal with ongoing community
issues, and communicate with parents. Teachers reported that Canada’s positive international reputation in education made provincially affiliated schools attractive to students who wanted access to Canadian universities, and to parents who wanted greater social status in their community. Teachers reported that a language barrier created challenges in communication with parents, and could create opportunities for administrators to be influenced or pressured by parents.

**System Structure.** Teachers reported that the system structures of provincially affiliated schools were distinct in each unique setting, ranging from standalone offshore institutions to small foreign (Canadian) language departments. Each system structure created tension between differing culture groups: local government and offshore school policy-makers, local administrators/business owners and imported Canadian administrators, and local teachers and imported Canadian teachers.

**Administration.** Teachers reported that administrators were both school managers and instructional leaders. Teachers recognized cultural differences between local and foreign administrators engendered conflicts related to the top-down chain of command, attitudes toward authority, strategies for behavior management issues, and policies around moving students through grades regardless of their abilities.

**Cultural and Professional Preparation.** Although some teachers articulated that teaching experience, international experience, a basic university degree, and EAL training were sufficient in preparing them for their teaching assignment, others identified the need for specialized university programming. For example, teachers in Thai schools reported resorting to traditional teaching methodologies because they lacked Canadian teaching experience. Teachers described
the cultural challenges that accompanied living and working abroad. Cultural orientation provided by provincially affiliated schools was reported to be insufficient or ineffective.

**Professional Development.** Teachers reported a dissatisfaction with the amount of in-school and external professional development (PD) that occurred in their schools, particularly when the extra training occurred at their own expense. Additional university coursework and teacher collaboration were the predominant modes of PD. In South Korea, multiple provincially affiliated schools engaged in collaborative PD sessions.

**School Culture.** Teachers reported that they formed family-like bonds with one another to combat culture shock, through shared personal and professional experiences. Apart from their occasional frustration with local administrators, teachers spoke positively about their personal and professional experiences. Teachers explained that parents and students believed in Canada’s international reputation for quality education.

**English Language Learning.** Teachers reported that language immersion, as well as an immersion in Western culture, prepared students for university in the Western world. Teachers explained that because almost 100% of the student population was learning English as an additional language, content and expectations needed to be adjusted. Academic language was noted to be particularly challenging for ELLs.

**Resources.** Teachers reported that limited access to curriculum-specific and culturally relevant resources created challenges for curriculum implementation. Existing Canadian resources were sometimes difficult or culturally irrelevant for English language learners. As well, schools often did not have access to up-to-date technology for both teaching and learning.

**Curriculum.** Teachers reported that the open and flexible design of Canadian curricula was universally applicable in all contexts. Curricular adaptations accommodated differences in
culture, particularly in relation to religious beliefs and Canadian-centric social studies content. Furthermore, teachers also needed to accommodate individual students’ differences in English language proficiency and academic readiness. Additional adaptations were made due to deficiencies in time and resources.

**Canadian Methodology.** Teachers ascribed to Canadian methodology because it focused on student-centered, hands-on, and differentiated learning. Language barriers and cultural differences (such as differences in religious ideology and attitudes toward behavior management) were reported to create challenges for student learning, instruction, and assessment. Canadian practices focused on differentiated and formative assessment, which countered the more rigorous and standardized testing that characterized traditional local practices.

**Student Learning.** Provincially affiliated teachers reported that because their students learned critical-thinking, social, and leadership skills in a cultural environment that resembled Canada, students developed unique world perspectives and knowledge that prepared them for Canadian universities. However, teachers expressed some concerns about the differing learning styles, intrinsic motivation, and academic expectations of their students. Inconsistent parental support was also cited as an issue.

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Chapter 4 summarizes the quantitative and qualitative data that were collected from Maple Bear schools and provincially affiliated offshore schools. Chapter 5 interprets the results and compares them with the relevant literature provided in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Schools around the world are using different models, policies, and practices from the West (Grigorenko, 2007). From an exploration of the relevant research on this topic and through mixed method data collection approaches, 12 distinct themes emerged to answer the following thesis research question: “What are the strengths and weaknesses of two distinct models of Canadian education used in international settings?”

This chapter begins with a description of the system structures and upper administrative processes at play in Canadian offshore schools. A profile of the school staff is provided, and the strategies and challenges for recruitment and retention are discussed. The perspective of the community at large and the attitudes of the staff provide insight into the school climate that each of these models has cultivated. Each model is unique in its approach to professional and cultural preparation of staff prior to their employment, in addition to their continued professional development (PD) throughout their time with Canadian offshore schools. Curriculum, resource materials, and the methodology by which these curricula are enacted are also unique from one model to the next. Students attending Canadian offshore schools are predominantly English language learners (ELL). Other dimensions of student profiles are also discussed.

System Structures and Upper Administration

The two distinct models of Canadian education explored in this thesis research consisted of complex systems that were structured and administered in unique ways. Many of these Canadian offshore schools employed a blended form of education, while some of the provincially affiliated schools used a standalone immersion program. Although the systems under review used their own unique forms of quality assurance, the size and complexity of these
systems made communication and collaboration essential. Additionally, various affiliations and associations were formed between individual schools, government entities, and/or university institutions. Adding to these dynamics, Canadian offshore schools were usually private enterprises, which had an influence on the quality and culture of each system.

**Systems and Structures**

Maple Bear schools use a dual track structure that incorporates both Portuguese- and English-medium instruction. Under this model, all principals/academic coordinators are Brazilian. Additionally, each school operates by using the same system structure. There is therefore uniformity among all the Maple Bear schools in Brazil. Maple Bear is an educational franchise that has a central upper administration that oversees, supports, and ensures that all schools look and operate the same. The teachers and administrators who participated in this study had virtually no issues with how the school system operated. Participants did, however, raise some concerns about how schools were administered. Although Maple Bear schools were consistently administrated by local individuals, other system issues had an impact on the role and ability of the principal or academic coordinator. Specifically, the role of the coordinator was not clearly defined, administrators often lacked valuable experience and skills-set in the complexities of administrating an educational institution, schools were growing at an extremely rapid and impracticable pace, and pedagogical leadership was not prioritized sufficiently as a primary component of the role.

Provincially affiliated schools, on the other hand, are organized into independently unique system structures that are realized in different ways in each distinctive context. Research participants indicated that schools usually consisted of both a local and a Canadian administrator.
Differences in culture reportedly had an influence on leadership style, decision-making, and educational values.

Many provincially affiliated schools that use Canadian education abroad operate under a blended model. In China, for example, students are legally not allowed to attend international schools. Therefore, provincially affiliated schools offer a dual track or blended system structure. Students engaged in this model work toward achieving both a Chinese and a Canadian certification (Cosco, 2011).

In the thesis study, one Canadian offshore school in South Korea could be better described as an English-speaking department. This department was a small component of a larger public school institution that operated independently with its own principal and teachers. In Thailand, one school was made up of three campuses. Under this system structure, each campus provided a different format and level of English language instruction. One school in Egypt operated as a stand-alone institution that provided exclusively English-medium instruction in all content areas.

Each of the provincially affiliated schools was organized and administrated in distinctive ways. Additionally, schools contained both foreign and Canadian departments. There were often drastic differences in how each side was administered. One of the requirements of the provincially affiliated schools was that the school needed to be administrated by Canadian-certified administrators. Furthermore, local governments often required schools to employ local administrators. Participants indicated that the leadership and management styles of Canadian and local administrators was drastically different.

Marilyn, a Canadian administrator at a school in Thailand, stated,

We were the foreign department. We had an English-speaking and a Thai-speaking principal. They worked together. The Thai principal was the liaison between the Thai
staff as well. And I think there were 5 Thai staff that we could collaborate with, so we were all on the same page. The Thai side is very hierarchical. The head principal . . . if we ever walked by and saw her we would just smile and walk by her, and that was pretty much our interaction with her. We were definitely our own little department.

Many participants from provincially affiliated schools indicated that this duality of administration was often problematic. Disagreements between local and Canadian administrations were cited as the primary source of frustration for Canadian teachers and administrators. This may have been as a result of differences in culture and its impact on leadership. As Marilyn suggested in the comment above, Asian cultures are traditionally described as hierarchical by nature. Power and authority are strongly valued in Asian societies such as China, South Korea, and Thailand. This, of course, is a generalization, but differences in culture will surely have an influence on leadership styles, decision-making practices, and educational principles. Additionally, schools that were privately owned and operated reportedly made decisions that were business-focused rather than educationally focused.

**Quality Assurance**

Both models of Canadian education have set up quality assurance processes. Quality assurance inspectors regularly visit Maple Bear schools to assess the quality of facilities, programming, administration, and curriculum implementation. Training and PD are ubiquitous in the Maple Bear system of education, which provides direct attention to specific issues identified by quality assurance inspectors. Additionally, the franchise model enables the Maple Bear system to track and attend to quality assurance issues systemically, rather than on a school-by-school basis.

Quality assurance and PD go hand-in-glove. Quality assurance processes serve the purpose of identifying specific areas for improvement, while PD enables the trainers to build capacity among the educators to make improvements in the areas that have been identified. The
Maple Bear model of Canadian education boasts a culture of rigorous training and PD at all levels of the educational process. Teachers, coordinators, school owners, teacher trainers, and quality assurance agents are all encouraged to engage in some form of PD. This training has been developed and delivered by Maple Bear employees, which ensures that policies and practices are uniform from school to school. Not only does this training help to address issues before they arise, but it attends to the specific issues identified by quality assurance inspectors.

Maple Bear inspectors ensure that schools adhere to potential liability issues outlined in the terms of the franchise agreement. School owners need to demonstrate reasonable and safe supervision of their franchise. This includes, for example, ensuring that schools conduct an allocated number of fire drills. Additionally, because Maple Bear is a franchise, it can track recurrent issues, enabling it to make systemic improvements that will prevent these issues from occurring again in the future.

Cosco (2011) identified a number of issues that provincially affiliated schools have encountered with their quality assurance processes. Each province has quality assurance policies and procedures that occur with their affiliated international schools. Provincial governments employ individuals to travel to offshore schools to do inspections and provide some PD. When schools first open, they are subject to two inspections in their first year and one inspection in every subsequent year (Manitoba Education, n.d.). This thesis research found that inspection visits were primarily a way to ensure that the terms of the affiliation agreement were being met. The appointment of a Canadian principal was considered the most important quality assurance measure, as is the case in most Canadian schools.

Cosco (2011) found a lack of regulatory oversight in the provincially affiliated model. An inconsistency of regulatory inspections and a lack of proper PD for teachers were cited as two
areas for improvement. One principal participating in this thesis study suggested that there needed to be more oversight in offshore schools, because many teachers did not use the provincial curriculum effectively or even at all. When asked to provide a recommendation to provincially affiliated policy-makers, Jessica, a teacher working at a school in China, stated, “More overseeing of the implementation of the curriculum. I saw too many unqualified teachers, and teachers not using the curriculum at all. Little was done to monitor for standards of a [name of province] school. It was highly disappointing.”

Cosco (2011) recommended regular reviews to ensure that the needs of English language learners (ELL) were being addressed. Castle and Kelly (2002) found that factors such as learning styles, resources, and system structures may differ in various international contexts. As a result, standardized or universal educational policies may not be universal and the quality of teaching and administration could suffer. Quality assurance practices, therefore, need to be rigorous and individualized, in order to ensure that standards of quality are maintained in all contexts.

**Affiliations, Collaborations, and Associations**

Education organizations such as provincially affiliated schools and Maple Bear schools are complex and dynamic systems. Affiliations exist with Canadian and local governments. In systems of this scale, collaborations and associations with other organizations, governments, and/or institutions are inevitable. Some South Korean provincially affiliated schools in this thesis research had the opportunity to collaborate with other of provincially affiliated schools. These schools often create associations with specific university institutions. These relationships are mutually beneficial to both parties.
Affiliations

The relationship between provincially affiliated schools and specific Canadian provinces is implicit. These affiliations are established to the mutual benefit of both Canada and to the school institution itself for a number of reasons. These reasons are outlined in the statement of joint benefits document created by Manitoba Education (Manitoba Education, n.d.). Currently, there is little to no federal government support for Canadian offshore schools. Schuetze (2008) recommended that the federal government of Canada should play a greater role.

Additionally, local governments have a unique influence on Canadian schools operating in their country. In fact, teachers in this thesis study indicated that, in many cases, disagreements occurred between local government and offshore school policy-makers, between local administrators and imported Canadian administrators, and even between local teachers and imported Canadian teachers. These disagreements occurred for a number of reasons, including differences in cultural ideology, conflicts with local policy and law, and mismatches between local traditional pedagogies and practices of education.

One principal who participated in this thesis research indicated that on one occasion, the school that he worked at in South Korea planned and implemented a PD day in collaboration with three other Canadian schools. This, however, was the only example of provincially affiliated offshore schools collaborating with one another. This principal indicated that because these private schools were essentially in competition with each other, owners were reluctant to engage in collaboration. As a result, this principal was unsure whether this type of collaborative opportunity would occur again.
Collaborations

Both Schuetze (2008) and Cosco (2011) advocated for stronger collaboration between different Canadian provinces, between provinces and affiliating schools, and between other offshore schools in the local contexts. Teachers and principals in this thesis study also indicated that they would appreciate more opportunities to collaborate with other schools and to receive greater support from affiliating governments.

Maple Bear schools provided bi-annual central training opportunities for teachers to come together, in order to engage in PD. In these training sessions, teachers from different Maple Bear schools gathered with grade-level colleagues in sessions facilitated by Maple Bear trainers. Coordinators, school owners, trainers, and quality assurance inspectors also engaged in central training sessions one time per year. These collaborations with colleagues from different schools provided individuals the opportunity to celebrate successes, talk about common challenges, and develop shared understandings of pedagogy. Additionally, it helped the Maple Bear franchise to promote, solidify, and re-affirm a collective institutional identity and philosophy of education.

Associations

Yang (2011) asserted that it is imperative that the partnership between universities and associated schools involve effective collaboration for transnational schools to be effective. In this thesis research, one provincially affiliated school in Thailand had established an association with a Canadian post-secondary institution, which was mutually beneficial for both schools. For the school in Thailand, this association provided the school with a valuable teacher recruitment process. Student teachers from Canada would travel to Thailand to complete their last year of teacher education. Often, student teachers would sign on to teach at the school after
they completed their degree. The association with the university created a sense of security for teachers, which helped to relieve the anxiety about living and working abroad.

This university benefited from this association for a number of reasons. One major reason could be that when students graduate from the provincially affiliated school, they are awarded a diploma that is recognized by Canadian universities. This association ensures that these students are aware and comfortable with this university, and are therefore more likely to apply to this university for their own post-secondary education.

Many students who graduate from provincially affiliated Canadian schools do not have the academic language skills that are required for success in post-secondary education (Cosco, 2011). Cosco’s 2011 research indicated that some offshore schools have set up associations with universities that flag language learners traveling from abroad, in order to provide them with specialized EAL programming.

**Privatization**

Maple Bear schools use an educational franchise model, which is advantageous for a number of reasons. One challenge, however, that Maple Bear schools face is learning how to deal with the rapid rate of school growth and popularity. In this thesis research, teachers and administrators from provincially affiliated schools indicated that there is often friction or conflict around decision-making that is business centered rather than education centered. Finally, private education is often said to perpetuate social inequalities, because private schools are truly accessible only to the privileged elite.

**Benefits of Private Education**

Private schools glean a number of advantages from using a franchise model of education in offshore contexts. According to Aurini and Davis (2004), private schools that use a franchise
model secure a niche in the educational market. In Brazil, this niche market reflects a reputable system of education that educates students by using Canadian methodologies and curriculum.

In Brazil, Maple Bear schools have developed a strong reputation for providing quality education while teaching students how to speak English. Furthermore, the Maple Bear franchise takes pride in the notion that its teachers receive rigorous training in Canadian methodologies, which sets the franchise apart from other private English-medium schools in the community. Because the Maple Bear franchise also provides all of its schools with curriculum materials, supplies, and training, its schools are universalized across the system. Additionally, Maple Bear has a standardized school startup for new school owners and administrators. Aurini and Davies (2004) indicated that this system of operation is a central advantage to the franchise model.

Maple Bear schools have been growing at an incredible pace. Since 2008, 86 schools have been established in Brazil, with plans to open more and more each year. Additionally, every school year, a new grade level is added to every Maple Bear school. For individual schools, the costs of providing quality education have risen dramatically. The owners in this thesis research explained that when their schools first opened, they needed only a small facility to house 1 class of pre-school sized children. In just three years, the owners needed to find a school facility that could house at least 4 or 5 classrooms. Just finding a building to sustain this rate of growth and expansion was challenging. The rate of school growth also has an impact on the need for school resources, staff recruitment and retention, and staff-training. In many cases, administrators felt ill-prepared for the fast-paced expansion of the school, and the accompanying complexities of managing such a dynamic school environment.

Challenges of Private Education
One administrator identified another risk in such rapid franchise expansion. Her concern was that by flooding the market with Maple Bear schools, the quality of education at some of these institutions could become compromised by the franchise’s struggle to keep up with the responsibilities of quality assurance and training. She also suggested that because these Maple Bear schools represent a growing trend and a niche market, many owners were purchasing schools out of business interests rather than educational interests. On the other hand, one Maple Bear franchise administrator stressed the notion that, unlike many private schools that operate “business first,” Maple Bear schools’ first priority was on student learning. Owners in this thesis research understood that marketing an expensive and high-quality educational service was a good business decision. That is, business and educational interests were not mutually exclusive.

Most of the provincially affiliated schools in this thesis study were also private; however, some of these operated as a small publicly run department of a larger school community. A number of potential issues arose as a result of educational privatization. In many cases, conflicts arose from the friction between the business interests of the local owner/administrator and the educational objectives of each institution’s administration. The director was often the owner, whose decisions had to be both business based and educationally based.

A common issue for all of the provincially affiliated schools participating in this thesis research was that there were often conflicting priorities between school owners and foreign administrators. Iowna, a teacher at a school in Egypt, explained,

In the beginning, it was business. I hope it’s more education driven now, but when it first started it was about getting the kids in and getting the money... Books are expensive. Plants are expensive. Choose what you want. But because it was an affluent school and the kids were affluent and the parents were rich and all that, it was all about “the look” in the beginning, because they were trying to build a name for themselves.
A larger issue that repeatedly emerged in any discussion about the merits and follies of private education is that private education inherently perpetuates social inequity. Affluent families enroll their children in private schools because they believe that these schools provide a better form of education. These schools benefit from tuition costs and are able to pay their teachers a higher salary, thereby attracting stronger teachers. Therefore, students from affluent families receive a higher quality of education, better preparing them for employment in the 21st century. Maple Bear school owners provide a certain number of free scholarships to families who are unable to afford tuition, as a proportion of their school’s paid enrolment. This, however, is not monitored and is usually left up to the good will of the owners. Schuetze (2008) articulated that provincially affiliated offshore schools do not offer academic scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged students. This perpetuates the issue of educational inequity among the privileged elite and the lower income families in the community.

**Staff Profile**

In this thesis research, school staff in both Maple Bear and provincially affiliated schools assumed a variety of roles. TAs made up a significant component of Maple Bear schools; however, provincially affiliated schools rarely hired TAs. The role of the teacher is discussed in both educational models. Maple Bear academic coordinators and provincially affiliated school administrators are also discussed. The teacher-trainer role was unique role in the Maple Bear model of education. In both models of Canadian offshore education, a need was identified for additional support staff to help teachers attend to the special needs of students.

**Teacher Assistants**

TAs are a common resource asset of schools in Canada. TAs in provincially affiliated offshore schools are far less prevalent than they are in Maple Bear schools. There were very few
TAs in this thesis study’s provincially affiliated schools. One teacher indicated that an Canadian offshore school in Egypt had a small, but notable number of TAs at the elementary level. These individuals were hired to support students with profound language learning needs. In Vorapanya and Dunlap’s (2014) study, school leaders in Thailand indicated that TAs were hired to support classrooms with students who had special needs. They found that in both public and private schools, the salary of these TAs were paid by the families of the children with special needs. Schools that did not have TAs reported that neither they, nor the parents of their children, could afford to pay for a TA’s salary.

In the Maple Bear model of Canadian offshore schools, TAs are a large component of school staff. According to this thesis study’s Maple Bear school owners, TAs were hired to support classrooms when the class size was large, when the teacher was new or struggled with behavior management, when there were students with special needs, or when students were at the toddler age. Another major rationale for hiring and training TAs was that these individuals were often groomed to become teachers. Maple Bear teachers spoke at length about the role of the TA, noting that TAs took their direction from teachers by helping with centers and working one on one with certain students. Maple Bear teachers praised the support of TAs in schools and explained that in some cases, the TAs and the teacher would work together as a team to teach classes. Teachers indicated that the Maple Bear franchise did not provide specific training to the TAs of the school; the teachers were expected to provide the direction and training for all TAs. A few teachers expressed a concern that they did not personally feel prepared in their own practices, let alone prepared enough to train other individuals.
**Teachers**

In this thesis research, the role of the teacher in Maple Bear schools looked very similar to what it looks like here in Canada. Teachers were expected to plan and deliver lessons. Maple Bear trainers and coordinators indicated that planning was heavily emphasized as important in the success of teacher development. In some schools, Maple Bear coordinators would provide one or two-weeks of lesson plans directly to teachers to implement in their classrooms. In other schools, teachers were required to submit a general year plan at the beginning of every year and to submit a weekly lesson plan at the beginning of every week. Academic coordinators were tasked with reading the lesson plans and providing descriptive feedback to the teacher. Teachers were responsible for providing guidance and training to TAs. They were expected to speak high-quality English at all times. Most teachers in these positions were early in their career or were new to teaching with Canadian methodologies. Accordingly, teachers noted that they were strongly encouraged to attend Maple Bear training. Although central training was not an expectation, some teachers reported that they felt obligated to attend.

Teachers in provincially affiliated schools were required to be certified by the province with which their school was affiliated. Teachers’ roles and responsibilities were described by the teachers as very similar to what they are in Canada. Teachers who travel abroad to teach in foreign contexts are usually brand new teachers. Kelly, an administrator from South Korea, explained that teachers in his school were young and often inexperienced: “Many of them are brand new practically, one or two years of experience; maybe 50% of them are one or two years of experience, and the other 50% have none at all. So you’ve got a whole staff of inexperienced teachers.” Some teachers remarked that they were provided opportunities to take on more leadership roles than they would in Canada. One teacher indicated that she was responsible for
writing the new-teacher orientation manual, managing the resource room, and organizing special school field trips, among other duties.

**Maple Bear Academic Coordinators**

The roles and responsibilities of the Maple Bear academic coordinators in this thesis study were comparable to those of the Canadian principal. Trainers noted that the role of the coordinator seemed somewhat ambiguous, suggesting that in some schools the focus was on administrative duties, while in other schools the role focused on pedagogical leadership. One O/FA described the role of a coordinator as unclear and explained that Maple Bear had just released a coordinators’ handbook as a way to help clarify the role. The job itself was divided into two distinct components: administrative and pedagogical. The administrative side of the job included managing finances and resources, hiring teachers, coordinating communications with community, dealing with parents, organizing special events, and generally being available to “put out fires” as they emerged throughout the day. According to many participants from multiple stakeholder groups, academic coordinators also needed to be pedagogical leaders. Participants agreed that this was the most important and a valuable aspect of the coordinator’s role. In this capacity, the coordinator was deemed responsible for facilitating weekly teacher meetings/special workshops and providing feedback from their class observations and teachers’ lesson plans. One trainer indicated that she would have preferred to work directly with coordinators, in order to create in-house experts who would be available to work directly with teachers on an ongoing basis.

Teachers and coordinators indicated that time management and prioritizing responsibilities were the greatest challenges for coordinators. Many teachers agreed that coordinators were too busy to perform their jobs effectively. Teachers reasoned that a critical
component of the coordinator’s job was to support classrooms, and that this responsibility was being neglected. Several participants recommended that coordinators receive specialized training in both pedagogy and administration. Another issue was that schools were growing extremely quickly and that the role of the academic coordinator would continuously change as the needs of the school changed.

**Provincially Affiliated Administrators**

Principals participating in this thesis research indicated that the job was very similar to what it would be in Canada. Like teachers, principals are required to be certified by the province that the offshore school is affiliated with. Teachers from China, Egypt, Thailand, and South Korea all expressed that they felt supported by their administrators both as managers and as instructional school leaders.

In many provincially affiliated schools, Canadian principals were responsible for the administration of the English or Canadian department of the school. In these contexts, local administrators were responsible for administering the rest of the school. In many cases, this mismatch created friction. Other teachers from each of these countries also expressed a frustration with the decisions of the foreign administration, describing the leadership style as top down. Johanna stated,

> Experience with the students was great, as it was with the Canadian staff. The Chinese administration, though, were often shockingly bad and frustrating to work with . . . The Canadian principal – I worked as one for one year – has virtually no real power, and the Chinese admin isn't really interested at all in providing anything like a Canadian school experience outside of the classroom.

At one Thai school, many of the students’ parents could not speak English. In this context, all communication between each student’s teacher and parents went through the Thai administrator. Teachers expressed a concern that this relationship between parents and
administrators can create opportunities for the administration to be influenced or pressured by parents.

**Teacher-Trainees**

The Maple Bear teacher-trainers in this thesis research were identified as being critical assets in the Maple Bear model of Canadian offshore education. The process of teacher development and training is further unpacked in a later section. Franchise administrators indicated that teachers’ instructional practices and their ability to implement the curriculum effectively were the primary objectives of the trainers. Teacher-trainers supported schools in three primary ways: initial training, central training, and in-school training. Training was ubiquitous within the Maple Bear community; that is, teachers, coordinators, school owners, and even the trainers themselves underwent PD and professional collaboration.

**Need for Support Staff**

Multiple participants in this thesis research articulated a need for support staff in schools. Most schools lacked specialists, clinicians, specialized EAL teachers, resource teachers, and school counsellors. Patty, an administrator who worked at a school in China, explained that specialists and clinicians were non-existent at her provincially affiliated school. She suggested that this was because mental illness or the need for specialized help was not recognized the same way by the Chinese culture. Teachers from a few different schools stated that additional teacher support staff was limited. Teachers expressed a need for more support staff. In most cases, teachers were expected to take on the responsibilities that would have been taken on by support staff in Canadian schools. Patty stated,

> That is the issue that I really feel very uncomfortable with because . . . we as staff became those resources. We became the counselors; we became whatever had to be done to get through that process. There were no certified counselors . . . there was nothing there. Nothing for that support work.
Marilyn, a teacher who worked at a school in Thailand, described how teachers were “willing to accommodate and create an unofficial IEP,” in order to support students with high needs.

**Recruitment and Retention**

The process of recruiting and retaining quality teaching staff can be a challenge for any school, regardless of the context. Hickey and de Mejias (2014) stated that the single most profound challenge of immersion education is training and retaining teachers who are experienced and effective, who hold the necessary credentials and qualifications for the role, and who have fluency in the target language. This can be especially challenging in offshore education institutions that use a foreign curriculum, a foreign teaching methodology, and/or a foreign language of instruction. Accordingly, Canadian offshore schools require specific qualifications in their teacher candidates. Canadian offshore schools often experience challenges with staff recruitment. The cost of training teachers to use a foreign curriculum and Canadian methodologies is extremely high. It is, therefore, critical that schools take purposeful action to retain teachers in which they have invested so heavily. Canadian offshore schools enact a number of processes to address the challenges associated with recruitment and retention.

**Recruitment Processes, Strategies, and Challenges**

All stakeholder groups who participated in this thesis research indicated that the primary method of teacher recruitment was word-of-mouth. Although Maple Bear did substantial marketing to raise the attention of prospective students, very little marketing was needed to attract teaching staff. This was especially true in large urban centers where there was an abundance of universities, colleges, and English-language schools teeming with young, educated, English-speaking individuals. Because English-speaking job opportunities were abundant in
these regions, there was more competition from employers who were willing to pay higher salaries, thus leading to higher rates of staff turnover in the Maple Bear schools. Regions further from post-secondary institutions often struggled to find trained teachers who spoke fluent English.

Additionally, as Maple Bear schools grew into the middle- and secondary-school levels, there was an increasing need for teachers who had specialized qualifications in particular content areas, a requirement that was mandated by the Brazilian government. Recruitment requirements were becoming more specific, causing the pool of potential teacher candidates to shrink considerably. Furthermore, Maple Bear schools recruited from the same pool as government schools that offered highly unionized teachers’ benefits and job security. One unique benefit of working for Maple Bear schools was that teachers’ children could attend these schools for free.

This thesis research found that one requirement of provincially affiliated schools was that all teaching staff held a certification from the affiliating Canadian province; therefore, most of the teachers working in these schools were recruited from these provinces. Canadian offshore schools used a number of strategies to recruit qualified teachers from Canada. The administrators who worked in schools from Chinese and Egyptian schools used the same consultant firm to recruit teachers from one Canadian province. Several teachers from these same schools stated that this was how they had obtained their jobs. These consultant firms participated in university job fairs, in order to recruit for multiple schools. One administrator indicated that these consultants would not necessarily search for the best people to fill these positions, but simply for candidates who could fill the role.

In one case, a school in Thailand created an association with a particular Canadian university whereby pre-service teachers could complete their last year of practicum experience at
the Canadian offshore school. The school offered to pay for teachers’ accommodations and flights, in addition to providing a salary comparable to what they would earn as a first-year teacher in Canada. This would give the pre-service teachers the opportunity to have an offshore teaching experience without having to commit to a full year of living abroad. In many cases, pre-service teachers who participated in this practicum experience would sign a contract to come back for two more years. This was an effective recruitment practice for this particular school.

This thesis research also found that one administrator in South Korea indicated that most teachers actively searched out their school, whether through word of mouth or simply through an interest in working overseas. He also indicated that Canadian province had a website that allowed offshore schools to post job opportunities for prospective teachers.

For its part, Maple Bear offered a set of hiring guidelines that would support school administrators in recruiting teachers. Trainers, franchise administrators, school owners, and school coordinators indicated that relevant qualifications for teachers included teaching experience, English-language proficiency, teaching certification, and international exposure. Although university teaching certification and professional experience were described to be useful qualifications, English-language proficiency was found to be the most valuable asset of individuals seeking employment at Maple Bear schools. In fact, school owners and coordinators articulated that teacher certification was not necessarily required to gain employment at Maple Bear schools. Teachers explained that they also felt that their fluency with the English language was the most important strength attributing to their success at the school. Many teachers described international experiences that not only helped them to develop language fluency, but also exposed them to living and working with different cultures. In most cases, these
international experiences were in Western countries such as Canada, Britain, and the United States.

**Target Audience for Recruitment**

Both quantitative and qualitative data from this thesis study indicated that almost all of the teachers who obtained employment with Maple Bear schools were young individuals who were early in their teaching careers. In fact, many individuals were hired as TAs with no previous teacher-training or experience, and who then trained in Maple Bear classrooms to become teachers. This provided these individuals the opportunity to work alongside classroom teachers and to develop their philosophy of education through the exposure to the Maple Bear methodology and in-service teacher-training. In many cases, TAs took their university teacher education while working at a Maple Bear school. This process could have directly included teacher recruitment and indirectly influenced teacher retention. Teachers who are most likely to leave their profession are usually at the beginning or at the end of their career (Brown & Wynn, 2009). When individuals begin their employment with Maple Bear as TAs, they have not yet entered their actual career in teaching. Over time, these individuals may become more invested in the franchise. When they become teachers, they have already been associated with the company for a number of years and do not see themselves as new to the profession.

Other teachers who were hired had a range of teaching experiences in adult English-language classes or in daycare institutions. According to teachers who participated in this thesis research, these experiences were vastly different from Maple Bear schools. The focus of their previous experience in schools was to develop students’ English language by using traditional Brazilian teaching methodology, whereas the focus of Maple Bear was to teach core curricular content through English-medium instruction that used Canadian-style methodology. Many of
their teaching skills were valuable in preparing them for their role at Maple Bear schools; furthermore, many of their international experiences, though perhaps not related to teaching, prepared them for working in a culturally diverse environment.

Trainers, franchise administrators, and coordinators from this thesis research agreed that hiring staff who were young and inexperienced, rather than hiring teachers with many years of teaching experience, was far more advantageous. Experienced teachers who had been exposed only to Brazilian pedagogies were less likely to adopt Maple Bear philosophies and teaching methodologies. One coordinator voiced the franchise’s and schools’ expectation that Maple Bear teachers would use these Canadian-based teaching methodologies. Accordingly, teachers who were resistant to this philosophy of learning and professional growth would find their role at this school difficult.

Another challenge identified by Maple Bear trainers and franchise administrators was that in instances of high teacher-turnover, training must continue to focus on the basics of how to implement the Maple Bear curriculum. If Maple Bear staff were to stay at the school for multiple years, they would become increasingly familiar and comfortable with the curriculum; thus, training could focus on other components of PD. Curriculum could then be developed in a less prescriptive manner, offering teachers flexibility and choice in their instruction. This could also contribute to the retention of teachers.

This thesis research found that provincially affiliated schools seemed to target young teachers who had recently graduated from university. In some cases, these first-year teachers traveled overseas because they were unable to obtain a teaching assignment in their home province. Provincially affiliated schools offered teachers the opportunity to gain valuable teaching experience recognized by their home province, while working in a school that offered a
familiar curriculum and methodology of instruction. When these schools recruited teachers, they were not necessarily focused on teaching skills, philosophy, or experience, but were simply searching for individuals who met the requirements specifically outlined by the local and affiliating Ministries of Education.

**Retention Challenges**

Private schools comprise a large component of Brazilian education, and English-medium schools are highly competitive among the affluent elite (Akkari, 2013). Teachers and school coordinators in this thesis research indicated that although there was a great need for quality English-speaking teachers, salaries remained low when compared to other English-speaking careers. Additionally, each private school, even within the Maple Bear franchise, paid their teachers differently and thus could become competitive with each other. Research has found that teachers who are early in their career often leave their profession because of low salaries (Carboni, Patall, & Wynn, 2007; Hughes, 2012). This thesis research supports this finding, affirming that teachers were often transient, moving from private school to private school, or into other more lucrative professional sectors as they sought a higher salary for their work. This was particularly true in regions close to Rio or Sao Paulo, where there were many universities and colleges.

According to Maple Bear trainers and coordinators in this thesis research, Maple Bear schools developed a reputation among the educational community for their rigorous teacher-training and development processes, making Maple Bear teachers particularly attractive to other schools. One school owner explained that her school rewarded staff with leadership opportunities and a pay scale that reflected teachers’ years of experience with Maple Bear and their commitment to training.
In the provincially affiliated model, an administrator from Turkey who participated in this thesis research indicated that it was difficult to obtain, train, and retain high-quality teachers for several reasons. The mere idea of teaching overseas was daunting to some teacher candidates. As this administrator indicated, the Turkey’s reputation often deterred teachers from accepting jobs in that country. Another challenge was that offshore schools would need to obtain teacher candidates who had a certification from a very specific Canadian province. This limited the pool of prospective teachers considerably. In addition, the local Ministries of Education in many of these international contexts had other requirements that would narrow the pool even further. For example, the Turkish government required content area teachers to have a degree in their specific field. For example, science teachers were required to have a degree in science.

These challenges with recruitment also contributed to the challenge of teacher retention. Both teachers and administrators in this thesis research indicated that provincially affiliated offshore schools often had a high turnover of staff. Some teachers explained that this most often came as a result of culture shock. Although most schools offered a basic cultural orientation, teachers traveling from Canada would enter the country unprepared to live and/or work abroad.

Retention Strategies

Carboni, Patall, and Wynn (2007) found that when schools promote an environment that is rich in professional learning, teachers are more likely to stay in their job. When groups of teachers collectively engage in shared professional learning experiences, as they did in this thesis study of Maple Bear schools, the commitment to their profession becomes stronger. Ongoing teacher-training was identified as a major component of the Maple Bear system of education. Teachers in these settings reported feeling supported and motivated by their peers. Maple Bear school owners saw this a bit of a “chicken or the egg” situation: if they provided frequent PD,
then their better qualified staff would find it easier to get jobs elsewhere, thereby increasing staff turnover. The alternate perspective viewed PD as an inducement to retain staff. As MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) found, a positive school climate that has a collective focus on professional growth makes teachers feel invested in the system and committed to their role as teachers.

Two teachers from different provincially affiliated schools indicated that they were encouraged to stay working with the offshore school because they were offered leadership opportunities.

**Community Perspective**

It is important that Canadian offshore schools actively seek to understand why families enroll children in Canadian schools abroad. This understanding will inform decision-making around marketing, programming, and policy. One primary reason that parents enroll their children in Canadian offshore schools is their general appreciation for the Canadian model of immersion education. Community attitudes toward inclusive or special education are particularly interesting. In many countries, culture has an influence on how families perceive students with special needs. In addition, administrators reported that parents had expressed concern over enrolling their children in Canadian offshore education, due to a misunderstanding of Canadian teaching methodologies and whether Canadian offshore schools would adequately prepare their children for post-secondary education.

**Rationale for Selecting Canadian Schools**

The stakeholders in this thesis researched Canada as having developed a positive international reputation as a country that provided high-quality education. Canadian offshore schools were regarded as a symbol of prestige. The research participant reported that parents
usually searched for schools that provided an education that prepared their children with 21st century skills and proficiency in the English language. In many cases, parents registered their children for Canadian schools because they were dissatisfied with their own country’s system of education.

Maple Bear school owners and franchise administrators indicated that the Canadian system of education had a positive reputation in Brazil. Coordinators indicated that parents initially enrolled their children in Maple Bear schools because they appreciated Canada as a culture and English as a valuable language to acquire. As families gained a familiarity with Maple Bear school methodologies and philosophies, their respect for the academic program and instruction slowly became the primary attraction.

According to teachers and principals, parents from provincially affiliated schools perceived Canadian education as the best in the world. Many of these parents reportedly decided early on that they wanted their children to attend Canadian universities because they strongly believed that Canadian education was the best. These parents sent their children to Canadian offshore schools because they knew that their students would graduate with a high school diploma that was recognized by Canadian universities.

Sperandio et al. (2009) found that many parents feel that Canadian schools represent a certain prestige. Parents considering schools for their children would find this image appealing. The Maple Bear teachers in this thesis study suspected that parents registered their children for Canadian schools because of the status of a bilingual school, rather than a true belief in the model of education. One coordinator suggested that immersion schools were a current trend in Brazil.
In provincially affiliated schools, teachers explained that Canadian schools offer parents a favorable symbol of social standing in their community. Generally speaking, high tuition rates have tended to make Canadian offshore schools most accessible to affluent families. As a result, schools have served as a symbol of their social standing in the community. Marilyn, a teacher from a school in Thailand, described the social prestige that accompanied sending students to an Canadian offshore school:

I think it was kind of a prestigious thing for these kids to go to this school. For the most part, especially in the kindergarten department, it was like a social thing . . . “I go to THIS school” . . . and they really wanted to engage with . . . a lot of gifts or just trying to connect.

Among other reasons that families choose to enroll their children in Canadian offshore schools, Tan (2014) indicated that English is perceived to be a skill that will give their children an advantage as they enter the global world of business. Jung Song (2014) found that in Korea, there is also an assumption that local teachers cannot effectively teach English. The Maple Bear coordinators in this thesis study discussed the value of learning the English language in Brazil, and many teachers and administrators stressed the value of learning to speak English fluently. English is a universal language and a 21st century skill that is thought to be necessary in this increasingly globalized world. Some factors are unique to individual countries, but most students are enrolled because their parents want them to have 21st century skills (Tan, 2014).

Additionally, according to Aguiar (2007), Aguiar and Nogueir (2008), and Aguiar et al. (2008), many middle and upper class families in Brazil are investing in educational resources that are internationalized. This means that they want their students to learn another language, usually English, and to develop a cultural understanding of other countries. Families want to enroll their children in schools that will prepare their children for success in the 21st century.
School owners and school administrators/coordinators from both provincially affiliated schools and Maple Bear schools in this thesis research indicated that many parents enrolled their children in Canadian offshore schools because of their dissatisfaction with the local system of education. Patty, a former administrator from a school in China, indicated that students from well-off families enrolled their children in a Canadian school as a last resort to facilitate their children getting into university because of the rigorous testing process that streamed students according to test results.

**Parental Support in Immersion Environment**

Immersion education is a model of language instruction often perceived to be connected with Canadian education. Canada is a bilingual country that has established a comprehensive system of immersion education. In short, although immersion may not be exclusively Canadian, Canada is a nation that boasts a general proficiency in this style of programming. Accordingly, immersion education was described by multiple Maple Bear and provincially affiliated stakeholders in this thesis research study as one of the primary strengths of Canadian offshore education. Teaching English language and content area knowledge simultaneously provided opportunities for learning tough academic language in context.

According to Hickey and da Mejia (2014), parents may not speak the target language of their children who attend immersion schools. This often results in parents feeling marginalized or incapable of supporting their children’s learning. Effective immersion schools play a critical role in helping parents who develop language- and literacy-rich home environments. According to the educators in this thesis study, teaching and learning the English language through immersion can also be challenging when there is no language support offered at home.
Cultural Attitudes Toward Inclusive/ Special Education

As Lim and Thaver (2012) pointed out, there are many challenges with implementing inclusive education across different countries in the world. Each country needs to consider its cultural context and climate, as well as particular indigenous issues and solutions that are unique to the region. In Brazil and many Asian countries, for example, students with special needs are usually catered to by private specialists – paid by parents – rather than by schools. In Thailand, teachers in this thesis research explained that, although inclusive education had been implemented for many years, it was simply not a methodology that was congruent with Thai culture. Kaur, Noman, and Awang-Hashim (2016) found that attitudes toward inclusion were embedded in the teachers’ belief system, which was influenced greatly by the local Thai culture. Implementation is therefore influenced by culture and tradition.

In this thesis study, Kelly, an administrator from a school in South Korea, explained that at least 20% of the school’s population were “Individual Education Plan – potential. . . . We can’t activate that because the moment we identify this, it becomes visible and they are at risk of being isolated by the rest of the school community.” In one instance, a student who exhibited low IQ, low social intelligence, low physical ability, and diminished physical capacity was alienated by the local and school community.

Parental Concerns

According to multiple participants from both models of Canadian offshore education in this thesis research, Canadian methodologies were considerably different from those that existed from the local contexts. This difference set the Canadian schools apart from other private international schools, particularly in Brazil, where the Maple Bear franchise specifically marketed Canadian methodology as a uniquely desirable quality. According to a few trainers,
most parents bought into the Maple Bear model; however, some parents expressed concerns about the methodology after they had seen the model in practice. Trainers postulated that although these parents believed in the methodology in theory, when they saw it in practice it was such a departure from their own understanding of teaching and learning that they became apprehensive. In some cases, teachers felt a need to adapt the curriculum because they feared that parents would be offended.

Administrators from provincially affiliated schools expressed a similar issue. Kelly, a principal at a school in South Korea, stated,

I think it’s the parents that are a bit naïve, I don’t mean that in a negative way . . . I mean that they are innocent to the cultural differences that will take place on campus. Because embedded in our Canadian curriculum are cultural expectations . . . So parents, if they’re not forewarned, they think that this means that we’re incompetent. They think . . . what kind of school are we running? And so we have to give them a lot of advance notice about how things are different and that there may even be an experience of culture shock at first when they enter our campus.

All Maple Bear schools and some provincially affiliated schools provided parents with information nights to discuss the aspects of education that make Canadian offshore schools unique. School owners from Maple Bear schools explained that the most common concern of parents was whether Maple Bear schools would adequately prepare their children for the “vestibular,” a highly competitive university entrance exam. A principal from Turkey indicated that this was a similar concern of parents at the school he worked at. Ultimately, parents from both models felt that a primary criterion for their children’s school was that it prepared them for post-secondary education.

School Climate

The climate of a school can be described as the character of the school community. Established by trends of students', parents' and school staff's experience at school, it is a general
reflection of school norms, values, goals, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes toward teaching and learning. Leadership in the school can have a profound impact on the climate. This thesis study found that while Maple Bear franchise provided significant leadership in schools, provincially affiliated school leadership was inconsistent. Thesis research participants reported that when teachers collectively faced adversity, strong supportive relationships emerged. In both models of Canadian offshore schools, there were two distinct culture groups on staff, which often created friction. Leadership, relationships, and a commitment to profession growth were all factors that influenced school climate.

Role of Leadership

School leaders and policy makers purportedly needed to think creatively about how they support teachers, in order to foster a positive environment. When teachers work in schools that promote collaboration, information sharing, and professional support, teachers develop positive attitudes toward teaching and become more strongly committed to personal PD (Flores, 2004). The role of an instructional leader in the school is vital in the process of transforming the teaching and learning culture of the school (Fullan, 2001). Learning environments and school climates are likely to improve when principals or instructional leaders interact with the climate of the school by increasing goal focus and building structures that support these endeavors (MacNeil et al., 2009).

Teachers at provincially affiliated schools had a mix of opinions about the quality of their administrators. Many teachers from schools in Egypt indicated that they felt extremely supported by their administrator. On the other hand, teachers in Japan indicated that their school did not have high-quality administrators. Attitudes toward their administrators differed from school to school. Maple Bear teachers articulated that they felt supported by the Maple Bear franchise
administrators. Teachers were happy with the program and the training. Teachers also indicated that they were comfortable with the level support that they received from their academic coordinators; however, many expressed that they would have preferred more in-school pedagogical support and leadership from administrators.

**Importance of Community and Relationships**

A central component of school climate is the relationships among school staff. In Maple Bear schools, teachers were collectively responsible for implementing a foreign program using foreign teaching methodologies. This challenge was consistent across all Maple Bear school contexts. When teachers struggle with common challenges, it seems natural that they would be more likely to develop stronger collaborative relationships.

Canadian educators travelling abroad to teach at provincially affiliated offshore schools often faced a common challenge of living and working in a foreign culture. Culture shock was cited as a factor that helped teachers to develop strong relationships with one another. Teachers explained that because of their shared circumstances, strong bonds formed among teachers. Patty (China) explained how the staff supported each other, particularly when new staff arrived to the country: “When they arrive in China, we were there to greet them at the airport. We helped them settle into their apartment. We took them around to all the local spots. We became like their family. That was very valuable.” Many teachers referred to their staff as acting much like a family. This came as an apparent result of living and working together in a foreign context. One teacher from a school in Egypt described a Christmas holiday season where teachers gathered together to cook a meal and celebrate the holiday, just as she would have done in Canada with her family.
Two distinct culture groups often existed in this thesis study of Canadian offshore schools. The Maple Bear schools typically had a group of teachers who taught exclusively in English and another who taught in Portuguese. Although both these groups were from Brazil, these teachers often represented different pedagogical and attitudinal profiles. Many English-speaking teachers were young and had been exposed to some form of Western culture. Portuguese teachers were often further along in their career and may not have received the same level of Maple Bear training and marketing. Coordinators stated, in some cases, English and Portuguese teachers both received in-service training. This, however, was not always the case. These differences between the two groups created friction – not necessarily in conflict, but moreso in mismatches in understandings and beliefs.

Provincially affiliated schools often had far more distinct culture groups. There were Canadian staff and local staff. These groups often operated very separately from each other. Many cases, these two culture groups were situated in different areas and governed by different administrators. How these groups were treated by the school was often inequitable, as well. Salary scale and work expectations, in some instances, were more favorable for one culture group over the other. Schuetze (2008) found that because offshore schools in China operated using a blended program, there were two different culture groups of teachers in the school who used a different pedagogy, spoke a different language, received a different salary, and were tasked with different workloads. In a 2009 study, Sperandio et al. found that when a Western program was introduced in a Kuwaiti school, issues of culture arose. The findings of Sperandio et al. (2009) were reflected in the experiences of teachers in the present thesis study. Sheldon (China) articulated how “both the English department and Chinese teachers had different ideas
on how things should run.” In some cases, these differences sometimes created conflict. Blair (Thailand) explained,

Teachers are considered “specialty teachers,” not classroom teachers. I believe Thai and foreign [Canadian] teachers should both have desks and “equal” rights and responsibilities in the classroom. The pressure/responsibility given to Thai staff and foreign staff were different. It was divisive.

Lynda (Thailand) reinforced this notion stating, “There is dissension between foreign and Thai teachers due to obvious 'unfair' salary and vacation allowances.”

Many teachers from provincially affiliated schools expressed frustrations with the local administration. Clara stated, “Local staff do not share the cultural norms of foreign teachers, so the main conflict is in dealing with administration – not in dealing with students.” On the other hand, Sheldon (China) provided some positive feedback in how the Canadian administrator attempted to develop the relationships between local and foreign teaching staff. He commented, “The principal was great and tried to get more collaboration between Chinese and foreign staff.”

**Climate of Professional Growth and Continuous Development**

An important finding of this thesis research was that the Maple Bear franchise model strongly promoted a climate of professional growth and continuous development. As has been previously mentioned, training and PD is central to the goals and objectives of the Maple Bear school model. This kind of school climate is critical for the success of the school. MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) found that schools that have strong school climates and cultures have teachers who are more motivated to improve their professional practice. Additionally, highly motivated teachers are more successful in terms of student performance and outcomes. Sperandio et al. (2009) asserted that staff need to embrace educational change before educational transfer has the potential to be successful.
**Attitudes of Staff**

The attitudes of Maple Bear staff throughout the franchise and schools were very positive. Trainers noted that they felt inspired and excited about how they were treated and how their training was received. Trainers described a culture of engaged professional growth and development. In fact, as one trainer explained, when staff members did not embrace the Maple Bear philosophy and model of continuous PD, their experience at Maple Bear was usually brief and unpleasant.

Maple Bear trainers hypothesized that the practicality of training, the novelty of this Canadian model of education, and the quality of professional support were three factors that seem to be having a positive impact on school climate. Coordinators described a school culture that was generally positive and focused on professional growth and student learning. They described the environment of Maple Bear schools in positive terms, explaining that it was a team environment. Teachers and the families of students were described as happy. All staff in the Maple Bear system of education indicated that they believed that students were learning.

Staff shared respect for Canada and the Maple Bear methodology of teaching. All staff associated with the Maple Bear model of education strongly agreed that Canadian teaching methodologies were effective for educating students at Maple Bear schools.

For the most part, participants associated with the provincially affiliated model of education were positive about their experiences with their Canadian offshore school. Any conflict that occurred was usually as a result of the conflict between local and Canadian culture. Ted (Turkey) said, “The challenges that I faced had more to do with the group that I was working with, and the ownership group, so if I were to put it on a spectrum those were my biggest challenges. And, dealing with the Ministry of Education.” Many participants talked very
positively about their personal experiences living and working abroad. The relationships that they created were described as strong and meaningful. The experience was unique and interesting, which gave value to the experience. Additionally, principals described their own personal experiences at the provincially affiliated school as being positive, advocating for Canadian education abroad. Josh (South Korea) explained, “Having taught in many American systems, I am a bit like an ex-smoker having returned now to a Canadian model. I very much believe in its value in an international context.”

Generally speaking, the staff at Maple Bear school were far more positive when discussing their experiences that individuals associated with provincially affiliated schools. The differences between the school climate of these schools highlights the importance of leadership in developing a common and shared vision, a valuable support network of coworkers and mentors, and an attention to the challenges that emerge from differences in culture.

**Cultural and Professional Preparation**

The Maple Bear staff and the staff of provincially affiliated schools in this thesis research had opposing views about their preparation going into teaching in their own contexts. Maple Bear teachers and academic coordinators expressed feelings of confidence with the culture of their students and the families that they worked with, while feeling less confident about their capacity to implement a foreign and unique form of curriculum and instruction. Provincially affiliated teachers and administrators, on the other hand, expressed that they felt adequately prepared to implement the curriculum. Staff associated with the provincially affiliated model sometimes found the shock of living abroad the most challenging. To attend to these challenges, many provincially affiliated schools conducted cultural orientation classes for teachers and administrators. In some cases, these classes occurred prior to travelling overseas. In other cases,
they occurred in the first few weeks upon arrival. Teachers and administrators agreed that these orientation sessions were insufficient in preparing teachers.

**Maple Bear Professional Preparation**

The thesis survey data revealed that Maple Bear staff mostly believed that their training prepared them for their professional role; however, there were a broad range of responses which raises the question of why these there were so many different answers. Interviews revealed that many teachers articulated that they did not feel that their education prepared them adequately to be a teacher with this franchise. Teachers felt unprepared for their new role because the methodology and the style of programming was a dramatic departure from their own educational experience. Additionally, their post-secondary teacher-training did not teach them to skills and knowledge that Maple Bear schools insisted on. Throughout all of the interviews, there seemed to an underlying sense that people felt that what they were doing was insufficient. This could have been a result of a few different factors. One explanation may be that many teachers have never seen the methodology in action, and therefore had no frame of reference when deciding whether they were doing a good job. Another explanation is that people experience this lack of confidence when transitioning from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Maple Bear promotes a growth mindset with its ongoing and persistent training processes and the indoctrination of its unique philosophy of education. Inherent in the notion of a growth mindset, is the idea that one can always continue to improve; some may confuse this feeling with the idea that one is never doing good enough. What was unique about the Maple Bear teachers was that all of the teachers felt no trepidations about working with the students. Most of the teachers were Brazilian and had an in-depth understanding for how to deal with students and families.


Provincially Affiliated Cultural Preparation

Conversely, most participants associated with provincially affiliated schools expressed that they felt confident about their ability to teach, but felt sometimes struggled to understand the culture differences of their students, families, school policies, and/or local politics. Most administrators felt that their educational training in university was valuable in preparing them to be principals. Previous administrative experience and previous international experience were also recognized as very valuable. One principal explained that her experience with the Franco-immersion model of education prepared her for her role in this particular context. Teachers felt confident about their ability to teach, often in spite of the fact that they were at the very onset of their career.

Principals felt that Canadian teachers were very well prepared for their professional role in offshore schools. Current orientation programming was described by principals as insufficient. Change in culture was highlighted as the most significant challenge to working at provincially affiliated offshore schools. Teachers traveling abroad to teach need to overcome not only the challenges of transitioning into a new professional role, but also the cultural challenges that arise in their personal lives. Getty (2011) found that teaching staff in foreign contexts need to be prepared for the local politics of their educational institution, including management styles that may hinder their acclimatization to their new role.

Many participants indicated that overcoming culture shock can be a challenge for new teachers. When asked why culture shock occurs for many new staff, Kelly responded,

Because it’s everything. One of the questions is, what should I bring from Canada? And the first reply is deodorant. I mean you never would have thought that finding deodorant would be so difficult . . . so the simple things like that can be a real hang up when you start compiling it.
Each country has a unique set of challenges. For example, one teacher suggested that women moving to the Egypt may find it more difficult than men.

**Cultural Orientation**

One strategy that many schools used was to provide teachers with orientation training prior to traveling. Several teachers explained how valuable experience or specialized training for ELLs was for teachers working abroad. Yang (2011) found that teachers benefit from induction training prior to traveling overseas, in order to prepare them for the differences in the educational system, school culture, teaching methodology, and learning styles of that particular country. Quezada (2004) recommended that pre-service teachers engage in cross-cultural coursework and a comprehensive orientation programming prior to travelling to another country, in order to avoid culture shock. Cultural orientation sessions were provided to teachers after they had arrived in the country; however, many teachers expressed that these orientation sessions were insufficient or could have been more effective.

Policy-makers, school leaders, and teacher-trainers need to recognize teacher induction as critical component of professional success in their offshore experience and as a key phase of a teacher’s career (Flores, 2004). When it came to their actual profession, Mike (South Korea) explained, “With knowledge of customs and society as well as being aware of norms within the culture, one can teach effectively.”

**Professional Development**

Researchers stress the importance of ongoing, in-service PD, in order to ensure that teachers continue to hone their craft (for example, see Cosco, 2011; Garii & Schlein, 2011; Ma, 2011; Schuetze, 2008). This thesis research found that the quality and quantity of PD in offshore Canadian schools differed dramatically from one model to the next. Teachers began their
employment with these Canadian offshore schools with varying experiences and education. There was a dramatic difference in the quality of in-service PD from Maple Bear schools to provincially affiliated schools. Thesis participants from provincially affiliated schools reported a number of indirect benefits that resulted from their experiences. School location, lack of money, and unreliable access to resources were highlighted as impediments of PD in these offshore contexts.

**Pre-service Education**

Maple Bear teachers did not feel that their pre-service education experience adequately prepared them for the unique task of implementing a Canadian curriculum. However, as was discussed in a previous section, teaching degrees are not a required qualification of Maple Bear schools. In many cases in this thesis study, several individuals were hired and worked as TAs while concurrently taking courses to achieve a post-secondary degree in education. This seemed to be a particularly effective way to recruit teaching staff and to ensure that their pre-service education reflected Canadian pedagogy and practice. Many teachers and coordinators took advantage of the partnership set up between Maple Bear and the University of Winnipeg. These pre-service teachers had the opportunity to take courses that specifically prepared individuals for using the Maple Bear program and Canadian methodologies of teaching and learning.

Costo (2011) explained that in most cases, provincially affiliated Canadian offshore secondary schools have established teacher exchange programs for practicing teachers and for student teachers who seek a placement abroad. As is explained in a previous section, these associations are extremely valuable for both the university and the associated offshore school. For offshore schools, these associations act as a productive teacher recruitment tool. These teachers travel abroad for their first year of teaching after graduating with a degree in education.
Participants in this thesis research stated that they felt adequately prepared for the role of teaching. One principal indicated that his teachers were not adequately prepared. He asserted that universities would benefit from developing programming that was specifically tailored to teachers who were considering international teaching. Another provincially affiliated school in Thailand had created an association with a Canadian university. Students from this Canadian province could travel to Thailand to complete their final year in education, while working as teachers within the school. This offered student teachers the opportunity to engage in learning experiences that were directly associated with what they were doing, while introducing them to life abroad.

**In-service Training**

The quantity and quality of in-service training may have been the single most dramatic difference between Maple Bear and provincially affiliated schools in this thesis research. Teacher- and coordinator-training is a central standard of all Maple Bear schools within the franchise. In the provincially affiliated model of Canadian education, teachers and administrators both indicated a lack of in-service PD.

Maple Bear’s rigorous training model was credited as the most important factor for the success of the educational franchise model. Training was universally touted as a critical factor in the success of the school by teachers and the trainers. The trainers who came to Brazil to provide PD were highly skilled, educated, and experienced educators. At the time of this thesis research, Maple Bear was contracted 41 trainers who travelled from Canada to 86 schools two times per year. This accounted for a total of approximately 227 weeks of training. Maple Bear training occurred in three distinct phases: initial training, central training, and in-school training.
New schools underwent initial training, whereby trainers travelled to newly opened schools to support the introduction of the Maple Bear philosophy, immersion learning, and instructional practices for introducing the curriculum. Trainers would also help teachers set up and organize their classrooms. They would also work with coordinators to set up protocols and school processes in the school. First year schools often struggled to open with little to no outside support. The Maple Bear franchise helped to smooth the transition for brand new school with little practical experience, by resourcing them and providing startup materials and training necessary for success. Aurini and Davies (2004) asserted that local owners of franchised businesses enjoy the benefits of selling established and recognized products, receiving marketing services, training and developing leadership, and incorporating product assessment tools. These features provide school administrators the opportunity to kick-start their enterprise with greater ease than less-established private school models.

Central training occurred at two natural breaks in the school year. Schools paid for their coordinators to attend training sessions. Coordinators explained that in central training, most teachers were motivated to engage and actively participate, despite the fact that central training occurred during unpaid teacher holidays. Teachers, however, noted that they were often reluctant to participate in central training because it was voluntary. Central training offered courses in such topics as literacy, numeracy, and classroom management. Coordinators reported that central training could be redundant or repetitive. One teacher said that she attended the same central training session three years consecutively because she was not learning anything new. Trainers indicated that the Maple Bear methodology was a manifestation of the curriculum; therefore, training was needed in curriculum implementation, in order to ensure that teachers, coordinators, and owners were using the appropriate methodology that defined the Maple Bear model. This
training was presented by the Maple Bear franchise once per year in September, and was meant to specifically target the role of the coordinator at various school age levels.

In-service PD was a component of teacher-training that was often overlooked. PD experiences needed to be made more available for Canadian educators working in offshore schools (Cosco, 2011; Schuetze, 2008). According to the majority of participants in this thesis research, teacher-training or PD that occurred after teachers entered the international workforce was virtually non-existent. Only two principals expressed that PD opportunities were sufficient. These principals were from Egypt and Japan. Principals from Turkey, China, and South Korea indicated that there were limited opportunities for PD. Principals indicated that because most of the teachers working at offshore schools were still early in their career, extra training and support would be needed for success. Teachers expressed a dissatisfaction with the amount of PD that occurred in their schools. There was limited exposure to training opportunities within the school context. External opportunities of PD were also limited and were usually at the expense of the teacher. In more than one instance, teachers opted to take additional post-secondary education while working in these schools. It was not uncommon for teachers to take post baccalaureate diplomas or master’s degrees in education.

In-service PD was usually delivered by either school principals or provincial liaison officers. In many cases, principals indicated that they often facilitated PD with their staff. Kelly, an administrator from a school in South Korea, indicated that he would often sit in on classes to provide observational feedback or model lessons for teachers. In many cases, government liaison officers would come over to provincially affiliated schools to conduct a school inspection and to provide PD.
Teachers and principals both indicated that the most valuable PD that occurred in schools was through teacher collaboration. In most cases, teachers would take on leadership opportunities and lean on each other for support. Teachers talked about sharing resources and planning together. Teachers and principals from multiple schools in South Korea discussed the benefits of working in collaboration with other provincially affiliated schools. This collaboration provided teachers the opportunity to share their own successes with their peers. It also allowed teacher leaders who were having notable success in specific areas to share their success through teacher-driven PD sessions. It facilitated the opportunity to introduce a new provincial curriculum to multiple schools at one time.

**Important Areas for Future Professional Development**

Participants from multiple stakeholder categories identified a few key areas for future PD. A seemingly obvious component of education that would require attention is cultural and language training for teachers. Ma (2011) and Garii and Schlein (2011) suggested that PD in offshore contexts should concentrate on cultural education and curriculum implementation. Canadian offshore schools are inherently multicultural. Many participants from both models indicated that cultural adaptations to teacher or curriculum were necessary; yet, there was little to no PD that attended directly to these critical areas. Inclusive education is a philosophy that is underdeveloped in many non-Western countries around the world. Insufficient PD and skill development have been identified as deficiencies in the implementation of inclusive education (Onbun-uea & Morrison, 2008; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Curriculum implementation was another area that participants identified as being of critical importance.
Culture and Language

Although Maple Bear schools do not directly provide training in Canadian culture, what is perhaps more relevant to this particular model is that there is no training in the English language. Most educators speak a relatively strong version of English; however, all the teachers who are part of the Maple Bear system speak English as an additional language. Many of the teachers interviewed in this thesis research demonstrated English proficiency that was conversational, yet lacked the fluency and vocabulary needed for immersion education. Teachers would benefit from ongoing English language training and development.

Provincially affiliated schools are Canadian institutions that operate abroad. It is important that staff at these institutions understand of the cultural dynamics of their local environment when planning, delivering curriculum, programming for the school, or developing policy. Ma (2011) articulated that local, non-native English-speaking teachers would benefit from professional learning in cultural knowledge and ongoing English language development. Culture has an impact on teacher retention, curriculum implementation, instruction, assessment, living abroad. Provincially affiliated staff would benefit from learning about the unique features of living and working in each context.

Inclusive/ Special Education Practices

Many participants indicated that there were very few students with visible special needs at Maple Bear schools. One school coordinator reported having a student with selective mutism and another with cerebral palsy. Her personal experiences working in schools in Canada made her realize that the Brazilian system of education was lacking in its ability to implement inclusive education. She explained that including the student with the visible special need in her school was an important step toward becoming a truly Canadian school, albeit with challenges.
Teachers explained that planning and programming had been difficult for this student because the lesson plans did not differentiate enough to accommodate for her needs. A few participants from different stakeholder categories also indicated that there are many students with intellectual or cognitive issues that would warrant an individual education plan. Teachers would benefit from training in how to differentiate the program and instruction, in order to accommodate for students with special needs. Additionally, coordinators would benefit from PD in how to modify programming and provide additional support for classroom teachers.

Teachers and administrators from provincially affiliated schools articulated a similar sentiment. Students with physically visible special needs were rare in these educational contexts. According to a few teachers and administrators, there were many students with invisible special needs that required accommodation. An administrator from South Korea and a teacher from Thailand both explained that teachers often came to these international contexts with some experience and training with how to work with students with unique learning challenges. In these foreign contexts where there is limited or no additional resources or support, teachers do their best to set these students up for success. Schools need to take an inventory of the unique needs of their building in order to inform the professional learning of their teachers. PD for teachers should be driven by the unique set of needs in each individual school.

**Curriculum Implementation**

Curriculum, when designed strategically, can serve as a valuable tool for PD. New teachers require support to carry this out effectively. The curriculum is one potential source of support (Kauffman et al., 2002). With this in mind, it is easy to understand why the Maple Bear curriculum has been designed to be very prescriptive and detailed. As was discussed in a previous section, most Maple Bear teachers in this thesis research were new to Canadian
teaching methodologies and curriculum. The curriculum itself served as a valuable tool for supporting teachers in developing their own teaching methodology. It is, however, important to remember that further modeling and guided learning were critical to ensuring that teachers implemented the curriculum as it had been designed. Tanya asserted that training “is key to success – the program is worthless, if not implemented properly. This involves constant training and management of implementation. Training of teachers, coordinators and owners.”

Teachers at provincially affiliated school are obligated to implement the specific curriculum that was designed for the province of which the school is associated. These curricula are designed in a manner that is open and flexible in how it is implemented. Most teachers employed by provincially affiliated schools are first-year teachers or are early in their career and would benefit from the support and direction in how to implement curriculum appropriately. Grossman and Thompson (2008) found that new teachers benefited from opportunities to analyze and critique curricular materials, under the support and guidance of experienced colleagues. New-teacher training should focus on teaching teachers how to make sense of and use the curriculum materials provided. Additionally, Shawer (2010) recommended that teacher-training should introduce pre-service and in-service teachers to approaches to curriculum.

**Indirect Professional Learning from Teaching Experiences**

Both models of education offer teachers the opportunity to engage in professional experiences that are situated in environments that are culturally distinct from their own. Maple Bear teachers work in schools that have been intentionally designed to reflect the values and norms of Canadian schools. Provincially affiliated teachers and administrators travel to foreign countries to live and work in countries outside of Canada.
Alfaro and Quenzada (2010) articulated that teachers grow both personally and professionally through their experiences in international contexts. The simple act of traveling abroad and interacting with a different culture can provide individuals with learning and development opportunities that will undoubtedly inform and cultivate personal and professional growth. Alfaro and Quenzada discussed the value of exchange programs between offshore schools and universities. Teachers involved in overseas teacher education programs gain valuable experience and PD in three distinct areas: (1) instructional pedagogy, (2) self-learning, and (3) authentic multiculturalism.

In many cases, these university associations provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to engage in international experiences. When pre-service teachers participate in authentic experiences in these foreign contexts, that are exposed to the realities and frustrations that language learners often experience in the early stages of their education (Nussli & Oh, 2014). These first-hand experiences enable teachers to develop empathetic understandings of the EAL experience. Nussli and Oh (2014) stated, “Pre-service teachers experience the impact of a language barrier, what it feels like to be a minority in a foreign environment, and to go through culture” (p. 82).

Additionally, working in these international environments will help teachers to develop stronger personal and professional identities. Foreign teaching experiences all teachers to see their professional practice from a multicultural perspective and to reflect on their own personal experiences, in order to develop their identities as educators (Garii & Schlein, 2011). Individual teaching skills are also developed. Yang (2011) found that teachers involved in an overseas teaching experience developed valuable teaching strategies and methods, while becoming better prepared for their role. Through classroom experiences and personal interactions with EAL
learners, pre-service teachers in Yang’s study developed a stronger cultural awareness and understanding of appropriate pedagogy.

**Challenges**

Three primary barriers make providing PD to Canadian offshore schools a challenge. Geography can make PD in these contexts a challenge. One issue that was unique to Maple Bear identified by coordinators was that in-school training sometimes lacks continuity and consistency. Accessing the necessary resources can also create a challenge for schools. Finally, when one considers the issues of teacher retention in provincially affiliated schools, it is not difficult to understand why school owner may be reluctant to invest in PD.

As was previously discussed, Maple Bear schools provide both in-school and central training. Schools that are located near Rio and Sao Paulo have easy access to training. Schools that are located in less central regions of Brazil have access to fewer training opportunities. Teachers at these schools are less likely to travel to central training because of the costs associated with travel and accommodations. Owners and franchise administrators in this thesis study explained that geography made providing equitably accessible central training to all schools a challenge. The Maple Bear franchise had been trying to host central training in more remote regions, in order to accommodate for these challenges. In some cases, when schools were big enough, trainers were sent to these schools to provide central training to the entire staff. In most instances, Maple Bear trainers would provide in-school training two times per school year. Coordinators indicated that on many occasions, these trainers would come to schools with different priorities. They explained that there was a lack of continuity and consistency from one trainer to the next.
As most Maple Bear thesis research participants reported, trainers and curriculum writers were extremely experienced classroom teachers and/or administrators from Canada. However, in some cases, these trainers lacked experience in immersion education and/or had a limited understanding of Brazilian culture. Language and culture are distinctive characteristics of the Maple Bear model. A lack of experience and training in these two areas would surely have a detrimental impact on training and curriculum development.

School principals indicated that geography was also the biggest obstacle that provincially affiliated schools faced in orchestrating PD. According to the principals interviewed, there were very few presenters or PD facilitators available in these foreign contexts. Opportunities to attend conferences or educational seminars were, in most contexts, non-existent. Principals explained that they themselves received very few opportunities for PD. Principals and teachers indicated that time and money were the biggest reasons for the lack of PD. Limited resources were also postulated to be a major constraining factor.

For provincially affiliated schools, the cost of PD in the foreign contexts would be high. School owners paid for Canadian teachers’ flights from Canada, accommodations, and a higher salary than their own national teachers received. It is not difficult to understand why provincially affiliated school owners were reluctant to invest in the PD of staff who were likely to return to Canada after only a year or two of service.

Curriculum, Resources, and Materials

In many ways, curriculum forms the framework for how a Canadian form of education is used abroad. How the curriculum is designed has a distinct influence on how it is implemented. Maple Bear schools use a curriculum that has been written by Canadian educators who are considered experts in their field. Provincially affiliated schools use provincial curriculum that
have been designed and used for many years with little revision or formative change. The Maple Bear curriculum is not formatted or designed in the same manner as curriculum used by Canadian public schools. This curriculum could be better described as a series of strategically coordinated lesson plans that outline exactly what a teacher needs to say and do at each moment in the lesson. In provincially affiliated schools, teachers are obligated to implement the curriculum exactly as is. These curricula are written with a greater sense of flexibility and openness, which gives the teacher greater autonomy and less structure by which to plan and deliver instruction. Implementation strategies are outlined in the Maple Bear curriculum, which are purposefully designed to outline a Canadian form of education. Teachers in this thesis research expressed a need to be conscious of local culture when implementing curriculum, in order to prevent indigenization. Resources and materials varied from school to school. Maple Bear schools indicated that access to Canadian materials could be challenging, which was a problem because of the prescriptive nature of how the curriculum had been written. In many cases, the costs of importing specific Canadian resources and materials were challenging because of local tax regulations and customs policies.

Curricular Design

Maple Bear curriculum was written for a private education franchise; as a result, curriculum was developed by independent experts with more than 10 years of teaching experience in specific content areas. Although these individuals were extremely competent classroom teachers and administrators, they did not always have specific education/ training in curriculum development or a deep understanding of immersion strategies and/ or Brazilian culture. Maple Bear curriculum was frequently updated and revised to improve its quality. The Maple Bear curriculum was designed to cater to the specific needs of teachers who were new to
Canadian methodologies or new to teaching. These highly prescriptive curricula outline in a step-by-step manner, exactly what the teacher needs to say and do at each moment in the lesson. One coordinator in this thesis research explained that although lessons were highly prescriptive, there was some room for interpretation for teachers, which could pose challenges for coordinators who were responsible for ensuring that lessons maintained the basic essence of the Maple Bear program. A coordinator and a franchise administrator indicated that future program writers should attempt to include more “as” and “for” assessment strategies in lesson plans. Lessons were characterized by coordinators as a tool to facilitated enjoyable, hands-on opportunities to learn academic skills, social skills, and practical life skills. These skills were assumed to be 21st century skills that prepared students for life, as much as they did for post-secondary education.

Teachers and coordinators indicated that some adaptations were made to the curriculum. Reasons for adaptations included a lack of time, a lack of resources, and cultural differences. This thesis study found that provincially affiliated schools were expected to implement a provincially designed curriculum in exactly the same manner that it would be in Canada. These curricula very rarely underwent revision or change. Additionally, provincial curriculum was originally designed to be implemented in Canadian contexts by Canadian teachers with a range of professional experience. Accordingly, the curriculum was organized in an open and flexible way, permitting the teacher to plan and deliver instruction autonomously and creatively. Some principals highlighted the flexible nature of the curriculum as a feature that lent itself to implementation in foreign contexts. Principals also indicated that this format of curriculum could make implementation more challenging for teachers who were new to the profession.

One administrator from a school in China explained that because of the local politics and differing philosophical perspectives of school owners and the local Ministry of Education,
programming was limited to strictly traditionally academic domains. Social emotional learning was a feature of the Canadian program that was embedded within curricular outcomes. Principals also indicated that Canadian offshore schools promoted critical thinking, independence, respect, investigation, and social skills. Many thesis research participants indicated that they needed to make many adaptations to the curriculum, in order to make it relevant to students in these foreign contexts.

Textbook requirements were identified as a reason that teachers would need to make special adaptations to the Canadian curriculum. Larrie, a teacher from a school in Thailand, explained, “We are required to use 70% of a textbook that does not match curriculum.” Rick, reiterated this same point:

Another difficult pill to swallow was the whole “we teach the [name of province] curriculum” farce. In reality, we teach out of a textbook made in Singapore that the parents pay an unbelievable amount of money for, so if we don't get through at least 80% of it, we will pay for it dearly. This means that at no point are we really teaching [name of province] curriculum.

Culture was identified as the primary reason for curricular adaptation. According to Ngugyn et al. (2009), non-western countries need to reconstruct pedagogical policy and practice so as to reflect the cultural values and norms of their own country.

**Cultural Considerations**

When a curriculum that has been designed by and for educators and students in the Western world is used in Asian contexts, there is a risk of potential cultural conflicts and mismatches (Ngugyn et al, 2009). Maple Bear curriculum designers explained that they consider the cultural values and norms when developing curriculum. These designers stated that although culture was considered when curriculum was being designed, explicit cultural teaching was not specifically included in the lessons. Coordinators explained how Brazilian culture had been included in the science curriculum and through field trips. Teachers remarked that that most
Brazilian culture was taught more specifically in Portuguese classes, while Canadian culture was the focus in English classes. This cross-cultural experience was highlighted as one of the strengths of the program.

It is important to note that in the Maple Bear model of Canadian education, teachers are local and have the same cultural background as their students. Culture is implicitly included in all instruction and assessment. For example, when students struggle to understand a concept, the teacher will likely make reference to local or cultural examples that students will relate to. Local teachers are more likely to help students make personal connections to what they are learning because they have a deeper understanding of students’ cultural norms and values. This is one of the greatest strengths of this particular model of Canadian education, from the thesis researcher’s own experience as a past trainer in a Maple Bear school.

This proved to be a particularly thorny issue in curriculum implementation. Many thesis research participants indicated that certain Canadian curricular content was inappropriate because of differing ideologies or backgrounds. This was particularly evident in subjects like health education, history, government, and indigenous education. Indigenous education was frequently cited by administrators as a content area that had little relevance or meaning to the learners. Differing religious beliefs of students’ families caused many teachers to make curricular adaptations, in order to remain sensitive to differences in ideology. Teachers communicated that they often had to make adaptations to the curriculum, in order to attend to the needs of an English language learner.

On a positive note, the multicultural experience that students experience when they attend a Canadian school in a foreign context has a positive influence on their character
development. Kelly Card, a principal from South Korea, passionately described the strengths of the Canadian system,

> We live in a culture where 25% of our population were born outside of Canada. We live in a culture where there are 200 spoken languages. We do not trumpet or proclaim the death of multiculturalism . . . we are proud of the fact that we get along with one another. We don’t do it perfectly… But I believe that we have something to teach the world. Especially, as the world is getting smaller and smaller . . . the whole globalization thing. . . . This is one thing that I’m proud of and I think many Canadians are proud of. I think that it is a candle in the very dark corners of the way people deal with things in the world.

Kelly articulated Canadian ideals and values of multiculturalism were valuable for students to learn. Multiple stakeholders from both models of Canadian education studied in this thesis research indicated that learning in Canadian education went beyond the simple academic domain. Students learned the virtues of character education, social education, and citizenship. Several stakeholders explained that these learning outcomes were not necessarily evident in traditional schools in their local context.

**Teachers’ Experience**

Ma (2011) found that local, non-native English-speaking teachers (LNNETs) followed textbooks and provided materials using a step-by-step approach to teaching, while foreign, native English teachers (FNETs) continued to push their students through a more flexible and differentiated approach to the curriculum. These findings are consistent with this thesis research. Maple Bear teachers, otherwise known as LNNETs, were more likely to implement step-by-step curricula, while provincially affiliated teachers (FNETs) were more likely to use flexible and differentiated approaches to curricular implementation.

The specific design of the curriculum is particularly relevant in Canadian offshore schools because of the typical profile of teachers. As was discussed in an early section, most teachers in Canadian offshore schools are early in their career and have limited experience in
implementing curriculum. Maple Bear’s curriculum designers took this into account when developing curriculum. Kauffman et al (2002) explained that a curriculum should be very detailed and should prescribe teachers’ behavior, in order to ensure effective instruction through proven pedagogical approaches. On the other hand, he also asserted that that this form of curriculum had the potential to constrain professional creativity and discretion, resulting in less effective instruction. Teachers who are early in their career begin by strictly adhering to the curriculum that they have. As they gain experience, teachers learn more about both students and curriculum; they also learn to make adjustments for using the curriculum effectively. New teachers require a curriculum that is highly specific, while engaging in ongoing, high-quality PD in the area of curricular implementation. A curriculum should provide new teachers with a set of instructional structures, teaching strategies, and support materials that will enable them to refine their own pedagogy in order to meet the diverse needs of their students (Kauffman et al.).

Maple Bear teachers are new teachers and are also new to Canadian methodologies. For this reason, prescriptive curricula are an important design feature. On the other hand, provincially affiliated schools do not use a prescriptive curriculum, which raised flags for some thesis research participants. One principal at a provincially affiliated school expressed concern with teachers’ ability to effectively use the curriculum. In fact, he stated that in some cases, teachers were not using the curriculum at all. Richard, a teacher from a school in Thailand, asserted,

I believe having fairly open models is really beneficial as they often allow more versatility to the environment. However, it is, at times, difficult (especially as a new teacher) to know where to begin with such open models! I think having more mentors in these environments would be extremely helpful!


**Indigenization**

Sperandio et al. (2009) found that when educators implement a foreign curriculum, they run the risk of intentional or unintentional program modification. Maple Bear trainers, owners, franchise administrators, and coordinators in this thesis research indicated that Maple Bear teachers were expected to implement the curriculum exactly as it was written with no adaptations. One trainer stated that if this were not an expectation and priority of the franchise, teachers likely revert to their previous teaching methodologies and practices.

Many teachers in the provincially affiliated model of teaching were not experienced enough to know exactly how to implement the curriculum by using Canadian methodologies. Amy, a teacher from a school in Japan, pointed out that many teachers working at provincially affiliated schools were new to the profession, and therefore struggled to implement the curriculum with high fidelity. Tim, a teacher from a school in Egypt, reiterated this notion, “We have many new staff who are not experienced enough to deviate from the curriculum effectively.” Sheldon, a teacher at a school in China, explained,

> I had taught a year previously in China and was prepared for the culture; however, combining the curriculum alongside a Chinese education could be tricky at times. Students had become accustomed to rote learning, and it took some time to get them interacting in groups or teams.

In many cases, provincially affiliated curriculum became indigenized as a result of the combination of a lack of teacher experience and because Canadian methodologies differed from what Chinese students were used to. This combination often resulted in teachers using a style of teaching that was characterized by rote learning and memorization.

**Resources and Materials**

Participants at both Maple Bear and provincially affiliated schools discussed the quality of school facilities. Schools associated with both models of Canadian education indicated that
accessing Canadian resources was challenging. Maple Bear trainers indicated that in some cases, schools had acquired Canadian resources, but staff had not yet been trained to use or implement them effectively.

According to Schuetze (2008), many Canadian provincially affiliated schools are substandard in terms of the quality of their facilities, when compared to Canadian schools situated in Canada. Patty, a research participant teacher from a school in Thailand, confirmed this notion of outdated classroom furnishings:

But also because there was like thirty kids in lines at desks on wooden chairs you know, like, there was this old school feel to it a little bit. You know, chalkboards and such. Things may have changed since then, but just the amount of books was, you know, like textbooks and notebooks and workbooks. That was all very different. It felt like we were going back in time.

These classrooms were not conducive to cooperative learning and collaboration.

Maple Bear schools, on the other hand, were described by one trainer as beautiful facilities. According to franchise administrators in this thesis research, all Maple Bear schools were colourful and decorated with red and white colors, in order to symbolize the association with Canada. One challenge that a few school owners articulated was that the initial purchase of a school building was a challenge. Owners need to consider how rapidly the school will grow because it increases a grade level each year.

Limited Access to Canadian Resources

Accessing the appropriate resources and materials to meet the needs of the curriculum was challenging for Canadian offshore schools. Both models implement a curriculum that recommends Canadian-made resources. Cosco (2011) asserted that many Canadian international and offshore schools purchase textbooks and other educational materials from Canadian manufacturers and educational service providers. This is one of the benefits of offshore schools.
for Canada; however, it may cause issues for the access of specific materials required for Canadian curriculum.

The Maple Bear curriculum employed a prescriptively outlined very particular Canadian-made resources and materials. One trainer in this thesis research told the story of a time when her schools purchased several thousand dollars’ worth of reading resources, only for them to be held up in the Brazilian customs. Three years later, these books had still not been released from customs. Two owners and one coordinator indicated that, in many cases, school owners would travel to Canadian or the United States to purchase independently educational resources. Trainers explained that another challenge that was faced by teachers was that there has not been a simple or economical way to access distinctively Canadian resources while in Brazil. As a result, many teachers explained that they did not have access to all the resources they needed to be successful. In many cases, academic coordinators and school owners indicated that they would travel to Canada or the US, in order to purchase the specific materials that they required. These teachers added that they made do without these particular resources, or would purchase them elsewhere with their own money. As schools grow larger and larger, the need for Canadian resources and materials will grow. Policy makers should consider new and innovated ways to access school resources in Brazil.

Principals from provincially affiliated schools described a very similar problem. A principal of a school in Turkey explained that when the school first opened, accessing proper resources was a challenge. Schools struggled to establish a quality stock of technological resources. This could have been as a result of the school’s mandate that resources be specifically Canadian. According to teachers, this obstructed teacher’s ability to address the specific needs of students with special needs or difficulties with language learning. One teacher explained that no
remedial instruction kits were available for teachers to assess students with special needs, and plan and implement appropriate programming. Additionally, using Canadian resources was sometimes difficult or culturally irrelevant for ELLs. In many instances, schools did not have access to up-to-date technology for both teaching and learning.

Teachers explained that both Maple Bear schools and provincially affiliated schools did not receive sufficient school training to support the use of these kinds of resources and tools. These schools often lacked the necessary resources to implement the Canadian curriculum effectively. Another teacher raised the issue that in some situations, the curriculum would suggest the use of a specific resource, but would not explain how the teacher needed to use it.

Methodology

Culture and context have an impact on teaching and learning. Westcott and Johnson (2013) asserted that learning styles and teaching styles are influenced by culture: “Faculty and students may have different learning styles and expectations, reflecting their own cultural backgrounds and values, and this discrepancy may result in a mismatch between teaching methods and students’ learning styles” (p. 67). In this section, the influence of Canadian teaching methodology in these foreign contexts is discussed. The first part will explore the relationship between local context and teaching methodology, followed by an examination of effect that a Canadian program has on the teacher. Conversely, how this style of programming affects the learner is also be discussed. The final part of this section explores methodological considerations in the cultural interplay between teacher and learning.

Methodology and Context

In both models of Canadian offshore education, teachers who worked in all contexts made a comparison with the local education system. Maple Bear participants in Brazil and
provincially affiliated participants in China, Egypt, South Korea, Thailand, and Turkey described the “traditional” form of education that was still prevalent in those local contexts at the time of this thesis research. From comparing the traditional system of education with the model of Canadian education being implemented, a picture of what participants identify as the “Canadian methodology” begins to come to light.

Participants from all stakeholder categories indicated that traditional Brazilian methodology was still very prevalent in public education in Brazil. Additionally, teachers suggested that post-secondary institutions provided pre-service teachers with an education that perpetuated these methodologies. The traditional Brazilian methodology focusses on lecture style programming, memorization, rote learning, and concentrated on preparing students for a university entrance examination. Maple Bear participants described the Canadian methodology as experiential and exploratory. Students in Maple Bear school learn through discover and play, using hands-on materials, learning centers, games, and music. Additionally, trainers and franchise administrators indicated that principles of universal design for learning and differentiation are embedded within the program. As a result, all participants expressed the need for rigorous training to prepare teachers for the transition from a traditional to a Maple Bear model of education. This being said, survey results revealed that teachers and academic coordinators did not believe that culture had an effect on teachers’ ability to perform effectively in their professional role. Maple Bear franchise staff felt more confident about this. Through interviews, it became clear that participants felt this outcome because of the prescriptive nature of the curriculum.

Principals and teachers from the provincially affiliated model of Canadian offshore schools also frequently compared the local “traditional” forms of education with the Canadian
form. By describing how these two models were different, participants painted a picture of what defined the Canadian form of education. A principal from a school in Turkey described the Canadian methodology by using the following terms: well-prepared, more-varied, willing to take risks, willing to collaborate, and eager to give feedback. A principal from a school in South Korea stated that the Canadian culture was embedded within in the curriculum, focusing on projects, working-together, cooperation, and thinking skills. Teachers from a school in Egypt explained that Canadian assessment strategies were different from local assessment practices, in that Canadian assessment was differentiated and formative in nature. When asked why this model of Canadian education was effective, Johanna, a teacher from a school in China, responded, “Giving students opportunity to engage in learning in a method other than sitting and listening to lectures and rote memorization, which is all they get in the Chinese system.” These descriptions of the prevalence of traditional education support Forlin’s (2008) finding that although pedagogy in developed countries around the world has moved toward social constructivism, Asian-Pacific countries have resisted this change, continuing to use a didactic pedagogy.

Teachers from a school in Egypt indicated that religion had an influence on how the Canadian methodology was received. Differences in religious ideology and attitudes toward behavior management were cited. Kristie, a teacher from a school in Egypt, explained, “Teaching in a predominantly Muslim country does not always allow for open discussion on certain issues regarding other religions and beliefs in social studies programs.”

Another issue that a teacher from a school in Thailand raised was that students were used to a fairly conservative school model. These students did not always behave appropriately when given more freedom in their day. According to this teacher, English teachers were perceived as
more fun and academically less rigorous because educational philosophies were not as traditional as their Thai counterparts. For teachers new to the profession and/or new to the country, it can be very daunting to approach interactive or student lead activities in the classroom. As a result, this teacher indicated that classroom management was particularly challenging.

**Strengths of the Immersion Model of Language Learning**

Many researchers assert that there are benefits of immersion education to both teaching and learning (for example, see Cummins, 1998; Pence & Macgillivary, 2008; Willard-Hold, 2001). When students are involved in immersion programs where the school itself is immersed in a context rich with the target language, they tend to develop stronger expressive skills. Cummings (1998) found that students in these immersion contexts usually engage in interactions in the language they are learning with native speakers. Additionally, students experience being immersed in a target language while living in a first language environment, which produces recognizable patterns of language development found in fully bilingual children (Hermanto, Moreno, & Bialystok, 2012). For teachers, the multicultural experience of being immersed in a different culture can be particularly enlightening. This applies to both FNETs and LNNETs in both models of Canadian offshore education. Maple Bear teachers in this thesis research were immersed in a school environment that was specifically designed to emulate and embrace a Canadian culture; teachers associated with the provincially affiliated model were immersed in a context that was not Canadian. In both cases, teachers were forced to engage in cultural and linguistic learning and experiences that inevitably influenced their understanding of the challenging plight of a language learner. In their research on student teachers who travel abroad for teaching experiences, Pence and Macgillivary (2008) and Willard-Hold (2001) found that
pre-service teachers undergo personal experiences that provide for them a unique cultural perspective and a deeper understanding of other cultural realities.

Many participants from the Maple Bear model indicated that they believed that immersion education was an extremely effective way for students to learn English. Tanya, a franchise administrator, told the story of a group of grade 7 students who did a public speaking presentation in English in front of a large group of adults at the Maple Bear owners’ conference. She stated that the students “got up and presented. They spoke phenomenal. Their English was phenomenal. They weren’t grasping for words and they were confident. It was a testament to English Immersion working in Maple Bear.”

For the most part, principals from the provincially affiliated model of Canadian education communicated that using a Canadian curriculum strongly benefited students in learning English language and preparing them for Canadian universities. Principals articulated that teachers used EAL teaching strategies to meet the needs of their student population. Language immersion, as well as an immersion in a form of “Western culture,” helped to prepare students for university in the Western world.

**Teacher and the Program**

Ngugyn et al (2009) raised the concern that when non-Western countries pedagogical practices from the Western world, they put themselves at risk of academic ineffectiveness, neglect of their own cultural assets, and dependency on the Western educational practices. This finding is relevant to this thesis research because it highlights the potential risks associated with Canadian offshore schools. The Maple Bear franchise attempts to avoid these risks through a rigorous training and quality assurance process, as well as through its prescriptive curriculum design. Brazilian teachers’ understanding of the Canadian culture may be limited, so these
teachers will be less able to pass on Canadian ideals and norms in their instruction. There is a different set of considerations for provincially affiliated school teachers. These Canadian-born teachers need to be cognizant of how and when they adapt their teaching methodologies to accommodate for the differences in learning styles of their non-Canadian students.

One of the primary differences between Maple Bear schools and provincially affiliated schools is the cultural background of the teacher. Maple Bear teachers are from Brazil. Provincially affiliated teachers are from Canada. According to Aydarova (2012), teachers, administrators/academic coordinators will interpret foreign curriculum and foreign methodology, which will have a critical role in the implementation and indigenization of foreign practices in international contexts. The longer that a program or curriculum has been implemented in a foreign context, the more it will be indigenized. This is particularly a concern for Maple Bear schools, because the Canadian curriculum is foreign to these teachers. However, the cornerstone of the Maple Bear franchise is training. The curriculum is highly prescriptive, leaving little to no room for teachers’ personal interpretation. Additionally, Maple Bear’s intensive quality assurance processes diligently act to ensure that teachers do not indigenize their instructional practices.

Ma (2011) found that LNNETs often had an insufficient cultural understanding of the Western country where the foreign curriculum had been originally created. This interplay had implications for the teachers’ transference of cultural understandings, which may be critical to the curriculum and to students’ learning. Only a handful of Maple Bear teachers indicated that they had personal experiences in Canada. Most teachers’ exposure to Canadian culture would have been through their interactions with Canadian trainers. Maple Bear schools do not provide any form of training toward understanding the Canadian culture.
In both cases, a Canadian form of education is foreign to the learners. Hayes (2009) found that teachers sometimes adapt their classroom practices to meet the locally situated needs of their students. He suggested that sometimes teachers used traditional methods of teaching to meet the sociocultural and learning needs of their students. These needs may have emerged as a response to the lack of available subject resources, inadequate institutional facilities, quality of teaching profession due to governmental professional teaching requirements, students’ access to English beyond the school, and differing perspectives of the economic and social value of English. As was previously stated, quality assurance, training, and curriculum design act to ensure that Maple Bear teachers strictly adhere to the Canadian form of education.

These factors do not occur with the same consistency and persistence in the provincially affiliated system. A few teachers indicated that their style of teaching had to be adjusted to accommodate for the students’ differences in learning. For example, a few teachers indicated that students in China were not used to engaging in group work activities, so when teachers attempted to use these teaching strategies, they were met with challenging behaviors. These teachers said that it was sometimes easier just to teach students with more traditional methodologies.

In some instances, it may be appropriate for teachers to use a teaching methodology that is in line with students’ learning styles. Hu (2002) found distinct differences in the cultures of teaching and learning between traditional Chinese culture and communicative language teaching. Socio-cultural mismatches are identified as primary differences between systems. Traditional Chinese schools maintain the assumption that learning should be teacher-centered, while communicative language programs encourages student-centered learning. Traditional Chinese schools, for example, reward conformity to Chinese culture, while communicative language teaching rewards independence. Additionally, Schuetze (2008) found that Canadian schools
promoted a democratic and pluralist society. Chinese teachers, on the other hand, promoted patriotism, collectivism, and socialism. In this thesis study, there was a clear distinction between the purpose of the Canadian program and the philosophical and cultural realities of the individuals implementing the change. These realities need to be carefully considered when implementing a Canadian curriculum in a foreign context.

*Learner and the Program*

Getty (2011) asserted that differences in culture have an impact on students’ learning. Culture establishes how students think about or interpret problems; this may result in a gap of understanding between teachers and students from different culture groups. Interpretations of what constitutes intelligence often differs across cultures (Sternberg, 2007). When teachers’ methodology and the curriculum are subjugated by a culture that is different from that of their students, then assessment, problem-solving, and a shared understanding of intelligence need to be considered to inform teaching practices and curriculum design.

Many other researchers have highlight the importance of considering the culture when designing curriculum. Johnson (2013) found that when a foreign model of education is introduced to a local culture, critical players involved in the design and implementation of such programming need to consider the differences in the cultural context by examining local expectations and students’ unique learning styles. For this reason, Nguyen-Phuong-Mai et al. (2012) cautioned policy-makers to avoid assuming that educational policy and pedagogy are universal. Maple Bear program designers frequently update and revise their curriculum when problems arise, which may help to avoid this particular issue. Provincially affiliated schools, however, are bound by the provincial curriculum that their school is affiliated with. Curricular
change in government is a particularly slow process; furthermore, these curricula are designed to meet the needs of Canadian students.

According to Chapman and Pyvis (2005), students who attended an offshore campus at a locally situated university were susceptible to a form of culture shock. This is a phenomenon that has not been sufficiently explored in this thesis research. Students in the Maple Bear model were described as happy and good learners. Students from the provincially affiliated model were described to have a diverse response to the foreign educational experience. There was no evidence that students experienced any form of culture shock in these Canadian offshore schools.

**Teacher and the Learner**

Getty (2011) reported that in order for foreign teachers to be effective, it is critical that they have at least a basic understanding of the moral and educational dimensions of their learners. Teachers in Maple Bear schools have a particular advantage because they share the same culture as their students. Ultimately, learning is about making connections to one’s own personal life and experiences. Maple Bear teachers understand the nuances and intricacies of the Brazilian culture that enable them to model and provide guidance for students toward making these connections.

Ma (2011) found that foreign, native English teachers (FNETs) had a limited cultural understanding of their student, resulting in gaps in teachers’ ability to understand their students’ learning difficulties and needs compared to local, non-native English teacher (LNNETs). Teachers who work in provincially affiliated schools, therefore, may not have a clear understanding of the learning needs of their students. Provincially affiliated teachers in this thesis study indicated that students in a blended or dual track program found switching between two different styles of teaching to be academically and behaviorally challenging.
Ma (2011) also found that using students’ first language during instruction helped students to improve comprehension and communication with their teachers. However, too much use of students’ first language had the potential to limit opportunities for the use of English. Teacher-student relationships were found to be stronger between LNNETs than they were with FNETs. In Maple Bear schools, teachers in this thesis study were encouraged to speak English exclusively during English-medium classes. This practice may have hampered English language development and/or content area learning. Many provincially affiliated schools use blended or dual track programming. Under this model, students have the opportunity to learn some subjects in English and others in their local language. In China and South Korea, for example, students take science in English and in their local language. This should encourage students to ask questions and clarify their learning and understanding of science concepts in their own language. Finding the balance of an appropriate amount of use of students’ first language is likely a challenge for Canadian offshore schools.

**English Language Learning**

As Castle and Kelly (2002) discovered, there is an international demand for English language learning opportunities by families and students in countries around the world. This has created an international demand for English language learning schools. The Maple Bear owners in this thesis study articulated that immersion programming was the primary reason that owners decided to open a Maple Bear franchise school. Many provincially affiliated school principals and teachers indicated that learning English was a strong motivator for families to enroll their children in Canadian offshore schools. Comblain and Rondal (2001) indicated that learning a new language through content and language-integrated methods is a particularly effective. In this section, the strengths of the immersion model of language learning are identified. The benefits
and challenges of both FNETs and LNNETs are explored. This discussion is followed by an examination of the challenges educators face when using an immersion model.

**Student Challenges with Immersion Education**

Although there are many positive benefits to learning in an immersion education environment, there are a few challenges that schools and students may face. Immersion learners may experience high levels of classroom anxiety, which may negatively affect language learning. LNNETs who exhibit poor English language proficiency can negatively influence students’ ability to learn English. Students who enter Canadian offshore schools late in their education often come in with low levels of English. Some principals in this thesis study had concerns about the preparedness of graduating students who planned to attend Canadian post-secondary institutions.

According to Tanielian (2014), foreign language classroom anxiety has an almost debilitating effect on language development. One school principal indicated that one of her students exhibited symptoms of selective mutism. She believed that this was a result of extreme anxiety around speaking English. She indicated that when this student was outside of the school environment, she had no difficulty speaking Portuguese. No evidence of this occurrence was collected from provincially affiliated participants.

According to Arva and Medgyes (1999) and Ma (2011), teachers’ comfort and proficiency with the language of instruction directly affects students’ learning and teachers’ teaching, and students’ comfort and proficiency with the language of instruction directly affects their ability to learn and the teacher’s ability to teach. Teachers on the English side of Maple Bear schools were expected to speak English all the time. Many teachers expressed some trepidation around their own ability to speak the English language. Additionally, through the
interviews with teachers and academic coordinators, this thesis researcher noted that there was still significant room for improvement in their English language proficiency. This, however, was not an issue among provincially affiliated teachers and administrators.

One principal from China explained that students entering their Canadian school in grade 10 often came with low English language proficiency as an apparent result of poor English language instruction by local educators. In fact, students who entered Canadian schools later in their educational lives usually came with weak English language skills. In most cases, these students took an initial screening assessment to determine their proficiency in English. Principals indicated that initial screening assessments revealed that students often entered school with stronger conversational skills than academic language skills. One administrator expressed his concern that these language assessments used for initial student intake were poor indicators of English language proficiency. Additionally, other than the initial language assessment tools, no other language tracking tools were identified.

Maple Bear schools in Brazil have not yet graduated students who will move on to Canadian universities. On the other hand, many students who graduate from Canadian offshore schools travel to attend Canadian universities. Some principals indicated that foreign students were not adequately prepared for Canadian universities, recommending that offshore schools offer programming specifically designed to prepare foreign students for life in the western world. According to Cosco (2011), graduates of provincially affiliated schools in China travel to Canada with a language proficiency that is insufficient to be successful in Canadian schools. As a result, many of these schools have developed associations with universities that run ESL programs for these students.
Student as a Learner

Although there are clearly differences in the profile of students who attend Maple Bear and provincially affiliated schools, some commonalities are explored in this section. What is also interesting about the profile of students is the notable absence of students with physically visible special needs. A unique feature of Canadian offshore schools is that students are immersed in a foreign culture. The impact of this experience is discussed. Many students plan to attend post-secondary education. In some cases, children are enrolled in these specific institutions in order to prepare them for university in Canada.

Student Profile

In almost all situations and in all contexts, students attending Canadian offshore schools are from affluent families. Maple Bear schools are exclusively private. According to Akkari (2013), the private education sector in Brazil is accessible only to the privileged and affluent elite at secondary and elementary levels. Provincially affiliated school principals and teachers in this thesis research indicated that the students attending their schools were also from the economically elite sector.

Students from Maple Bear schools were all said to be from the local community. Teachers from schools in China, Egypt, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand indicated that the student populations at their schools were primarily local. As a result, almost all of the students attending Canadian offshore schools were ELLs.

Almost all stakeholders from Maple Bear schools indicated that their student populations was very respectful. In fact, most Maple Bear stakeholders were far more inclined to talk about the Canadian teaching methodology and fundamentals of the franchise model, whereas
provincially affiliated stakeholders seemed more interested in discussing student behavior and personal, non-work related experiences with the local culture.

Principals from Asian schools described a culture of students who were highly competitive and engaged in learning. Another principal from China indicated that there were therefore virtually no behavioral issues at this school. According to teachers, students attending Thai and Chinese schools extremely respectful and particularly hard working; students from Egyptian schools did not exhibit this same work ethic.

Students With Special Needs

Inclusive education is a philosophy of teaching that insists that all students can learn and should be a regular part of the classroom, regardless of ability or disability. This is a philosophy that has been adopted by much of the Western world; however, it is a philosophy that has not necessarily been fully embraced around the world (for example, see Engelbrecht, 2012; Peters & Forlin, 2011; Kim, 2012; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). This difficulty with the implementation of inclusive education was also described to be a challenge of Maple Bear schools in this thesis research. Maple Bear schools are particularly competitive to get into. Local owners and academic coordinators have the autonomy and authority to be selective about the student body. Not surprisingly, there are very few students with physically visible special needs at Maple Bear schools. This could be for a variety of reasons that could include additional cost of supports needed, additional cost and time for additional training, lack of resources and support system, and, potentially, a cultural barrier or mismatch in local value systems. Maple Bear franchise administrators explained that resource support for students with special needs is a domain of the Maple Bear system of education that requires some attention in the future.
This pattern also exists in the provincially affiliated model. Onbun-uea and Morrison (2008) and Forlin (2008) found that large class sizes, system challenges such as a lack of time for collaboration, limited resources, and lack of TAs as classroom support have all contributed to the challenge of educational reform to an inclusive model in China. Thesis research principals from China and South Korea explained that students with visible special needs simply did not attend these schools because of cultural factors. Although inclusive education has been slowly integrating into systems of education around the world, its implementation in most areas outside the Western world have been slow.

**Cultural Attitudes Toward Disabilities**

The attitudes of the local school community have also had a direct influence on the implementation of inclusive education. Peer-to-peer relationships and attitudes between each other seem to change and evolve as students get older. In a 2008 study, Kim and Kim found that children in early years’ classes had relatively positive attitudes toward sharing a classroom with students with disabilities, but as children grew older, this positive attitude shifted due to increasing pressure to achieve high grades academically. Kim (2012) pointed to the perils of high-stakes testing and educational competition as the source of such intolerance of inclusive practices as students enter the later years of their secondary education.

Two principals from provincially affiliated school in this thesis research indicated that despite the lack of visibly disabled students, there were several students with special learning and emotional needs. Patty (China) further explained that specialists and clinicians were also non-existent at her provincially affiliated school. She suggested that this was because mental illness or the need for specialized help was not recognized the same way by the Chinese culture:
In the culture of Chinese, those are not recognized. They are not. From my understanding and the people I talked to. I talked to a psychologist... on of the top in Beijing, and he had said that it is not even recognized. There are no official problems.

Many students were said to have mental health issues or learning difficulties, but these students received little support because support would mean that these students would be socially alienated.

Teachers from Thailand and Egypt explained that there were no students who had visible special needs attending their schools. Teacher from the Thai school attributed this to the exclusive architectural qualities of the school itself. Additionally, this teacher explained the Buddhist religion sees physical disability as karma for a past life. Therefore, physical disability in Thailand has a negative connotation. A teacher from an Egyptian school provided a cultural rationale, suggesting that special needs are not recognized or acknowledged by parents.

Kelly Card, an administrator from a school in South Korea, described a similar issue:

As long as the need is not physical, its okay. So, I’d say on a rough survey of our students, 20% of them at least are Individualized Education Plan-potential . . . We can’t activate that, because the moment we identify this, it becomes visible and they are at risk of being isolated by the rest of the school community.

Inclusive education is a fundamental component of Canadian education. Inclusive education positively promotes empathy, compassion, and a respect for diversity. If Canadian offshore schools are aiming to emulate the Canadian educational experience, they will need to start incorporating inclusive practices, policies, and pedagogies that reflect these values.

* * * * *

Chapter 5 interpreted the results and compared them with the relevant literature provided in Chapter 2. Chapter 6 concludes the research and provides recommendations to policy-makers and for future study.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into two sections: (1) conclusions and recommendations for practice, and (2) recommendations for further research. The first section consists of four topics: “The Power of the System,” “Recruiting and Retaining Teachers,” “Peering Through a Cultural Lens,” and “Creating a Culture of Professional Development and Collaboration.” Each topic includes research conclusions and recommendations for practice. The chapter ends with recommendations for further research.

The Power of the System

Maple Bear and provincially affiliated schools are smaller parts of larger systems. These systems are important. The Maple Bear franchise achieves over-arching business and educational objectives through this systemic organization. Regulatory processes monitor general issues, track trends, and assess program effectiveness. These data are used to inform decisions about programming, policy, curriculum, training, and the provision of support. Provincially affiliated schools, on the other hand, operate as independent entities. Although provincial departments of education provide some oversight and support to their affiliated offshore schools, no efforts are made to formatively address issues or challenges as a system. Although one government liaison officer indicated that two inter-provincial collaborative sessions did occur, previous research indicated that little to no collaboration, communication, or transparency occurs between provincial departments of education regarding their offshore educational affiliations (Cosco, 2011; Shuetze, 2008). In many of these international contexts, provincially affiliated owners are reluctant to collaborate because they see each other as business competitors.
Although the federal government acknowledges the economic and societal benefits of Canadian offshore schools, it does not provide any financial or organizational support. Many of the challenges faced by provincially affiliated schools could be addressed if provincial governments collaborated to facilitate systemic improvement. The federal government could be instrumental in orchestrating this endeavor. On the other hand, it could be argued that there is something inherently unethical about using Canadian taxpayer dollars to finance the education of wealthy children from other countries.

With varying degrees of system support, each Canadian offshore school operates autonomously. School owners and principals/academic coordinators independently develop policy, coordinate programming, hire staff, and make decisions about the day-to-day operations of the school. In most cases, decision-making is extremely top down and hierarchical in each of these contexts. Teachers are generally not included in school planning or priority development, which may account, in part, for the high rate of teacher turnover.

Maple Bear academic coordinators are provided some training to support policy- and decision-making, although more training was reportedly needed. In-school Maple Bear trainers who travelled from Canada provided academic coordinators with some feedback and guidance that would help to inform their decisions. Some stakeholders in this thesis research articulated that Maple Bear trainers provided differing perspectives, which made school priorities and direction less clear. On the other hand, stakeholders associated with provincially affiliated schools recognized the importance of hiring experienced administrators whose decisions were thought to be trustworthy.

Despite the value of consultation with experienced individuals, there is need for reliable school data to inform policy, programming, and administration. The Maple Bear franchise
provides schools with standardized assessments – designed by contracted Canadian experts – to track student learning. Provincially affiliated schools administer the same standardized assessments used in Canadian schools. Apart from these assessment tools, this thesis research found gaps in data sources that would be pertinent to informing policy- and decision-makers.

Many Canadian offshore schools reported using initial language assessments; however, neither model had assessment tools for tracking the ongoing language development of their learners. Considering that virtually all students attending Canadian offshore schools are English language learners (ELLs), tracking this element of education provides valuable formative information for program development, instruction, teacher-training, and classroom support. Additionally, Canadian offshore schools make no effort to track the personal and academic success of their graduates. Many provincially affiliated graduates attend Canadian universities. Understanding the successes and challenges that these students experience when living and going to school in Canada would be important information for schools and policy-makers. The schools collect no explicit information to understand the reasons that parents enroll children in Canadian offshore schools. Understanding parents’ perspectives and motivations would be extremely valuable in shedding light on the cultural nuances of each unique context.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Considering these conclusions, this thesis researcher makes the following recommendations:

- The Canadian federal government should research the potential cost/ benefits of organizational/ financial support of offshore Canadian schools.
• Provincial departments of education should increase transparency and collaboration regarding the policies, programming, successes, challenges, and plans of provincially affiliated offshore schools.

• Canadian offshore schools should develop collaborative relationships with other Canadian schools in their international settings.

• Canadian offshore schools should provide scholarships or financial accommodations for the tuition of lower income families.

• Canadian offshore schools should administer multiple forms of assessment (reading scores, student work, observational assessments, EAL tracking, etc.) to collect, measure, and track school data.

• Canadian offshore schools should develop a system for assessing and tracking language development.

• Canadian offshore schools should use school data to inform school planning, staffing, and to establish clear priorities. For school planning to be effective, all school stakeholders must engage in the development process. An attention to school priorities will encourage continuity and explicit focus for teacher-training and professional development.

• Canadian offshore schools should establish professional development, programming, and assessment/tracking strategies that integrate the unique needs of English language learners with high-quality pedagogy.

• Policy-makers should identify the specific reasons that why families enroll children in offshore schools. This information should be included when schools develop their school plans.
Canadian offshore schools should track the success of their graduates in Canadian post-secondary institutions. This data should be included when schools develop their school plan.

**Recruiting and Retaining Teachers**

Canadian offshore schools perpetually deal with the challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers. Many different factors contribute to this issue. Maple Bear school owners and academic coordinators hire local, non-native English-speaking teachers. Finding teachers who possess both a teaching certification and English language proficiency can be challenging, especially in Brazilian regions that are not located close to universities. Provincially affiliated schools are mandated to employ administrators and teachers who are from the specific Canadian province with which the offshore school is affiliated. Finding individuals who are willing to commit to living and working abroad is a significant challenge under this model.

For the most part, all teachers and administrators in offshore schools are hired under a standard contract, regardless of their number of years of experience. In many cases, individuals are encouraged to continue their employment with monetary incentives. Despite these incentives, a high rate of staff turnover continues to negatively impact the continuity and quality of education in offshore institutions. Experienced teachers deliver high-quality education to students and provide mentorship to less experienced staff; however, experienced teachers are less prevalent in these offshore contexts and are also less inclined to buy into educational change.

A primary component of the Maple Bear franchise is ongoing teacher-training. Schools pay the Maple Bear franchise for training; therefore, it not surprising that these high rates of teacher-turnover are not a particularly pressing concern for the franchise. The Maple Bear methodology and curriculum is a niche market, touted as vastly different and superior to other
Brazilian schools. Additionally, teachers who are young and inexperienced require training. Teachers, coordinators, and school owners in this thesis research articulated the need for more training. Many of the issues and challenges identified by Brazilian teachers, however, were similar to challenges faced by Canadian teachers. Coordinators preferred hiring teachers who were inexperienced because these teachers were more likely to adopt the Maple Bear philosophy. Some thesis research participants suggested that provincially affiliated schools opted to hire teachers who were less experienced because they were less expensive. Under these suggestions, high rates of teacher turnover was by design.

Although in some instances these suggestions may have been true, it is more likely that teacher turnover is an issue that Canadian offshore schools wish to remedy. When teachers remain abroad to teach for longer stretches of time, less money needs to be invested in teacher-training. It also means that the school benefits from continuity and progressive improvement. Higher retention leads to more experienced teachers who can act as mentors to support new hires. Increased teacher retention enhances all areas of education from staff recruitment to student learning.

Maple Bear schools often hire individuals first as teacher assistants, and then groom them to become teachers. There are significantly fewer teacher assistants in provincially affiliated schools. In fact, participants reported that Canadian offshore schools generally had very few support staff such as school counsellors, resource teachers, and clinical staff.

Through an association with a Canadian university, one provincially affiliated school in this thesis study provided pre-service education to Canadian students, while simultaneously employing them as teachers. These practices were extremely successful as recruitment, retention, and training strategies. Although other Canadian universities offer programming that specifically
prepares pre-service teachers for employment abroad, they lack the association with offshore schools that would provide a feedback loop for reflecting on their programming. These associations could also provide offshore schools with data about the success of their graduates.

Teacher salaries were a contentious issue for local teaching staff of Canadian offshore schools. Maple Bear teachers are paid a lower salary and receive fewer benefits than other local schools or other English-speaking jobs in Brazil. In many provincially affiliated schools, foreign staff are paid significantly less than foreign (Canadian) teaching staff. This can create tension and widen the gap between the two cultural groups.

Although Canadian staff who traveled to these foreign contexts are offered compensation for their work, the difficulties of adjusting to the local culture lead to retention issues. The quality of support and communication in the pre-departure and initial-arrival stages of the teachers’ experience abroad have profound implications for teacher retention. Provincially affiliated teachers and administrators from this thesis research indicated that prior to departing for these foreign contexts, the cultural orientation and description of living abroad were woefully insufficient, inaccurate, and/or incomplete. One provincially affiliated school principal praised the support of a local individual who supported her upon her arrival into the country. A Maple Bear coordinator indicated that in some cases, teacher-trainers who travelled to Brazil from Canada were not appropriately supported. She recommended that a local individual be responsible for helping trainers to navigate the cultural differences unique to the local context.

**Recommendations for Practice**

In light of these conclusions, this thesis researcher makes the following recommendations:

- Canadian offshore schools should consider monetary incentives for long-term service.
In contexts where local non-native English speakers are hired to teach in Canadian offshore schools, the practice of hiring individuals first as teacher assistants, then grooming them to become teachers, is effective and should be applied wherever possible.

Canadian offshore schools should invest in support staff at the discretion of the school principal or academic coordinator. These decisions should be informed by school data and consider the cultural ideologies of the local context. For example, students attending offshore schools in South Korea were reported to have high levels of anxiety and therefore would benefit from the support of a school counsellor. Clinical support from local individuals such as psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech/language pathologists would also be beneficial in some of these contexts.

Canadian offshore schools should invest in English as additional language specialists to support, and in some cases supplement, the classroom teacher.

Canadian offshore schools would benefit from developing associations with individual Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Canadian universities should offer courses tailored to preparing teachers for the unique experiences of international teaching.

Provincially affiliated schools should provide a thorough cultural orientation to prospective teachers, in order to prepare them for living in foreign contexts. This programming should be developed and administered by individuals who have first-hand experience living and working in these specific contexts.

Canadian offshore schools should provide extra support to foreign (Canadian) staff as they initially move and acclimatize to these new cultural contexts. A local individual who
is fluent in English and has a deep understanding of school policies, the local culture, and
the nuances of living in these contexts should facilitate this support.

**Peering Through a Cultural Lens**

Each country values education for a different reason. In many Asian countries, for
example, the purpose of education is to rank and sort students for post-secondary education.
Similarly, schools in Brazil aim to prepare students for the vestibular, a public university
entrance exam. Canadians tend to value education as a way to prepare students for life, which
includes academic, social, emotional, and physical domains. It is important that Canadian
offshore schools examine issues through this lens.

Because the purpose of education differs in each setting, resources that are congruent
with Canadian curriculum and pedagogy are not always easily available. Issues with customs and
taxes make importing resources directly from Canadian distributors challenging. As a result,
many research participants from Canadian offshore schools indicated that resources and
educational materials were often lacking. Thesis participants articulated a need for resources on
instructional best-practices. They also indicated that standardized assessment tools and their
associated intervention programming were not available. Sensory tools and furnishings were not
provided for students with sensory difficulties. School libraries often lacked high-quality levelled
literature. In many Canadian offshore schools, the curriculum called for or suggested very
specific resources that were available only from Canada and were extremely expensive to access.
This resulted in curricular adaptations or omissions.

In Maple Bear schools, experienced Canadian principals and teachers are contracted to
write curriculum. These individuals rarely have specialized training in curriculum design. Maple
Bear curriculum is written in a very prescriptive manner. Units are organized into lesson plans
that provide a list of necessary materials and step-by-step directions for implementation. This form of curriculum supports teachers who are inexperienced with Canadian pedagogy, and ensures that instruction adheres to a Canadian methodology. Participants from this thesis study indicated that in addition to instructional strategies, there was a need for formative assessment and distinctly ELL teaching strategies to be written directly into the document itself.

Provincially affiliated schools use curriculum that is specifically designed for Canadian students. Each province’s curriculum fostered openness and flexibility for implementation. Teachers may plan and deliver lessons autonomously, making adaptations according to the specific needs of their students. Unfortunately, because most Canadian offshore teachers are new to the profession, participants in this thesis research indicated that curriculum was often ignored or implemented incorrectly. In some cases, the traditional learning styles of the students reportedly influenced the teaching styles of their instructors. In these cases, many teachers relied on Canadian resources to provide prescriptive instructional strategies for curricular implementation.

When considering curriculum in foreign contexts, it is important to make the distinction between curricular content and outcomes. In many cases, content in these international settings is completely irrelevant to non-Canadian students. The history and perspective of Canada’s indigenous population are not necessarily relevant to students in China; however, there is a local indigenous group that could be studied using the same curricular learning outcomes. Content, therefore, can be adapted and learning outcomes can be maintained. Canadian teachers’ familiarity with the local culture could have an impact on their ability to adapt content effectively or appropriately.
Because the function of education differs in each offshore setting, the pedagogy and learning styles of students also differ. The Maple Bear methodology, for example, constitutes a profound paradigm shift for many Brazilian educators and students. Traditional pedagogy focuses on the acquisition and memorization of content, through teacher-centered rote learning and isolation. Maple Bear pedagogy enacts a constructivist approach. Parents and students in Asian societies are used to very hierarchical systems and practices in schools. The teacher, in these contexts, is the authority. In this thesis research, differences in the cultural understanding of pedagogy created conflicts and difficulties between teachers, learners, and parents. In some cases, language barriers between parents and teachers further exacerbated these issues. Although some parents were supportive of differences in pedagogy, many struggled to create English-rich environments at home to support the learning at school.

For many parents, the reason that students are enrolled in Canadian offshore schools is to prepare for Canadian universities. Apart from delivering a Canadian curriculum, no specific programming is in place that actively teaches students about living and going to school in Canada.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Considering these conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- Federal/provincial governments should provide financial support and leadership in purchasing and distributing educational resources for Canadian offshore schools.

- Canadian offshore schools should ensure that schools are supplied with up-to-date resources that support teachers’ instruction and students’ learning. Each Canadian offshore school must invest in an inventory of resources that meet the specific needs of their teachers and learners. Resources should include literature on best practices for
instruction, intervention programming, standardized assessment tools, high-quality levelled literature, and sensory tools.

- Maple Bear curriculum should be written and revised by writers who are experienced and educated in curriculum design and development.
- Because the staff profile of most Canadian offshore schools consists primarily of young inexperienced teachers, curricula should be written or revised to be more prescriptive and detailed.
- Maple Bear curriculum should incorporate formative assessment strategies. Furthermore, teachers should undergo specialized training in how to incorporate these strategies.
- Maple Bear curriculum should incorporate strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of ELLs.
- Canadian offshore curricula must clearly differentiate between content and outcomes. Teachers should be offered some flexibility in adapting content to meet the specific needs of their students. The process of adapting curriculum should be supported and overseen by school leaders.
- Offshore Canadian curriculum should include content and outcomes that are tailored by local/foreign school leaders, in order to attend to the culture of the local learners.
- Canadian offshore teachers should consider the culture of their local students when planning and delivering instruction, and assessing student learning.
- Canadian offshore schools should explore ways to support parents in fostering English language- and literacy-rich home environments.
• Students who will be graduating from Canadian offshore schools should engage in learning opportunities that explicitly teach them about living and going to school in Canada.

**Creating a Culture of Professional Development and Collaboration**

The school culture of Maple Bear schools is different from provincially affiliated schools. This difference in school culture has a profound influence on teaching and learning. Provincially affiliated participants from this thesis research indicated that although professional collaboration was encouraged, internal and external professional development was woefully inadequate or non-existent. Embedded within the Maple Bear system was the inherent need for ongoing professional development and collaboration. Every stakeholder category was engaged in professional learning. Teachers received both in-school training and central training. Maple Bear academic coordinators received some specialized central training and support from in-school trainers. Maple Bear trainers and school owners had opportunities to collaborate at central conferences. Almost all the Maple Bear respondents reported the need for ongoing professional development to support the schools’ success.

Research participants identified leadership as a critical factor in fostering a culture of learning and collaboration. Maple Bear franchise administrators, contract teacher-trainers, and school owners insisted that teachers participate in professional development and demonstrate its value by engaging in learning of their own. Maple Bear school owners invested heavily in the professional development of their teachers by offering to pay for teachers to attend central training. Provincially affiliated school owners or school principals did not pay for their teachers to attend external professional learning opportunities, nor did they report attending learning conferences themselves. The greatest challenge that schools face in providing staff with
professional development opportunities is geography. Provincially affiliated schools do not often have access to quality presenters or conferences, and are thus left to their own devices. To develop a culture that is rich in professional learning, the role of school principals/academic coordinators must include an element of pedagogical leadership.

In addition to ongoing professional development, Maple Bear teachers meet weekly to engage in collaboration. Academic coordinators facilitate these weekly sessions. Teachers and academic coordinators in the research articulated that school owners and coordinators would benefit from similar opportunities to collaborate with others in their role from different schools. Provincially affiliated teachers reported that teachers regularly engaged in collaboration with other teachers in their own schools. However, there was only one instance where provincially affiliated schools collaborated with one another. Those thesis research participants involved in this collaborative endeavor found the experiences was particularly valuable. The school principal who described this experience indicated that school owners were not likely to engage in this multi-school collaboration again because other provincially affiliated schools in the region were viewed as business competitors.

Maple Bear has been providing central training to teachers for a number of years. Because of high teacher turnover and the rapid rate of franchise growth, the topics of central training sessions have remained the same. In recent years, specialized coordinator training has also been offered. Teachers and academic coordinators in this thesis research highlighted several potential areas for future central training, such as behavior management, immersion learning strategies, and how to work with teacher assistants.

Maple Bear teacher assistants are often hired and groomed to become teachers. This has been an effective recruitment and retention strategy. Maple Bear franchise does not currently
provide any specialized training to teacher assistants; classroom teachers are responsible for providing this training.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Considering these conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- Canadian offshore schools should purposefully and actively develop a school culture rich in professional learning and collaboration.
- Canadian offshore schools should promote and finance internal and external professional development opportunities for teachers.
- School principals/academic coordinators should be pedagogical leaders in the school. When managerial demands overwhelm the principal’s ability to be an effective pedagogical leader, a second position should be created to fulfill this role.
- Canadian offshore school principals/academic coordinators must engage in professional development specifically tailored for their particular roles as managers and pedagogical leaders.
- Provincial departments of education should develop online networking resources that provide offshore teachers access to professional learning, sharing, and collaboration opportunities.
- Canadian offshore teachers should be provided with regularly scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration.
- Canadian offshore school principals/academic coordinators should engage in regular and ongoing professional collaboration with others in their role.
- Maple Bear schools should diversify central training workshops to include a variety of topics. School plans should be analyzed as a system to generate themes for training.
• Maple Bear teachers should be provided with specialized training in how to work with teacher assistants effectively.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The following recommendations would address the limitations of this thesis research and offer valuable supplemental information:

• There is anecdotal evidence that Canadian provinces benefit from Canadian offshore programs. Further research could be tailored to explore the economic and societal benefits of Canadian offshore schools to Canada and/or individual Canadian provinces.

• This thesis research was broad in scope. Survey and interview questions explored a wide range of topics and themes related to each model of offshore Canadian education. Future research could focus on one individual theme that emerged in this thesis research.

• The Maple Bear model is relatively uniform in its policies, practices, and overall system structure; the provincially affiliated offshore model, on the other hand, is less consistent. Each Canadian province has a distinct approach to offshore education. The scope of future research could be further narrowed to examine the similarities and differences between individual provinces, in each country, and/or among schools with similar system structures.

• This thesis research endeavored to explore a diverse range of perspectives from all of the selected stakeholders associated with two models of Canadian offshore education. However, missing from the sample of stakeholder groups were students, parents, provincially affiliated school owners, and franchise owners. Future research could explore the perspectives of these stakeholder groups.
• This thesis research revealed a notable absence of students with special needs in Canadian offshore schools. Furthermore, many stakeholders stated that they felt ill-equipped and unprepared to support students with special needs. Future research could explore local attitudes and approaches to students with special needs, and how these understandings manifest themselves in these “Canadian” contexts. Then follow up research could identify ways to incorporate special needs programming.

• For many of the participants from the Maple Bear model, English was not their first language. It could, therefore, be suggested that their responses may have been limited or misinterpreted. Future research could translate the survey and interview questions into the stakeholders’ first language, and allow them to respond accordingly.

• Most of the teachers who participated in this thesis research were new to the teaching profession. In many cases, this international experience was also their first year of working as a teacher. Furthermore, teachers who have never taught in non-offshore schools have a limited frame of reference. Many of the participants were from Brazil and had never experienced a “Canadian” school first hand. Future research could stratify respondents according to their years of teaching experience, in order to avoid this issue.
REFERENCES


[Date TBA]

Dear ____________________:

As a Master of Education student at Brandon University and a former teacher at an international school, I am writing to ask for permission to conduct research in Maple Bear Global Schools Limited. My study will examine two specific models of education being used by Canadian International schools from the perspectives of the individuals involved in administration, development, and implementation. This is an important study, as it will improve the practices of all stakeholders by providing first-hand insights into the perceived strengths and weaknesses associated with two models of Canadian education being used in a foreign context. Additionally, each stakeholder group will be offered the opportunity to make recommendations for improving policies and enhancing school practices. The data will be shared in a final report, which will be available to a variety of stakeholders involved in program/curriculum administration, development, and implementation. The data will also be made available, in aggregate format, to third parties upon request. This research has been approved by the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC).

The following stakeholders from Maple Bear Schools will be invited to volunteer for the study: school owners, curriculum writers, teacher-trainers, school administrator(s), and teachers. Every participant will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data will first be collected from these stakeholders using a Likert-scale survey that will also include open-ended questions. This portion of the data collection will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Follow-up one-on-one interviews will be conducted with individuals who have volunteered to be interviewed. Each interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be recorded. Individual respondents will have access to their own transcripts to check for accuracy. The research participants’ confidentiality will be guaranteed during the research and in the final report. A copy of the final report will be forwarded to you upon the completion of this study.

This study is important. Canadian schools are becoming increasingly prevalent all around the world. The models for how these schools develop, administer, and implement Canadian programming and curriculum are extremely diverse. This study will bring to light the strengths and weaknesses associated with two models of Canadian education, as perceived by the individuals directly responsible for the development, administration, and implementation of Canadian programming and curriculum. This study has the following potential for research significance: (1) to add to the literature surrounding international education and the cultural implications of using a foreign model of education, and (2) to produce a shared understanding among all school stakeholders of the perceived strengths and weaknesses associated with their models of Canadian education being used in an international setting. Such a shared understanding has the potential for improving future educational policies and practices.

I thank you for considering my request, and I look forward to receiving your written permission to conduct the study. Please include with this permission the name and email address of the person to whom I should forward the letter of invitation, conditions of informed consent, and link to the survey. I will be relying on this person to
APPENDIX A – INITIAL CONTACT LETTERS

disseminate this information via email to the stakeholders listed above. All survey responses will be accessible only to me as the researcher.

If you have any questions, please contact me, Derek Marvin (telephone 204.230.1099, email derek_marvin@hotmail.com) or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Marion Terry (telephone 204.727.9793, email terry@brandonu.ca). You are also welcome to contact Brandon University Ethics Committee (BUREC, telephone 204-727-7445, email murkink@brandonu.ca)

Yours sincerely,

Derek Marvin
Master of Education Student,
Brandon University
Dear [name of initial contact from provincially affiliated offshore school]:

As a Master of Education student at Brandon University and a former teacher at an international school, I am writing to ask for permission to conduct research at your school this year. My study will examine the specific model of education being used by your Canadian school from the perspectives of the individuals involved in administration, development, and implementation. This is an important study, as it will improve the practices of all stakeholders by providing first-hand insights into the perceived strengths and weaknesses associated with your model of Canadian education being used in a foreign context. Additionally, each stakeholder group will be offered the opportunity to make recommendations for improving policies and enhancing school practices. The data will be shared in a final report, which will be available to a variety of stakeholders involved in program/curriculum administration, development, and implementation. The data will also be made available, in aggregate format, to third parties upon request. This research has been approved by the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC).

The following stakeholders from your school will be invited to volunteer for the study: the school owner, curriculum consultant(s), instructional coach(es), school administrator(s), and teachers. Every participant will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data will first be collected from these stakeholders using a Likert-scale survey that will also include open-ended questions. This portion of the data collection will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Follow-up one-on-one interviews will be conducted with individuals who have volunteered to be interviewed. Each interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be recorded. Individual respondents will have access to their own transcripts to check for accuracy. The research participants’ confidentiality will be guaranteed during the research and in the final report. A copy of the final report will be forwarded to you upon the completion of this study.

This study is important. Canadian schools are becoming increasingly prevalent all around the world. The models for how these schools develop, administer, and implement Canadian programming and curriculum are extremely diverse. This study will bring to light the strengths and weaknesses associated with your particular model of Canadian education, as perceived by the individuals directly responsible for the development, administration, and implementation of Canadian programming and curriculum. This study has the following potential for research significance: (1) to add to the literature surrounding international education and the cultural implications of using a foreign model of education, and (2) to produce a shared understanding among all school stakeholders of the perceived strengths and weaknesses associated with a particular model of Canadian education being used in an international setting. Such a shared understanding has the potential for improving future educational policies and practices.

I thank you for considering my request, and I look forward to receiving your written permission to conduct the study. Please include with this permission the name and email address of the person to whom I should forward
the letter of invitation, conditions of informed consent, and link to the survey. I will be relying on this person to disseminate this information via email to the stakeholders listed above. All survey responses will be accessible only to me as the researcher.

If you have any questions, please contact me, Derek Marvin (telephone 204.230.1099, email derek_marvin@hotmail.com) or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Marion Terry (telephone 204.727.9793, email terry@brandonu.ca). You are also welcome to contact Brandon University Ethics Committee (BUREC, telephone 204-727-7445, email murkink@brandonu.ca)

Yours sincerely,

Derek Marvin
Master of Education Student,
Brandon University
Brandon, Manitoba
Canada
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

You are invited to participate in the following research study: “Canadian Education Abroad: Exploring the Strengths and Weaknesses of Two Distinct Models.”

The purpose of this project is to highlight the perceived strengths and weaknesses associated with two models of Canadian education used in international settings. The information will be used to improve both local and systemic school policies and practices of schools using or planning to use a Canadian model of education in an international setting.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You may also volunteer to participate in a follow-up one-on-one interview, which will take approximately 1 hour to compete.

Your participation is important because you have valuable information to share. Including your perspective will bring insight into the workings of your model of Canadian education that is being used internationally.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact:

Derek Marvin (Thesis Student) 204.230.1099 derek_marvin@hotmail.com
Dr. Marion Terry (Thesis Supervisor) 204.727.9793 terry@brandonu.ca

You are also welcome to contact Brandon University Ethics Committee (BUREC):

BUREC 204.727.7445 murkink@brandonu.ca

CONDITIONS OF INFORMED CONSENT

Submitting this survey confirms that I have read, understand, and agree to the following conditions for my participation in this research study:

1. My participation is completely voluntary. There are no risks or benefits associated with my completion of this survey or my participation in a follow-up one-on-one interview. For example, whether I participate or not will not affect how I am perceived in my professional role at the school.

2. My personal information will be treated confidentially.
All data will be securely stored. If I do not wish to be interviewed, there will be no identifying information on the survey. If I do wish to be interviewed, I will give my name and email address in the last question on the survey. This information will be used to contact me if I am selected for an interview, and then will be removed before the survey answers are analysed. No identifying information will appear in the thesis document or in any other reports of the research.

3. **I may change my mind and withdraw at any time during the study by contacting the researcher** (derek_marvin@hotmail.com).
   If I withdraw, my consent form and any information that I have contributed will be destroyed.
   Volunteering for the research does not mean that I have given up my right to ask for legal help in the event of research-related harm.

4. **Should I agree to participate** in the survey and/or a one-on-one interview, I may choose to answer all, some, or none of the questions that I am asked.

5. **If I participate in an interview,** it will be conducted by telephone or Skype, and will be audio recorded.
   I will have an opportunity to check my interview transcript for accuracy.

6. **I will have access to the results of the project.**
   Electronic copies of the final report will be sent to each Canadian educational institution that participates in this study, and to other participating stakeholders.

**LINK TO THE ONLINE SURVEY**
[Survey Monkey URL Link]
Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC)
For Research Involving Human Participants

ETHICS CERTIFICATE

The following ethics proposal has been approved by the BUREC. The approval is valid for up to five (5) years from the date approved, pending receipt of Annual Progress Reports. As per BUREC Policies and Procedures, section 6.0, "At a minimum, continuing ethics research review shall consist of an Annual Report for multi-year projects and a Final Report at the end of all projects. Failure to fulfill the continuing research ethics review requirements is considered an act of non-compliance and may result in the suspension of active ethics certification, refusal to review and approve any new research ethics submissions, and/or others as outlined in Section 10.0".

Any changes made to the protocol should be reported to the BUREC prior to implementation. See BUREC Policies and Procedures for more details.

As per BUREC Policies and Procedures, section 10.0, "Brandon University requires that all faculty members, staff, and students adhere to the BUREC Policies and Procedures. The University considers non-compliance and the inappropriate treatment of human participants to be a serious offence, subject to penalties, including, but not limited to, formal written documentation including permanently in one’s personnel file, suspension of ethics certification, withdrawal of privileges to conduct research involving humans, and/or disciplinary action."

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<td>Dr. Marion Terry, Faculty of Education, Brandon University</td>
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<td>Authorizing Signature:</td>
<td>Dr. Etsuko Yasui</td>
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<td>Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Brandon University Research Ethics Committee</td>
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270 18th Street, Brandon MB, Canada R7A 6A9

BrandonU.ca
APPENDIX D – SURVEY QUESTIONS

SURVEY FOR RESEARCH INTO CANADIAN MODELS OF EDUCATION USED IN INTERNATIONAL SETTINGS
[TO BE CONVERTED INTO SURVEY MONKEY]

Name: _____________________________________ Email Address: _____________________________________________

Name of School: ____________________________ Location of School (Country): ______________________________

Academic Year(s) of employment at this school: ________________________________________

Professional Title at this school _________________________________________

While you were employed by this school, how many years of professional experience did you have?
- 1st year teacher ( )
- 1-2 years ( )
- 3-5 years ( )
- 6-9 years ( )
- 10 or more ( )

Please specify your Academic Preparation / Teaching Qualifications:

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<th>Year of Graduation</th>
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<td>Master of Education</td>
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<td>Other – please specify</td>
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Please answer the following questions about your teaching experience at the Canadian school specified above. Questions are a mixture of open- and closed-ended questions. Please answer closed-ended questions using the scale provided (0- Strongly Disagree, 1-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree) to indicate the degree to which you Agree or Disagree with the statements.

1. Canadian teaching methodologies are effective for educating students at this school. (1 2 3 4 5)

2. Teachers have to make many adaptations to the curriculum content while teaching at this school. (1 2 3 4 5)

3. I received specialized training that prepared me for my professional role in this Canadian school. (1 2 3 4 5)

4. Teaching at this Canadian school is very different from teaching *in Canada /or at a Brazilian school. (1 2 3 4 5)
APPENDIX D – SURVEY QUESTIONS

5. If I were to redo my experience at this school, there are many things that I would do differently in order to improve my professional practices. (1 2 3 4 5)

6. It is challenging for teachers to use Canadian methods of teaching at this school. (1 2 3 4 5)

7. Teachers routinely implement a Canadian-form of curriculum as it is written in the curricular document provided. (1 2 3 4 5)

8. I could have been better prepared for my professional role at this Canadian school. (1 2 3 4 5)

9. While working at this school, I had concerns about using a Canadian model of education. (1 2 3 4 5)

10. My professional experience at this school was positive. (1 2 3 4 5)

11. Teachers receive sufficient opportunities for in-service professional development while employed by this school. (1 2 3 4 5)

12. Differences in culture did not impact my ability to perform effectively in my professional role. (1 2 3 4 5)

13. Using a Canadian model of education at this school has been challenging. (1 2 3 4 5)

14. There are many strengths of using a Canadian model of education at this school. (1 2 3 4 5)

15. The administration in this school operates in a very similar manner to other schools that operate in *Canada/Brazil. (1 2 3 4 5)

16. What do you perceive to be the most significant strength of using this Canadian model of education at this school? (Please give rationale for your answer if possible)

17. What do you perceive to be other strengths of the model of Canadian education used at this school? (Please give rationale for your answer if possible)

18. What do you perceive to be the most significant weakness of using this Canadian model of education at this school? (please give rationale for your answer if possible)

19. What other weaknesses would you identify in relation to utilizing this Canadian Model of education? (please give rationale for your answer if possible)

20. What recommendations would you like to communicate to policy-makers and program developers regarding implementation of the model of Canadian education employed at with this school?

21. Are you interested in participating in a one-on-one interview based on this survey’s topics?
APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW TOPICS

INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR
INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION

Preliminary Questions
- Length of time that he/she has been associated with this model of Canadian education
- Anticipated time still to go

Focus on Staff Recruitment
- Process by which new school staff are recruited
- Qualifications required for employment
- Other considerations when recruiting staff
- Special services/incentives/accommodations made for staff living/working abroad
- Issues/challenges associated with staff recruitment

Focus on Professional Development (PD)
- School policies for professional development (PD)
- Individuals responsible for promoting, organizing, and facilitating PD opportunities
- Successful/unsuccesful PD events/sessions
- Cultural considerations and/or training
- Issues/challenges associated with PD and/or staff development

Focus on Curriculum / Instructional Practices
- Rationale for using a particular form of Canadian curriculum
- Regulatory procedures/quality assurance
- Adaptations/modifications to curriculum to accommodate cultural differences
- Similarities/differences between Canadian public schools and provincially affiliated offshore schools; or, similarities/ differences between traditional Brazilian schools and Maple Bear schools

Focus on Perceived Strengths/Weaknesses of Canadian Model
- Status/perceptions of this Canadian model in the community
- Aspects of this model perceived to be the most effective
- Aspects of this model perceived to be the least effective

Focus on Recommendations
- Current plans/strategies being used to improve policies and practices
- Personal reflections/recommendations for improving school policies and practices

Final Question
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me? – anything else that I didn't ask about, or that you would like to add to something we’ve already discussed?
INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Preliminary Questions
- Length of time that you have been associated with this model of Canadian education
- Anticipated time still to go
- Duties/responsibilities associated with his/her professional role

Focus on Curriculum Design/Development
- Cultural considerations when creating curriculum
- Processes used to evaluate and improve curriculum (Quality assurance)
- Processes used to acquire input/feedback from multiple stakeholder groups
- Methods for determining relevant content areas

Focus on Preparation for Professional Role
- Required qualifications for professional role
- Academic/professional experiences that prepared him/her for their professional role
- Specialized training to prepare him/her for their professional role
- Life experiences that helped him/her for their professional role
- Special services offered to staff to facilitate transition into their professional role
- Current programming for new staff to help prepare them for their professional role

Focus on In-service Professional Development
- Required in-service professional development for staff
- Strategies for determining relevant areas of need for staffs’ professional development
- Methods/strategies for delivering professional development
- Perceived attitudes of staff towards professional development opportunities
- Professional Development opportunities specifically dealing with culture

Focus on Perceived Strengths/Weaknesses of Canadian Model
- Perceived attitudes of this Canadian model of education among staff and students
- Aspects of this model perceived to be the most effective
- Aspects of this model perceived to be the least effective

Focus on Recommendations
- Current plans/strategies being used to improve policies and practices
- Personal reflections/recommendations for improving school policies and practices

Final Question
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me? – anything else that I didn't ask about, or that you would like to add to something we’ve already discussed?
INTERVIEW TOPICS FOR
INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Preliminary Questions
- Length of time that you have been associated with this model of Canadian education
- Anticipated time still to go

Focus on Pre-service/In-service Education and Training
- Required qualifications for professional role
- Academic/professional experiences that prepared him/her for their professional role
- Specialized training to prepared him/her for their professional role
- Life experiences that helped him/her for their professional role
- Special services offered to facilitate transition into professional role

Focus on Curriculum/Instructional Practices
- Adaptations/modifications made to curriculum to accommodate cultural/contextual differences
- Cultural considerations when planning, delivering, and assessing instruction
- Perceived level of support offered by various school stakeholders
- Challenges associated with delivering a foreign curriculum
- Opportunities for professional collaboration among teaching staff

Focus on Perceived Strengths/Weaknesses
- Successes/challenges of implementing a foreign curriculum in this school
- Aspects of this model perceived to be the most effective
- Aspects of this model perceived to be the least effective

Focus on Recommendations
- Current plans/strategies for improving this model of Canadian education
- Personal reflections/recommendations for improving school policies and practices

Final Question
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me? – anything else that I didn’t ask about, or that you would like to add to something we’ve already discussed
APPENDIX F

RESULTS – MAPLE BEAR SCHOOLS

Quantitative Results

Question 1 - “Canadian teaching methodologies are effective for educating students at this school.”

Table 4.1. Responses to Question 1

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Question 2 – “Teachers have to make many adaptations to the curriculum content while teaching at this school.”

Table 4.2. Responses to Question 2

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Question 3 – “I received specialized training that prepared me for my professional role in this Canadian school.”

Table 4.3. Responses to Question 3

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Question 4 – “Teaching at this Canadian school is very different from teaching in a Brazilian school.”

Table 4.4. Responses to Question 4

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APPENDIX F – RESULTS – MAPLE BEAR SCHOOLS

Question 5 – “If I were to redo my experience at this school, there are many things that I would do differently to improve my professional practices.”

Table 4.5. Responses to Question 5

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Question 6 – “It is challenging for teachers to use Canadian methods of teaching at this school.”

Table 4.6. Responses to Question 6

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Question 7 – “Teachers routinely implement a Canadian-form of curriculum as it is written in the curricular document provided (without modification).”

Table 4.7. Responses to Question 7

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Question 8 – “I was well prepared for my professional role at this Canadian school.”

Table 4.8. Responses to Question 8

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Question 9 – “While working at this school, I had concerns about using a Canadian model of education.”

Table 4.9. Responses to Question 9

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Question 10 – “My professional experience at this school was positive.”

Table 4.10. Responses to Question 10

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Question 11 – “Teachers receive adequate opportunities for in-service professional development while employed by this school.”

Table 4.11. Responses to Question 11

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Question 12 – “Differences in culture did not impact my ability to perform effectively in my professional role.”

Table 4.12. Responses to Question 12

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Question 13 – “Using a Canadian model of education at this school has been challenging.”

Table 4.13. Responses to Question 13

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Question 14 – “There are many strengths of using a Canadian model of education at this school.”

Table 4.14. Responses to Question 14.

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Question 15 – “This school is administered in a very similar manner to most schools in Brazil.”

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Qualitative Results

Maple Bear Trainers

Staff Recruitment and Retention. Participants discussed how trainers are recruited for Maple Bear Global Schools Ltd. They described the challenges associated with recruiting effective teachers and explored the importance of training teachers in a Canadian model of education. The trainers also noted that teacher assistants (TAs) were often groomed to become teachers.

Two trainers involved in the survey cited word-of-mouth as the primary means for trainer recruitment. Sara commented that although there are a few other “little recruitment things, it is my guess that there is a lot of word-of-mouth that goes on.” Beth, another trainer, echoed these sentiments, stating that franchise owners “rely on people saying, ‘I worked with this person and so I think they would be really good at it.’” She also stated that this was how she, herself, had been recruited. It should be noted that trainers indicated that other recruitment practices did occur; however, all of the trainers who were interviewed in this thesis research acquired their
role through a recommendation. As a result, Sara stated that “many of the trainers originally came from the Winnipeg area because that’s what Gerald (co-owner) knew.” All of the trainers came from Canada but, as Beth pointed out, “in Brazil, they use local teachers.” Barbra stated that teachers are often recruited in the same way as teachers in Canada: “They advertise and do some of the same things that we do to attract teachers.” Interviews with trainers revealed that although the recruitment practices may have looked similar to those in Canada, the qualifications required of teachers differed greatly.

None of the trainers interviewed for this research had a clear understanding of the required qualifications for teachers working in Maple Bear schools. However, trainers who participated identified teaching experience, English language proficiency, and professional training as the critical assets that administrators should look for when hiring teachers. Beth stated that schools “work really hard to have ‘so-called’ qualified classroom teacher in the classroom.” Brent added that “trained teachers are like gold.”

Sara identified English language proficiency as a fundamental qualification for teachers employed by Maple Bear schools. However, recruiting experienced or well-trained teachers could be challenging because, as Brent pointed out, “teachers do not come to the program being well-trained or knowledgeable in Canadian teaching practices.”

Accordingly, all trainers stressed the value and importance of training. Brent stated that teachers “must be trained.” Steven’s statements reinforce this notion: “Making teachers trained in Canadian practices . . . would serve to create a professional community of teachers that are the best.” The problem, as pointed out collectively by the trainers interviewed in this research, was that often after the franchise schools had spent time and resources training teachers, they became more valuable to other schools and often left Maple Bear. Teacher retention was identified as a
significant issue in delivering the Maple Bear program. Steven stated, “It was my experience that the best teachers tend to leave because they are not valued as they should or could be.” Brent described a similar experience when he recounted that “trained teacher retention is a constant battle as it is very easy to quit and get a different teaching position in Brazil.” Even if teachers did not move on to other schools, Brent was concerned that “the best teachers become coordinators and, thus, spend little to no time as teachers.”

As a trainer and curriculum writer, Anna’s concern with teacher retention focused on the need for training in the implementation of the curriculum. One successful practice for recruiting and retaining teachers identified by trainers was to staff their classrooms with multiple TAs. As Beth explained, “Lots of times, they [schools] hired teacher assistants and they groom them to be teachers. That is part of the process in some schools.” Her comments suggested that she believed that this was an effective practice.

Teachers. Trainers described the role of the teacher in Maple Bear schools through the lens of instructional practices and curriculum implementation. Teachers were expected to use Canadian methodology and adhere to the Maple Bear curriculum. The trainers acknowledged difficulties associated with these requirements.

Teachers’ instructional practices and their ability to implement the curriculum effectively were the primary objectives of the trainers. Trainers focussed on supporting teachers as they learned to use Canadian instructional practices, and the teachers were expected to attend the instructional training. Brent stated that “most teachers strive to use the Canadian model. It is an expectation.”

Furthermore, all trainers who participated in this research emphasized the importance of implementing the curriculum as it was written. Mandy noted that “the teachers lack the ability to
be more creative or take advantage of learning opportunities that may arise unplanned.” Beth explained that she “encourages the teachers to follow the Maple Bear program. A lot of them do, but they think, ‘I should add this.’ The thing is that you really don't need to add anything.”

Barbra described a “quality assurance process” of the Maple Bear franchise, whereby a “quality assurance person goes to the school for one or two days . . . and looks for certain things . . . they are looking for . . . program implementation.” Trainers who were interviewed collectively described the curriculum as thorough and prescriptive, and that it was the role of the teacher to follow the program explicitly as laid out.

An accountability measure had been put into place through school policy to ensure that teachers applied a Canadian model of instructional practices and implemented the program as written. Teachers submitted their lesson plans weekly or bi-weekly to their coordinators, depending on their schools. Anna commented, “In lots of ways, the teachers are required to be more accountable than some of our teachers here in Canada. . . . [Maple Bear] teachers always have to turn in their lesson plans. They always have to have their lesson plan on the table, describing exactly what they are doing . . . I think this is really critical.” Trainers stressed that the teachers’ lesson planning process was crucial. Beth echoed this sentiment:

The other thing that I think is really important at the school level, is teacher planning. So they have the Maple Bear program. It's right there and it's written for them. But it's not a script so you have to take that program and then turn it into an operational plan and then follow that.

As many of the trainers pointed out, using a Canadian model of instruction and program implementation could be very challenging for teachers who had not been exposed to this methodology or model of instruction in their own education or professional training. For this reason, trainers asserted that professional development and training should not really be an option; it should be more of a requirement of the role. Sara identified three areas of training that
were required by schools: initial training, in-school training, and central training. Another responsibility of the teacher was to give direction to teacher assistants, and to pass on teaching suggestions gleaned from their training sessions.

**Coordinators.** Trainers compared the role of coordinators to that of a school principal in Canada. Most noted a change in this role from traditional management to pedagogical leadership, which would require specialized training.

In the interviews, trainers recounted that the role of the coordinator in the Maple Bear school was complex and multidimensional, comparable to the role of the principal in Canada. Brent stated, “In terms of the administrative structure, it is similar [to Canadian schools] in that they have coordinators. It is different in that the director is often the owner and makes decisions that have to be business-based, as well as educationally based.” Business-based decisions, as this trainer put it, were exacerbated by the extremely rapid growth of schools.

According to trainers, some of the administrative responsibilities of the coordinators included paying bills, managing resources, and staff recruitment. In the context of a fast-growing school and a fast-growing company, trainers described how each of these responsibilities were impacted. Anna stated, “The coordinator controls the money and clearly it’s a private business.” Managing the money meant that coordinators also had control over the school’s resources and materials. Anna stated that she worked “really hard with the coordinator to say that those books need to be in a classroom, not in a central area.” Alison added, “Sometimes coordinators are just overwhelmed with the recruitment part.” Trainers indicated that because schools were growing at such a dramatic rate, keeping up with the challenging task of hiring qualified teachers could become overwhelming.
Some of the trainers spent some time during their interviews reflecting on how the coordinator role was being operationalized; some trainers suggested that a strong administrative focus for the role of coordinators portrayed a more traditional model, with less of an emphasis on pedagogical leadership. As Anna stated,

The coordinators are really, really busy. They usually have their own job, and they have this pedagogical leadership role as a sideline of that job. They have to make sure they are paying the bills, and there isn’t a lot of time for them to attend the training.

Several trainers indicated that the coordinator’s responsibilities differed from school to school, with the focus shifting from administrative to pedagogical. The sentiment that the role of coordinator should be more clearly defined, and that the pedagogical aspect should be supported, was recounted in numerous conversations. As Alison commented, “I think the role needs to be specifically defined with a balance with some of the pedagogy and leadership, and management.” Anna agreed with this statement: “Those coordinators have to be strong pedagogical leaders and not just recruiters here or managers.” Both trainers described how teachers and schools could really benefit from strong pedagogical leaders within the school.

From the comments made by the various trainers, it became clear that if the current definition of the role of coordinator did include a component of pedagogical leadership, then specific coordinator-training must occur to support this transition. According to Tricia, “The schools need support to move away from the more traditional model of administration.” Alison reinforced this assertion by stating, “I think that in all my experiences, the coordinators were really searching; they needed lots of help, but they were really open.” Anna added the following comment, speaking to the importance of training coordinators to become strong pedagogical leaders:

I would continue to say that the key is professional development for the coordinators. It’s important to select coordinators that have a willingness to learn, and not necessarily have
all the necessary skills, but just the willingness to learn. I think the focus really needs to be on helping the coordinators to learn because they are the key to success in each and every school. Then it's their job to help the teachers. It is impossible to have Maple Bear always in-servicing teachers. . . . I would have preferred to spend more time with the coordinators, as opposed to the teachers . . . to build that mentorship.

All of the trainers who participated in this research highlighted the importance of coordinator training. Although Beth was unsure of the scale and scope of coordinator training that was already in place, she indicated that it did occur. Beth spoke of “coordinator training . . . I heard them [franchise administrators] talking about training coordinators, I heard them talking about training for new coordinators. So there is coordinator-training that goes on.”

**Teacher Assistants.** Trainers indicated that the TAs were often groomed to become teachers. Similar to Canada, TAs in Brazil took their direction primarily from the classroom teacher with whom they were working.

**Professional Development.** The trainers traveled from Canada to help Maple Bear staff and owners improve their professional practice during in-service sessions. They credited Maple Bear’s rigorous training model for the success of the franchise. Three forms of training comprised this professional development: initial training, central training, and in-school training.

The interviewees described the role of the trainers as working with teachers on instructional practices and program implementation. According to respondents, trainers flew from Canada to Brazil to provide ongoing professional development to a variety of stakeholders at various stages during the school year. All the participants involved in this research said that their training experiences with Maple Bear were extremely positive. Beth expressed her appreciation by saying, “You can give me a group of Brazilian teachers to do professional development with any day.” Alison stated that after retiring from her current job in the Canadian school system, she planned to “embark on a journey with Maple Bear.” Most of the trainers who
participants in this research have engaged in a variety of roles and jobs within the company and have been very pleased with their experiences.

Professional experience with the Maple Bear franchise was cited as one factor that influenced the effectiveness of training. Referring to her background experience with the company, Anna stated, “I was better prepared and I had a better understanding of focus ahead. I felt like I could kind of let go, but hold on to the philosophy of Maple Bear.” Beth echoed this sentiment in her comment, “After a while, I felt a little like a family doctor who knows a little bit about a lot of different things, as opposed to the specialist.” These participants described how their experience with the company enabled them to develop a better understanding of the Maple Bear philosophy. This encouraged them to become more autonomous, and enabled them to use their personal expertise and critical thinking skills to deliver poignant and personalized professional development, through the lens of the Maple Bear philosophy.

All of the trainers who participated in this research spoke strongly about the importance of training. Five trainers added that the transition from a traditional model of education to the Canadian model could be difficult. Steven stated that “the majority of the teachers did not grow up in a system that uses many of these strategies, so it is a lot to learn.” Chris echoed these sentiments: “Many teachers find it difficult to adapt to this new model and need extra support and professional development, as it is so different from what they have experienced.” These trainers implied that the instructional practices utilized in this model were not intuitive for Brazilian teachers, because this was not the model that they were educated in or taught to use in their previous professional training. As a result, Mandy explained, “The teachers do not come to the program being well-trained or knowledgeable in Canadian teaching practices.” Fortunately, trainers reported that most teachers were eager to learn the new instructional practices.
The attitude of most Maple Bear teachers toward professional development was reported by trainers to be very positive. According to Jackie, “The teachers were receptive to new ideas and methodologies, and were eager to implement them.” Trainers explained that teachers and trainers alike recognized the importance of professional development. With this mutual engagement, Sara stated, “You feel that most teachers are taking advantage of the training and embracing the trainers when they come to the school.” Training was universally touted as a critical factor in the success of the school by teachers and the trainers.

According to trainers who were questioned, the high value placed on training was a sentiment that was reflected in the policies of the company (the Maple Bear franchise) itself. As Beth stated,

They [Maple Bear] don’t say, ‘Here’s a program, pay us $1000s of dollars for it and then say, ‘Have a good life.’ They have ongoing training, at different levels, and I think that’s what sets Maple Bear apart and a really good part of the program.

Beth suggested that the success of Maple Bear was a direct result of their ongoing training.

Training, as recounted by respondents, was at the heart of Maple Bear; it was ubiquitous. As Brent explained, “There is always training happening.” All stakeholders in the company were engaged in training. Two of the trainers interviewed cited examples of training that was scheduled for teachers, coordinators, owners, quality assurance personnel, and for the trainers themselves. Further to this, trainers from Maple Bear pointed out that training occurred through various methods, stages, and contexts. Franchise trainers supported schools through initial training, central training, and in-school training.

Initial training was depicted as an important phase of the Maple Bear school set-up process. Two trainers described why this phase was so critical, noting that it was an opportunity to impart the Maple Bears’ educational philosophy to all school stakeholders, in order to develop
the desired school environment, and to prepare teachers and coordinators for implementing the program. Beth described initial training as follows:

When a new school opens, they do what is called initial training. So usually a Canadian trainer goes to the school and does the initial training. They talk about the Maple Bear philosophy/model, the immersion learning (which is different from ESL), and how to implement the program. They help with planning. They help with classroom set-up.

Barbra indicated that prior to this initial training, a senior member of the administrative team at Maple Bear went to the school to work “with the owners on the physical plan and the policy.” Initial materials and resources were purchased at this time, so that, as Sara stated, “Hopefully when the trainer goes in, they have materials or resources – or else they’re on their way – so they can do that initial training.” In this way, right from the very beginning, the school owner acquired some one-on-one professional development, while the coordinators and teachers also had an opportunity to receive some initial professional training.

The Maple Bear trainers who were interviewed indicated that central training occurred twice per year during the two school breaks: once in July and once in January. The sessions were hosted in one central location such as Sao Paulo, a very large urban center, where teachers from multiple schools could come to attend the seminar. One trainer shared that this training occurred during teachers’ vacation time. Despite this timing, two trainers described central training to be extremely popular. Beth said that central training “is growing unbelievably. When I was there in January to do central training, they had several hundred people lined up for various courses. . . . we were astounded at the interest in central training.” This form of training was popular because it permitted teachers and coordinators to select sessions in “science and math and various components of literacy, and the world of early childhood, early toddler training.” Although these sessions were popular, trainers believed that in-school training was the most effective method for professional growth and development.
In-school training was touted as the most effective phase of professional development by five of the trainers who were involved with in-school training. When asked about the frequency and timing of training, Barbra noted that with the in-school training, “each semester, there is training. There are two Brazilian semesters, so each semester a trainer goes to the school.” Beth further described the process for determining how long and how often trainers went to schools:

The way that it worked is that you get a trainer for X number of weeks, based on the size of the school. So if you're a smaller school you'll get a trainer for one week, for example. A medium sized school might get three weeks, then another bigger school might get it for eight weeks or whatever. Maple Bear provides that every semester . . . the key thing is that every semester, a Canadian trainer goes in for a period of time to work in the school during operational time.

Anna compared the in-school training to the practicum process that Canadian teachers undergo when they take their education degree in university. She stated,

I think they need ongoing professional development because, even though they have the course (central training), they need somebody to give feedback. It’s just like doing their practicum as university students. So you do all your coursework in the classroom, and then you go out to the school where the kids are and then you put that theory into practice; but you have someone there to help facilitate that with you. They will have conversations with you and, kind of, act like your coach.

According to the trainers interviewed, in-school training could look different for each trainer. The areas of focus might differ from trainer to trainer, as well. When Alison described her approach to in-school training, she suggested that you have to “look at what you have control over: how you organize your classrooms . . . the materials . . . the curriculum, and how you teach that, and you have control over the parental involvement. You have control over your time.” For Alison, each school and each teacher had a different set of needs to address. Jackie stated that classroom management was an issue that she had consistently encountered. She remarked, “The classroom management seems to be challenging until the teachers understand that developing respectful relationships with the students is the key to success.” Jackie worked with teachers on
creating relationships, in order to prevent future issues with behavior management. Another trainer provided an example of a time when a teacher gave students worksheets for homework without providing any feedback to their work. This trainer implied that these are the types of practical opportunities for trainers to highlight and demonstrate the principles of the Maple Bear philosophy and instructional practices as teachable moments.

According to all of the trainers interviewed, teachers were genuinely very open and willing to learn during these in-school training sessions. Beth concurred, “I went to that school and the teachers are saying, ‘Come into my classroom, help me with this, help me with that.’ So . . . they are very open to that training, but it's a long process.” All of the trainers in this research suggested, in one way or another, that although the learning curve for teachers was very steep, a willingness to engage in professional development opportunities paired with a rigorous, comprehensive, and ongoing training process ensured that the overall impact on teachers’ professional growth was positive.

School Culture. Trainers attributed much of their success to the Maple Bear school culture, which they perceived as committed to professional growth and development. They reported that teachers embraced the training because of its practicality and its focus on Canadian methodologies.

All of the trainers interviewed in this research described their experiences with Maple Bear fondly. The general feeling described by trainers was that they were happy with how their training was received. Alison stated,

From a personal level, it helped me meta-cognitively, and inspires me to see such dedicated and committed and excited people working with children and it energizes me as well and so more than anything, every day you do your practice and then when you get to take that practice somewhere else, it’s really even more exciting.”
Chris echoed this sentiment, “I had a great experience and was able to provide some additional mentoring to my Brazilian colleagues.”

Trainers described teachers as willing and open to professional development. Interviewees communicated that the model of education advanced by Maple Bear trainers was innovative and exciting for teachers; in turn, this fresh new approach had a positive impact on the school culture. Jackie stated, “Teachers were receptive to new ideas and methodologies, and eager to implement them.” Mandy affirmed this ideation, “Staff and families are receptive to a Canadian model and embrace the experience.” Anna described teachers as “such Whipper Snappers . . . They sucked up everything.” All the trainers who participated in this researched remarked how receptive most teachers and coordinators were to training.

According to Anna, it was a real challenge when teachers did not embrace the Maple Bear philosophy. She said, “Experienced teachers, especially those that were British trained, were the hardest because they were so set in their ways. You could see that they have not embraced the philosophy of Maple Bear.” Anna described the friction that would occur when a teacher would try to implement the Maple Bear program using traditional teaching methodologies. Her sentiment reflected the general belief that if teachers and coordinators were open and willing to develop as professionals, their experience with Maple Bear would be positive.

Trainers came from Canada and had previous experience working with Canadian teachers on pedagogy and instruction. Three of the trainers compared the attitudes toward the professional development of teachers from Canada with their new experiences with training teachers from Brazil. Beth stated,

I went to Thailand . . . I taught a course for someone from Winnipeg and so they were young teachers . . . I couldn’t believe the difference working with them as compared to working with a group of Brazilian teachers . . . I don’t want to sound negative, but they just didn’t engage in the same way. It was just different.
Beth suggested that it may have been the nature of the training that was different; Brazilian teachers were getting training on the job in a manner that would have some direct practical implications to their actual work. She also suggested that because it occurred in school, rather than in a classroom environment after school, teachers were more willing and open to learn. Barbra noted, “This is very different from Canadians. How many Canadian teachers would you know that would welcome a trainer to come into their classroom? That wouldn’t happen in the same way.”

Barbra asserted that there was something unique about the culture of Maple Bear schools that inspired teachers to want to learn and develop. She suggested that teachers generally felt supported. Jackie affirmed this claim by noting, “Regular teacher-trainer visits, evening workshops, and holiday meetings support the professional development of teachers.” Both of these trainers affirmed that it was this comprehensive support that nurtured a positive school culture.

**English Language Learning.** Trainers defined English immersion education as having English as the sole language in the classroom. This immersion model, although challenging to both staff and students, contributed to the Canadian identity of Maple Bear schools.

Two trainers discussed how students at Maple Bear schools were learning English in an immersion setting. The trainers referred to classes where Portuguese students were learning ELA, math, and science in a classroom where the teacher, the TAs, and all the other students spoke exclusively English. Jackie suggested that Maple Bear was unique in that this immersion setting also included educational immersion: “This includes an active, student-centered classroom with outcome based lessons.” Jackie further noted that not only were students being immersed in the English language, but they were also immersed in the culture of experiential and...
social education. Beth postulated that immersion education was what made the Maple Bear model of education truly Canadian, asserting that the Maple Bear’s model of immersion directly reflected the immersion strategies that were implemented in Canada. She summarized her ideas as follows:

I guess what makes it Canadian is the immersion strategies. Canada has been having immersion learning for over 40 years, so the whole idea of having a class where you are learning in a particular language, as opposed to ESL. So the whole immersion idea is Canadian. When I go to Asia, for example, they say to me, ‘there are a lot of schools that is saying that they are immersion,’ but they're really not in the same way that Mabel Bear is.

Jackie added her thoughts on the planning strategies that were required of Maple Bear teachers. Jackie pointed out that using lessons that had been designed for native English speakers in English as an Additional Language (EAL) classrooms can be difficult. Through her experience, “just reading the math and science textbooks in grade 4 to 7 can be very challenging for EAL students in Canada and impossible for students in Brazil.” She argued that complex text and academic language could be potential barriers to the learning of EAL students.

**Resources.** Resources and materials were a crucial component of the Maple Bear program, but trainers identified difficulties associated with access from Canadian suppliers, financial implications, and the need to train teachers for their use in the classroom. Trainers reported that local schools lacked the expertise to choose and prioritize purchases.

Three trainers explained that it was vitally important that appropriate materials and resources be available for teachers when they were implementing the Maple Bear program. Beth highlighted sand/ water tables and quality literature as extremely valuable tools for effective learning. She commented,

I think sand and water tables are really important for the centers. I think it’s really important that they have that kind of material and that they use it. They are getting better and better at that. So also books are a really important part of the program, and they need to have quality literature.
Barbra discussed the value of math manipulatives and quality literature. She noted that “math manipulatives are really important part. Some schools are really well resourced in that area but some, not so much.” Anna discussed how important art supplies are to learning, pointing out that “every classroom needs to be equipped with hundreds of markers and lots of pencils and all kinds of materials and papers and books.”

Not only did schools need access to resources and materials, but additionally teachers needed to be trained in how these resources could be used to impact student learning. Alison described one situation that exemplified this point,

They hired somebody who had had a Montessori background and she had all of this Montessori equipment. And Montessori materials are extremely expensive . . . and so, just as I was leaving, they were just unpacking them . . . What a waste! Unfortunately, no one knew how to use them.

Although all three trainers ascribed to the critical importance of resources, they alluded to challenges that schools faced in accessing sufficient resources to support the Maple Bear program. Maple Bear schools were reported to be growing at an extremely rapid pace, which made accessing sufficient resources more difficult. Alison explained,

I think Maple Bear is really good at stating what the requirements are, but not all owners and coordinators are able to do it all at once. So I think, I would want to believe that everyone has that goal in mind and that they're not trying to skimp out, but they just can't get everything at the same time and I understand that.

Anna highlighted another potential issue related access to resources. She suggested that owners were sometimes unaware of what resources they needed to purchase for their teachers. She described a situation where one owner told her, “Nobody ever told me that we don’t have the materials, and my coordinator never told me that I had to buy a set of books for each classroom and I am very willing to do that.” In this case, the trainer pointed out that financial burden was not an issue; this was rather an issue of communication and simply not knowing the program.
This model and program were new to coordinators and owners. Purchasing new and appropriate resources for this specific program, as Anna pointed out, was new territory for these schools.

Beth and Barbra raised a unique challenge for teachers in relation to resource acquisition. They pointed out that Canadian-made resources and materials could be difficult to purchase and access from Brazil. Chris stated, “Some materials are not available here in Brazil that are in Canada, and teachers have to modify the ideas or the materials to be successful.” When asked how schools obtained resources from Canada, Beth’s response was, “With great difficulty and at great expense. A lot of them are brought in from Canada. A lot of them deal with Canadian companies, so they are imported. There aren’t a lot of resources there.” Barbra described a similar situation:

At one school, they tell the story about a few years ago, they bought a Literacy Place guided reading material. They never got them out of customs. In fact, I think they just gave up thousands of dollars of books. . . . I think that they’re getting better at sourcing the materials. They have certainly had their challenges.

Curriculum. Experienced trainers created the Maple Bear curriculum, but teachers were responsible for implementing it in the classroom. Trainers commended the curriculum for being engaging, lesson-based, and prescriptive. However, they also saw a need for continued revision and for professional development to help teachers adapt the lessons to their students’ needs.

All of the trainers who participated in this thesis research, and who were responsible for writing curriculum, reported that they had more than 10 years of teaching experience and a master’s degree in education. Alison, for example, described her educational preparation as follows:

I have the background to do many things because my specialty is in early childhood education. I was a math and science teacher for many years. I taught that the grade five, six, seven, eight level and I really understand curriculum. My master’s is in the curriculum.
Beth commented that “Maple Bear hires experienced educators to write curriculum.” According to these trainers, the Maple Bear curriculum writers used a combination of their own personal experiences with education and the current best practices in education when they designed the curriculum. All of the trainers interviewed for this research affirmed that the theory and pedagogical underpinnings of this curriculum seemed sound. Alison described her process of generating a unit in the science program. In her description, she identified the factors she considered in the design. She said,

I made it really engaging, and exciting based on my experience, and what I knew about children and their development . . . and about their interests, and making sure that the principles of education are always at the forefront, and there is always opportunities within the context of the unit for engagement, so they are engaged and they understand, they collaborate, and everyone’s included, and the assessment is at the forefront. I kept those in mind as I was doing the unit. I believed it was successful.

In this statement, Alison referred to the need for the curriculum to be engaging and exciting, to be developmentally appropriate, to accommodate for a variety of interests and multiple entry points for engagement, to create opportunities for collaboration and inclusion, and to consider how students will be assessed. Jackie described her understanding of why the Maple Bear curriculum was strong. She stated, “I believe in the Canadian model. It is based in research and it is well renowned, world wide, as one of the best.”

According to participants, the curriculum itself was more of a lesson-based program than it was an outcome-based curriculum. Interviewees noted that the Maple Bear program was organized by themes and units. Anna stated that “the Mabel Bear program, particularly in the younger grades, is arranged around themes.” Within each theme, Anne pointed out that units were organized by a series of daily lesson plans. As Beth described it,

Using the Maple Bear model, they've done all that for you. It basically tells you, “In this time block, do guided reading. Use these materials, follow these teacher plans, ask these questions.” So if you follow the program, it's laid out for you.
All of the trainers involved in this research at one point or another called this curriculum “prescriptive.” Tricia declared, “The curriculum is very specific and is comprehensive, if followed properly.” Fidelity of curriculum implementation was repeatedly cited by trainers as pivotal to the success of the program.

Anna provided a rationale for why the curriculum was written in such a prescriptive manner. She stated, “It seemed so prescriptive; however, I was always reminded that these teachers don’t have the pedagogical background, and they need that [the curriculum] as their guide.” She noted that because teachers were new to this model of education, a very detailed and prescriptive curriculum was necessary to steer them down the correct path. Alison described her experience as a new teacher and related it to the experience of a Maple Bear teacher. She stated that as a new teacher, a detailed lesson plan made me feel more confident and it allowed me to then diverge. I kept in my mind about what it was like when I was a beginning teacher. Even though I had the pedagogical training and the background, and when I looked at it I said, “Yes, this is just a workbook.” . . . but keeping those things in mind that I just mentioned . . . I thought it was really critical.

Having a detailed lesson plan gave Alison the confidence to teach in a manner that she knew was sound, but once she grasped the methodology, she felt that she could diverge and become creative.

Beth pointed out that after a teacher had some experience with the curriculum, there was some flexibility. She stated, “If you understand it, there is flexibility within. But when you are starting out and it says, ‘Say this to the kids . . .’” Alison suggested, “If Maple Bear were to be able to sustain their teachers for any period of time, then I feel that the curriculum would become more effective and evolving because the teacher gets to feel that they are free.” Anna, Alison, and Beth recounted that those teachers who were new to Maple Bear and new to this model of
education needed to implement the curriculum as it was written. After teachers became more comfortable with using this curriculum and the methodology, there would be more opportunity for personal flexibility and creativity within the plan.

Two trainers raised concerns about the curriculum being too prescriptive. Jackie stated, “Sometimes it is hard to follow a pre-made program that the teacher did not create on his or her own.” Jackie described the challenges that some teachers faced when trying first to interpret, and then implement, a curriculum that was so new and different from what they were used to. She suggested that the curriculum was not intuitive for teachers, because “most teachers teach how they were taught. It is challenging for teachers to take risks to try methodologies and were outside their realm of experience.”

According to two trainers, the curriculum was consistently being revised, rewritten, and developed. Barbra stated, “They also hire people to revise and update the curriculum on a regular basis.” Chris echoed this notion: “The manual is detailed and is being elaborated on regularly.” Both trainers stressed that this type of curricular development was a critical factor that legitimized the program and helped to ensure that it was up to date, relevant, and effective.

Cultural relevance and language were factors highlighted by three trainers as an important consideration when implementing curriculum. Anna suggested that culture tended to be built into the curriculum through experience. When individual teachers made meaning of learning through their own lens, they made personal connections to their own culture. Anna stated, “There are all kinds of opportunities for people to go out and photograph and experience and smell, and to touch and hear rain forest sounds that we don't have, and so I tried to do that cultural part.” Beth indicated that although culture had not been included in the curriculum specifically, teachers were encouraged to celebrate Brazilian holidays or traditional celebrations. She remarked,
I don't know if it's actually included in the curriculum, but they are encouraged to celebrate Brazilian holidays . . . So some of the themes do apply to Brazilian culture. Some perhaps not so much, but there are opportunities . . . the schools take time out and do things to celebrate Carnivale . . . But I know there aren't specific themes that are written around Brazilian culture. There are some that apply; for example, rain forest is a theme that fits very well with Brazil.

Chris raised the concern that “sometimes the vocabulary is difficult for students learning a new language and not everything can be covered.” Jackie made a similar statement: “Adaptations are required because the students first language is Portuguese and their vocabulary in English is limited.” Brent also noted, “Some accept students a bit older with limited English experience, so that needs to be adapted.” Brent referred to students who joined Maple Bear at a later age, and therefore did not have as much experience being immersed in English language and Canadian teaching practices.

Trainers highlighted a few challenges that teachers faced when implementing the curriculum. The need for more formative assessment strategies was highlighted by one trainer as a recommendation to curriculum writers. Jackie stated she “would recommend that strategies for assessment ‘for’ and ‘as’ learning be incorporated into the curriculum.” Also, two trainers suggested that the time it took to complete the lessons was sometimes unrealistic or inaccurate. Chris commented that “most of the teachers I worked with followed the lessons as written, but ran out of time to implement all of the lessons.”

**Methodology.** Trainers focused on the teachers’ transition from traditional Brazilian pedagogy to the current Canadian pedagogy. They noted differences in teaching and assessment, and the need to juxtapose culture and language. Trainers also recognized the critical role of parental acceptance when making significant changes to children’s education.

When discussing the teaching methodology of the Maple Bear model, trainers made comparisons to the traditional model of education that was practiced when Maple Bear teachers
APPENDIX F – RESULTS – MAPLE BEAR SCHOOLS

went to school. This traditional model was also understood through the pedagogy used in their university education. Additionally, the traditional model was still reportedly prevalent in many public schools in Brazil in 2016. Trainers unpacked the overall differences between the traditional model of education and the Maple Bear model of education. The traditional model is very teacher centered, focuses on memorizing facts, and aims to prepare students for a university entry exam. The Maple Bear model was described by trainers as one that engages experiential, exploratory, or discovery learning. According to trainers, this style of instruction ensured that students were actively engaged and were at the center of the learning experience, while the role of the teacher was to learn alongside the students. Trainers stressed the importance of play in student learning. This could be achieved through hands-on activities, centers, games, and music. Some trainers highlighted the importance of differentiated instruction and multi-modal assessment. Formative assessment strategies were also highlighted as key components of the Maple Bear Model. Incorporating culture and language into the classroom environment was portrayed by three trainers as having a minimal negative impact on instruction and learning. A few trainers suggested that, although most parents bought into the Maple Bear model, some parents expressed concerns about the methodology after they had seen the model in practice.

When discussing the Maple Bear model, six trainers used the traditional model of education in Brazil as a standard by which to explain how uniqueness of the model. Brent stated that “the traditional model treats teachers as givers of all knowledge and students as empty vessels to be filled.” Rhonda reiterated this notion by stating, “In Brazil, it’s changing, but it’s very passive learning. Kids go to school and listen to teachers and do lots of exercises and they don’t usually have the chance to learn from experience.” Trainers explained how this was different from the Maple Bear model of education. Tricia articulated that “the Canadian
methodology is more effective in moving forward from more traditional rote-style of learning used in [traditional] schools.” Six different trainers used terms like experiential learning, discovery learning, and exploratory learning to describe the Maple Bear model of teaching and learning.

Beth stated, “Maple Bear is based on Canadian practices and the children will learn through discovery.” Mandy introduced a comparable concept: “The option for exploratory learning and learning through play is desirable along with language learning, leadership and responsibility.” As discussed by participants, discovery learning and exploratory learning implied that the students were actively involved in their own learning. Jackie was one of two different trainers who used a popular expression to describe the role of the teacher in this model: “Teachers are moving away from being the ‘sage on the stage’ and towards the ‘guide on the side.’ Students are in activity centers and are actively involved in their own learning.” Brent reinforced this concept of active learning by stating that “the Canadian model seeks to invite and teach children to be active learners and participants in their own learning.”

As six trainers pointed out, this active style of learning placed students at the center of the learning process. Jill stated that “child-centered learning experiences that build independence are successful at this school.” Jackie reinforced that the Maple Bear model “includes an active, student-centered classroom with outcome-based lessons.” Brent added, “The learners are high stakeholders in their own learning.” All of these trainers emphasized the importance of students being actively involved and at the center of the learning process. Furthermore, several trainers provided examples and specific features of the Maple Bear program that helped to move this theory into practice.
Play-based learning was one form of active, student-centered learning that was highlighted by five trainers. Anna described “how important it is to play, and we know that children play to learn, not learn to play, and that children have to be involved in that play.” Barbra discussed how she saw teachers embracing this method: “I love the fact that they are learning about the importance of play and I saw a lot of that.” Trainers described how students were provided opportunities to play during activity centers, games, and songs. Chris articulated how incorporating play and learning centers had improved the Maple Bear program:

The Canadian strategies really help children learn. Centers and free play are two additions that have enhanced the program. The children are learning skills quickly and have the chance to practice them during daily learning centers.

Beth added that if Canadian teachers were to go to a Brazilian classroom, they would “see the same kinds of strategies being used. So that means, like using learning centers, structuring it so that students learn through manipulating materials, and discovery learning.” Learning centers, hands-on activities, and games were strategies for promoting learning that was experiential and active.

Brent suggested that differentiated instruction and assessment were extremely important. He also added that formative assessment practices were important. These types of strategies also provided teachers with opportunities for differentiated instruction and assessment. Brent stated:

We know a one-size-fits-all model only works for some students and doesn't meet the needs of all learners. The Canadian model of education strives to meet the needs of all learners through formative assessment, guiding teaching practice, lesson progression, and differentiation. What matters is that students are provided the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways that support them and the Canadian model of education supports learning this way.

Three trainers who participated in this research stated that another critical component of the Maple Bear model was an emphasis on the value of formative assessment. In some cases, this proved to be an area of practice that required further training. Jackie described a situation where
a teacher she was working with had not been providing students with feedback, stating that there needed to be some professional development in this particular area. She alluded to a need for more guided learning, whereby teachers provided ongoing formative feedback for their students. Jackie said,

I saw lessons that were rushed through with little feedback to the students to help them to improve their learning. There was a focus on assigning worksheets to be completed at home with little or no corrections to the worksheets which would give feedback needed to improve.

Three trainers discussed the juxtaposition of culture and language between Canadian curriculum and practices and Brazilian learners. Brent offered the following: “In my opinion, it doesn't matter where schools are or in what language.” He suggested that language and culture had little influence on student learning. When asked if there was cultural friction or any negative impacts of a Canadian model used by Brazilian teachers, Darren reinforced Brent’s belief, noting that “they are best teaching practices that are founded in research and are not dependent on culture. They are best teaching practices because they promote learning regardless of ability.” In these trainer’s opinions, the differences in culture and language had no impact on student learning. Barbra discussed one possible rationale for why parents chose to send their children to Maple Bear schools:

I think in a lot of cases, take Brazil for example, the public school system is awful. So they are looking for alternatives to that and so they look around to see what is out there so maple bear seems to have what they are looking for in trying to find something that is better than the public school system. I'm really not too sure. Once they hear about the Canadian model they typically like it.

According to three trainers, most parents had bought into the methodology of the Maple Bear model. However, for the same reason that some teachers struggled initially with program implementation, some parents struggled with maintaining this belief in the program after they had seen it in practice. As trainers suggested, parents were, in some cases, concerned about the
effectiveness of learning because this model did not reflect their own educational experiences. Darren highlighted this issue: “While parents choose to pay to send their children to the school, they are unfamiliar with Canadian teaching practices and often question the validity of them. In some schools, they must defend the model year over year and it is tiresome.” Beth reinforced this notion:

Parents say, “Yes, this is what I want for my child,” but lots of times they change, and they’re excited, but they kind of step back into what they know, and they ask me, “Why aren’t you sending home workbooks?” . . . and so we say, “Well, this is the way we are trying to teach them.” We tell them we’re putting more emphasis on the process, as opposed to the product, and so you’re not always going to have that kind of product evidence. We can provide evidence in other ways. . . . In different cultures, they are looking for that evidence that they are used to.

**Student Learning.** In addition to explicit academic outcomes, trainers identified implicit learning outcomes, such as character education, social skills, and 21st century readiness. They also addressed parental concerns that the Maple Bear curriculum would not adequately prepare their children for university.

When trainers discussed student learning, three participants spoke about the academic outcomes that students acquired. Tricia commented that the program had a “strong literacy component. Quality literature was at the foundation of the program. The comprehensive literacy model is used throughout the program.” According to Rhonda, students were learning in all subjects, “particularly the way kids learn in math.” Academic outcomes, however, were not the domain of learning that most trainers chose to speak about. Trainers cited several other learning outcomes (beyond those written directly into the curriculum) that were noteworthy; for example, five trainers described how the Maple Bear model promoted a passion for learning among students. Steven pointed out, “The students are prepared not only for success at secondary level, but are instilled with a passion for lifelong learning.” Beth described students at Maple Bear
schools as “happy learners.” According to Rhonda, “It's a completely different mindset. It's focused on preparing kids for adult life and teaching them how to think and learn for themselves.” This mindset and attitude towards learning could result in many other different positive outcomes.

Two trainers described how this positive attitude toward learning helped to create a respectful and responsible classroom culture. Chris discussed the value of instilling responsibility in children by “giving students tasks to make them become more independent, such as packing their own backpacks, working at independent learning centers, having them make good choices about behaviour, and respecting their classmates and teachers.” Chris alluded to another significant outcome that many other trainers discussed: independence. Trainers directly discussed how the Maple Bear model worked to prepare students for the 21st century by promoting independence, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and social skills. Tricia stated that Maple Bear “is a model that prepares students for the 21st century by using inquiry-based learning, activity, discovery, etc.” Chris reinforced this idea when he pointed out how “there is a desire for an alternative way to learn for many middle- and upper-class people in Brazil.” Trainers noted that they recognized that the world was changing and the education for their children needed to be different for them to be competitive in the world market, including reading and writing in English. Trainers claimed that they aspired to create a learning model that supported problem-solving, creativity, increased independence and collaboration. Steven further described how this program was successful in “promoting problem-solving, working together, thinking for themselves and not just producing an answer the teacher wants.” Rhonda elaborated on this point by describing how valuable social skills are learned through play: “They are also learning how to interact in a positive manner by sharing and taking turns during free play.” All
these trainers alluded to the fact that student learning did not mean memorizing content to prepare them for a test; it meant learning skills to prepare them for life.

Preparing students for standardized government assessments was identified as a real concern for many families in Brazil; the results of these tests have significant future implications for the student. Sara stated,

The other cultural factor that has an impact is that other countries have a so-called government test that is supposedly required so parents are sometimes worried: “Will this program prepare my child for that test?” But it’s interesting. I sometimes look at Maple Bear global schools of Facebook. I guess there was a posting a few weeks ago, which was of a school in Brazil where they showed a picture of their grade 5 student. The caption was there had been some Brazilian test, and the year five students had done really well on it. And the implication was that this is a testament to Maple Bear.

Beth described an interaction she had with a parent regarding how Maple Bear’s philosophy dealt with this issue. She remarked,

We don’t have to drill them for a particular test. We don't have to prepare them for the test as such, but the style of learning will enable them to do really well on the test. I thought that was kind of interesting . . . it is a struggle to convince them that critical thinking and problem-solving is the way to go, because they are like, ‘yeah but they need this content.’ And we’re like, “no they don’t.”

**Maple Bear School Owners and Franchise Administrators**

*Staff Recruitment and Retention.* O/FAs described teacher recruitment and retention challenges related to school locations, non-competitive salaries, and the need for specialized teachers in progressively higher grades. O/FAs outlined qualifications required for hiring teachers, preferably younger teachers who were fluent in English. Retention incentives included salary adjustments and professional development. The qualifications for hiring trainers focused educational expertise and academic preparedness.
O/FAs explained how the geographical location of their schools made staff recruitment simple. Julia reported working in a location that was rich with young English-speaking individuals who were looking for employment. She commented,

This area that we are in, we have the two major universities in the state . . . 20 minutes from the school . . . so they have good language courses, good education courses. In this community, it is very common to go to be an exchange student when you were a teenager and when you were in the middle of the university. You travel to be an au pair. This is about the culture of this region. So far, I didn’t have any trouble in finding good teachers.

Felipe noted that finding teachers used to be easy because the schools started with only one class, usually at the toddler age. Then, with each progressive year, the students became older and one more grade level was added. He explained that in the beginning,

it was so small that we didn’t need to recruit teachers. I just had [name] and [name] and [name] and [name] worked at the other school that I owned . . . we had five [students] at the start and it grew to 20 students . . . maybe more. Not many teachers needed. Now we have 40 teachers and assistants.

He went on to explain how recruitment had become more and more of a challenge each year.

O/FAs discussed common thoughts about the necessary qualifications for teachers. English language proficiency, teaching experiences, English experiences abroad, and a teaching certification were described as the most important qualifications. Julia asserted that in addition to teaching experience, English language proficiency was the most critical requirement, with international teaching exposure also being advantageous:

We focus on the language. There is nobody . . . that didn’t have any experience with teaching . . . So the first thing is the quality of the language. Do they have proficiency? Do they have an international certification? Education first and foremost, but you are also looking for language proficiency. We do like people who have lived abroad. So they have a different kind of approach concerning, not the language, but the whole thinking process . . . the teaching strategies. You know? When you’ve lived abroad . . . it’s different . . .

Felipe reinforced Julia’s belief that English language was important. Reflecting on the early days of Maple Bear, Felipe said they would hire teachers with good pedagogies and
mediocre English skills. Over time, they decided to change their approach. He explained that they began hiring teachers with quality English and less experience in teaching subjects other than English: “In the beginning, they had good pedagogies and their English was so-so. After the beginning, the teachers . . . they were only teaching English but from English schools, but not in other subjects . . . not bilingual.” He explained that the latter approach was successful.

One result of hiring staff based on language rather than teaching experience was that the overall age of staff was young. As Julia recounted, “Now-a-days, we have about 35 people working. I tell you that the age average would be around 30.” According to Julia, this was intentional. She stated,

Sometimes you struggle trying to decide to hire a young teacher with no experience, and then you can train them totally on a Canadian way. Or you hire a very experienced teacher, but you have to convince this person that everything that they have done in the past 10 years . . . it will change . . . I prefer the young ones.

She suggested that staff who were early in their career would be more likely to adopt a program and teaching methodology that was different from their own. Accordingly, all O/FAs who participated in this research indicated that teacher training was extremely critical.

Staff turnover was an issue at Maple Bear schools. Schools invested a lot of money into training their teachers. This training had become a valuable asset for the success of the Maple Bear schools, prompting one school to devise ways to retain its staff. Two school owners indicated that the promise of rigorous training and pedagogical support was often enough to convince teachers to stay at this school. Felipe declared,

The teachers are learning a new pedagogy. New techniques. If you don’t work here, you don’t learn that. In other schools, I imagine you get paid a little more money, but people want to work more here to learn the pedagogy and improve their career and they stay on here longer.
One school owner pointed out that her school had developed a sliding pay scale that considered experience and training. This incentivized teachers not only to take advantage of training opportunities, but to stay with the school. Julia described how this incentive was specific to that school and that it seemed to be successful. It also drew attention to the fact that salaries were a critical point of concern for teachers. Competitive salaries were used as leverage for recruitment and retention practices.

Complementary training was seen as a method to encourage retention and supplement the benefits/salary package. Julia stated,

So what we have done, in order to try to persuade them is to say, “It will be good for you, it is volunteer, you can go if you want to, but we have a career plan, so if you have training, if you have a positive attitude, if you have an international certification of proficiency, for example, in language . . . this will increase the salary. You will move on categories.”

The rapid rate of growth has presented a challenge for Maple Bear schools. When asked about how schools dealt with the fast rate of growth, Tanya communicated that the issue was becoming less pronounced. Tanya suggested that the perceived issues related to rapid growth constituted a growing pain that would gradually dissipate with time and persistent training. When asked about how the schools coped with the rapid growth, she responded,

Well, I guess it’s like with any explosion anywhere, you just deal with it . . . You run into your barriers like growing pains . . . I’d imagine the site would be a problem . . . probably hiring enough staff quickly, efficiently, and getting everybody on the same page . . . and teaching well . . . using the curriculum well. So, it takes time . . . people seem to be managing.

Another challenging issue, or “growing pain,” that emerged from the qualitative data was that as schools approached the senior years’ level, not only did teachers need to have the above-mentioned qualifications, but there was an emerging need for more advanced and specialized
expertise. Julia added that schools required teachers of chemistry and biology, for example, to have special training in these specific areas. Julia further described the issue:

You become too specific . . . then you have to have specialists. And in some areas . . . it’s easier to find . . . Math and physics, these ones, it’s okay. But then for the other subjects, biology, I receive lots of CVs, and resumes of people . . . My second grade teacher has a major in biology. She is a very good second grade teacher; her lessons are amazing. It’s nice because they study a lot and they work a lot in English. They have materials and that are attached to the language . . . But for the other subjects, I don’t know.

When asked about this particular issue, Tanya stated, “They are managing and they are being creative . . . so it’s working. The good thing is . . . the prescriptive curriculum and there are trainers coming. It all helps.” Tanya suggested that, because the curriculum was so specific, teachers without a specialized background in these content areas could still be successful because they were following a specific plan and receiving training on the implementation of that plan.

Tanya provided an example of how the franchise supported teachers who encountered growing pains. This anecdote provides an example of how the Maple Bear franchise supported schools as they navigated the inevitable pains of rapid school growth. Tanya remarked,

In one school, for example, there was a year 3 teacher who has resigned and won’t be able to teach next year . . . and they can’t seem to find another year three teacher. So the coordinator is going to jump in and do the year three program. But they are worried that they won’t have enough leadership in the building until they can hire someone . . . so I’m sending someone with principal experience and curriculum, to help them for three months . . . transition plan, support the year 3, and also help the leadership continue and school to manage and keep going until they can fix their problem and hire people.

Tanya clarified how trainers were recruited by Maple Bear. She stated that many trainers applied to a posting on the website and that word-of-mouth was another way of recruiting trainers. Tanya added, “They email me or send me their CV and I meet with them. Check their references.” She explained,

Every school gets a trainer twice a year in semester 1 and semester 2. Some schools are up to 12 weeks. It’s based on your enrollment, your teaching staff, and your willingness to have more. It is part of the franchise agreement that maple bear will provide MB trainers based on your enrollment and size.
When asked whether Maple Bear was keeping up with the need for trainers in schools, Tanya replied, “. . . barely.”

Tanya also described the key qualifications of trainers: professional experience in education, master’s level of education, and specific personal skills and experiences. She relayed the following in relation to desirable trainer qualities:

On our website, if you are interested in becoming a trainer, we have all of the qualifications listed on there. I think we’d like you to have lots of experience in the field of education, for sure a Bachelor of Education, and I believe there is a master’s listed on there, but I have hired people who don’t have their master’s. It’s just about a good range of experience from early years to middle years, with a diverse background of teaching in the classroom, to resource, to expertise in reading or math or science . . . just a good skill set, able to think on feet quickly . . . If you encounter problems, you are able to strategize . . . feeling comfortable and enjoying the challenge of being in a new country and be able to cope and . . . navigate through all that.

**Teacher Assistants.** O/FAs identified the criteria for providing TA support in classrooms. They noted the roles that TAs played, including the potential for promotion to the role of teacher.

O/FAs stated that three factors determined whether a classroom would be supported with a TA: class size, the presence of students with special needs (who would need a TA), and the presence of toddlers. Tanya stated, “There is a certain amount of students that you need to qualify for a TA . . . I can’t remember the exact amount. Or, if there are special needs. Also, it is a requirement in toddler and early toddler. It is something like, for every 6 kids you have to have a nanny, a TA. I think this is a government regulation.”

According to O/FAs, TAs had a number of different roles in the classroom that depended on the age of the students, the range of student needs, and the skillset of the teacher. Ultimately, the teachers were responsible for giving direction to each TA. As Tanya stated, “How they are used varies . . . depending on the organization of teacher, the behavior of the children of the
room, depending on the strength of the teacher. The nannies change diapers and help with feeding.” Thus, the role of the TA was more distinct and defined in the toddler age.

Another reason for assigning a TA to a classroom may be to groom them to become teachers. O/FAs articulated how TAs, or “trainees” as one owner called them, were often groomed to become teachers. Julia explained how trainees came from a variety of background experiences and had been hired by her Maple Bear school to begin a new career as teachers. Julia described her TAs as “trainees” who “have traveled. They have done a couple of other specialty things and courses . . . They are not that experienced. Some of them come from language schools. They go through all the education courses again and they’re starting over.”

Coordinators. O/FAs reported that coordinators were responsible for a variety of managerial and educational leadership tasks. They noted the need for specialized training to prepare coordinators in Maple Bear schools.

From school to school, the role of the coordinator seemed to be inconsistent and inadequately defined. In fact, Tanya described the role as “a little bit murky.” She compared the role to that of a Canadian school principal. Two other O/FAs represented the role as a pedagogical leader in the school. Julia stated, “What [the coordinator] does is trains the teachers, supplies the program, and makes sure that they are doing the right thing inside the classroom.” Julia identified managing resources and providing an in-school quality assurance process as additional duties.

According to Tanya, the issue of an undefined coordinator’s role is one that had been observed and considered by the Maple Bear franchise. Tanya remarked, “I think the coordinators had a role that was bigger than it should have been. So, to address that, Maple Bear has made a coordinators’ handbook about the roles and expectations.” Additionally, specific coordinator
conferences had been scheduled to help provide these trainers with specific training. Tanya reported that Maple Bear did

have a coordinators’ workshop for experienced and new coordinators in the fall . . . There will be lots of workshops for coordinators as well. That’s during September for coordinators. It’s getting bigger and more in-depth. The coordinators have specific times for training and the teachers have specific times for training.

Unanimously, all of the school owners who participated in this research affirmed the value of training their coordinators. School owners demonstrated this belief by sending their teachers to conferences. Tanya stated, “It is my understanding that they get their flights paid for . . . The owners send them . . . so their flights and hotels are taken care of.” Felipe stressed the importance of having separate workshops for different age categories. Tanya asserted that these concerns would be addressed. She said, “I’ll go back in September and I’ll be working with middle years’ coordinators to share the new strategies handbook that we’ve just come out with.”

Felipe described the importance of training individual school leaders to deal with increasing numbers of students at different ages and grade levels in their schools. Julia reinforced the idea that coordinators need specialized training that can be transferred to school staff: “We go to all the conferences that we have the opportunity to, [the coordinator] takes all the courses that she has an opportunity to, she can, you know, pass that on to the [school] team in a very good way.”

Julia stated that her coordinator would have “special dates for specific workshops, like math workshops, language workshops, science workshops.”

**Professional Development.** O/FAs summarized the purpose for, and specifics of, training that occurred in Brazil. Geography created challenges for delivering equitably accessible central training to all schools.

As Tanya explained, training was at the core of the Maple Bear philosophy. Many trainers were associated with the Maple Bear franchise. Tanya stated, “We’re up to 41 trainers to 77
schools for about 227 weeks’ worth of training, two times a year.” One reason cited for why training was so important was that Maple Bear was a relatively young system of education that represented a profound difference in its pedagogical approach from the traditional model of education in Brazil. Tanya describing training as a way to prepare teachers for curriculum implementation. She asserted, “This is key to success – the program is worthless if not implemented properly. This involves constant training and management of implementation.

Training of teachers, coordinators and owners.” She stated,

> It’s just how to learn it all very quickly. It very rigorous when you don’t come from that, to change it all in a whirlwind. And they work very hard. So it’s all about time to just sink in . . . Sometimes they’re just doing it . . . and they don’t even know why . . . But they are doing it because it is in the curriculum.

Julia echoed these sentiments and further explained the value of training in building the overall capacity of teachers: “I had many teachers beginning at this school, all of the teachers have been teaching now for 6 or 7 years . . . They attend many, many trainings. After 5 years, many teachers like the training . . . it improves step by step.” Julia thus described the slow but important process of professional development and pedagogical change.

Another need for training was identified in relation to providing an educational platform for TA to develop a future career in teaching. Tanya indicated that she had “seen teacher assistants work in rooms and be groomed to becoming a teacher.” When asked if this had been successful, she indicated that it had, with a few exceptions, been very successful. O/FAs believed in the value of training but they also discussed an issue with training. One O/FA indicated that the popularity of training had so rapidly increased that in some cases, training sessions became booked up and were unavailable for schools. Julia described how schools and teachers dealt with the rapid change:
What we are facing now is we have trainings . . . We have 82 schools . . . 64 are already running . . . but when you enroll yourself for training, there is only 25 places. You can only send 25 teachers. They should have at least one spot for each school . . . and this should be mandatory. If you bought my program . . . If you are going to teach my program . . . You have to be trained by my team.

Julia suggested that training should be an expectation of teachers and schools. In her school, Julia asserted that training was an expectation. The challenge was that training occurred during teachers’ holidays and the local teacher’s union did not allow schools to mandate professional development during teacher breaks. O/FAs described how professional development was encouraged for all stakeholders within the Maple Bear education system.

Owners, coordinators, and teachers were all provided with training opportunities. Tanya stated,

We do have an owners’ convention in the beginning of May. That’s for owners to attend and a chance for some top-notch speakers to come in talk on topics of education. For example, last May we had Lloyd Axworthy come and give a keynote. We also had the assistant dean of the Faculty of Education from the University of Winnipeg, Neil Besner, who speaks Portuguese. And, just little workshops for owners to learn whatever they need to learn about. Whatever is up-and-coming, you know . . . finances . . . looking into middle years . . . what will the senior highs look like . . . those types of topics.

Coordinators were also encouraged to participate in training. The goal of coordinator training was to create in-country leaders who would help build the capacity of teachers in their own schools. Tanya explained,

We are getting the best from everybody from the schools and they are going to be trained by her to go back to the schools and really promote and help out with math within those schools. So, we are trying to create experts within the country.

When asked if the Maple Bear franchise was intentionally targeting training for local leaders, Tanya responded that this was true. However, training would continue to occur on the ground floor level with teachers. Felipe explained that when trainers worked directly with
teachers, the improvement in practice was tangible and extremely successful. This member of the O/FA team expressed his belief in the importance of training for teachers:

We bring Canadian trainers because the pedagogy is very nice, but it is different too . . . At Maple Bear, kids need to write, read, and understand. The training is the most important thing . . . Training is very important. When the trainers come here and look and watch the class, they see what the teachers are doing. O/FAs also explained that there were several forms of training. Initial training, as explained by two O/FAs, was a critical component of the school start up process. Tanya described her experience as a trainer implementing initial training:

I also do go to schools to help them set up. For example, I just went to [name of city] to get ready to open a Maple Bear this fall and I went to help get them organized and develop a plan for what they will need to be ready to open in September.

Both O/FAs stated that Maple Bear required schools to participate in initial training, and that the training encompassed all of the stakeholders of the school from teacher assistants to school owners. Connie also clarified the initial training process. She stated,

When they are first starting out, they do initial training. We send a trainer in there to help them set up . . . That’s called initial training and that helps the schools prepare for opening and it’s a week long. So the staff is taken through the curriculum. How to set up their room? How to set up for the first week? How to do routines? How to do classroom management? All those things that teachers should be doing to get ready. So before the school even opens, we send in an initial trainer. And that’s non-negotiable.

Central training was another form of training that occurred at various stages during the year for all stakeholders. O/FAs identified two challenges with this form of training. One challenge was alluded to earlier when one O/FA indicated that central training was so popular that sessions had become unavailable. Secondly, the vast geographical regions of Brazil presented a financial challenge for many schools that are not in close proximity to the major urban centers where central training occurred. Julia recounted,

I’m close to Sao Paulo . . . for me it is cheap to send teachers to be trained every January and July. But, what about those people that are up there in the north? They need to buy
plane tickets. They need to set up hotel rooms for those people. Pay for food. It’s very expensive, so you need to send somebody there . . . but it can’t be optional.

Connie concurred that this was an area of concern that Maple Bear would need to address in the future:

We are trying to branch out a bit. We try each year to hold it, not just in Sao Paulo . . . For example, we had some middle year training in Jundiai . . . and Ohji . . . and I forget the other place . . . But we’re trying to branch out a bit. And, likewise with Brasilia . . . Brasilia’s got 1000 students and a huge staff. So rather than send all of them, we’re trying to send a trainer there to do a week of literacy. It’s coming . . . I can’t say that it’s perfect yet . . . but it’s coming. I can see it working towards going to the areas more and holding the sessions via area so that it isn’t such a long flight for, let’s say, Menal up by the equator to come all the way down to Sao Paulo . . . It’s like a 5-hour or 6-hour plane ride.

Despite these challenges, all participating O/FAs indicated the value of central training. Julia stated that she found that math training workshops were the most valuable for teachers:

I think in math. They are always the best ones because it is completely different than everything that we had our entire life as a student. And the way . . . you know . . . the strategies, the materials that you use . . . it’s so amazing. It becomes so fun, and interesting, and easy to understand the whole process . . . That’s what I hear from the teachers.

Although math was one of the most successful central training topics, several other sessions were also available. Tanya explained how experts from each field were hand selected to deliver professional development to Brazilian teachers during central training conferences, based on their acclaimed reputation at a local level or, in some cases, at an international level:

We’ve had a retired reading clinician from [school division] come and do some training in literacy. And we have some early childhood, that had the writer [Name] from Winnipeg come and do early childhood and review the curriculum and give the best tips and tricks and why we do things the way we do . . . Right now, in the July central training, we are going to have a Math Institute by the math consultant from [Name], she’s coming to do a math institute.

In-school training delivered by Canadian Maple Bear trainers was flagged as being the most successful form of training. This training occurred during the school year, when trainers
from Canada came to Brazil to work in schools, in classrooms, and directly with teachers. Felipe observed that teachers were more engaged in learning when trainers came to the school. He said,

In Sao Paulo, in a workshop, I watched year 3 teachers. They sit down but after, I watch the training, after 20 minutes, they are not watching the boards any more . . . they can’t watch anymore . . . After 20 minutes. They can’t look at blackboard any more . . . But when the training is here, it is possible. It’s wonderful . . . they don’t use those techniques here.

Connie reinforced this position, stating that the greatest strength of the Maple Bear model was “the support of Canadian trainers twice a year or more if needed. There’s nothing like that. That’s one of the things that is making it work. It’s about educating kids. That’s our focus.”

Another form of training that had reportedly occurred within the Maple Bear franchise was for the trainers themselves. Every year, a Maple Bear symposium was organized in Winnipeg to provide trainers with an opportunity to collaborate. Connie explained that the purpose of the symposium was “for the trainers, to bring them together to meet once per year and give them training in areas that they have requested and also a chance for them to network.” Connie believed that these symposiums were important and successful.

A central responsibility of the coordinator was to provide pedagogical leadership to the staff within the school. This person was responsible for continuing and maintaining the learning that occurred during structured Maple Bear trainings. One school owner stated that they hired two retired Canadian teachers to work at their school in the capacity of in-school trainers. This school owner stated,

We have the Canadian trainers. I also have another couple that . . . give another kind of classroom management, and you know . . . techniques . . . He is Canadian, and he used to be a principal for many years . . . and she is also retired . . . but lives in Brazil.

This school owner explained the value of these individuals as permanent in-school trainers.
O/FAs pointed out that Maple Bear schools exist in several countries around the world. One form of training that was described in other countries was online training. As Tanya explained, online training was not used in Brazil, because it was deemed to be more effective to use trainers in-person. When asked about online training in Brazil, Tanya responded,

We do that . . . not in Brazil. We do that with India . . . parts of India . . . and China . . . and some areas where it is more remote and where women aren’t even allowed to travel. We do have skype training . . . but it’s not as effective as having a body right there with you.

O/FAs described the process by which trainers determined the area of focus for each particular form of training. In central training, Connie explained that training is usually “based on what we see as the need and what’s coming from head office . . . We also survey them. We get their feedback and we take that into consideration . . . and account for their needs.” Connie described the feedback process for communicating with schools about identified teachers’ needs; the goal was to coordinate targeted professional development.

The focus for in-service training was generated in a similar manner to central training. However, in-service training often relied on communication between trainers, the academic director, and school principals/ coordinators. It was then up to the professional discretion of the trainer to develop a training plan. Tanya explained that this information was based on “emails, verbal, written reports . . . all kinds of things from multiple stakeholders.” She stated that when schools knew there was a trainer coming, they would go through the following preparation process:

They can identify the needs of the school . . . and then I, in turn, when I’m sending a trainer, I outline that very generically . . . but I get someone to communicate directly with them . . . because needs can and do change. And so, communicating between the trainer and the school is encouraged before the trainer even goes down. The director in Brazil is also a Canadian . . . they do school visits, so they go and visit schools . . . they work with school owners and the coordinators to identify . . . I think your next trainer should work on this . . . you know, to help them to identify what they need. Also trainers, while they are
down there, write thorough reports that come back to us and help us identify the needs of schools.

**School Culture.** O/FAs outlined their mission to create a Canadian school culture that would suit the local context and directly contrast the business-first focus of other private schools in Brazil. Professional conferences served as evidence of the collaborative culture of the Maple Bear franchise.

School owners described the goals for their Maple Bear schools. Connie said,

I’d say that they are really trying to be like Canadian schools. They are trying to create really warm and friendly, caring, exciting learning environments. And they’ve come so far from the traditional way. They have struggled with things the way that Canadian have, too. But they are really working hard to creating good learning environments for their children. And they want to emulate the way we do education in Canada.

Julia added that she would like her school to look and feel like a Canadian school. This desire to emulate Canadian schools and a Canadian culture:

I think that I can tell by my parents when they walk in to get to know the school, for the first time. It is completely different from what we know about a traditional Brazilian school. When they mention that this looks so much different from what we are used to . . . I say . . . that’s the way! That means that I’m on the right track.

When asked what it meant to be a Canadian school, one O/FA described an effective learning community that valued kindness and respect. Julia communicated that in traditional schools, students positioned themselves into a social hierarchy with cleaning staff, nannies, and teachers. She evinced pride not only in the attitudes and inclusive community culture of her staff, but also in the way that these values were shared by the students. Julia remarked,

Teachers here are to be respected. You have to be proud of your teacher. You have to look at them as the guide . . . the person that holds all the knowledge and it will teach you how to be a better person. We focus on values. We focus on character. We’ve got that environment and it’s so nice. It’s such a quiet school. Kids are so polite and it’s amazing because we are in a small town. So I think this is so nice because it’s not the Maple Bear curriculum, it’s a matter of culture, attitude, posture, values, education.
Teachers depicted the Maple School environment as a collaborative community. When asked about the relationships between teachers and students, Julia explained she knew that it was a positive relationship by “the way that teachers behave. Their posture. The way they talk to students. The way the students grow in the school environment. They learn how to respect the teachers.” Julia added that many teachers worked together. Connie described an upcoming teachers’ convention that would provide teachers with the opportunity to come together and share their experiences and their successes:

The other thing that is new is that we are having a teachers’ convention. This will be the first ever. This is where the teachers in Brazil who have shown great things happening in their room are going to run workshops, and share what they are passionate about. This is a two-day session . . . There will be 200 teachers that are already signed up to attend.

Not only would the success of this conference demonstrate teachers’ ability to collaborate, but, as Connie explained, it would reflect the collaborative nature of the Maple Bear community. Similarly, Tanya described the success of the owners’ convention. When asked how well the event was attended, she exclaimed, “Oh . . . Every owner comes. There are very few owners that don’t come . . . We’re so big now that we have to have it at a big convention center site in Brazil.”

O/FA repeatedly affirmed the essence of Maple Bear’s first priority: quality education. Connie pointed out that Maple Bear was an “education-first” school, as opposed to a “business-first” school. She noted, “We’re there to help people be successful . . . even though they are private and Maple Bear does make money, I never hear that. It’s always about how can we help these schools be successful with their children. I think those things help in success.” Franchise administrators stated that teachers had positive relationships with trainers. The general culture around training and professional development seemed very positive. Connie remarked,
I think that for the most part, they love the trainers. I think they really appreciate the expertise. The way in which many of our trainers come in and work with them, share with them, and model, and help them to feel that they are doing a good job... and coaching them. It’s like a good coach.”

Tanya suggested that owners felt similarly about trainers. She stated,

I know that schools look forward to having their trainers come. Some request the same trainer two or three times back because they just feel so great about the progress and the learning, and the sharing and the changes that are being for the promises. Who wouldn’t want a coach to come down once a year to have good lessons and experience and work with schools, to help them improve and to help them get better and to encourage them?

**English Language Learning.** O/FA s identified immersion programming as the primary reason that owners opened Maple Bear franchise schools. English language proficiency was highlighted as the most important qualification of teachers.

One O/FA shared a story that exemplifies the success of the model in English language learning. When Felipe was asked why he decided to open a Maple Bear franchise school, he responded, “It is bilingual countries with French and English. English and French. In Brazil they have the Latin and Portuguese... It is bilingual. Canada is very good about education and bilingual.” Julia affirmed this notion:

When there’s a bilingual school like Maple Bear... you touched another kind of people, you know, another part of the society... We can offer this kind of education for them. So I think this is one of the strengths. The language became more accessible.

For this reason, O/FA s emphasized the value of English language proficiency when hiring teachers. Julia stated, “we focus on the language... So the first thing is the quality of the language. Do they have proficiency?” If learning the English language was a primary concern for students and their families, then it was of vital importance that teachers speak quality English.

One franchise administrator shared a story that illustrated the success of the immersion model of the Maple Bear franchise. Connie explained that at a recent owner’s conference with hundreds of school owners in attendance, “a group of students at a year 7 level got up and
presented. They spoke phenomenal ... their English was phenomenal ... they weren’t grasping for words and they were confident. It was a testament to English Immersion working in Maple Bear.”

**Resources.** O/FAs discussed the initial challenge of purchasing an appropriately-sized school building and accessing classroom resources. Franchise administrators explained that resource support for students with special needs would require attention in the future.

According to O/FAs, when schools were growing at such a rapid rate, it could be challenging to find a school the right size. The schools started with small classrooms, few students, and few staff; but within 5 or 6 years, the schools would grow to multiple classrooms, with hundreds of students, and 30 to 40 staff members. Felipe described the process of purchasing a building for a Maple Bear school: “Normally you begin with a kindergarten in a house. You begin small. It is not easy to have a school in a Maple Bear in a house. It is best to buy land and build a new building to make a Maple Bear school.” This process could be challenging. Julia described her experience purchasing a building: “We are struggling with the city hall, we have a huge property. It bigger, but we are in another building, waiting for this approval, there’s a zoning law. So this is my limitation. So this year, we moved to a second unit. So we split pre-school and elementary.” With schools growing at this pace in a new school system, it was challenging to predict the issues that may arise. Franchise administrators were pleased to explain that schools would come to them when they were encountering issues. In such cases, the franchise offices themselves served as a resource to support schools as they navigated unanticipated issues. Tanya noted,

> We do get the occasional call when a school seems to be experiencing some growing pains ... and they ask for a trainer for three months ... so they ask, “Can you help us out?” ... There have been two times in the last month where I’ve been able to find available trainers
who are going to go out to schools who are experiencing growth pains . . . It’s good for me know to that schools will contact me and ask for help.

Another issue that was consistently raised in the data was schools’ access (or a lack thereof) to classroom resources. When Julia was asked how she accessed materials and resources for her classrooms, she stated, “You can buy stuff in Brazil . . . but if you want to do everything that you have on the materials, on the program, on the math and science books . . . I travel abroad . . . twice a year.” Connie explained that the Maple Bear franchise consistently made accommodations in order to ensure that resources were available:

We definitely try to make sure that all the resources are available. Sometimes, that’s the reason that we revise a curriculum. We may suggest another book, you know, those kinds of things. They order them from wherever they can. Like, I’ve brought over books for schools, I’m allowed three suitcases now, and so whenever I can, I help a school. I think that every trainer is willing to bring over a suitcase of materials and supplies, books and resources. Some schools simply order and pay the tariff.

According to O/FAs, Maple Bear franchise was in the process of working on developing protocols and processes for supporting classrooms and students with special needs. Tanya explained that the demand for these kinds of supports had only recently emerged. When asked if there were resource teachers who work in these schools to support the classrooms, she replied,

No. We’re just starting to see the demand and so we are just coming up with a document that we hope will help schools develop IEP plans, how to work with that, it’s very new. The government has passed that all kids will go to school regardless of their disabilities and ability. I would say that there is more (of a need); there’s always been a need, but it’s occurring now more and more. Schools are coming to us and asking, “How can I handle this?” So we’re working on a document and how we’re going to handle that all, so schools can handle that well. We’re still researching and trying to figure that out.

She also indicated that because these schools are private, school owners have a bit more discretion around which students are accepted into their schools. If school owners do not feel that they have the expertise or the resources to support students with particular needs, they would be encouraged to find a school with better structures of support.
Curriculum. O/FAs explained that all Maple Bear franchise schools used the same curriculum. Experts were hired to create and continually update Canadian-centric lesson plans that were hands-on, experiential, and prescriptive. The Portuguese side of each school used Portuguese curriculum that incorporated Canadian methodologies. O/FAs identified formative assessment as a necessary element in future curriculum development.

When compared to the traditional curriculum of Brazilian public schools, the Maple Bear curriculum was deemed superior by O/FAs. Julia identified “curriculum” as the biggest difference: “The Canadian curriculum is better.” Felipe reaffirmed, “I like the Canadian method. It’s an improvement. I like it very much. It is step-by-step for the students.” Tanya said, “The curriculum is good. It’s prescriptive . . . It’s pretty well laid out.” When asked what factors had the greatest impact on the success of the Maple Bear model of education, Connie stated, “The actual program. [It is a] very strong, detailed and constantly evolving program based on Canadian philosophy and practice.” Participants particularly appreciated the step-by-step layout of the curriculum. Additionally, all the O/FAs indicated that they preferred the Maple Bear methodology to local or traditional models of instruction. As the participants collectively reported, the prescriptive nature of the curriculum ensured that non-traditional instructional methods would be used in the classroom.

According to O/FAs, the curriculum was written in this prescriptive way because the model of teaching was different from what the teachers were used to. Teachers would follow the directions outlined in the curriculum, sometimes without even understanding the purpose of the lessons. Tanya explained,

It is very rigorous, when you don’t come from that, to change it all in a whirl-wind. And they work very hard. So it’s all about time to just sink in . . . Sometimes they’re just doing it . . . and they don’t even know why . . . But they are doing it because it is in the curriculum.
Connie highlighted this notion that teachers are sometimes unclear about the theory behind some of these teaching practices. She stated,

As time goes on and as schools really learn their curriculum and have had time with trainers and they’re learning it as fast as they can . . . they will really be able to focus on the “Why?” . . . the philosophical reasoning that is kind of embedding in us . . . through our own education and at the university. Then we begin to put the practices into place in Canada. They have this rigorous curriculum, but they don’t have the “Why?” They don’t have the same kind of training as we do. So there is a mismatch there, in terms of learning it all in the Maple Bear program.

At this stage, the teachers were focusing on the “how to” of the program rather than the “why.” The curriculum had been created by experts who had a clear understanding of the “why.”

Connie pointed out that curriculum was created by experienced Canadian educators with specific expertise. She stated,

We identify really strong people, mostly from [name of province]. We have had some people write from [name of province], who will write a year for us . . . with all the units and that. So we have found people that have written all of the curriculum that you see.

Additionally, O/FAs stated that culture was taken into consideration when developing the curriculum. Connie reported that Maple Bear schools offered students the opportunity to learn about Canadian culture, which enabled students to develop a broader perspective. This was also achieved through the dual track programming offered by schools. Connie provided an example of how curriculum writers included Brazilian culture in the music program:

We do take culture into account when writing curriculum. For example, when we recently did our music program, we hired a Brazilian to include traditional Brazilian songs and offer all kinds of support and materials that way. We are mindful of the culture differences and we offer the chance to learn other things.

Maple Bear schools were depicted by O/FAs as dual track schools, meaning that there was an English side that taught ELA, math, science, gym, and music. There was also a Portuguese side. One O/FA expressed her appreciation of the fact that the curriculum on the Portuguese side
was also written using Canadian principals of education. Julia affirmed that ensuring that Portuguese teachers used a Canadian-style of programming and instruction was good for student learning and was agreeable for parents:

They made the Brazilian program in the Canadian way. So the results are very good. And Portuguese teachers are using all the Canadian strategies to teach the Brazilian program and content. The results were literacy and writing, and their skills are much faster and much better. So I think this caught parents’ attention as well.

Tanya explained that the curriculum was constantly undergoing revisions and updates. She explained,

We are re-editing, re-doing, and revising . . . because that is the way that curriculum should be done . . . Curriculum should always be improved. You know . . . when the curriculum has glitches, the curriculum should be improved upon so that it is better understood.

When asked how often curriculum was revised, Tanya reported,

As the need arises. For example, we just re-did the year 5. We discovered from the schools that there were some problems with it . . . so in the meantime, we’ve taken it and we are having it revised . . . it’s just how to learn it all very quickly.

When asked how the program could be improved, two franchise administrators articulated a belief that curriculum needed to be reviewed at all stages in development and implementation. Connie stated, “We have to be mindful of assessment for, of, and as learning. We have to be really good about how we revise our curriculum. We have to ensure that someone with a good eye of curriculum reviews it.” Both Connie and Tanya conveyed that it was their opinion that a rigorous review process was vital to success of the Maple Bear program. This belief in the value of reviewing and revising the curriculum regularly was reaffirmed by Tanya:

We need to know whether what we are doing is working well. Hence the need for training in assessment, the need for quality assurance visits to the schools, the need for training of coordinators to look for quality of implementation and also to conduct and use results of system-wide testing of students to assess quality of program and implementation.
In addition to this rigorous feedback system for curriculum developers, one franchise administrator indicated that more time to test or trial new programs or changes to programs would be advantageous to the system. However, she indicated the challenges of this, in that schools were growing so rapidly that there was no time for testing and revision. Tanya remarked, “I think that before we send them out to the schools, we should have a few schools testing it. But often we don’t have the luxury of time. It’s often that the demand is so great…. but I think there is a need for that.”

**Methodology.** O/FAs discussed the franchises’ transition from traditional Brazilian pedagogy to current Canadian pedagogy. They noted the critical role of training in preparing teachers for curriculum implementation through hands-on and experiential learning.

Two participants described the positive reputation that Canada has in education. Julia remarked that “our way of teaching math in Brazil, well in PISA, we can see . . . Canada is in the top 5 and we are in the bottom 5. So there’s no comparison.” This positive reputation was further discussed by Connie who described how Brazilian teachers, administrators, and owners were receptive to learning Canadian methodologies because of Canada’s strong standing in education. She said,

They really respect Canadians and our opinions and practices about education. Internationally, our rankings around the world are very good. And other countries know it, even more than we know ourselves. So when we go to Brazil, they are very, very receptive and excited. And so that makes us want to give them more.

All of the O/FAs who participated in this research described how traditional Brazilian schools used very different practices. Julia noted, “In Brazil, you have this discipline thing where everything has to be under the control of the teacher all the time . . . teacher-centered all the time . . . And in Brazil, you have this group teaching the whole time. And you lose control, you look over and they’re falling asleep, texting . . . depending on the age.” Julia discussed the
importance of student engagement and explained how the traditional form of education can hinder this engagement. She suggested that the Maple Bear model ensured that students remain engaged throughout the lesson. In Maple Bear schools, for example, the students were engaged in “the centers, the groups rotation. Kids get involved and they’re not looking around. They’re focussed, they’re concentrating. Okay, the activity’s over, let’s do something else again. You keep them working all the time.”

Maria commented that Canadian methodologies were superior to the traditional Brazilian model because of the use of hands-on learning strategies and concrete materials. When asked about the difference between traditional Brazilian schools and Maple Bear schools, Maria responded,

Pretty much everything. The approach. The teaching approach. The strategies in the classroom. The concrete materials that we use a lot in preschool and still a lot in math. Everything is completely different from Brazilian schools. Brazilian schools are textbooks. There’s no hands-on activities . . . that’s so rare.

Felipe also compared Maple Bear schools with traditional Brazilian schools:

We bring Canadian teachers, because the pedagogy is very nice but it is different too. In Brazil, they read the books, they write things on the blackboard and expect that is ready, but that is not teaching. At Maple Bear, kids need to write, read, and understand.

Felipe suggested that simply reading and writing does not necessarily facilitate student learning. He believed in the value of experience and engagement. Connie reinforced this point: “Brazil was very traditional, and still is in some ways, way of teaching . . . where a class of 25 opens the same book and does the same thing and there’s no real group sharing and hands on.”

She expressed that Brazilian educators really liked the Maple Bear methodology because of the “hands-on learning, or centers, or interactive, multi-modal way of teaching . . . They really like it. They can see that this is a far better way of teaching children. . . . This is Canadian education.”

Connie defined quality Canadian education as hands-on, interactive, multi-modal instruction.
Tanya reflected that the methodology was a direct manifestation of the curriculum. She stressed the importance of effective curricular implementation for the success of the program:

“Implementation in the schools is the key to success. The program is worthless if not implemented properly. This involves constant training and management of implementation, training of teachers, coordinators and owners.”

**Student Learning.** O/FAs explained that student learning outcomes included academic skills, social skills, character education, 21st century skills, and English language fluency. Standardized assessments tools were created to measure success and to inform curricular revision and development.

One school owner described her school environment as being a positive place to be. Julia stated, “We’ve got that environment . . . It’s such a quiet school. Kids are so polite.” Maria reinforced this point: “It’s not the Maple Bear curriculum, it’s a matter of culture, attitude, posture, values, education, you know . . . so this is nice.” Maria thus described the learning that occurred beyond the curriculum.

Maria also indicated that this type of character education was not a priority for other schools in her community. She expressed that this was a cultural difference in Brazilian culture, and that this was a feature of the Maple Bear model of education that was unique:

In Brazil, we have this moment right now where the private schools are so expensive. Families are very wealthy, and the kids have this posture and this attitude where “My father pays your salary, but I don’t care. You are one of my family’s employees. We have a gardener, we have a cleaning lady, we have a nanny and you are the teacher.”

Tanya described how a group of grade 7 students demonstrated a level of confidence and fluency in English language. When talking about these students, she reflected on “the confidence and enthusiasm and fluency with which they were handling themselves and speaking English. It was a real testament to the solid foundation of not only academic but creating really confident
learners who are able to handle any situation.” These O/FAs discussed the impact that the program and the methodology of teacher had on developing character traits such as respect, attitude, kindness, politeness, and confidence. Language learning was also highlighted.

In addition to these indirect outcomes of value and character, academic outcomes were also acknowledged as being a high priority. According to three O/FAs, standardized assessments were created by the Maple Bear franchise and administered to grades 3 and 5 students in numeracy and literacy. Connie remarked, “We do have standardized test. We had someone come in and do a year 3 ELA test a couple of years ago and we are getting ready to do year 3 and 5 again, for math and ELA.” She stated that results were “okay.” Julia stated that another school delivered a standardized test that was independent of Maple Bear. She said, “The results were in literacy and writing, and their skills are much faster and much better.” Tanya reinforced this sentiment: “A school hired an independent company to come in and assess their children and they did really well, compared to other schools in the area. That was independent of Maple Bear. I think our results are good.”

Connie indicated that, although students were successful on these assessments, there was still room for growth: “We could be better . . . We’ll use those results to improve things.” Connie added that these assessment tools would provide valuable feedback for future curriculum development and training.

Maple Bear Coordinators

**Staff Recruitment and Retention.** Coordinators reported that in urban centers, young English-speaking teachers were conveniently recruited through word-of-mouth. Challenges with recruitment and retention were related the location of schools and their non-competitive salaries.
For many schools in urban centers, attracting teachers was reportedly not difficult. Mariana stated, “Here in [name of city], I never had to put an ad in the newspaper. We never had the need to do that because we receive so many curriculum (vitae) every day. We get a bunch of new resumes every day.” This coordinator suggested that schools in more remote geographical regions may have faced different challenges in staff recruitment. Another way that schools attracted teachers was through word-of-mouth. Fernanda indicated that “the people working here at the school tell me, ‘I have a friend who wants to work here. May I send her resume?’”

Coordinators suggested that many of the schools hired teachers who were still early in their career. One coordinator who participated in this research explained that she had been with the company for four years. This coordinator joked that she felt like a veteran in the Maple Bear system. Interviewed O/FAs noted that coordinators were generally experienced educators who had been promoted to their role due to their pedagogical leadership and expertise.

Qualifications of teachers were described by coordinators. One coordinator pointed out that Maple Bear had a manual for owners that outlined a list of qualifications for teachers. Fernanda stated, “There is a Maple Bear manual about what to look for in Maple Bear teachers. So I try to follow that.” Coordinators indicated that finding teachers with a certification was ideal; however, it was not a requirement. Mariana commented, “They need to have a teaching certificate to teach classes. Sometimes, it is possible while you are taking your teaching certificate to do some teaching.” This way, teachers could first be hired as TAs, and then be trained to become teachers.

Coordinators strongly suggested that English language proficiency was an extremely important qualification of teachers. Fernanda stated, “English is a requirement. Fluent English.” Amanda agreed that English language was important. She described how finding teachers with both teaching skills and English language proficiency was sometimes a challenge. When asked
about what challenges were faced when recruiting staff, she stated, “The teacher's background is probably the biggest challenge. Some teachers don't speak English well and so they aren't secured to go there and teach so finding good teachers who know English is hard.”

A passion for teaching and learning was also touted as a critical qualification for teachers. Fernanda explained what she looked for in teachers. She said,

I want to see if they have a degree. But more than that, are they passionate about teaching? Even if you aren’t that good to begin with, maybe you can get better if you love what you are doing. If you don’t love it, its tough. Passion is my first thing.

Amanda reinforced this belief in the importance of an positive attitude towards professional growth. She stated, “Most of them they come here because they get good training and professional development. So by investing more time in development, teachers are more committed.” Amanda articulated that teachers who did not demonstrate this passion for teaching and learning often found Maple Bears to be a difficult place to work.

As Gabriela pointed out, it can be difficult for teachers who are resistant to learning new teaching methodologies to work for Maple Bear. When asked about the transiency of Maple Bear teachers, she stated, “I can only say for the school I’m at now. What I can say on this matter is that people who are not open to changing, we continue to tell them the same thing over and over again.” When working at a school that has an expectation that teachers use such different teaching methodologies, teachers who were resistant to learning and professional growth found their role at this school to be difficult. This was one explanation put forward by Gabriela to rationalize the high rate of staff turnover at Maple Bear schools.

In Brazil, having the ability to speak fluent English was seen as a valuable asset for other businesses or companies. Unfortunately, as coordinators explained, the teaching profession did
not pay their teachers a wage that was competitive with other private employers. Amanda recounted this notion:

It’s hard because teaching is not the most lucrative . . . it’s not too attractive, in general. So Maple Bear tries to pay them well enough to keep them because it’s important . . . The teachers, they don’t only come here for the money.

Amanda and Mariana indicated that teachers who were passionate about teaching stayed with Maple Bear; teachers who were passionate about money often moved on to other careers. Mariana remarked,

Here in Brazil, the teachers should be paid better. But we can’t control this. Even in other schools, they are not being paid very well. This is one of the issues. I try. I know it is a business. I wish we could pay them more. I tell staff, “If you love teaching here then stay, but if not, go and be a secretary because you have English and you could make much more money. But do you want to be: a secretary or a teacher?”

**Coordinators.** Coordinators described their role as complex and diverse. As pedagogical leaders, coordinators were responsible for facilitating and supporting teachers’ daily practice and continued professional development. They were also responsible for managerial roles. As well, coordinators identified the need for franchise support and specialized training.

Coordinators reported that their role within the school was extremely diverse. Gabriela stated, “I have many responsibilities.” Camila expressed, “Nowadays, there are too many things and I always try to help with everything, but sometimes I am not able to finish what I have started.” Each coordinator described their role in a different light. However, congruent among all coordinators descriptions was the belief that the coordinator needed to be a pedagogical leader in the school. Gabriela declared,

I believe that the most important assignment as the coordinator in the school is to be in the class, observing class, instructing the teachers, and providing feedback . . . and guiding them where they can improve . . . And helping them make their classroom more successful.
Amanda also explained her role in providing pedagogical support for teachers in the school:

I am the coordinator and I work with all the teachers. I help with lesson planning especially with the students, the ones that need the most help the students who are not learning, the way they planned. Or, if they are not respecting or if they have behaviour problems.

As Gabriela and Amanda explained, pedagogical leaders act to support teachers by observing classes, providing feedback, co-planning, and providing support with students who have unique needs.

If students have unique needs, Amanda explained that she would often go into the classroom to interact directly with these students, in order to develop her own understanding of the child. This way, she asserted that she could more effectively support teachers with programming and report card writing. Amanda reported,

If I want to see something specific about a child, I would sit down at a center that they are working at and I would interact with the child to see what the child is struggling with so that I can know the child for myself . . . When I go into class, I see it for myself, and I help the teachers write the report card with the appropriate language and put it in a way it would be acceptable by the parents.

According to coordinators, pedagogical support occurred through individual support with teachers, small-group teacher meetings, and facilitating professional development for teachers during weekly teacher meetings. Gabriela stated,

I have weekly meetings with the teachers. We have meetings as a group, every Tuesday. And I have individual weekly meetings with the teachers. When we meet in groups, I usually bring topics for discussions, about something that I have read, or a new strategy that I have learned when I go to a conference, or to a training, and I think that I’ve learned something new and I think its important to share that with the group.

She indicated that she frequently attended conferences and consistently shared her learning with her staff.
Fernanda talked about her role as a general coordinator for other coordinators in her building:

I am kind of a coordinator – major coordinator. We do have some other coordinators, like early year’s coordinator, but I am like a general coordinator. I am aware of everything that is going on for early years and elementary. But, for sure, I can follow everything class or every curriculum, so that is why we have other coordinators. My role here is to make sure that everything goes well and the pedagogical part and also in the administration part.

Her role included being a pedagogical leader, but also included various other administrative duties.

The coordinators described many other administrative roles. Mariana described her role in managing resources: “I am the one who takes care of things like, if we need to buy some books or food for the snacks for the school, or maybe some furniture for the school.” Camila described her role as a communications and events coordinator:

I can talk to the parents and to the students when they don't have good behaviour. And I need to do the communication with parents about some activities like meetings and workshops, because I do that. I organize programs and am a publicist. With these visual things, I use it to do decorations around the school.

Hiring teachers and other staff members and providing these individuals with initial training was another of the cited responsibilities of coordinators. Amanda further elucidated this role: “I help with the hiring of new teachers and make up some beginning training here.”

Amanda explained that dealing with the daily and ongoing problems or issues as they emerge was a major role of the coordinator. She stated, “We are just trying to put fires out.” Amanda further highlighted that a lack of time was a common issue that many coordinators alluded to. Coordinators agreed that finding the time to complete all of their responsibilities was a challenge. As a result, the coordinators needed to prioritize their responsibilities. Amanda stated that she had “multiple commitments. Figuring out and deciding what's most important. . . . I think I could do a better job.” Her approach to the role was depicted as being dynamic,
changing from year to year based on needs and through collaboration with franchise trainers.

Amanda explained,

> I'm watching the classes with a lot of help from the trainer. I try to identify what fills the need for coordination. I tried break it into parts and every year, I focus a little bit different. . . . and so I work towards trying to cut some parts to work with to get it all in.

Camila reinforced this sentiment, stating that as a team of coordinators, “we need to organize our time and we need to establish priorities. I think, when we started, we tried to do everything and now I think we need to separate things and do what we can.” Camila intimated that coordinators at her school needed to work together as a team, delegating more specific roles to individuals and creating a more defined role for coordinators. Amanda also noted that she believed that her leadership team needed to work together to better define the various duties and responsibilities. She said,

> I think this is teamwork. I don't think it's just something for one coordinator, but it has to be discussed. The decisions are too important to be done alone. It is important to have inclusion. Sometimes I feel that we need to have more of a team.

Two trainers asserted that there was a strong need for Maple Bear franchise support and training. Camila commented,

> One point is the administration, coordinators, and principals . . . for us, it’s a new thing. We were small and now we are growing and we don’t have the experience. We are growing together. We are doing our best, but I think we need a professional.

She suggested having a trainer come to the school to work directly with the administrators:

> I would like to have training like we are doing with the teachers. Someone come here and feel our journey and we can talk about, “How can we do this? What do we say when . . . ? Is it about money? Is it about teachers? Is it about parents? Is it about communication? What do we do?” I would like to have my part clear. I do this, [name] has to do this, and [name] has to do this . . . because I always love help. Its really hard. We really need this.

**Professional Development.** Coordinators described the strengths and challenges of central training and in-service training for both English and Portuguese teachers. As pedagogical leaders, coordinators were tasked with promoting and supporting this training in classrooms.
They expressed the need for continuity across in-school training, and vocalized a desire for specialized coordinator training.

As coordinators described central training, they identified some inherent challenges and lessons that were learned. Central training was optional. Despite the fact that training occurred during teachers’ holidays, coordinators reported that teachers were motivated to attend these sessions. Fernanda stated,

No, we can’t tell teachers they have to go to training. They are on vacation. But we suggest they go. But most of them want to go because if they had to attend something like this on their own, they would pay a lot but here, they do not have to pay. We pay for the food, for the gas, for the hotel if they stay there.

Fernanda described how teachers were motivated to attend central training because they wanted to learn. Both Mariana and Fernanda described how teachers were more inclined to attend central training when the school covered all costs of the professional development.

Mariana reflected on the training:

There is a head office in Sao Paolo and they always provide trainings. We have trainings in January and July, when the teachers are on holiday, they MAY go…it is not something where I say they MUST go. We suggest that they should go. Maple Bear provides those trainings sometimes in another Maple Bear school. We are always encouraging teachers to improve themselves, to take courses, and they take the Maple Bear training. Now, if they want to take some additional training, we encourage that and we try to pay for it.

Amanda indicated that the Maple Bear franchise seemed to be improving their training strategy. She stated,

I can see that this is changing because what Maple Bear is doing now is being more focused. We had longer workshops and less in-school support and now we have much more in-school support and we have longer and more different kinds of workshops.

She asserted the belief that centralized training became redundant for anyone who was with Maple Bear for several years. She stated, “Every year, we have the same kinds of workshops . . . and because some teachers have been here for a long time like, like over eight years, they’ve
done all of those same workshops in science and math and other subjects.” Coordinators suggested developing workshops on such topics as emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and classroom management. Additionally, Amanda explained that in-school training was a superior model of training to central training.

In-service training occurred two times a school year for both English and Portuguese teachers. Mariana explained, “The Maple Bear trainers come here. Canadians train about Canadian curriculum and we have some Portuguese trainers from Brazil, who come to do the training for the Portuguese classes.” Both forms of training were modalities for teaching all educators to implement Canadian teaching methodologies.

One issue identified by coordinators was that individual teachers had a different set of priorities. One coordinator stated that this was not so much of an issue for experienced schools, because they were operating more autonomously and were able to recognize and focus on their own priorities even without the guidance of trainers. Gabriela stated,

I believe that some Maple Bear schools struggle when they have trainers in their schools because trainers come with a different background. And each trainer has a different experience. And we notice that not all the trainers are speaking the same language. So they differ a whole lot in their instructions to us as a school. I think that for the new schools, especially, that can be a concern because they are lost. They need so much help and so much instruction. And if you get different instructions from the same group of Maple Bear trainers, it can be a bit confusing.

The primary responsibility of the coordinator was recognized to be in-school training and leadership. Classroom observations, report card support, weekly teacher meetings, small-group and individual support were all methods that coordinators used to deliver in-school professional development. Coordinators shifted their focus, depending on the needs of their teachers.

Coordinators reported that teachers were open and willing to receive in-school support from their coordinators. Gabriela stated,
They are usually open to criticism; but it depends on their personality. Some people are more open and willing to learn. They really appreciate when you talk to them and go into their classrooms. Usually the teachers want to learn more and improve what they are doing.

She stated that this attitude towards professional growth was important:

I think that’s what differentiates a good teacher from a not so good teacher. If you find a teacher has a lot of resistance, and hesitates to use new ideas, to criticism . . . then this is not the kind of teacher that we want to keep on our staff.

Two coordinators articulated a desire for more franchise support and training. Camila stated,

I would really like extra help and we really need this kind of help. If some owners of Maple Bear could help us because we are growing and we need help. So some communications might help. Some opportunities for coordinators from Maple Bear to get together and talk and share.

Camila suggested that coordinators should receive opportunities to gather together, problem-solve, collaborate, and share their professional experiences with one another. Amanda stated that she participated in Maple Bear courses that were offered to teachers through the [name of university]. Describing these courses as valuable and important to her own learning, she said, “I took courses through the [name of university]. That was not just for coordinators, but also for other teachers. I think those courses made all the difference for me.” Both coordinators emphasized the value of training and improving in their own role. One recommendation from a coordinator was that a “local counselor” should be provided for trainers, so that they have someone to support them while they are working in Brazil. Amanda stated,

I believe the trainers deserve to have a counselor to reach out to. Trainers, when they come here to Maple Bear, they are lost here and they have nowhere to look for help if they get in trouble or if they have an accident. Myself, as a coordinator, and I speak for the owner as well, when we have a trainer in our school, we try to make the best of it, make them have a good time. Take them out for the weekend or at night time.
**School Culture.** Coordinators indicated that they were motivated, teachers were committed to professional growth and best practice, and students were learning happily. Coordinators had reported that parents enrolled their children in Maple Bear schools because of its positive reputation in the community.

Coordinators believed that it was important that staff adopt the philosophy of the Maple Bear model of education. Gabriela explained why the philosophy was important to the success of the school. She explained that sometimes teachers may not be willing or able to properly receive training and fully adopt the Maple Bear philosophy. When asked what was the most important factor that has led to Maple Bear’s success, Gabriela commented,

> Respecting the Canadian Culture and believing the Methodology. You have to believe it. . . . You have to see it as an improvement and growth for your class and your students . . . you will not see it as a criticism for yourself as a professional. It depends what you have in your heart. Will you get the message or will you translate it the way it suits you? It could be the best message in the world, but you might not be ready to receive it.

Camila affirmed the importance of embracing the Maple Bear philosophy. She described the positive reaction that most teachers had when they started with Maple Bear schools:

> It is hard because sometimes they come here and they are very young, and we give them training and modeling in the Canadian way. It is very interesting and they believe that this is the best way to teach and I think they are happy. They like to see the children growing and it becomes natural.

The Maple Bear school philosophy was portrayed by a number of participants as being very different from other schools that exist in Brazil. The methodology for teaching was characterized as distinctly different, and therefore teachers noted that rigorous training was necessary, in order to prepare one to teach like Canadians. Canadian educators were highly respected by the participants and, accordingly, teachers were motivated to learn to use Canadian methodologies. Mariana described a general attitude of wanting to learn and grow as professionals:
The teachers are very motivated to learn. They are eager to learn because their experience has been from Brazilian schools and what they have learned. And so they want to learn more about how the Canadian schools work and make sure we are doing things the right way as much as possible. The way it is done in Canada. Teachers and the coordinators and I, we want to excel and learn.

The parents of students and the community also appreciated and respected Canadian education. Camila communicated, “When the parents hear that the Canadian teachers are coming – parents like that teachers come – they are excited.” Gabriela also stated that parents were happy with the school. However, she stated that parents were happy about the status that Maple Bear schools provided, rather than about the educational strengths of the model:

Many parents have in mind that they are enrolling their children in a fancy school. Not all the parents are concerned with what their children can learn or are involved in visiting many schools to find the best school for their child. I think that as the years go by, we will prove to those parents that we are not just a fancy school, we are a school that is committed to education. I hope that we can change this mindset of parents in the near future.

Amanda viewed parents’ mindsets in a different light. She believed that, in the beginning, parents were committing to schools because they were both Canadian and English. She suggested that now the school had developed a reputation for being a strong academic school:

I think when parents came eight years ago, they just trust this because it was the Canadian curriculum – which is strong and English is important – but they were always trying to see, “What if my child went to another school?” They were worried especially about academics. But now, they say they have heard great things about Maple Bear . . . I think success came from good experience.

Ultimately, participants reported that the mark of a quality school is heralded by student learning and future success. Fernanda declared that community and parents saw Maple Bear schools as a place where students learned. According to Fernanda, any concerns about student learning that parents may have had in the early years of Maple Bear had now been dismantled. Fernanda articulated this belief:

People are very happy with Maple Bear. Parents realize that children are learning. Always when I talk to teachers, my main concern is: Are the children learning? And what
is making the learning happen? They must like the school, they must be involved with the learning, they must be interacting, and they must be doing predictions and reflections/observations. This is when learning is really happening.

**English Language Learning.** Coordinators reported that immersion education, a current trend in Brazilian private schools, was an effective way to learn the English language.

Gabriela stressed the importance of learning English. She explained how it was an important tool for success in students’ lives and careers: “Being bilingual is so important here. If we want our children to be successful in their lives and their careers, it’s a tool they will need to have. To speak English.” When asked what the greatest strength of the Maple Bear model of education was, Carla praised

the immersion program . . . a bilingual school. My mom tells me this herself. If there was a Maple Bear 20 years ago and I was going into school, she would definitely enroll me there because of all the benefits that I share with her about my job.

Coordinators strongly believed in the value of learning English and following the Maple Bear model of immersion. Gabriela explained why she believed immersion learning was successful: “The way they learn English is so genuine. They are learning English as any Canadian or American child would through immersion. They are living in a bilingual environment and they will eventually learn.”

Amanda echoed this support for using immersion to teach English. She reflected on how other schools taught English and explained why it did not work:

I have seen some schools use a lot of translation . . . and they are teaching English with reading texts, comprehension, vocabulary. Trying to understand but not speaking so they aren’t using all of the communication like writing, speaking, listening. And they focus on some vocabulary, but it doesn't make for a fluent speaker. So this is one of the strong points at Maple Bear.

Like Gabriela, Amanda stressed the importance of teaching English in a genuine or natural environment, where students learned conversational language as well as academic language.
Carla expressed a belief that bilingual schools that use the immersion model were a trend: “I still believe that Maple Bear will need to change a lot in the future because people in Brazil tend to follow what is in fashion.”

**Resources.** One coordinator reported challenges with access to Canadian resources. Another indicated that on-line networks for teachers and coordinators would be helpful.

Mariana expressed her frustrations with accessing supplies and materials for Maple Bear schools. Mariana stated that she returned to Canada at least one time a year to purchase school supplies and materials:

Now they have almost 100 schools . . . It is very hard to get all those materials here. We need like a non-profit association to get supplies/ materials for schools. I think it would be very good to have a coop to help get the supplies here more easily. Can you imagine having to go back to Canada to get the materials that you need every time?

Amanda recommended that an online network be created for teachers to share ideas and resources:

If it [an on line network] was there for all for the teachers to use, they could assess the material more easily. . . We could use an online network . . . a place for the teachers to network and share things. Not just a chat, but a place where they could post ideas and share because they are using the same programs they are using the same books, and they’re using the same product. So if they made a book or created something, they could see that there are other people reading the same book and generate some ideas.

**Curriculum.** Coordinators reported that although the prescriptive nature of the curriculum promoted hands-on, experiential learning, there was still some room for teachers’ interpretation. Coordinators emphasized their role in ensuring curricular fidelity. Brazilian culture was reported to be included in the science curriculum and through field trips.

According to coordinators, school owners decided to open Maple Bear schools because Canada had a good reputation for quality education. Mariana remarked,
I think because of the good results from PISA and those organizations, that Canadian schools have had the designs. And evaluations show, we know that Canada is one of the top in student performance. So the quality of education is strong.

Coordinators indicated that this strong quality of education was the manifestation of the curriculum.

Coordinators explained how the curriculum was written and developed for teachers who did not come with a background in Canadian education. It was detailed in design and highly prescriptive. Amanda stated, “Our teachers don't have the same background as Canadian teachers. So when we read the process, it’s step-by-step, has many descriptions.” As Amanda explained, this step-by-step process enabled teachers to implement the program with high fidelity. However, Beatriz explained that although this program was highly prescriptive, there was some room for interpretation:

Every teacher sees it in a different way and they imagine that. But, I imagine a different way. That is good. But it is challenging in this job because I find we have to make something that everything doesn't have to be the same . . . but it has to have the same foundation, the same structure.

Beatriz suggested that a component of her job was to ensure that teachers were implementing the program in the way that it was designed, while providing them with some autonomy for creativity and choice within the curriculum.

The coordinators described features of the curriculum that they deemed important. The curriculum was portrayed as hands-on and experiential in nature. When asked about the strengths of the curriculum, Fernanda highlighted the following features: “It’s the resources . . . multiple resources that we have here, especially the manipulatives. The things that allow students to have hands-on experiences. They have to experiment and experience.” The curriculum was also said to be written in a way that focussed on learning life skills, rather than memorizing basic facts. When Mariana discussed how purpose and relevance were embedded in the curriculum, she
identified the importance of developing a sense of inquiry and promoting research skills for searching out information on their own:

   In Canada, I think it is much more related to daily life. I think this is what learning is about: when you can relate it and make a connection to daily life. What is the purpose to knowing what the date was when Poland was invaded by Britain? But you have to know what is the purpose, the relevance.

   Additionally, Amanda explained how the curriculum was designed in such a way that students learned English while having fun: “The students learned English and they were having fun, but now they are even better.” Amanda further explained how Brazilian culture was included in the curriculum. She explained that the Portuguese side of the program taught about Brazilian culture through lessons in history and geography. She said that in math, “we have our economy and our money and we try to talk about.” Discussing the Canadian climate in science can be challenging because it is so distinctly different from the Brazilian climate, so sometimes adaptations needed to be made to accommodate this difference:

   Amanda stated, “We've been trying to take a lot of field trips every year in Brazil and in our environment here locally.” She stated that through the Portuguese program, through moderate curricular adaptations and additions, and through field trips, culture was appropriately included in students’ programming.

   Coordinators pointed out that the program was frequently revised and improved. Beatriz explained how standardized assessments were used not to judge students or teachers, but to inform curriculum revision and development:

   They are being revised often. They have changed a lot from the first batch. They were good . . . some of it is changing. They are revisiting, thinking, reflecting, and they are assessing. And when they get the information about the assessments, they are not judging, they are just getting information and looking at ways to make it better for the students. So this is good.
Methodology. Coordinators asserted that the Maple Bear methodology was effective in promoting instruction that was practical, hands-on, and experiential. Principles of universal design and differentiation practices were described as important features of the Maple Bear methodology.

All of the coordinators who participated in this thesis research stated that they believed in the Maple Bear methodology. Gabriela exclaimed that she was “a big fan of the Maple Bear philosophy.” She believed that the strength of the model was in the “practical way” that content and knowledge were transferred to students. She stated that this methodology provided students with life skills: “We hope that in the future, those students will be successful in their lives and their career. I think that’s the main goal as educators.” Mariana agreed, stating that this way of teaching was “more related to daily life.” She explained that learning needs to be experienced before it will be absorbed by students. Amanda described the importance of hands-on learning, which was a foundational component of the Maple Bear methodology: “I realized with hands-on activity, you’re able to touch and feel and see what you're learning.” She explained that, in traditional Brazilian schools, “it was reading all the time and writing, which helps.” She stated that when she first experienced this form of teaching herself, it “really made it clear for me what Canadian education looks and feels like.” Amanda’s experience was not unique. Coordinators all described a version of this same epiphanic experience. Lucas stated, “Teachers have not experienced this model as students themselves.” Both teachers and coordinators from Brazil had often not experienced this methodology before in their own education. According to coordinators, this made learning and using the model challenging for educators.

Two coordinators described how principles of universal design and differentiation practices were a fundamental component of the methodology. Carla stated,
In the old times, and I believe even the traditional schools now-a-days, they only have one way of approaching a child with the content that the teacher needs to have. Whether it is by writing or by sitting in a chair listening to a teacher talking. So that’s not the way your brain works and that’s not the way you learn . . . then they won’t have any room for you in that class. So I think that Maple Bear sees a child in every aspect of learning.

**Student Learning.** Coordinators reported that Maple Bears’ student-centered pedagogy promoted social skills, character education, meta-cognition, and life skills. Coordinators believed that these skills prepared students for university entrance exams, which was a concern for parents.

Mariana explained that Maple Bear schools made student learning a priority: “People are very happy with Maple Bear. Parents realize that children are learning. Always when I talk to teachers, my main concern is: Are the children learning? And what is making the learning happen?” Because of the detailed program and the experiential methodology, she believed that “learning is really happening.”

Amanda detailed how students were put at the center of the learning process: “I understand the need to put the student forward as the main character and when I think about a lesson plan internally, I think of putting the students first.” She reported that this encouraged student learning by making the experiences meaningful and relevant to the students.

Coordinators explained how they are trained to teach in a way that promoted cooperative learning. Carla commented, “Something that concerns me a lot is the term that they use for group work which is cooperative learning.” She indicated that cooperative learning is important for developing important social skills that are valuable for life.

Other learning outcomes that were described by coordinators related to character education. Camila stated,

Children are happy here. I believe in human beings. With Maple Bear and its methodology, we try to be raising children and we try to show them the best way to improve and know
the best way. I really love and I respect life and I use that to teach my children. To put things back into nature. Sometimes, I meet them (students) later and the parents say their children remind them to respect nature because of what they learned here.

Camila explained that students learned respect because the teachers were respectful to the students: “We have the same thinking about respect here. This is a good way because the thinking matches the students. Here, I think we really respect the children and we try to listen to them.” Gabriela explained that this type of learning created “critical thinkers” and prepared students for real life and future careers. She stated that a Maple Bear student “behaves well, acts properly, respects adults, and cleans after himself or herself . . . just standing out as a good citizen.” She affirmed that these are skills that prepare students for life.

As Mariana indicated, parents were often concerned about whether Maple Bear schools properly prepared students for university entrance exams. She stated that parents “measure the schools by looking at how many students could pass the Vestibular (exam) to get into university.” She communicated that Maple Bear schools prepared students well for this exam.

**Maple Bear Teachers**

*Staff Recruitment and Retention.* Teachers reported that English language fluency, international experiences, and experiences in teaching EAL classes were primary qualifications for being hired by Maple Bear schools. Many teachers reported started as TAs, then being promoted to teacher after a few years. Non-competitive salaries were flagged as a recruitment and retention challenge.

All of the teachers who participated in this research indicated that their English language proficiency was a primary reason for being hired. Teachers who were interviewed suggested that this was a critical skill for teachers who worked for Maple Bear. Natalia stated, “They are always looking for teachers who could speak English . . . they are hard to find here in Brazil.”
Several teacher participants pointed out that one way in which many of the teachers learned their language was through experiences traveling and working abroad. According to numerous participants, English language proficiency opened up the doors to several career opportunities, including language schools. Learning English, as many of these teachers recounted, was a very valuable tool for getting jobs in Brazil. Vitoria explained, “I graduated in biology, and after, I went abroad to New Zealand for three months. I worked on my English and when I returned to Brazil, I decided to try starting to teach English in language schools.” Several of the teachers worked as teachers at EAL schools prior to coming to Maple Bear. Larissa stated, “I was an English teacher . . . an ESL teacher, for adults not kids, in languages at English schools.” Rafaela also described her experiences as an EAL teacher: “I’ve been an ESL teacher since I was 18-year-old. And, now I’m 33.” As demonstrated in the demographic profiles of the respondents gleaned from the survey, many of the teachers at Maple Bear were new to the school and were often young, but most had professional experience as educators.

With experience as a teacher and the ability to speak fluent English, these teachers described how they were watching for new opportunities to use their skills. Most of these teachers had heard about Maple Bear schools from friends or family. Word-of-mouth was highlighted as the most prevalent way that teachers heard of Maple Bear schools. Leticia described her experience:

My sister came here to see the school, to bring my nephew. I was on maternity leave because I had a baby and I was thinking about going back to work . . . There was an opening . . . and so I sent my curriculum vitae and was in right place at right time. I was hired 8 months ago.

Other stories of teachers’ initial introduction to Maple Bear schools mirrored Leticia’s story.

Six of the teachers interviewed in this thesis research stated that they started working at Maple Bear as a TA. Natalia described her experience:
Three years ago, I started working as an assistant. And, I've worked in many different grades in a certain role, but before I helped everybody everywhere, like in elementary and in early childhood. This year I started as a teacher.

The tendency was to work one’s way up to becoming a teacher after three to four years as a TA.

A theme that emerged in the dialogue with educators was that there was notable transiency among teachers. Several educators suggested that low teacher salaries contributed to higher-than-expected turnover. When asked if there was anything that she would want to change at Maple Bear, Leticia stated, “The only thing is the salary. It would be really nice to have a better salary.” Larissa echoed this sentiment: “They could talk about salaries because there is a lot of difference in that area. Sometimes, it would be good to talk to teachers in other schools.” Larissa explained that pay is different from school to school. In turn, other schools may be more appealing for teachers who felt as though they were not being fairly paid.

Several teachers suggested that, at times, they did not feel valued in their job. When asked to make recommendations to policymakers about improving the Maple Bear system, Livia stated, “I would ask them to fight for more benefits for teachers. Because we are really involved, we love to teach and to learn more to improve our teaching. We do a great job and we deserve to be more valued.” This was a recurring theme in the teacher interviews. Luana remarked, “We could be better paid and receive more recognition for our work, especially because we need to have a much more open mind and be willing to learn a totally different education model than the one we're given. Unfortunately, education is seriously undervalued in Brazil.” Teachers noted that this was an issue that was prevalent throughout Brazil and was not specific to Maple Bear.

*Teacher Assistants.* Teachers reported that although teachers and TAs often worked collaboratively, TAs received their training and direction from teachers. Because TAs were often
groomed to become teachers, teachers suggested that schools would benefit from providing specialized franchise training for both groups on the role of the TA.

Many teachers pointed out that TAs did not receive training from Maple Bear trainers, and the system relied heavily on teachers to train and coach the TAs. Teachers explained that TAs worked in classrooms with teachers to support their instruction. Jessica stated that the coordinators or the administrators did not “tell them to ‘do this and that’ or tell them what to do. They tell them to go to their teacher.” She stated that TAs became a burden for some teachers and that “teachers without much training are training TAs . . . and this is difficult.” Jessica strongly suggested that TAs would benefit from training, and teachers would benefit from training that focused on how to work with TAs.

According to the teachers who were interviewed, TAs worked in classrooms in a variety of ways. They engaged in learning centers, worked one-on-one with individual students, and provided some small group instruction. Teachers believed that this format helped them to provide better service to children. Natalia explained how TAs were used in her classroom:

You can assist kids better and make centers . . . For example, kids who need better fine motor skills improved or maybe you have some kids who need to try a little bit harder at reading, and so you can separate them in different groups and then work with them individually.

Natalia asserted that the program was organized and written in a way that often necessitated a TA in the classroom. She described this as a positive factor because “in traditional schools, you don’t have somebody to help you.”

**Teachers.** Teachers reported submitting to their coordinators annual and weekly lesson plans that included instructional strategies and TA responsibilities. Teachers were expected to maintain a clean and safe learning environment, implement the curriculum in English, communicate regularly with parents, and engage in ongoing professional development.
Teachers articulated that they were expected to submit their annual year plan at the beginning of each school year and lesson plans at the beginning of each week. Larissa stated, 

I have to make a plan for every week and the annual plan at the beginning of every year . . . with all the goals and everything that we need to teach during the year. But we have to do that based on the programs that we have been given; then we have to work on the plan weekly and try and execute them.

Rafaela reiterated, “I have to prepare lessons and send my plans to the coordinator.”

In addition to planning their own lessons, teachers were also responsible for developing a plan and providing training for their TA. Natalia explained, “I have to plan all of my courses and also I have to instruct my TA to help me with my classes.” Jessica stated, “I have to train my assistant, as well.” This planning was said to be very detailed and portrayed as a priority for their school.

Once plans were developed, teachers recounted how their next task was to put these plans into action. Program implementation was described to be the most enjoyable and important part of a teachers’ jobs. Teachers clarified that they were trying to prepare the students for the next school year in content and in language. Natalia reflected, “You have to prepare them very well for elementary.” Teachers on the English side of the program affirmed that they were expected to maintain an English-speaking environment at all times. Teaching in immersion was challenging, according to some participants. Natalia explained,

Especially since it is different when it’s just a language class. You are teaching everything: a whole curriculum and a whole different side to a language and the culture. You teach grammar and everything together. It is a lot and a lot of responsibility on you.

Jessica echoed this sentiment:

I am responsible for everything that happens inside of the class . . . all of the teaching and behaviour management . . . and to maintain the English environment. I speak English as much of the time as possible . . . I can’t speak Portuguese with them . . . just with my assistant in a private way.
Teachers affirmed that it was their responsibility to create a physical environment that was safe and clean. Larissa explained, “I'm responsible for their safety for their bodies and everything. I make sure they're clean, make sure they aren't thirsty, but they are happy that they are learning.” Classroom instruction was the primary element of the teachers’ job. There were, however, other responsibilities that teachers from Maple Bear schools identified. Teachers were expected to communicate regularly with parents and attend special after-school events. Natalia explained that she “has meetings with families and helps to organize portfolios with all the kids’ activities, and prepare for fairs and family day.” Rafaela stated, “Sometimes, we have special events that I also have to attend. Like we had a Cultural Fair, the Family Day, all the graduations.” Teachers were also responsible for various supervisory duties such as snack, recess supervision, or end-of-the-day supervision. Rafaela explained, “Sometimes I have to help with snack. When kids are leaving school, I watch them as they leave.”

Teachers were also expected to be learners. Training was a very important responsibility of teachers at Maple Bear schools. Teachers were expected to attend weekly teacher meetings that were led by coordinators. Rafaela stated, “I have teacher meetings. We come every Wednesday.” Larissa explained that even though central training was not an expectation because it was held during vacation times, teachers often felt obligated to attend. She explained,

I need to take the trainings at least in January on our vacation when is a break and they we need to take the training that is offered each semester, and sometimes we need to attend a conference as well, and basically we are obligated.

**Coordinators.** Teachers reported that coordinators were responsible for a variety of managerial and pedagogical leadership tasks. They noted the need for more classroom support from coordinators and specialized training to prepare coordinators for their diverse role.
Teachers frequently affirmed that the role of the coordinator could be organized into two distinct categories: pedagogical leader and administrator. Teachers explained that coordinators were often so busy with administrative tasks, that their role as a pedagogical leader was often neglected. Several teachers explained that the coordinators were too busy. Luana stated, “A lot of time is spent with administrative work that could've be done by secretaries and others, while the pedagogical things are left aside.” Rafaela made a similar comment:

They are usually involved in the administrative things that they have to do here. I know that they are meaning to change that. Because our school is growing fast and they don’t get the chance to stay with us in the classroom . . . And they try to do their best, but in this moment because the school is growing so fast, there are so many things going on that they don’t have the time to give us all the support that we need.

Larissa agreed with this appraisal, suggesting that coordinators needed to prioritize their duties: “Sometimes I think the coordinator and principal are too busy. But I also think, they need to prioritize some things.” Several teachers from different schools expressed these sentiments, stating that they wished to have more pedagogical feedback and support from their coordinators.

Teachers described the type of classroom training and support that they would like to have. Luana noted, “Our coordinators rarely have time to observe our classes, and help us when we need . . . We don’t have many feedbacks. They rarely preview or prevent the problems and work only to solve them when they have already happened.” She suggested “helping us with planning, developing strategies, leading workshops, which in my opinion, are the most important role of a coordinator.” Rafaela pointed out that it would be beneficial if coordinators were “to watch over us and to attend the classes to see what we need and everything. So when we have a question or when we have something going on and we don’t know what to do about it . . . We’ll go and talk to them.” Larissa indicated that she would like to see them [coordinators] observing in the classroom more often, like once a week or one every 15 days or so. I want to see them and know that they are reading our
plans actually because we send them every week . . . But I feel that I miss that support. I need someone working together with me. Not telling me what to do, but evaluating my work. Working with me and giving feedback. Like someone asking, “Why don't you do this?” I guess I would like to have more suggestions about what I could do.

Another role of the coordinator highlighted by teachers was to complete administrative duties, such as hiring staff, communicating with parents, and dealing with issues as they arose. Schools were said to be administered in a very similar fashion to other traditional schools in Brazil. Isabela asserted, “The administration of this school works as the traditional schools. The difference is that coordination and principal speak English.” Teachers strongly suggested that these administrative tasks took away from their other pedagogical responsibilities.

Two strong recommendations for how to the role of the coordinator could be made more effective were gleaned from participants. One suggestion involved dividing the coordinator’s role into multiple roles and dividing responsibilities. Rafaela commented,

I think there should be more people working in the administrative part. Like, “you do this, the other person does that.” We know what everyone is doing . . . separating and delegating the jobs. [name of coordinator] could say, “I am the coordinator; this is what I do. So I will go talk to her. And this is what [name] is doing. She does this, this, this.”

Another recommendation was to provide additional specialized training for coordinators that featured pedagogical principles, leadership, and administration. Bruna remarked that coordinators should receive training:

Just like Maple Schools have trainings for teachers . . . there should be training for the ones who work on the administration sector. Schools principals, etc. Training not only on methodology, but administration. The effectiveness of organization will be better.

*Professional Development.* Because teachers lacked experience with (and education in) Canadian pedagogy, they reported that central and in-service training were critical for teacher and school success. Although there were strengths and challenges with all forms of training, in-service training by franchise trainers was cited as the most valuable.
Several teachers indicated that the Maple Bear model of education was dramatically different from the model of education that they experienced in their program of study. As a result, teachers recounted that adequate training and preparation for their role was critical.

Larissa explained,

All of the education that I had is different than what we do here. Sometimes, we have a hard time knowing what to do, knowing how things work, and what we are really supposed to do, knowing how to act and how to talk to the kids. And that's why I think the training is very important.

Luana reiterated how her own university education did not adequately prepare her to work for Maple Bear schools:

I can certainly say that my college education didn't prepare me for what I do at Maple Bear. Learning how to work at a Canadian school . . . It's been a totally new college for me. I've been learning and being prepared day after day.

Teachers were united in recounting that their prior educational experiences did not fully prepare them to use a Canadian model of education.

As an apparent consequence of this lack of formal preparation and the disparity between their education and the Maple Bear program, many teachers expressed insecurity regarding their personal teaching practices. Sophia stated, “I don't feel prepared and I get lost quite often. I feel we need more pedagogical support.” Rafaela expressed similar concerns: “it was hard to understand it at first.” Jessica summarized her internal reaction:

Oh my god . . . we think the trainers will analyze my teaching and they might think my lessons suck . . . Sometimes I don’t know what to do. Sometimes I come up against a problem and I wonder, “Wow, how do I deal with that?” I don’t know where to start.

Insecurities and a lack of confidence in their ability to teach optimally appeared to be the driving force behind a strongly expressed desire for more training. Natalia explained, “I think it would be nice to have more training and not just at the beginning of the year. In the middle of the year, but also something else . . . It would be nice to have more of that.” Bruna agreed, “I think
that the Maple Bear team should prepare me even more because it’s very different from other Brazilian schools.” This training, participants suggested, could occur in three distinct stages: central training, in-service training by Maple Bear trainers, and in-service training by school coordinators.

Teacher participants spoke at length about the training that was provided. One stage of training was called central training. Central training occurred at a central location where teachers from multiple school would travel for professional training sessions. It occurred during June and January, which fell during the teachers’ holidays. Topics of central training included numeracy, English, science, and English as an additional language. Jessica explained, “In January we have the ELA training, then literacy one, two, and three. And, in the middle of the semester – for us it’s June – we have math and science trainings.” The strength of central training was that it offered trainers the opportunity to introduce new programs, model hands-on instruction strategies, and provide teachers with hands-on materials. Larissa stated, “We are in training. They bring us materials and give us some very practical ideas. Activities we can do. They teach us all about this.” Natalia expressed why she appreciated central training:

They always offer us courses, and I do Maple Bear courses every vacation when they offer them. They have math and science and all the courses with topics about what we teach, like English literacy. They give us many, many tools to work with. They talk about ways to work with the kids. How to teach. How to improve ourselves. How to make our classes more interesting and everything. They help us a lot.

Larissa reported, “Even if you go to repeated trainings, we always learn something new, and we can internalize this concept, and this way of teaching and educating students.” Jessica remarked that central training was good but was insufficient: “We get our training . . . we go to Sao Paulo for two days, but this is not enough.” She also expressed a belief that training topics could be a little bit too repetitious: “After you do the trainings, it is just repetitious . . . the same thing is
taught each time . . . I already did Literacy 1, 2, 3, so there is nothing for me. Nothing new. So I won’t go all the time.”

In-service training that was delivered by Maple Bear trainers was said to be the most successful form of training. Jessica articulated why she believed in-service training was so effective:

I see that it is very good to have someone come. Someone who has this knowledge and to calm us down. Someone to tell us, “This is good, you are doing fine,” or “You could change that,” or “This is Ok” . . . so now, if that happens, I have what I need for everyday business.

Rafaela explained,

During the semester, we usually have trainers that come to attend our classes and give us support. Its really good because here in Brazil, we don’t have a strong teaching experience. To teach a Canadian curriculum in Brazil . . . The schools are totally different.

Isabela expressed a similar attitude towards in-school trainers: “The trainings are really effective in our daily routines. It shows how we have to act according to the situations.” Teachers described the trainers themselves to be loving and experienced educators. When asked why in-school training was so effective, Milena responded, “Being able to learn from loving and experienced people who always share things that really work well according to their knowledge and experience.”

In-school training that was delivered by school coordinators was described to be less effective. Natalia explained,

Teachers get some support and training from coordinators but not too much . . . I think we could have more. We have someone watching our class once in a while, checking in, to see if you are doing things right. I feel that we only get training when the Canadians come to train us. I know that our coordination is always very busy. But sometimes, I miss having some direct kind of feedback.
Jessica stated, “I don’t sit with my coordinator to do the planning . . . we don’t plan together. They don’t discuss it. We discuss problems, but not my plans. We don’t have enough time and they don’t have enough people to do that.” Weekly meetings were meant to be an opportunity for coordinators or in-school leaders to deliver professional development. However, some teachers believed that these weekly meeting could have been more effective. Natalia pointed out,

The meetings that we have every Wednesday, sometimes they bring really good texts and articles to discuss and something we can use during class. But sometimes the meetings are about things that we don’t need, and so I think the meetings could be planned better to make use of time better, more efficiently.

Several teachers remarked that TAs received no additional professional development. Most TAs learned their skills by observing teachers in the classes they were assigned to. Often, teachers became the trainers for TAs. Natalia stated, “When I started, I was an assistant, not a teacher. So, I helped everybody. So I had an opportunity to see many classes and many things and strategies the teachers use to teach.” As teachers expressed, this could put a strain on the teachers and created a “blind leading the blind” type of scenario.

Some teachers made recommendations for improving training. Eduarda expressed a desire for specific training in music and songs: “I’d like to receive training about music, or Canadian music.” She also suggested that Maple Bear create opportunities for music teachers to share their ideas with one another: “I'd like the music teachers of Maple Bear team to communicate and exchange ideas with each other.” Classroom teachers also explained that they would benefit from opportunities to collaborate and share with other teachers in different Maple Bear schools. Livia explained, “We are constantly being trained and can also ask for help. We ask other teachers and coordinators that like to share their experiences.” Luana pointed out,

We don't have much contact with the teachers of the other schools, only during the training sessions on holidays. We could have more interaction, exchanging experiences
and ideas and improving even more our work. This could be done like an interchange stay in different schools, so we could learn from each other's practices.

**School Culture.** Teachers described a positive school environment where all stakeholders, including students, appreciated the Maple Bear model of teaching and learning. Although teachers reported a need for more support from school coordinators, they felt generally supported and were committed to professional growth.

Teachers spoke highly about their experiences with Maple Bear schools. Larissa stated, “I love working and teaching here. Sometimes I wish I have experience in other schools but when I reflect, there is nowhere else I’d rather be.” Jessica exclaimed, “I love this school. I love it. really! So I hope to stay here as a teacher. I love teaching.” Rafaela remarked, “I love working here. I don’t know if I’d be able to teach in a different model . . . I don’t know if I’d fit in a Brazilian school. I would probably have to find another job. I love working here.” Eight teachers, all from different schools, made statements that reaffirmed this sentiment. In a few cases, teachers associated these attitudes with Canadian education. Luana stated, “I simply love to work here. I've never been so challenged and so happy for my entire professional life. I wish I could learn at the source, studying the Canadian system of education in a Canadian school.” Farolina echoed this sentiment: “I really like to work here and I believe in the Canadian education!”

When asked what it was that they liked about the Canadian model, several teachers explained that the teaching methodology was excellent. Isabela commented, “When I started as a TA, I had my doubts about this Canadian model of education. After a while, I could see that it is really effective and is really good way to teach young learners.” Teachers articulated that they embraced the Maple Bear teaching methodology and attributed the positive school culture to the distinctive Maple Bear model. Jessica stated,
The Canadian way of teaching is affecting the way Maple Bear is... because the Canadian way of teaching is not just Maple Bear... The Maple Bear way of learning is the Canadian way of learning. The way that Canadians respect and deal with teachers. Teaching is a Canadian cultural thing. And we don’t have that. That makes Maple Bear schools very different.

A team model of teaching was identified as a positive aspect of the Maple Bear program. This team approach included administrators, coordinators, teachers, teacher assistants, and, in turn, the students. Several teachers who were interviewed described the school culture as one where the staff worked together as a team. Jessica described the positive team environment at her school:

When the trainers, they say that the staff is very good and the environment is good... we can feel that too. This positivity gets everybody. Everybody helps each other. People help each other. Teacher helps the cleaning lady... Sometimes, when you go to a classroom you don’t know who is the teacher and who is the TA, because we work together as a team and the environment is very good.

Although teachers, in general, expressed that they were happy with the level of support they received from administrators, many teachers articulated a belief that more support was needed for teachers in pedagogy. Larissa explained that she felt as though her questions and concerns were not being heard:

To be very honest... I do not get support. I get very frustrated sometimes because we report everything, we ask for help, and we try to always engage them, to advise them what is going on in the classroom, but we don’t get too many answers. And I think I could have been helped more with many things.

Larissa’s statements were comparable to those expressed by many of the teachers who participated in this research. However, all but one teacher explained that they understood that coordinators were very busy with other administrative duties. Teachers were generally united in expressing satisfaction with and appreciation for the training that they receive from Maple Bear trainers.
Teachers recounted that the environment in their respective Maple Bear schools was very conducive to student learning. Jessica described the difference between traditional Brazilian schools and Maple Bear schools:

When we have some trouble or problems here, we say, “Go to another school, then you will see what’s trouble.” . . . In other places, the students are fighting and are hating teachers. Really, it’s complicated. So here is heaven. The kids don’t want to leave school and so this is the best sign. They don’t want to go home. They love what they do and the environment for us to work is perfect, too.

Rafaela described a situation where the year five teachers and the coordinators worked together as a team in supporting a new student who had a limited grasp of the English language. She explained, “All the teachers were trying to help him. We tried hard to work on his emotions . . . We really took care of him emotionally.” Rafaela recounted how she felt that this story was an example of how teachers worked together to support a student who was struggling to learn.

*English Language Learning.* Teachers articulated the value of immersion education as a model for teaching and learning English. However, they noted concerns about the difficulty of learning academic vocabulary and the absence of parental cooperation.

Most teachers declared that teaching students through an immersion model provided an excellent platform for learning the English language. Milena stated,

I find it really significant, mirroring our model of education on Canadian education . . . because it is always among the world's best educations. And, I also notice that bilingualism is something that can really happen if appropriate strategies and dedication are applied.

Milena communicated that, as long as teachers are dedicated and used the immersion strategies, it was possible for students to become bilingual. Isabela reiterated, “What I can see is that they are able to learn how to read and write in Portuguese and English at the same time. That must be really nice for a young child.”
Some teachers expressed a concern that teaching students academic subjects like science and math in English may not adequately prepare students for Brazilian universities in these subject areas. Sophia explained, “Learning about mathematics and solving equations in a foreign language is quite a challenge for the kids. Perhaps a different approach would be helpful for this subject.” Livia made a similar statement:

I think that learning science in a second language is not so useful because children have to learn some terms that they probably will not use, being fluent in English, and maybe they will need to know this information in Portuguese.

Learning English could also be made challenging if students were not given any opportunities to practice their language at home. Isabela explained, “Most of the parents don’t speak or encourage their children to speak or even watch cartoons in English in their homes, which makes the bilingual word exist only at school.” Sophia stated,

In general, parents look for this type of education mainly because of status and they have no idea of what really is a bilingual school and how it works. As a result, we have parents telling us all the time “how we should work” instead of worrying about their children’s education instead.

Sophia suggested that some parents registered their children for Maple Bear schools because bilingual schools were often associated with a certain amount of status in Brazil. If parents did not fully understand the value of the model, then they were less likely to support it at home.

**Resources.** Most teachers reported having the necessary resources for their job. Other teachers noted that sometimes resources were not available or they did not know how to use them appropriately.

Some of the teachers who participated in this research stated that they believed schools provided all of the materials they needed for teaching and learning. Isabela articulated, “This school provides everything we ask for, especially talking about materials. These children are
really lucky to have the opportunity to study here.” Another teacher stated, “They have all the materials that they need and they have the support from us, teachers and TAs.”

However, not all teachers shared this belief. Farolina articulated that not all schools supplied teachers with all of the materials and resources that they needed. She stated, “We don't have enough time and they don't help us with money. Usually, we have to look and pay for everything using our money and, of course, we don't have enough.” Larissa stated, Some of the materials that they suggest that we use are difficult to find here. Sometimes we hear that that they are suggested, so we sometimes have difficulty. We don't have the materials for math, so we have a hard time adapting.

Larissa raised the issue that the curriculum sometimes suggested specific resources or materials that were not accessible to teachers. Jessica raised the unique point that the curriculum did not always provide a detailed description of how to use resources. She asked, “How do you do an activity so that they get that? . . . You have this water and sand center and you wonder, how do you do that?”

Curriculum. Teachers appreciated the detailed curriculum because it was well-organized, step-by-step, and cross-cultural. Teachers reported making adaptations due to cultural differences, and/ or a lack of time and resources.

Teachers provided a few recommendations to Maple Bear administrators/ curriculum writers. Teachers suggested universalizing the program, in order to make each program look similar. According to some teachers, following the progression of concepts could sometimes be challenging. Additionally, one teacher stated that some of the older programs required revision. Teachers expressed conflicting views on the design of the curriculum: some teachers expressed an interest in a curriculum that offered the teacher choice, and other teachers expressed a desire
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for curriculum that was detailed and prescriptive. Another recommendation of teachers was to include more formative assessment strategies.

Generally speaking, teachers declared that the Maple Bear program was effective in providing teachers with a detailed, step-by-step description of how to facilitate learning. Isabela stated, “The curriculum comes ready for us to use. We don't have to change the activities.” Eduarda explained, “The content is very organized.” Natalia described why she appreciated a newer grade-level curriculum that was recently created:

They have the new program and we got one of them printed. We are looking at it and it's amazing. It's much better. It gives you much more information. It gives you websites, and how to work with math, and everything. It's very detailed.

Teachers explained that the curriculum provided students with an opportunity to talk and share their ideas. Natalia stated, “I think that the curriculum, especially for K [kindergarten], is a lot about things to ‘talk about this, talk about this.’” She explained that these opportunities to share and discuss taught students valuable problem-solving and conversational skills.

Teachers reported that the detailed, step-by-step nature of the program ensured that teachers who were new to the program could very easily follow the directions and would therefore implement effective teaching strategies. According to teachers, these individuals would not need to make adaptations; however, once comfortable with the program, teachers could make various adaptations as needed. Farolina stated, “If you are a new teacher, you probably use the curriculum just the way it's been written. But once the time passes and you get more experience. You know what kind of changes you can do.” Several teachers cited a number of different reasons for making curricular adaptations. Larissa pointed out, “It is hard to write things to fit for every country.”
Making the curriculum more culturally appropriate was highlighted as one predominant reason for making adaptations. Isabela reported, “Teachers only modify the documents according to the culture.” Luana explained that some cultural adaptations were “related to cultural subjects, like weather, currency, materials, food, animals we don't have here.” Vitoria highlighted a few examples of cultural adaptations in math: “We talk about the Canadian money but we also have to talk about the Brazilian money so they can relate. Especially since we don’t have special names for the coins, so we have to do some things different.”

Vitoria also talked about cultural adaptations in science: “We talk about weather and so of course things are really different . . . so I had to really adapt.” Larissa articulated, “In science, when they talk about the Aboriginal issues, its a little bit hard to explain that.” Most teachers stated that the number of cultural adaptations were very limited, and usually based on the subject matter or the content.

A few teachers introduced how culture played a different role in how the curriculum was adapted. Jessica explained, “Sometimes we cut out some Canadian things like customs, because we are afraid of what parents will think.” Farolina also articulated, “We need to adapt the curriculum all the time. Sometimes because of the way that parents think, sometimes because of the director.” These teachers suggested that differences in parents’ beliefs influenced the content that was delivered. Rafaela stressed that, by-in-large, the concepts and topics that involved local culture were taught by the teachers on the Portuguese side of the program. Canadian culture was primarily included in the English side of the program. Jessica reinforced this idea:

We tend to keep the Brazilian culture or Portuguese content to the Portuguese class, so they know that English is English or Canadian, and Brazilian things are learned in the Portuguese class. English is Canadian. By now, this division is normal for them.
Both Jessica and Rafaela articulated that one of the strengths of this Maple Bear program was that children were afforded the opportunity to learn about both the Brazilian culture and the Canadian culture. Rafaela stated,

I think that it can often be a challenge to bring the Canadian culture into the classroom because we are in Brazil. We try to stick with this in the English classes. And we leave everything about Brazil for the Portuguese teachers. But every time we have a chance to compare or show them that something would be very different, if they were in another school here, we do it. Then they see the advantages and the differences, and they can really think about what other kids here are learning.

Teachers described the value of learning about other cultures. Sophia communicated that she would like Maple Bear programmers to include more cross-cultural experiences in the curriculum. She stated, “I think that besides being a bilingual community, it would be nice to become more bicultural . . . in the sense that we can learn more about Canada and how schools in Canada operate.” Additionally, she provided a few examples:

Some type of connection with Canadian classrooms, such as a cultural exchange program, would be interesting for our students. Perhaps communication via Skype with a partner school would be a fun project for the kids and expose them to things about Canadian culture that they may not know of otherwise.

Teachers explained that other curricular adaptations were needed because the curriculum called for resources that were not available to teachers. When Luiza was asked about making adaptations to the curriculum, she responded, “Maybe a small change in the resource for the activity.” Vitoria explained that she searched out her own resources and experiments to supplement a curriculum that she described as “not really that interesting.” Vitoria stated that she felt that many of the books suggested in the science curriculum were not age-appropriate and she made adaptations to accommodate this issue:

I think the books are too simple for the early years, but then later for years 5 and 6 I think the text books are too difficult . . . too many big words. The year 5 books were terrible and my students couldn’t stand them. This was the textbook. The experiments are not
really that interesting, so I always have to search on YouTube for another experiment that will be more interesting. I think the science curriculum could be a little stronger.

Another reason for curricular adaptations that was highlighted by several teachers was that the length of time suggested for activities was not in-line with the reality of how long the lessons would take. Luana stated, “We always make changes when we think they're necessary, to attend our needs and especially to fit in the time we have, which is much less than the time a Canadian school has.” Rafaela’s statements highlighted the challenge of prioritizing the curriculum, in order to accomplish what she perceived to be really important. Rafaela explained,

Sometimes I make some adaptations. First the curriculum doesn’t fit in our time, so we have to work with that and we make adaptations . . . I look at the whole curriculum and I see, “This is the important thing that they need to know.” Then I try to focus on these things. I think about organizing the curriculum. It is such a long one and there are so many things in it. Sometimes it’s hard to condense things: “What is really important here?”

Teachers made a few recommendations for the improvement of the Maple Bear program. Several teachers recommended that the curriculum should be designed in a way that is universal and congruent across the curriculum. Daniela noted that curriculum writers need to “make more use of common language at the different levels in the programs” – that is, common and consistent educational terminology. Daniela described the importance of universalizing the educational language used in the program, while Vitoria focused more on the format. Daniela also commented on the format of the lessons: “The programs are well laid out, but sometimes the flow from one level to the next is not easily apparent.” Vitoria reinforced this belief:

All programs should write the same way. For example, the year 4 program in ELA is written beautifully. Everything is written out so well. You know what you have to do. You even know the time. Whereas the year 6 ELA program, it is not clear what you have to do . . . I think they should all really follow the same pattern.

Additionally, a few teachers stated that some of the older curricula required revision. Natalia stated, “In the older program, we always had to think about different activities. We had
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to think about what video to show or try different strategies to add because the program was not enough.” Natalia explained that the length of the time allotted for some of these older programs needed to be adjusted. Luana stated,

I would recommend that the program developers adjust the time of the lessons to our schedule because they are very difficult to accomplish. Regarding the amount of time we have in class for each subject, around 50 minutes per subject, per day – at least at the school I work.

Teachers presented conflicting views on the amount of prescriptive detail to be included in the program. Some teachers wanted a curriculum that was more open and permitted more teacher-choice and options. Luana stated, “They could also think about a more opened guidance, with contents we must accomplish, and suggested themes, strategies, and techniques, not only activities.” Other teachers wanted the curriculum to be more specific and provide specific activities for each lesson. When discussing the strengths of the newer programs, Natalia remarked, “Now the new program seems to give us all that we need and so we don't have to think about everything that we have to do.” It should be noted that Natalia was new to Maple Bear, while Luana was an experienced teacher with Maple Bear. Another recommendation that was made by teachers was to include more formative assessment strategies in the curriculum. Raquel said, “I would recommend that strategies for assessment ‘for’ and ‘as’ learning be incorporated into the curriculum.”

Methodology. Teachers reported how Maple Bear’s constructivist methodology was different from their own educational experience. Teachers indicated that through hands-on, experiential, and student-centered learning opportunities, students developed social skills, life skills, and character education.

Teachers embraced the Maple Bear methodology. All teachers involved in this research articulated a belief that this Canadian form of education was superior to the traditional Brazilian
form of schooling. As teachers pointed out, the program was different in many ways. Luana explained, “Our schools work totally different from a Canadian school . . . like constructivism. We can hardly see a school that approaches the same methodologies of a Canadian system.”

Larissa and Jessica described one major difference between traditional schools and the Maple Bear model. Larissa explained how the physical arrangement of the classroom brought students to the center of the learning process:

I had to change my ways of teaching, even the setting, for example. The way the chairs are set up, we were always in lines and we weren't allowed to talk to our neighbor. But now, everything is completely different. As a student, I wasn't allowed to talk or to interrupt, and we had to raise our hand to make a comment on something.

Jessica reinforced this belief: “Because the way they learn here, it is way different from the way we did in traditional schools. In Brazil, the teacher talks and the students listen. That’s it!” Vitoria stated, “When I was in the Brazilian public school, classes were always teacher-centered all the time. Always putting things on the board, writing things in journals, and a few experiments. Here, it is very different. The students really understand.” Teachers explained that through this form of teaching, the teacher learns alongside the students, guiding them through the learning process.

To some teachers, learning to take on this guiding role was a challenge. Rafaela explained,

Giving up the time to let kids have a voice in every activity that they do. This is so good. I’m not the one speaking all the time. They do the talking most of the time. Much more than I do. I’m just a facilitator.

When asked about the Maple Bear methodology, Isabela recounted, “The children are free guided and they learn much more in a ludic way, especially with the songs.” Luana also stated, “The students are motivated to explore, research, and find answers for their questions, having the teacher as a facilitator.”
Teachers explained how principles of universal design for learning (UDL) and differentiation were used to meet the needs of all students. Natalia explained one major difference between the methodologies:

Here we are always trying to connect the subject that you are learning with something in your life. You're trying to make them see this all connected in some way. And you have different ways to make the kids understand . . . because all kids learn differently. Some kids are more visual, and some kids have to listen, and some kids have to play. So you explore all of these different ways. Everybody's included, and I think that's amazing.

Jessica stated that in the traditional model of education,

If you have problems, like you have dyslexia or something, you have to go to psychology or something like that. You have one way to learn, and one only. . . . At Maple Bear, you teach in a more positive way, and this is very hard for us because we were not taught like that. Complimenting and giving praise about the good things they have.

Teachers believed in the importance of attending to students’ unique needs in a positive way.

Vitoria described that in the Maple Bear model, students learned problem-solving and critical thinking: “They know the process and what it’s all about. So even if the students don’t remember all of the strategies, I am sure that they can stop and think, and find a way to solve.”

Livia explained how students are taught how to learn: “Children learn how to learn, how to think. It’s meaningful, so they enjoy.” Some teachers explained how they made connections with their Brazilian culture. Leticia stated,

They are experiencing Brazilian experiences, and we try to make connections. Maybe we are talking about beans, so we ask what is the bean that Brazilians love. We bring it back to the people, always respecting the program, but we are always trying to make this connection with Brazilian culture.

Teachers highlighted the use of activity centers, hands-on experiments, and inquiry projects as key components of the Maple Bear model. Larissa explained that she tried “to give the students the freedom to taste the things, like to try to be hands-on and do activities like this.”

Leticia explained that in her class, “the kids experience the learning. They are there inside it.”
They are not just seeing something from afar. They are touching.” Rafaela described how the curriculum prescribed a way of teaching that is hands-on: “It’s the way the curriculum is taught. Having students working in centers, all the hands-on activities, the games. All those things. Giving the kids a voice.” When asked what were the key features of the Maple Bear model, Jessica stated,

The way of teaching. The way of experimenting, first and checking knowledge later; this is perfect. In Brazil we usually have to only learn by listening whereas in Maple Bear, we experiment, we try, we test. We play, we do all the fun activities that’s possible, and then we give it back. Answer what you know. It’s natural. We experiment and then we test.

**Student Learning.** Teachers reported that while local Brazilian schools actively worked to prepare students for a university entrance exam, Maple Bear schools aimed to prepare students for life. Despite these different goals, teachers affirmed that Maple Bear students developed the independent, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills necessary to be successful on the university entrance exam.

Teachers identified clear differences in the overall goals of traditional Brazilian schools and Maple Bear schools, because the traditional schools’ primary focus was to prepare students for the university entry exam. Larissa stated,

In traditional school, there is a culture of passing. Passing is to go to college, and going to college is hard. To go to college you need to pass the test, and so teaching is designed to help you to pass the test and not to learn for life.

Jessica’s statement reinforced this position:

In other schools, they put too much pressure on the kids. You have to learn English. You have to learn other languages and Portuguese. Your math must be tops . . . because you are going to go do your tests for university [entrance] and so the pressure is very hard.

Natalia stated, “In traditional Brazilian schools, they don't have this concern about whether you really learned that or whether you're going to take that forward for your life. If you pass the test
and forget everything, that's fine.” Teachers agreed that the goal of Maple Bear schools was different.

Many teachers explained that Maple Bear schools prepared students for life. Larissa said, “I think here, we prepare students for life. They don't need to memorize many things like lists or books or tests or formulas, but they need to know the things that exist.” Natalia explained that at Maple Bear, “we are always trying to connect the subject that you are learning with something in your life. You're trying to make them see this all connected in some way.” Teachers believed that to prepare students for life meant arming them with important skills.

Teaching students to be independent was described by Maple Bear teachers to be a key feature of student learning. Luiza stated, “Students learning to self regulate is unique and very different from the Brazilian way of being. I believe it is the key in the program.” Sophia also expressed that “helping children become respectful and autonomous” had been important.

Developing problem-solving was one skill that was highlighted as a critical objective of Maple Bear schools. Eduarda stated, “The content encourages students to find solutions to problems.” Students were also encouraged to solve problems by asking good questions and developing a sense of wonder. Rafaela described how the Maple Bear program and methodology promoted inquiry: “What amazes me here is that whenever they have a question, they raise their hands. If they want to comment on something, they just do it naturally. I think this is so precious because nobody is holding anything back.” Livia stated, “Canadian education respects what children already know. Children can talk and share their ideas. They have voice.”

According to the teachers, promoting open inquiry and free speech, as was done at Maple Bear schools, taught students how to ask questions to solve problems and find solutions.
Teachers affirmed that the difference that separated traditional and Maple Bear schools lay in the way Maple Bear teachers promoted positive reinforcement and feedback. Rafaela stated,

In Brazil, we are used to listening to the negative all the time. Here at Maple Bear, we are supposed to always look at the positives . . . And just tell the students what they should do to improve. In Brazil, this is very common to have people pointing out our mistakes and our errors. That’s very frequent here. Because of this, our students are not getting that feedback.

Vitoria emphasized that even though the focus of Maple Bear schools was not specifically to prepare students for the entry exams, the students would still be prepared for exams: “When students write tests to enter colleges, they have to use these kinds of things. They have to think outside the box, not only to be creative but to figure out different ways to solve a problem.” She stressed, along with other teachers, that skills like problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking would be valuable skills for life, but would also be valuable skills for writing tests.
APPENDIX G

RESULTS – PROVINCIALLY AFFILIATED OFFSHORE SCHOOLS

Quantitative Results

Question 1 – “Canadian teaching methodologies are effective for educating students at this school.”

Table 6.1. Responses to Question 1

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Question 2 – “Teachers have to make many adaptations to the curriculum content while teaching at this school.”

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Question 3 – “I received specialized training that prepared me for my professional role in this Canadian school.”

Table 6.3. Responses to Question 3.

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Question 4 – “Teaching at this Canadian school is very different from teaching in Canada.”

Table 6.4. Responses to Question 4.

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Question 5 – “If I were to redo my experience at this school, there are many things that I would do differently to improve my professional practices.”

Table 6.5. Responses to Question 5

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APPENDIX G – RESULTS – PROVINCIALLY AFFILIATED SCHOOLS

Question 6 – “It is challenging for teachers to use Canadian methods of teaching at this school.”

Table 6.6. Responses to Question 6

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**Question 7** – “Teachers routinely implement a Canadian-form of curriculum as it is written in the curricular document provided (without modification).”

**Table 6.7. Responses to Question 7**

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Question 8 – “I was well prepared for my professional role at this Canadian school.”

Table 6.8. Responses to Question 8

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Question 9 – “While working at this school, I had concerns about using a Canadian model of education.”

Table 6.9. Responses to Question 9

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Question 10 – “My professional experience at this school was positive.”

Table 6.10. Responses to Question 10

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Question 11 – “Teachers receive adequate opportunities for in-service professional development while employed by this school.”

Table 6.11. Responses to Question 11

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Question 12 – “Differences in culture did not impact my ability to perform effectively in my professional role.”

Table 6.12. Responses to Question 12

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Question 13 – “Using a Canadian model of education at this school has been challenging.”

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Question 14 – “There are many strengths of using a Canadian model of education at this school.”

Table 6.14. Responses to Question 14

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Question 15 – “This school is administered in a very similar manner to most schools in Canada.”

Table 6.15. Responses to Question 15

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Qualitative Results

Administrators

Table 7. Pseudonyms and Countries of Administrators.

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Staff Recruitment and Retention. Principals reported four methods for recruiting staff: special consultant agencies, advertisements in Canadian publications, university career fairs, and recruitment websites. Recruiting and retaining adventurous teachers who met the requirements of both the provincial and the local government was reported to be a challenge.

1 As a condition of giving his informed consent, Kelly Card required that his real name be used instead of a pseudonym throughout this research report.
One principal described the personal qualities that she looked for in teacher candidates. A few principals from schools in Turkey cited issues that they faced in staff recruitment.

Principals used different strategies for recruiting teachers from Canada. Patty (China) explained,

They have a Canadian consultant [who] lives in [name of Canadian city] . . . he recruits staff . . . He would recruit staff from [name of province] to there. Most teachers were [name of province] . . . He would send me their portfolios . . . it was up to myself to decide whether they would fit into the system or not.

Ted (Turkey) stated,

I obviously looked at [name of province] first and we had advertisements in the local papers like the [name of publication] and the [name of publication], and we used to use Teach Canada, one of the on-line recruitment sites . . . At that time, we did not attend any of the search associates fairs. But, I did go to [name of university] and I recruited extensively using [name of university] graduates because they are really the most international graduates and they have their Career Tour fair, which I attended and that was a success.

Kelly (South Korea) said, “Most of them seek us out. That’s been our pattern until now. Just last week, we paid fees towards the Make a Future website, which is the [name of province] portal for [name of province] teachers.”

One principal from China described the type of candidate that she anticipated to be the most resilient to this work environment. Patty (China) stated,

The ones that I ended up hiring were people that, like myself, were interested in experiencing something a little different that still was in the realm of Canadian based. The ones from [name of province], they were looking for work because they weren’t being hired full time in their own province.

Principals described the challenges of recruiting Canadian teachers to work in Turkey. For example, Ben (Turkey) responded, “Finding suitable and experienced [name of province] trained and certified teachers.” Administrators indicated that this was a persistent and particularly thorny issue. Duncan (Turkey) explained, “Dealing with the Ministry of Education
and dealing with staffing, and then working with the province, I always found that the people from [name of province] were very approachable and helpful.” When asked to make recommendations to individuals who were thinking about starting a provincially affiliated offshore Canadian school, Ted (Turkey) responded, “I think that they should come into this knowing that trying to recruit and retain teachers is the biggest challenge that they will encounter.”

Politics often played a role in hampering the recruitment process in provincially affiliated schools in Turkey. Ted (Turkey) explained how the Turkish Ministry of Education held very strict requirements for Canadian teachers to work in Turkish schools:

The other challenges I deal with now are the Ministry of Education requirements. In [name of province], we are very generous in terms of certification . . . that is not the case here in Turkey. If you are a science teacher here in Turkey, you have to have a Bachelor of Science degree. You have to have a major concentration in that area if you're going to teach . . . you can imagine how few candidates that creates and how much more that further splits the pool . . . So when you now go look for candidates, it's very, very difficult. That was one of the realities that made recruiting exceptionally difficult.

Ted (Turkey) reinforced this sentiment, identifying another political factor that would narrow the pool of candidates qualified to teach at his Turkish school. He explained how the affiliated provincial government required teachers to have a teaching certification from the province-of-origin: “One of those stipulations of the overseas schools is that the teachers had the [name of province] certified or eligible for [name of province] certification so that obviously narrows the candidate pool immensely.”

Ted (Turkey) also described how the international reputation of the country influenced recruitment: “You can imagine that recruiting for any country like Turkey, who at the time, is a little misunderstood, not even really known, and is considered to be a Middle Eastern country, which isn't the case, but that created some challenges.”
Patty (China) described the issues that she faced when using international teacher recruitment agencies in Canada:

The consultant himself, even though he is doing the job, I don’t think he has clear expectations. It’s more of a job for him because it’s putting money in his pocket. We could go through a list of different people with different backgrounds and he just fills them in. . . . There needs to be a system for attracting targeted people for the job. I don’t know if all the information was there. There is something missing.

**Student Profile.** Principals reported that the student profile consisted of English language learners (ELLs), many of whom exhibited a wide array of special academic and emotional needs. The attitudes and work ethic of students different from one country to the next. Teachers reported that parents enrolled their children in provincially affiliated schools to provide easy access to Canadian universities or as a result of a dissatisfaction with the local system of education.

Principals reported that the student profile consisted of English language learners (ELLs), many of whom exhibited a wide array of special academic and emotional needs. The attitudes and work ethic of students different from one country to the next. Teachers reported that parents enrolled their children in provincially affiliated schools to provide easy access to Canadian universities or as a result of a dissatisfaction with the local system of education.

Principals from Asian schools described a culture of students who were motivated to learn. Jessica (China) commented, “Students are highly competitive and engaged in their education.” Another principal from China indicated that there were therefore virtually no behavioral issues at this school. Patty (China) said,

I can count how many time we had an issue on one hand. We just didn’t. When we did have issues, we followed the same protocol that we would at any Canadian school. That only occurred once, where I actually had a type of issue with the student and had to remove them from the classroom. They know what they are in the classes to do and that’s what they do. They are there to learn.
Paul (Japan) reported a similar situation in Japan: “Students are better behaved! They are more independent and more responsible, with far fewer social challenges than are present in Canadian public schools."

Another element of the student profile was learning English as an additional language. Duncan (Turkey) noted,

The kids that were coming to us had low levels of English, low academic success in their previous schooling, not a lot of motivation because of their bad experiences in elementary school, and now the fact that they were going to be in this very unique Canadian model school. So we had a whole host of challenges.

Adam (Egypt) also stated, “There are more ESL type learners here.”

Two principals spoke of several students with special learning and emotional needs. Ted (Turkey) remarked, “We ended up dealing with students with really significant learning challenges, so that was another challenge that we faced . . . Special needs? Absolutely!” Patty (China) echoed this sentiment: “It’s more in the area of mental health and health in general. Now I’m seeing more and more about mental health and the importance of our students. It’s not there in the international contexts and it should be.”

A few of the principals hypothesized about why their student population had developed the way it had. Patty (China) indicated that students from well-off families enrolled their children in Canadian schools as a last resort to help get into university. In China, there was a rigorous testing process that streamed students according to test results. Patty remarked,

The students that we got there were fairly well off. After grade 9, all students write a test and, if they pass that test, then they are given permission to continue with their education. If they don’t pass it, then they go into the labor and trades or whatever it is. That test is so important to many individuals. Then what happens is that the students that we get, they come from all different parts of China or from the far north or the south of China. We are the last resort because it fits into their pocket money. These parents are working to allow their son or daughter to attend a [name of province] school.

Ted recounted a similar scenario that existed in Turkey:
The student profile in our school is unique in so many ways. Because we were new and we had no track record, things were very different, and because the Turkish education milieu is so diverse in terms is of what is out there. You have the government schools, you have these other schools, which were kind for academically successful students, and you have a “Lyceum,” which is kind of a science track school, which would attract top students out of the eighth grade, and then you would have a variety of private schools, with varying levels of academic success from students, right from the really marginal ones who open the door to anyone to the established private schools that have a long history like ours. And so they were looking for an alternative, and basically what we found with our student profiles was that these were students who had been eaten up and spit out by this very rigorous system of middle schools, which prepares students to take an eighth grade exam. If they have been successful but their points were low on the eighth grade exam, they were relegated to some really bottom feeder schools. The profile of the students who were even willing to consider a Canadian program, with this unknown information, was really at the bottom.

Kelly (South Korea) identified a similar situation at his school in South Korea:

There is quite a high degree of transiency . . . But there are a couple of reasons for that, too. One is that they are already transient: they’ve already tried other schools before they came to us. There is a kind of skittishness among some of our clients. They don’t know who to trust. They don’t trust their own system, they don’t trust the private system, so they are already volatile . . . you could say. Then others, they’re a little bit less flighty. They are just looking for a good fit . . . But those ones have a particular conceptions and are maybe, you could say, more self-consistent. Not quite driven by their fears, but have more of a target that they are aiming to achieve. And then there are others that are just totally grateful that this option exists . . . and it’s exactly what they want for their children.

**Staff Profile.** Principals reported that most Canadian teachers were young, inexperienced, and professionally certified by the province the school was affiliated with. In many cases, political tension existed between the local government and the Canadian school. Principals articulated the need for additional support staff.

Principals described the profile of the teachers who worked at their school. Patty (China) explained that although teachers were supposed to be certified by the affiliating province, this was not always the case: “Not all were from [name of province]. There were four of us that were from [name of province]. We only had six staff. The other one was from [name of province].
We had one from [name of province] each year.” Kelly (South Korea) described teachers’ profile:

We do have one American. That American is not [name of province]-certified, and therefore, doesn’t teach our curriculum. She teaches a supplementary course in English. All the rest are [name of province]-certified . . . but not necessarily [name of province] trained . . . [name of province]-certified teachers have a quality foundation.

Kelly (South Korea) explained that teachers were young and often inexperienced: “Many of them are brand new practically: one or two years of experience. Maybe 50% of them are one or two years of experience and the other 50% have none at all. So you’ve got a whole staff of inexperienced teachers.”

Some of the principals shared that two cultures often co-existed in their schools. According to Ted (Turkey), that cultural diversity sometimes created issues: “The lack of bilingualism amongst colleagues, so communication can sometimes become challenging.” Kelly (South Korea) also identified this challenge: “I mean, we knew that there were two cultures. We knew that. Even on staff we have two cultures. And we knew that there would be problems.”

One principal explained the political challenges that emerged between local government and the school attempting to operate using a Canadian curriculum. Ted (Turkey) said, “The challenges that I faced had more to do with the group that I was working with, and the ownership group, so if I were to put it on a spectrum those were my biggest challenge. Dealing with the Ministry of Education.” Kelly (South Korea) described a similar issue:

People are a lot more involved in everyone else’s lives. So if you are going to be a nurse, if you are going to be an educator, if you are going to be whatever it is you are going to be, you will be accountable to defend and explain what it is you are doing to multiple constituencies . . . and that’s what teachers are a little bit surprised by . . . especially coming out into the international field. . . . If you’re back in Canada, back in the province, you are a little bit more sheltered by the inertia of public school systems that have been there and there are all these legal supports. . . . I think it’s a lot more in your face in the international system.
Principals indicated that a lack of support staff was another issue with provincially affiliated schools. When asked what these schools could do to improve, Adam (Egypt) responded, “Staff availability for substituting for staff absences.” Additionally, Kelly (South Korea) indicated that there were no educational assistants to support teachers in the classroom: “We had a few . . . but that didn’t last very long. They were basically first year university students with very minimal training, not very far away from our students in terms of experience and awareness.”

When asked whether his school had sufficient support staff for dealing with diverse student needs, Ted (Turkey) responded,

No, not at all. Luckily the teachers that we had were aware of these issues and they were aware of the diversity that might come like in a system in Canada. So they were sympathetic to them and they differentiated their instruction accordingly. But in terms of resources like push out and pull in, absolutely not. You were on your own and you had to make do with what you had.

Kelly (South Korea) also responded,

Very minimal. We have an English support teacher who just basically conducts a peripheral English class which is integrated with the other courses, but he is just not [name of province]-certified. Then we have cook and office staff, and our office staff are the primary conduits of communication. Otherwise, that’s it.

Patty (China) replied,

No, there were not. That is the issue that I really feel very uncomfortable with because there are not any of those. We as staff became those resources. We became the counselors; we became whatever had to be done to get through that process. There were no certified counselors. There was nothing there. Nothing for that support work.

Patty (China) further explained that specialists and clinicians were also non-existent at her provincially affiliated school. She suggested that this was because mental illness or the need for specialized help was not recognized the same way by the Chinese culture:

In the culture of Chinese, those are not recognized. They are not, from my understanding and the people who I talked to. I talked to a psychologist, one of the top in Beijing, and
he said that it is not even recognized. There are no official problems. Those roles are not part of the system.

Community Perspective. Principals reported that although many parents viewed provincially affiliated schools as superior to their local education system, an inaccurate understanding of Canadian methodology caused some apprehension. Communication was critical to combat this phenomenon. A principal from South Korea noted that parents did not want children with special needs attending classes with their own children.

Principals indicated that families often enrolled their children in provincially affiliated schools because of their dissatisfaction with their own system of education. In two cases, principals were also quite skeptical about Canadian schools. Kelly (South Korea) stated,

I think they basically have abandoned their own education and they are completely committed to an international education. They just don’t buy into the Korean method, the sort of self-abandonment or denial, for trying to get into the top three universities, which is just sort of the goal of every student. And only 5% of students will make it anyways. They see the foolishness of that ambition and they completely embrace the openness of international education. And what they get here, is that they get to do it at home. Whereas they might otherwise have left the country and established residence in a Western country to achieve the same goal.

Ted (Turkey) shared his understanding of how the community perceived the school. He explained that parents were often suspicious of new schools out of a concern that the school would not be open in a few years:

The truth is, there was a lot of suspicion of “start-up” schools. Turks have seen schools come and go, and so they don’t just embrace these new ideas too quickly. They want a track record. That was one of the things that I found interesting when I first arrived. I was explaining this Canadian program and all the benefits of having a duel diploma and the fact that they would, you know, get instruction from English speakers. Their reaction was, “Oh well, that sounds great on paper, but are you really going to be around in four years?” Turkey is not in a place where stability has always been long term.

Kelly (South Korea) added that families were often naïve about how Canadian schools operate:

I think it’s that the parents that are a bit naïve. I don’t mean that in a negative way . . . I mean that they are innocent to the cultural differences that will take place on campus.
Because embedded in our Canadian curriculum are cultural expectations . . . So Parents, if they’re not forewarned, they think that this means that we’re incompetent. They think, “What kind of school are we running?” And so we have to give them a lot of advance notice about how things are different and that there may even be an experience of culture shock at first when they enter our campus.

As Kelly (South Korea) articulated, although South Korean families usually started out eager and open to the Canadian model, after families saw how the school operated in practice, they expressed apprehension because the methodology was culturally different from what they had experienced:

They accept it on an intellectual level, but when they actually confront the real difference that this implies, they often find themselves implicated. They realize, “Oh, maybe this is too much for me. Maybe I’m actually more fond of my Korean system than I thought.”

Kelly (South Korea) provided an example of how the Canadian model of education was different from what parents were used to. Kelly asserted that Canadian schools were more accepting of students with special needs: “We had a student who was challenging, meaning low IQ, low social intelligence, low physical ability, diminished physical capacity because of medical condition. . . . They wanted this kid out.”

Some of the principals discussed how they communicated with parents. Patty (China) described the following method for discussing student progress:

The majority of the families we’d see twice a year. At the beginning of school and then we’d have our parent teacher meetings. . . . We’d also, being a [name of province] school, set up the same structures with one teacher being the lead for that student. We didn’t really see parents that often. We had a lot of contact with parents through phone, email. But actual physical meetings, not really.

Kelly (South Korea) explained the steps his school would take to prepare or to inform parents about the differences between local and Canadian models of education:

Every two months, we will do a new parent welcoming meeting. And so, that might mean the students have only been in the school for two weeks. But we want them to have enough experience in the school to already have questions in their minds. So that they are prepared for the information that we present to them. So then the new parents come, And
I basically do a presentation on – you could call it a promotional presentation – where I basically outline differences in attitudes on different education systems, including the Korean system and including the American system.

_Cultural and Professional Preparation._ Most principals felt sufficiently prepared by their education and experience for their role as an administrator. They cited differences in culture and the specifics of the local system of education as the most challenging factors. While some principals commended the professional preparation of the Canadian teachers, others perceived difficulties related to implementing curriculum and adjusting to a new culture.

Administrators explained that they felt sufficiently prepared for their professional role as administrators in provincially affiliated Canadian schools, despite receiving limited specialized training for the role. Amy (Japan) stated, “I was actually very surprised at how easy life in Japan can be in terms of adapting to cultural differences, and this is also true in our school environment.” Sam (South Korea) explained, “Training as a [name of province] teacher and administrator allowed me to be successful without specific training for offshore.” Josh (South Korea) added, “My experiences and training never-the-less bear a high degree of relevance to this position.”

One principal from Turkey admitted that he did not feel prepared for the unique realities of the Turkish education system when he first began his employment with this school. Ted (Turkey) said, “I was starting up the system, I was really unprepared as the head of the school to really and truly understand the realities of the Turkish system. I was kind of learning on the job in many ways.” Josh (South Korea) reinforced this notion: “Differences in culture are the main challenge.”

Several administrators credited their university training in preparing them for their role. Amy (Japan) remarked, “I have a Masters in TESOL. As an elementary teacher, I participate in
PYP professional development and I am able to present at the ELLSA conference in Thailand every year using my professional development budget.” Kelly (South Korea) added, “In terms of training, like university style training. I’m near to completion of leadership in the doctoral program. There is a lot of interaction with other principals or directors.”

Principals explained that previous administrative experience was helpful. Patty (China) stated, “I started in 2011 and I was finished in 2013. I was an acting administrator (in Canada), I’m not a certified principal; I don’t have my levels 1 and 2. But during the time that I was employed with [name of Canadian school], I took on the role of acting principal.” Adam (Egypt) acknowledged that he received “the same admin. training as in Canada.”

International experience was also highlighted as a valuable asset in preparing principals for their role as an administrator. Kelly (South Korea) noted, “I was the science leader at a school in Kuwait. There was a fair degree of administrative burden there already. That was under the supervision of the principal.” When asked about training and preparation for the role of principal, Nick (Egypt) stated, “Teaching abroad for over 10 years and experience got me here.” Paul (Japan) added, “I have worked in a variety of international schools as a teacher and an administrator, and was able to adapt easily.”

Experience with an immersion model of education was also said to be useful. Amy (Japan) explained, “I taught in Canada before coming to Tokyo 16 years ago and feel that my experience teaching francophone students, as well as First Nation students, was an asset for filling my professional role here at [name of school].”

Administrators also spoke about the professional and cultural preparation of teachers. Principals explained that teachers were aptly prepared for their professional role. Kelly (South Korea) remarked,
Teachers are trained as generalists. They are expected to be competent enough to teach in any subject area. That means they could integrate their courses a lot more effectively. If it is the case that they are competent in multiple areas, so they don’t have to be specialized so much . . . just as teachers.

Ted (Turkey) stated,

[Name of province] teachers were incredibly well prepared. They were really delivering their curriculum in a way that was much more varied in the classroom compared to their colleagues on the Turkish side, which tended to be much more of a lecture style. Our teachers tended to be much more willing to take risks, and to try different things. They incorporated technology more; there are assessment practices were very different; they tended to collaborate across the curriculum more. They were certainly eager to give feedback more frequently than in just the traditional exam. When they gave tests back, they would sit, go over things, they would share problems that students were having.

Principals explained that Canadian curricula were open and flexible, allowing teachers freedom and autonomy for implementation. As teachers explained, there were strengths and weaknesses to this. Paul (Japan) said, “Teachers are well trained and collaborative. The curriculum outcomes are clear. There is sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to allow teachers to plan how they will deliver it.” Tim (Egypt) made a comment that provided an alternate perspective: “Some curricular content is not understood or valued. Staff may not be flexible enough to deliver relevant content or provide context in the foreign or international environment.”

When asked about how teachers could be better prepared for teaching abroad at a provincially affiliated school, Kelly (South Korea) made the following observation: “Well, I think more could be done and I think it could begin in the universities. I know that some universities are starting to develop internationalization specializations.” When asked the same question, Ted (Turkey) responded that he felt the brief teacher-orientation was not sufficient and he would plan a more rigorous orientation in the future: “I would have had a much more comprehensive teacher orientation . . . explaining these challenges, and the realities of the
Turkish system, so that people could really get their head around all that those things early on.”

One principal explained that having a local individual who spoke the local language and could help make sense of the cultural intricacies was very helpful. Patty (China) stated, “We had someone on staff that is very fluent in English and is Chinese and she was a god-send for our system. She would help find apartments, got us started on the basics . . . very valuable.”

Principals described the teacher-orientation programs that operated in their school. Kelly (South Korea) said,

When they come over, we start them a week early. Now, that’s not much. You are trying to get them into the systems of the school which is, you know, management . . . and you are also trying to introduce them to the nature of the work.

Patty (China) stated, “The only beforehand information was that, if you had an opportunity to meet with [name of recruitment agent], you would be given information on expectations and language and stuff like that.”

Kelly (South Korea) expounded on how adapting to a different culture was one of the biggest challenges for teachers. He explained how this change could be difficult for teachers because it had an impact on their personal lives as well as their professional lives:

One of the questions is, what should I bring from Canada? And the first reply is deodorant. I mean, you never would have thought that finding deodorant would be so difficult . . . So the simple things like that can be a real hang up when you start compiling it. By the way, it was a Canadian theorist who coined the term “culture shock.” Basically, culture shock is people who are normally very adept and very competent, suddenly being put into this situation where they can question their own competence. Where everything seems enormously difficult, and you don’t know why. I wouldn’t say it’s about adapting to a culture; it’s about bridging two cultures.

Professional Development. Principals from Egypt and Japan noted that they received many opportunities for professional development (PD), in contrast to principals from Turkey, China, and South Korea. The primary limitations to PD for both principals and teachers were time, money, access to experienced presenters, and the support of local school owners. The
principals perceived a need to overcome these obstacles, particularly to support inexperienced teachers.

Principals from different countries had divergent opinions about the availability of PD. Nick (Egypt) reported, “Teachers get 13 professional development days.” Amy (Japan) remarked, “Professional development opportunities here in Tokyo are plentiful and there is a budget in place for teachers to participate in a variety of workshops.” Both individuals expressed a satisfaction with the number of PD opportunities that were available to teachers.

Principals indicated that PD opportunities depended on the availability of time and money. Ben (Turkey) stated, “Funding was an issue. We were limited by a small PD budget.” Adam (Egypt) pointed out, “Finding the time and adequate consultants to meet our needs is difficult and expensive.” Patty (China) commented,

What we were allowed to do was very minimal . . . We didn’t have the time and we didn’t have the resources . . . There were time frames that we would see where our staff could meet with other international schools and spend an afternoon to see what they were doing . . . but that would not benefit us because . . . we had to share our students with the Chinese school. . . . Their days were very, very filled.

Tim (Egypt) stated, “Very little is done for PD. . . . Time is allotted, but used for report writing, preparation, and technology awareness.

Most principals communicated that they received very little PD for their role as an administrator. Kelly (South Korea) stated, “There is one thing available . . . it’s annual. It’s a gathering of offshore principals which usually takes place in China where the largest group of [name of province] schools are located.” When asked whether she received a sufficient amount of PD, Patty (China) responded,

Not during the time frame that I was there. . . . One teacher could maybe go, but not all of us at the same time. And being the principal, I very seldom ever left the school. To send one of the staff members to go see another offshore school . . . he or she would have to be gone all day just to travel from our school to another school.
A few participants reported that they received special training that prepared them for teaching in a school that delivered an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Paul (Japan) explained, “We are an IB school in the elementary section and provide external IB training as needed. We offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and those teachers have taken AP training prior to us offering each course.”

Administrators believed that there was a need for PD because most of their teachers were still early in their professional career. Josh (South Korea) explained, “Teachers are typically new, thus inexperienced, and relevant PD needs to be designed in house.” Nick (Japan) added,

Most teachers have limited experience so following best practices is not a priority for them. In most cases, they are trying to deal with basic classroom management issues, lesson planning, and adapting to living in a foreign country. PD is school-run, by either administrators or teachers with less training in some cases than the teachers they are providing professional development for.

Finding PD opportunities outside of the school proved to be a difficult challenge. Patty (China) explicated, “There is no one who you could phone up and say . . . come talk to us about this or that.” In few cases, representatives from the affiliating provincial government would send government liaison officers to the country to deliver PD. Ted (Turkey) articulated,

[Name of officer] was there, [different name of officer], They had come over to do some professional development. We contracted [name of individual]. He was a retired colleague, superintendent from [name of town], and we had done a number of things there like assessment. We were using provincial documents that were there to do that, and we shared this with our Turkish colleagues and they benefited from this, too.”

Patty (China) explained, “The [name of province] representative would come over once a year, and during that time would be the time that they would have professional development.”

In many cases, administrators were responsible for being pedagogical leaders in the school. Kelly (South Korea) explained,
I do typical administrative stuff like classroom observations, so that’s sort of on one level. . . . I’m always growing and learning as well . . . Recently, I’ve taken to just, it might not make the teacher comfortable, but sometimes I might just jump up and say, “Do mind if I just try something here?”

The predominant form of PD, as described by administrators, was professional collaboration among teacher colleagues. As Paul (Japan) articulated, “The majority of our teachers are Canadian and are collaborative with their colleagues, especially those from other countries.” Patty (China) added, “The majority of that [PD] fell on the shoulders of the teachers.”

In South Korea, one principal indicated that schools that were affiliated with the same province collaborated together for a one day PD conference. Kelly (South Korea) explained, In Korea, there are about four schools that are affiliated with the [name of province] offshore schools. We are unique, in that we are able to collaborate as schools. All the other offshore schools, there are too many miles and distance between them to be able to work together.

Kelly stated that this collaborative session was very effective:

An opportunity to meet other colleagues working in the same departments, facing the same challenges in the same setting. Then we had individuals presenting on particular areas of talent, or interest, or whatever, myself included. And then we had a final session, where the principal of one of the schools introduced the rest of us, to the new curriculum, which is just being implemented this coming September.

The issue that these schools faced, as Kelly (South Korea) explained, was with the owners:

They have a certain hesitance, about exposing each school to each other, who are seen as competitors in the market place. . . . You have the business vs human interest and trying to balance those two together . . . It is a continuous challenge and it puts you into paradoxical situations all the time.

School Culture. All but one of the principals described their work experiences as positive. Their reasons focused on relationships among staff, and contented students and parents.

The provincially affiliated school principals described their own experiences as positive. Josh (South Korea) explained, “Having taught in many American systems, I am a bit like an ex-smoker, having returned now to a Canadian model. I very much believe in its value in an
international context.” Patty (China) associated her positive experience with the relationships she built: “I think that the relationships that developed between the students and myself, that in itself was an experience.” Only one principal indicated that he had a negative professional experience. When asked what he would do differently if he were to redo his experience, Nick (Japan) stated, “I wouldn't have accepted the position.”

Relationships among staff were highlighted as critical to staff’s happiness. As Patty (China) described, “Without that valuable human resource that we had on our staff, it maybe would have been more of a challenge.” She explained how the staff supported each other, particularly when new staff arrived to the country: “When they arrive in China, we were there to greet them at the airport. We helped them settle into their apartment. We took them around to all the local spots. We became like their family. That was very, very valuable.”

Patty (China) commented that new teachers brought an energy to the job place that was positive and enthusiastic: “Young teachers did not necessarily create issues in respect to what they had to do in the classroom. They brought in a new perspective, because they were so eager.”

Kelly (South Korea) observed that the students at his school were contented and cheerful: “Our students are happy . . . We are a happy community that just gets challenged frequently with newcomers who just don’t get it. Education can actually be enjoyable.” Paul (Japan) confirmed that parents in the community were also positive because communication was strong: “Parents are aware of learning outcomes and communication between parents and teachers is strong, especially when they have questions regarding the curriculum.”

**English Language Learning.** In general, principals communicated that they believed a Canadian curriculum strongly benefited students in learning the English language and preparing them for Canadian universities. Their teachers purportedly promoted English Language Learning
(ELL) and supported ELL students’ needs through immersion strategies. However, some principals reported that students had English language difficulties stemming from prior learning experiences with second language instructors, and from inaccurate initial screening assessments.

Principals commented that by using a Canadian curriculum in an international context, students had an opportunity to learn English in an immersion setting. Many principals perceived this as a strength of the program. Ted (Turkey) stated, “The strengths . . . were that these kids had the opportunity to learn English, to raise their level of English, to prepare for post-secondary education in Canada.”

Principals articulated that teachers used EAL teaching strategies to meet the needs of their student population. Kelly (South Korea) stated,

In our school, 90% of our students would be classified as ELL . . . based on the kinds of errors that they make. . . . I consider all the teachers “ELL teachers,” due to the fact that most of their students are ELL students.

Patty (China) explained that in [name of school], they pushed really hard in English language learning in the early years, so that students were better prepared to focus on content as they approached high school: “The first year, it’s all ELA and building on the phonics and stuff like that. So when they get to grade 11 and 12, the language is not in a way of the content.” When asked what the greatest strength of the Canadian methodology was, Ben (Turkey) responded, “English language instruction and ESL teaching strategies.” Ted (Turkey) observed that parents and students appreciated the methodology and that it was very valuable for student learning:

They found the language arts program very beneficial. All of the aspects of reading, learning about different types of literature and fiction, and nonfiction, and reading and understanding for different purposes. This came out in the curriculum and really benefited them in second language learners and also to think critically.

Patty (China) identified one challenge in pointing out that students often came from other schools where English was taught by local educators who taught English very poorly:
Their first year into our school . . . they’re getting EAL . . . You’ve got to also remember that a lot of these Chinese students do get taught in elementary school. It is part of their daily activity to learn English. You have Chinese teachers that aren’t able to pronounce the English words to understand it correctly.

This could provide one rationale for Amy’s (Japan) assertion that the academic language proficiency of high school students was quite low compared to their Canadian counterparts:

“Academic language proficiency in English is quite different than the students that I have taught in Canada.”

Principals from China and South Korea indicated that an assessment tool was used to screen students’ English language proficiency prior to starting school. Patty (China) noted that students entered grade 10 with proficient conversational skills, but often struggled with academic language:

In grade 10, they come through. They have to do a pre-registration exam to find out what level of English they are at and they do that for comprehension, reading and for writing . . . We had kids who would come in and could talk to you in English, but when it came to reading or writing in English, they fell short. It could be they are learning the English somewhere, but only the vocal part of it and not the rest of it.

When asked about the weaknesses of the provincially affiliated offshore model of education, Josh (South Korea) responded that he did not think that the screening tool provided an accurate depiction of students’ abilities:

I am unable to think of drawbacks to our system. The only one I can think of is the desire on the part of the policy makers that we carefully screen students for English-speaking ability. The restrictions here are not refined enough to properly capture talented students, and sometimes the school has to make the decision to work around restrictions in order to let qualified students enter the system.

Apart from the language assessment tool used for intake screening, Patty (China) indicated that no other language tracking tools were used: “It was assessed the same as we do here in Canada. There was not a different assessment tool to track language.”
Resources. One school in China stated that her school was fortunate enough to have an English language library on the school grounds. One teacher explained that no remedial instruction kits were available for teachers to use for planning, implementing, and assessment of students with special needs.

The principal of a newly-opened provincially affiliated school in Turkey described why accessing the school resources required for teaching and learning was challenging. Ted (Turkey) stated,

When we were starting up the program, they were very slow at resourcing the program, which added all kinds of frustrations for the teachers trying to get things in place. Just even the basics from textbooks, to overhead projectors, at the time and computers, even basic materials . . . I always felt that the province should have been a little more heavy-handed and getting them up to speed. They gave them a lot of rope, and I think in the early days it did compromise the program.

Patty (China) explained that there were no remedial kits or assessment tools for tracking reading or numeracy scores: “No assessment tools [were available] to track reading scores, etc.”

Duncan (Turkey) explained customs agency problems associated with the requirement that resources come from Canadian distributors:

We were required by the province to use the resources that were laid out, specified in the curriculum. We had to use Pearson books for example, in line with the [name of province] outcomes. We had to order them and get them shipped, and eventually we got them. They had to clear customs and there was import duty, etc. I ordered some maps and things like that, and they were confiscated. I didn't realize that the Canadian maps had Kazakhstan or something like that on them, so there were all kinds of issues that we hadn't even considered.

Patty (China) explained how teachers in her school addressed the issue of limited resources: “We did have resources that we built. A lot of the staff would just compile their resources from year to year. Good materials were left on the shelf, and those resources were recommended to those teachers coming in.” Patty (China) also praised her school for having library that was stocked with English language literature:
Actually we had our own little library that was decently stocked with English literature. Being a high school, we tried to accommodate to the interests of our students. So we would be able to go and purchase books in the English bookstore and that became the library resource books.

**Curriculum.** All principals who participated in this thesis research described Canadian curricula as effective in their respective school. Some principals reported that the curriculum was generally implemented with little to no modification, but most acknowledged that new teachers had difficulty doing so. They also noted the need to adapt curriculum content to accommodate cultural differences, linguistic barriers, and political mandates. One principal appreciated the social emotional learning that is embedded in Canadian curriculum outcomes.

Although all of the principals supported using a Canadian curriculum abroad, some noted challenges in adhering to provincial expectations for implementation while at the same time adapting the instruction to accommodate local students’ needs. Sam (South Korea) perceived strength in the “consistency in the program. It’s the credibility, accountability, qualifications of the teaching staff. Worldwide acceptance of the program.” Nick (Egypt) added, “Every teacher tries as much as they can to not modify curriculum.” Amy (Japan) explained that for the most part, “standards are adhered to while teachers adapt to their teaching contexts.” However, she also pointed out that many teachers were new to the profession, and therefore struggled to implement the curriculum with high fidelity: “Most teachers are unaware of the curriculum expectations and as a result, follow them very, very loosely.” Tim (Egypt) reiterated, “We have many new staff who are not experienced enough to deviate from the curriculum effectively.”

According to many principals, curriculum often required adaptations to add or delete topics according to their cultural relevance. Jessica (China) stated, “Sometimes methods were not culturally appropriate. Health education came across problems due to cultural standards. . . . Why do students in China need to know about Louis Riel?” Adam (Egypt) explained that social
studies topics such as Aboriginal issues needed to be adapted, in order to relate to local culture:

“Relations to Egypt must be included in social studies curriculum and history of the nation.” Josh (South Korea) explained that his school in South Korea was seeking ways to integrate local indigenous issues into the curriculum: “We are seeking ways to build indigenous knowledge into our delivery in the same manner as First Nations knowledge is built into the Canadian curriculum.”

Ted (Turkey) identified that teaching and learning was difficult because students did not have the same personal experiences that form the scaffolding to learning:

I remember just doing one unit with one of the teachers on the role of the monarchy in Canada. And how she the official head of state. They were just dumbfounded by all of that. They are coming from the perspective of a republic and they just had no sense of why we would do that. They couldn’t understand what would be the sense of that today; they wondered what does she do and in trying to make that relevant to their lives is difficult.

Students faced challenges when learning Canadian content, while simultaneously learning English as an additional language. Amy (Japan) pointed out that teachers often made curricular adaptations to accommodate ELLs:

All classroom teachers are teachers of language and our school has a high percentage of Asian students. That said, the [name of province] standards are adhered to with regard to content. Still, teachers need to adapt to the varying levels of ability when planning, delivering and assessing the curriculum.

Sam (South Korea) stated, “All students are ESL students and the content is the same as found in [name of province] schools. So reading levels and vocabulary may not be present.”

Principals from a Turkish-Canadian school indicated that politics played a detrimental role in programming by mandating particular courses and through staffing requirements. Ben (Turkey) explained, “Turkish Ministry of Education requires certain courses to be taught in Turkish by Turkish teachers – history, geography, Turkish language, and literature.” Patty
(China) explained that because of the local politics and differing philosophical perspectives of school owners and the local Ministry of Education, programming was limited to strictly traditional academic domains: “Within the school, there were few other classes. . . . None of our students took art classes. They did have an introduction to martial arts, but programming was very limited.”

Social emotional learning was embedded in Canadian curricula. Kelly (South Korea) explained the importance of enacting social emotional learning outcomes in his school:

The thing is that this is part of the learning strands . . . they are required to attain to. It’s not an add on. It’s something that we will be reporting on and it is expected that they take this in as part of their learning process. And this brings in the idea of group work, being accountable to one another and social accountability. Students who take this in and absorb it and become it, have a much greater chance of being successful when they go to Western-style universities.

Methodology. By comparing and contrasting Canadian methodologies with the methodologies of local educators, principals highlighted some of the strengths of the Canadian model of education. When describing the Canadian methodology, principals used words or phrases like “child-centered,” “student responsibility,” and “process rather than product.” One principal described parental misgivings about this methodology, but insisted that it was important to promote a typically Canadian ideal of multiculturalism around the world.

Two principals stated that the teachers used a teaching methodology that was more varied and adaptable to the local environment. Amy (Japan) asserted this notion: “Teachers adapt to their teaching contexts regardless of where they are teaching.” Sam (South Korea) explained, “There is an extreme difference between public schools and this one. Projects, working together, cooperation, thinking skills, and such are not taught or expected in the public system.”

One principal from China suggested that there needed to be more provincial oversight because there were many unqualified teachers employed by the school who were not
implementing the curriculum effectively. Jessica (China) stated, “More overseeing of the implementation of the curriculum. I saw too many unqualified teachers and teachers not using the curriculum at all. Little was done to monitor for standards of a [name of province] school. It was highly disappointing.”

According to four principals, Canadian teachers ensured that students were at the center of the learning process. When asked how he would describe teaching and learning at his Egyptian school, Adam (Egypt) stated, “Child-centered, co-operative learning, direct teaching when needed.” Paul (South Korea) responded that teachers put an “emphasis on student involvement and responsibility.” Josh (South Korea) suggested that Canadian teachers focused more on teaching process over product: “The students benefit in many ways. More critical thinking, opportunities to work on the process rather than product, less rote memorization.”

Kelly (South Korea) explained that local parents often confused the difference between local and Canadian methodology as a sign that the Canadian methodology was less rigorous than local educational models:

I often get from parents the complaint that our education is too easy. It’s not rigorous enough. We’re not giving the students enough to work on. As I understand that, what they mean is that they what us to give the students more information in, information out. And that it should be difficult. That they should be stressed about it.

Josh (South Korea) made similar remarks: “The methodologies are in themselves good and valuable for students who wish to enter Western post-secondary institutions; however, embedded in the methodology and curriculum are Canadian cultural expectations which frequently produce conflict.”

Kelly (South Korea) asserted that the Canadian culture was one that should be recognized for its inherent ability to promote multiculturalism. He suggested that multiculturalism was a concept that other cultures could benefit from learning:
We live in a culture where 25% of our population were born outside of Canada. We live in a culture where there are 200 spoken languages. We do not trumpet or proclaim the death of multiculturalism the way that England or German or even America has. As a country, we are proud of the fact that we get along with one another. We don’t do it perfectly, but I believe that we have something to teach the world. Especially, as the world is getting smaller and smaller in terms of transportation/communication/globalization thing. We’ve got something to offer. We have to learn to get along. It’s not perfect, but we’ve figured something out. So I’m quite proud of what we’re offering. It may offend, sometimes, Korean sensibilities, but I feel that it is an offense worth taking. I do think we have failings, don’t get me wrong. This is one thing that I’m proud of and I think many Canadians are proud of, and I think that it is a candle of some very dark corners of the way people deal with things in the world. We can’t keep going on in our global relations the way that we do.

**Student Learning.** Principals expressed mixed reviews regarding students’ readiness for Canadian universities. One principal recommended offering Western lifestyle courses and tracking subsequent success at Western universities. The identified strengths of the Canadian model included English language learning, critical thinking, independence, respect, investigation, and social skills. A drawback was that, unlike in Canada, appropriate programming was not provided for students with special needs.

Principals were divided in their opinions as to whether provincially affiliated offshore schools adequately prepared foreign students for Canadian universities. Patty (China) stated,  

They are not ready. . . . We are working with students from a different culture, a different type of upbringing, and a different system and language. They are expected to come over to Canada or the States. . . . there’s nothing in place for them. There’s no one they can go to talk to. They don’t have those guidance counselors.

On the other hand, Jessica (China) explained, “Students were prepared for Canadian university standards. Students had to pass provincial tests and were tested the same as [name of province] students. Therefore, students were equal in academic performance.” Paul (Japan) reiterated this belief: “The fact that we follow a provincial curriculum is important since it provides each graduate with a graduation diploma from that province.”
Patty (China) indicated that not only did students have the option to attend a university in the Western world, but it was actually an expectation: “The expectation is that all these students will move to Canada. Absolutely, that is the expectation.” She made two recommendations to policy-makers for improving the experience of individuals transitioning to the Western world. One suggestion was to commit curricular time and programming for direct teaching of Canadian life. She recommended “a whole class about living in Canada. We do that in our social studies class . . . but it’s not a designated class for when you move to Canada, which would actually be a good idea.”

Patty’s (China) other suggestion was that schools should track the success or follow up on the experiences of students moving to Canada:

Are there any follow up and tracking going on? I do have contact with a few of our students, but there is no follow up to see where our students are or where they have been. They were there for years, and has that program benefited them? There is no follow up on where they are at or their progress . . .

Ted (Turkey) indicated that a strength of provincially affiliated schools was that foreign students were offered the opportunity to learn a different language and culture simultaneously:

Kids had the opportunity to learn English, to raise their level of English, to prepare for post-secondary education in Canada, which most of them were tracking. There was all that intercultural connection, which benefited the students there as well. They could interact with . . . and learn more about their culture, so that was a great strength. Ultimately, we wanted to develop this international mindedness in students.

Several principals indicated that critical thinking was the hallmark of students’ learning at their schools. When asked about the strengths of the program, Jessica (China) responded, “Open-ended questions and critical thinking in ELA. Being able to explain one’s self and come to logical answers without regurgitating.” Adam (Egypt) responded similarly, “Child-centered learning and teaching the students to think critically.”
Principals emphasized the importance of other skills such as respect, independence, and creativity. Sam (South Korea) stated, “The Canadian model teaches skills that are required for success beyond school – not just test-taking. Students enjoy the sense of mutual respect, independence and responsibility they experience.” Ben (Turkey) explained, “The approach emphasized creativity, experimentation, choice and critical thinking.”

Principals indicated that students with special needs were not appropriately recognized. Rebecca (China) stated, “I found that there were certain areas that needed to be included, yet because of time restraints and mandatory credits, mental health was not acknowledged or certain areas of health were not encouraged.” Patty (China) reinforced this observation:

None of our students had any physical disabilities that were apparent to us. Mental is a different one. We had students that were not at the level that the rest of their classmates were at academically. They worked very hard but they were just not there. There was nothing that in a Chinese system or our system that we could provide them with.

Kelly (South Korea) explained that this was an issue that was also prevalent in South Korea:

As long as the need is not physical, it’s okay. So, I’d say on a rough survey of our students: 20% of them at least are individualized education plan potential. We can’t activate that, because the moment we identify this, it becomes visible and they are at risk of being isolated by the rest of the school community. While we want to differentiate as much as possible and the teachers are quite aware, and we did have a parent one time who was trained in special needs and she identified all the needs of our students to the parents and they kicked that parent out . . . They can’t tolerate diversity.

Teachers.

Staff Recruitment and Retention. Canadian consultants often attended university job fairs on behalf of provincially affiliated schools, in order to hire new B. Ed. Graduates. In one case, a Canadian university created an association with a provincially affiliated school as a means of recruiting teaching staff. Provincially affiliated school teachers reported that retention issues, related to teachers’ experiences with culture shock, often resulted in a lack of mentors and continuity in the school.
Table 8. Pseudonyms and Countries of Teachers.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clara</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
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<td>Johanna</td>
<td>Sheldon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerby</td>
<td>Michelle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Gwen</td>
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<td>Brad</td>
<td>Iowna</td>
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<td>Carla</td>
<td>Kristie</td>
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<td>Emily</td>
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<td>Greg</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>South Korea</td>
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<td>Blair</td>
<td>Marilyn</td>
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<td>Cyrena</td>
<td>Nathan</td>
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<td>Jon</td>
<td>Richard</td>
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<td>Katie</td>
<td>Rick</td>
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<td>Larrie</td>
<td>Trish</td>
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<td>Lynda</td>
<td>Twylla</td>
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<td>Luke</td>
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<td>Nancy</td>
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Teachers who worked at schools in China and Egypt articulated that teachers from Canada were recruited by Canadian recruitment consultants. Iowna (Egypt) explained, “It was just an interview with an international firm. They are a recruitment firm. I know they came to the job fair. . . . All the teachers were hired through [name of firm].” Iowna (Egypt) further noted how these consultants participated in university job fairs as a strategy for recruiting teachers.

One Canadian university set up a cooperative arrangement with a school in Thailand that offered teacher candidates the opportunity to complete their final year of courses and practicum in Thailand. As Marilyn (Thailand) explained, many teachers would return the following year.
Marilyn (Thailand) said, “I was at [name of university] in the fourth year of the integrated program. They provided an option to do our fifth year placement in [name of school]. We would be provided with the same education, just with the practicum experience being teaching full time instead of doing it in blocks. I went with a group of about 25 people.” Marilyn indicated that most of the teachers who were recruited to work were, therefore, usually at the very beginning of their professional career.

Teachers explained that provincially affiliated schools offered many incentives that attracted teachers. Iowna (Egypt) pointed out that recruiters would sell the experience by saying things like, “Go teach in Egypt and we’ll fly you there and we’ll pay for your rent.” Additionally, any professional experience was recognized by the affiliated province as certified professional experience and would be reflected in their pay grade when they returned to Canada. Gwen (Egypt) stated,

> It allows teachers who are Canadian to go teach in an abroad school and keep their experience here in their own province, even though they’re offshore, which is really nice and a good strength for any person who is willing to take advantage.

Young Teachers Kerby (China) stated, “Staff is young.” Marilyn remarked, “Most teachers were from university.” Iowna (Egypt) explained that she and five other newly graduated teachers were hired to teach at a school in Egypt. The school was just starting and they were the only teachers there: “When we first got there, it was myself, music, art, kinder, grade 1, and grade 2. Six of us, all brand new teachers. I had just graduated.”

Teachers indicated that their schools struggled to retain teachers for more than one or two years. Iowna (Egypt) remarked that teachers often came to Egypt unprepared for the significant cultural change. As a result, teachers would often leave before or immediately after their contract expired:
There was an issue of teacher retention. It’s a hard country to move to. When you are a woman, it’s a hard country to move to. For me, it was easier because I lived in India, so for me, the culture was very similar in that I was used to the pollution, I was used to the dead animals on the road. I was used to the people and the . . . I remember this one girl who quit in October . . . she didn’t make it three months. She wouldn’t go anywhere; she wouldn’t walk anywhere.

As a result of these retention challenges, there were few experienced teachers who acted as mentors in the school. In some cases, this phenomenon occurred by design. Katie (Thailand) explained,

As a money saving tactic, about a year after I left the school, all trained experienced teachers’ (with B. EDs) contracts were not renewed and were replaced with less expensive student teachers. Student-teachers did not work with a mentor and were now the classroom teacher. Some student-teachers had no prior experience of teaching the Canadian model of education.

Kerby (China) echoed this concern, stating that one major issue was that there were “less seasoned teachers in a mentor role.”

Marilyn (Thailand) explained that she was offered a leadership position in the school after only one year of service as an incentive to stay at the school for another year: “Interestingly, they asked me to be a key stage leader . . . helping out the grade 1, 2, and 3 teachers. I guess they just assumed that after 10 months, you were good to go in a supportive role.”

**Student Profile.** Provincially affiliated school teachers reported that the predominantly local, non-English student population usually came from affluent homes. There were very few students who had visible special needs. The behavior and work ethic of students were reported to be different in each educational setting.

The teachers reported that students attending provincially affiliated offshore schools were predominantly local. In one school in Egypt, Iowna (Egypt) described her school population as being more diverse: “Egyptian, Dutch, Finish, a couple of mixes, some of Turkish dissent. It was a real mix of students.”
Learning language was described to be one of the primary functions of provincially affiliated schools, because most of the students were learning English as an additional language. Andrew (South Korea) stated, “100% of the students are ESL students.” Mike (South Korea) stated, “All my students are ESL students, a few have started in my grade with no English, while a few have been in English education for a few years.” Marilyn (Thailand) described how she needed to use EAL teaching strategies to support her students’ learning:

You could tell that this concept was difficult in Thai, and not just the vocabulary. . . . You know, like, a lot of times you rely on your gestures, but a lot of time you are teaching something that is a little more abstract.

Most provincially affiliated schools were privately owned and operated; therefore, the cost of attending these schools was usually expensive, relative to other schools in the region. As a result, teachers explained that students often came from wealthy, affluent homes. Iowna (Egypt) stated, “Because it was an affluent school, the kids were affluent and the parents were rich.” Marilyn (Thailand) remarked, “This was a private school with upper class and wealthy families.”

According to teachers from Thailand and Egypt, there were very few students with visible special needs. Marilyn (Thailand) explained, “In the whole kindergarten department, K-1, 2, 3 and nursery, there was one student with autism. And as far as physical disabilities, everything was stairs in this building. It was very hard to accommodate for special needs.” Gwen (Egypt) stated,

At that point there were no students with special needs. It’s different, not like here. There was one kid at [school name], but then, they [parents] didn’t believe us, you couldn’t tell them, “Oh, your son has autism.” “No, my son is a prince. You’re the bad teacher who just can’t teach him.” [School name] had a student who I am pretty sure also had autism or was on the spectrum. And I remember there was a meeting where the parent was like, “My son isn’t reading . . . what are you doing wrong?” I was like, “He’s in 3rd grade.” That was a cultural issue. Special needs kids weren’t always acknowledged, in my
experience. . . . Culturally, because they didn’t want to be different. They didn’t want to have that child.

When teachers compared students from their schools with students from Canada, they often made general comments about students’ character traits and their commitment to school. Sheldon (China) stated, “Students are typically more respectful of their teachers compared to Canadian teens.” Marilyn (Thailand) described how important it was for Thai students’ work to look beautiful or perfect. She cited cultural differences as a rationale for this:

There is such a different expectation or a different standard. I think that is ingrained in them since they were able to walk. Being สวย (Swy) means being beautiful . . . so being “Swy” is the ultimate compliment. For a Thai teacher to walk by and go “Swy,” you could see that there was this pride . . . so you could see beyond the content that it looked perfect. That’s part of the package that they were aiming for.

However, as Jon (Thailand) pointed out, “The difference between Canadian and Thai methodologies sometimes causes dissonance in the student’s behavior. Being used to a fairly conservative school model, they do not always behave appropriately when given more freedom in their day.” Kristie (Egypt) stated, “You are dealing with low English skills and children who are not encouraged to work hard by their families. These children are not as motivated as Canadian children, so it is difficult sometimes.”

**School Staff.** Teachers reported that, apart from more leadership opportunities, their role was similar to what it would be in Canada. Teachers articulated a need for additional support staff, including educational assistants (EAs), resource teachers, school counsellors, and EAL teachers. Most schools had of both local and foreign (Canadian) teachers.

When asked about the greatest strength of the provincially affiliated offshore school model, Kerby (China) responded, “Canadian educated teachers.” She believed that Canadian teachers were particularly strong educators. Teachers’ roles and responsibilities were described by teachers as being very similar to what they were in Canada. Iowna (Egyptian school) asserted,
“Planning, teaching, all the extras . . . If we wanted to do something after school, if we wanted an extra activity, it was always on us to plan it.” Gwen (Egypt) echoed this sentiment: “All the responsibilities were on us. Everything that was at the school that wasn’t administered was on us. Anything extracurricular was on us.”

Kerby (China) explained that she was provided opportunities for leadership roles, even though she was just starting out as a teacher. She clarified that she was writing “new teacher orientation” manuals, managing the resource room, and organizing special school field trips, among other things. Marilyn (Thailand) noted that she was offered the role of grade-group leader after only 10 months of being a teacher. Both teachers explained that because the schools were so small and there were so few teachers in the English department, they felt obligated to take on more responsibilities.

Teachers lamented that there were very few EAs in provincially affiliated schools. When asked about EAs, Gwen (Egypt) responded, “I didn’t have any. I think there was one in the kindergarten from the beginning. It was SK1 and SK2. There were some EAs in the younger grades.” As Gwen (Egypt) stated, EAs were used primarily for elementary-aged students.

Additional staff for teacher support was rare. Because students with special needs were less prevalent or not recognized in these international contexts, there was less of a need for a resource teacher. Marilyn (Thailand) described how teachers were “willing to accommodate and create an unofficial IEP,” in order to support students with high needs. Gwen (Egypt) stated that it wasn’t until her “third year . . . there was someone who came in as a resource teacher.”

Two teachers from South Korea expressed a need for additional support for EAL students. Andrew (South Korea) stated that “ESL teachers are needed for higher grades for individualized focused support.” Mike (South Korea) reinforced this belief:
All my students are ESL students. A few have started in my grade with no English, while a few have been in an English education for a few years. Also, we have no EAs or ESL teachers and have students in need of English support and one-on-one aid.

Many provincially affiliated offshore schools operated as a blended program. Staff were hired to work either on the English side or the local language side of programming. In Thailand, as Katie (Thailand) explained, “students were taught the same topic by two different teachers and it expanded understanding.”

**Community Perspective.** Teachers reported that Canada’s positive international reputation in education made provincially affiliated schools attractive to students who wanted access to Canadian universities, and to parents who wanted greater social status in their community. Teachers reported that a language barrier created challenges in communication with parents.

Teachers from Egypt, China, and Thailand described how their provincially affiliated schools were perceived as schools for the privileged. These schools served as a symbol of their social standing in the community. Gail (Thailand) declared, “I think it was kind of a prestigious thing for these kids to this school. Especially in the kindergarten department, it was like a social thing . . . ‘I go to THIS school.’” Johanna (Chinese school) stated, “In a school like this, rich parents buy a place for their kid, regardless of English level.”

In many private schools, teachers explained how administrators felt a responsibility to serve the interests of the client, rather than the educational needs of the student. Sarah (Egypt) stated, “It is a private school. Parents have a lot more to say in what happens. The culture here expects homework and high reading levels at a younger age.” Expectations were higher and parents had a very active role in shaping their child’s education. Kristie (Egypt) explained,
“Parents in this culture seem to have a stronghold on the owners and, as they say, the squeaky wheel always gets the attention. Parents want to be babied.”

Gwen (Egypt) described an experience that she had with a parent after the Egyptian revolution:

I remember a mom came and she was quite angry and she was like, “What are you doing? I want my child to forget about this. I want them to put it away because I don’t want them to be upset anymore.” I said, “That’s what I’m trying to do!” It was that like bonking of heads. Even in my culture growing up, you don’t talk about things, you just let them go and don’t talk about them. Unlike [in Canada], there is still a lot of influence and control from parents, expectations from parents.

Iowna (Egypt) affirmed,

Parents expected their children to be perfect and when they weren’t, there were questions as to why? It’s the traditions. There are still many expectations, like getting the highest marks, being the most respectful child, and showing the most respect, and keeping yourself in that. Being the perfect, studious child, the logical child that shows initiative. That’s what all parents expect of their children. When that doesn’t happen, it’s my fault.

In Thailand, all communication and interactions with the parents of students was handled by the Thai administration. As Marilyn (Thailand) reported, “It all was filtered through the Thai administration before they would involve us. In two years, I think I had a meeting with the parents maybe once. Otherwise, the principal was just talk to them or to us.” Marilyn (Thailand) described how interaction with parents was minimal:

The only thing they would do was called Open House. All parents, grandparents, and family would be invited to the school to watch you teach. So they would come to the school and into your room. You have your 30 kids at the front, and you are supposed to give your regular lesson, and they all sit at the back of the room with their cameras, and so it was more of putting on a bit of a show. It would have been the day that we interacted the most. There were a few concerts and things like that where we would see them at the school.

*System Structure.* Teachers reported that the system structures of provincially affiliated schools were distinct in each unique setting. Each system structure created tension between differing culture groups: local government and offshore school policy-makers, between local
administrators and imported Canadian administrators, and local teachers and imported Canadian teachers.

According to teachers, provincially affiliated schools in China, Thailand, and South Korea used a blended program. One challenge of this structure was that students struggled with switching back and forth between two different teaching styles. Richard (Thailand) explained, “Students in the school were also taught 50% in Thai. . . . The Thai teachers have some different teaching methods than what we use in Canada. I think it was at times confusing to the students to go back and forth between two different teaching styles.”

Sheldon (China) articulated how “both the English department and Chinese teachers had different ideas on how things should run.” He suggested that this difference sometimes created conflict. However, as Andrew (Egypt) explained, blended programs in the schools in China provided students with a two cultures experience: “Asian studies are needed to keep students connected with their culture and society in the classroom.”

Another school in Thailand consisted of three campuses. Marilyn (Thailand) pointed out that her school had “three campuses: one block is straight English track. This was full on English. On campus two, where I was, it was not. The third is a dual track, as well.” Rick (Thailand) expounded on the difference between the campuses:

The difference between campus one and two is something I would have never expected. Campus one is very unorganized and kind of just go with the flow, while campus two is very structured and far more put together. I am at campus one.

Both teachers explained that there were distinct differences in how these schools operated. Marilyn (Thailand) stated that her campus was very separate from the other two departments:

We were the foreign department. We had an English-speaking foreign principal . . . and a Thai speaking. They worked together. They kind of oversaw us. The Thai principal was the liaison between the Thai staff as well. And I think there were five Thai staff that we could collaborate with, so we were all on the same page. The Thai side is very
hierarchical. The head principal . . . if we ever walked by and saw her we would just smile and walk by her, and that was pretty much our interaction with her. We were definitely our own little department.

One school in Egypt operated as a standalone provincially affiliated school. This school also faced challenges with local administration. Greg (Egypt) noted how conflict often occurred between the English administrators and the school owner: “While the principal was Canadian trained, it was still owned by local business people, which influenced a lot of the school’s calendar, staffing, concerts, extracurricular, etc., within the school.”

An issue that appeared to be common among all the provincially affiliated offshore schools was that there were often conflicting priorities between school owners and foreign administrators. This friction reportedly resulted from a conflict between the business interests of the school owner and the educational objectives of Canadian administrators. Kristie (Egypt) stated, “The owners of the school, while business people and not educators, have too much say in what is done in the school. I feel that it is run like a business and not a school sometimes.” Iowna (Egypt) asserted that schools were more focused on making money in the beginning, but as the schools developed, more educational priorities emerged:

In the beginning it was business. . . . When it first started, it was about getting the kids in and getting the money. “Books are expensive. Plants are expensive. Choose what you want.” But because it was an affluent school and the parents were rich and all that, it was all about the look in the beginning, They were trying to build a name for themselves.

Andrew (South Korea) explained, “The school has a business owner. There are some differences of opinion regarding the business side of things and educational needs of students.” Katie (Thailand) stated that the school she worked at was a “private school whose primary goal was to make a profit.” Nancy (Japan) expressed frustration with this particular issue:

My true recommendation would be a change in ownership that demonstrates some willingness to invest capital in improving facilities, resources, training and maintaining a teaching staff. There needs to be a dramatic change in priorities at this school, as I
sincerely believe that it really puts the idea of Canadian education in a negative light. This is a money-making/vanity project for our owners and little more.

Another issue that was raised by teachers was that differences in culture had an impact on how school were administered. Luke (Thailand) remarked,

[School name] works like many Thai schools: in a hierarchal format. As Canadian teachers, we worked in teams, which was quite foreign to them. We also addressed many of our supervisors/administrators as part of the team, which again does not happen very often in the Thai culture. The foreign [Canadian] department was a separate entity and worked quite differently than the Thai department and teachers.

Referring to a Chinese school, Johanna commented,

Experience with the students was great, as it was with the Canadian staff. The Chinese administration, though, were often shockingly bad and frustrating to work with. The Canadian principal has virtually no real power. The Chinese admin. isn't really interested at all in providing anything like a Canadian school experience outside of the classroom.

Nancy (Japan) added that another major issue with local administrators was the “ignorance of local administrators and teachers of both Canadian curriculum and best practices. Constant interference from the office staff who would meddle in classroom placements, student affairs, provide ‘guidance’ that ran counter to the goals and needs of students.” Mike (South Korea) pointed out,

In academics, we try to continue like any Canadian school, but due to the culture and language, certain aspects cannot be administered the same. For example, talking with parents – must go through an administrator to follow custom – some parents will not allow direct communication from the teacher.

Blair (Thailand) clarified that sometimes the differences in culture or pedagogical approaches created conflict among staff. Blair (Thailand) explained,

Canadian teachers are considered specialty teachers, not classroom teachers. I believe Thai and foreign teachers should both have equal rights and responsibilities in the classroom. . . . Too much pressure and responsibility was given to Thai staff. The pressures and expectations on Thai and foreign staff were different. It was divisive.

Katie (Thailand) provided an example of the friction between Thai and foreign staff:
Canadian teachers were often undermined by the Thai teachers of that subject. I could spend time prepping, teaching, and providing students with additional help, only to walk into the classroom and see the answers to my work written on the board. Students often had difficulties learning in their English and as a result would simply wait for instruction in Thai.

Lynda (Thailand) explicated, “There is dissension between foreign and Thai teachers due to obvious unfair salary and vacation allowances.”

Clara (China) described a similar friction between local and foreign teachers at her Chinese school. She stated, “Local staff do not share the cultural norms of foreign teachers, so the main conflict is in dealing with administration. Not in dealing with students.” Sheldon (China) provided some positive feedback on how the Canadian administrator attempted to develop positive relationships between local and foreign staff: “The principal was great and tried to get more collaboration between Chinese and foreign staff.”

**Administration.** Teachers reported that administrators were both school managers and instructional leaders. Teachers recognized a variety of issues that emerged because of the cultural differences between local and foreign administrators.

Teachers described the role of the administrator at provincially affiliated schools as being similar to the role in Canadian schools; however, teachers noted some difference in how the role was practiced. Gwen (Egypt) affirmed, “The principal’s job was the principal’s job. He had a vice principal. It was exactly the same. We had staff meetings. We did admin. days. We were set up like a [name of province] school.” Luke explained that although the curriculum was from a Canadian province, “the Thai system at [name of school] is very different than my experiences teaching in [name of province].” When asked whether the provincially affiliated school in Japan was administered in a similar way to schools in Canada, Nancy remarked, “There hasn't been any interest in doing so, despite the name of the school.”
Perceptions of the school administration were divergent. Three teachers from Egypt expressed gratitude toward having a Canadian administrator. Greg (Egypt) explained, “Having a principal who was trained and had worked in [name of province] was encouraging. As a new teacher, he was invaluable to my practice.” Iowna (Egypt) explained how her administrator did everything possible to support his teachers:

I remember my principal saying, “My teacher is doing everything possible to teach your child.” I never had any problem with support from my principals . . . I felt like I had good support. They trusted my judgement . . . I’d make a decision and they’d say, “Ok . . . that sounds like a good idea.”

Gwen (Egypt) expressed similar opinions. She felt that the administrator not only supported her as a teacher, but also valued her opinions:

When we gave advice, when we made offers to help, we gave our two cents, it counted. It mattered. It was heard. We were the division. We were the school division; we were the teachers. That’s it. That was our school. We were our own entity and we made it happen. We functioned as a group, as an environment, and it grew and blossomed that way.

Marilyn (Thailand) echoed these sentiments:

When we came in with the ideas of centers or hands-on activities, they were very open to this and excited about it. It was just very foreign to them. As long as we said we had a plan and it was attached to their learning, they were totally supportive of all that.

This perspective of the administrators being supportive and helpful was divergent from the opinions of other teachers from other schools. When describing the role of the administrators, some teachers used terminology like “top-down” or “hierarchical.” Michelle (China) noted, “It's a top-down administration.” Nathan (Thailand) explained, “The admin. structure is top-down with little support provided.” Twylla (Thailand) provided further evidence of this top-down style of leadership: “School administration has very strict, specific guidelines for in-class instruction and assessment.” Jon (Thailand) explained, “There is a similar hierarchy, but it's twofold here
because it exists amongst Thai staff and in a parallel fashion among foreign teachers. That makes communication twice as hard, and expectations can also vary between the two.”

According to some teachers, the actual role of the administrator was different from that of a Canadian administrator. Richard (Thailand) highlighted the notion that in Canada, administrators often functioned as pedagogical leaders in their school:

In Canada, the principal of my school visited classes often and was much more familiar to both teachers and students. In Thailand, our school’s director was often more distant. She would speak from the stage at assemblies and very rarely stopped by classrooms for visits.

Two other concerns were raised by teachers about administration: classroom management and the no-fail practices. In terms of classroom management, Nathan (Thailand) explained, “There was a lot of behavioral issues and bullying that we as a school team fought with the higher department heads to fix.” Kevin (South Korea) expressed concern with how students would progress through school regardless of their actual abilities: “Moving students through the grades, regardless of their ability. So if a student hasn't met the grade level requirements, we pass them along anyways.”

*Cultural and Professional Preparation.* Although some teachers articulated that teaching experience, international experience, a basic university degree, and EAL training were sufficient in preparing them for their teaching assignment, others identified the need for specialized university programming. Teachers described the cultural challenges that accompanied living and working abroad. Cultural orientation provided by provincially affiliated schools was reported to be insufficient or ineffective.

Teachers explained that prior teaching experience was important for preparing teachers for their role overseas. Sheldon (China) stated, “Having previously taught in the public system,
the Canadian curriculum was a refreshing change.” Nathan (Thailand) stated, “I had worked in schools before and understood the more admin-based style and the teaching requirements.”

Richard (Thailand) suggested that when teachers came to work at these international schools with no prior teaching experience in Canada, teachers were more likely to implement the Canadian curriculum by using traditional Thai methodology:

We were quite free to teach with whatever model of education we chose, but students were more accustomed to the Thai way. As a teacher coming with little prior classroom experience, it was overwhelming to introduce new methods to students who were accustomed to another way. It took a while to become comfortable enough in a new school and culture to try new things.

Kerby (China) explained that when teachers came to China expecting things to be the same as they were in Canada, they often struggled to adjust: “For other teachers who were unable to step out of a western mindset, I think it was much more challenging.” Sarah (Egypt) explained that a lack of Canadian teaching experience created a challenge for teaching overseas:

It was hard to understand what was expected of me when I was planning the ELA lessons for my class. I hadn't been exposed too much in Canada or at the [name of university] and no one here could really lay out a good plan that had worked in the past.

As Johanna (China) explained, “It often took a few years of teaching abroad before teachers truly felt confident in their role.” When asked if she faced any challenges in teaching overseas, she responded, “Maybe in the first year or two, but I got the hang of it after seven years.” Kevin (South Korea) stated, “I came here as one of the very first teachers at this school. We learned as we went along.” Luke (Thailand) reinforced this position: “My second year at [name of school] was much more successful than my first. I had an understanding of the students, culture, and expectations of the parents and the school. I would have only gotten more successful if I had stayed longer.” Marilyn (Thailand) expressed similar sentiments: “It was good to be there for two years, because you get into a groove and figure it out a bit more.”
Previous teaching experience overseas was also described by teachers to be helpful. Sheldon (Chinese) explained,

I had taught a year previously in China and was prepared for the culture; however, combining the curriculum alongside a Chinese education could be tricky at times. Students had become accustomed to rote learning, and it took some time to get them interacting in groups or teams.

Kristie (Egypt) stated that she felt prepared to teach abroad: “I had just taught at a school in Saudi Arabia and had to deal with many of the same issues.” As teachers suggested, teaching abroad can elicit a different set of challenges than teaching in Canadian schools. Nancy (Japan) expressed, “I had lived in Japan previously, so I was comfortable with cultural differences.”

Other teachers credited their preparation to their education. Lynda (Thailand) expressed, “I strongly feel my university education courses and previous practicum experiences have provided me with many tools and support for a teaching role.” When asked if he received any specific training to work in this offshore context, Luke responded, “I completed my fifth year of my Bachelor of Education, along with a cohort from the [name of university], while teaching at [name of school].” Teachers who were associated with the university program that had a special arrangement with a school in Thailand received teaching experience and university training at the same time throughout the year. Richard (Thailand) explained, “I received training as a teacher in university, but no specific training for the particular international school.”

According to Andrew (Egypt), Sarah (Egypt), and Kristie (Egypt), a university degree in education was the only training that they received for their overseas assignment. Many other teachers from provincially affiliated schools articulated that an education degree alone was not sufficient. Andrew (Egypt) asserted, “No B.Ed. can prepare you for actual teaching. I was not prepared for any teaching role.” Kristie (Egypt) asked rhetorically, “What? University actually prepares you for teaching? None as far as I am concerned.” Sarah (Egypt) explained, “The only
training I have is from the [name of university] and experience working with children at a school-aged daycare.” Carla (South Korea) explained that she completed her education degree in the United States, and was also inexperienced with Canadian curriculum. She had “no reference to Canadian classrooms.”

A few of the more established provincially affiliated schools provided their teachers with specialized training in the IB program. When asked what training she received prior to teaching abroad, Kathy (Japan) stated, “I have a degree in art, and that's the subject I teach. The school sent me for IB training.”

Several teachers explained how valuable experience or specialized training for English language learners was for teachers working abroad. Johanna (Chinese) explained, “We were in no way prepared for the almost complete lack of English skill we faced when we first arrived.” Kerby (China) remarked, “I did specialized training in EAL as a result of having taught at this school. I would have completed my CTESL before going.” When asked if she had received any previous training that prepared her for her teaching assignment abroad, Katie (Thailand) expressed that she took “a few ESL courses while completing my B.Ed.” Experience and training in teaching students who were learning English as an additional language was, as many teachers pointed out, only one aspect of cultural preparation that was important to have prior to working abroad.

According to teachers, one important consideration in preparing teachers for an international teaching assignment was to educate them about what to expect when living in that particular country. In many cases, teachers would often go through a form of culture shock. This would impact their ability to be effective teachers. Gwen (Egypt) explained that for teachers to be successful abroad, “you have to adapt. You have to accept that you’re not in your culture
anymore. You’re in their culture.” Gwen articulated that teachers who developed a comfort with living abroad were more likely to be successful in the classroom.

There were also cultural factors that influenced a teacher’s professional experience. Mike (South Korea) explained, “With knowledge of customs and society, as well as being aware of norms within the culture, one can teach effectively.” Katie (Thailand) stated, “I took the time to learn about the culture so that I had a connection with the student.”

According to teachers, many schools had established cultural orientation sessions aimed to help acclimatize teachers to the challenges or issues that culture may have on their professional experience. Iowna (Egypt) indicated that she did not feel that this orientation was sufficient:

We had a program. I helped create a book . . . I made the first year for the second year round of teachers . . . In Canada, we had a meeting in the boardroom and they showed us some pictures and they gave us this short little spiel . . . but it was only one afternoon.

Mike (South Korea) described the specialized training that he participated in: “I received tips and advice on how to work with Korean students, but no training that would have really assisted.” Jon (Thailand) stated, “They tried to provide us with all of the preparation that they could, but it's really hard to understand what a Thai classroom is like without ever having been here.” He indicated that when it came to learning about culture, context was very important. Luke (Thailand) explained, “We completed a series of cultural awareness courses before leaving [Canada] and did three weeks of cultural and school practice/ orientation courses before teaching, once we had arrived in Thailand.” Lynda (Thailand) reiterated, “In the months leading up to our departure, we had weekly meeting to prepare us for our specific Thailand schools. However, I feel many points were only half-said; I feel I could better inform the next group to arrive.”
Rick (Thailand) expressed a concern around the differences in orientation programming between the three campus at a Thai school:

One of the more frustrating things about campus one was the first three weeks that we arrived before we started to teach. Campus two was given an amazing orientation where they were brought into the classes and shown how to do so many different things. They were told what they would be teaching and given the books they will teach out of so that they could start planning. Campus one, on the other hand, was told that we need to make a bulletin board with the kids names on it, our books didn't come until three days before classes started, and we weren't given anything for an orientation. That made many of us pretty overwhelmed at the beginning.

Matthew (China) explained that the teacher orientation program consisted primarily of the functions of the school, rather than an introduction to the cultural challenges that teachers may face. He commented, “We did some training, but that was more surrounding the functions of the school. . . . more than curriculum.”

**Professional Development.** Teachers reported a dissatisfaction with the amount of in-school and external professional development (PD) that occurred in their schools. Additional university coursework and teacher collaboration were the predominant modes of PD. In South Korea, multiple provincially affiliated schools engaged in collaborative PD sessions.

Teachers from each of the provincially affiliated schools stated that there were very few PD opportunities. Matthew (China) explained, “There is not much PD.” Greg (Egypt) said, “There were no outside PD opportunities offered at the time.” When asked if there was a sufficient amount of PD available to teachers, Kristie (Egypt) exclaimed, “Not at all. There is not nearly enough professional development!” Kathy (Japan) stated, “In my role as IB Coordinator, I would have liked more PD.” Kevin (South Korea) reported that the school does “not have a lot of professional development opportunities. And the stuff we do have is often geared towards our high school, not the elementary. Nathan (Thailand) explained, “I have received no in-service
professional development while employed by this school to date.” Jon (Egypt) also stated, “there is no PD offered here.”

In addition to the infrequency of PD, teachers complained that in-school PD was also inadequate. As Sheldon (China) explained, PD was delivered only one time per year by individuals who worked as liaison officers for the school’s affiliated Canadian province. Clara (China) noted, “Our current principal has a few math DVDs in our library which he considers adequate PD. Even for non-math teachers.” Nancy (Japan) also felt that the frequency and quality of PD was inadequate: “For one PD session, for example, we had a company representative come in to pitch his company's products to us. This was called professional development.” Michelle (China) recommended that provincially affiliated schools find ways for PD to occur. New and innovative ways of teaching are introduced every day [in Canada] and they might not make it overseas until the following year, if and when teachers have returned for a break and catch up.

Teachers reported access to external PD, but that few teachers took advantage of the learning opportunities. Emily (Egypt) explained, “A professional development fund is available to all teachers, but opportunities in this country are not common.” Gwen (Egypt) added that some opportunities for PD outside the school was offered, but would be at the expense of the teacher: “They did do better at offering international PD. They’d give us the information. If you want to go to this conference in Sweden, here’s the information. We’d have to pay for that.” Marilyn (Thailand) stated,

There was some PD in Bangkok and I think every once in a while someone would look into it. But then it was sort of like, “Do I go to the beach for the weekend or do I pay money and go to this conference for the weekend?”

Two teachers from provincially affiliated schools enrolled in university courses as a way to engage in professional learning. Kerby (China) explained, “PD was an area that was not well
many teachers expressed that the best form of PD came from their collaborative professional relationships with their colleagues. Both Iowna (Egypt) and Greg (Egypt) described a school culture committed to professional collaboration. Greg (Egypt) stated, “We had monthly staff meetings where staff members would present best practices they had learned. The staff were encouraged to share and team teach as much as possible.” Iowna (Egypt) reinforced this understanding:

The third year, we had teacher come from the [name of province], who had been teaching for 10 years. She and I and a couple of other teachers formed the literacy committee and then we gave PD. We gave ourselves PD with her as the head. She would instruct us and we’d instruct teachers. We all had our own roles and we were all able to teach each other something. We collaborated and we gave ourselves PD.

Teachers at provincially affiliated schools in Thailand also described the collaborative relationships they had with their fellow teachers. Luke (Thailand) stated, “Fortunately, I worked with a very eager group of teachers and learners. We organized, prepared, and planned our own PDs. We also asked our supervisor to hold PDs whenever she came to visit.” Marilyn (Thailand) explained,

Because we weren’t getting PD, we were creating our own PDs and so [name of supervisor] sort of oversaw that. And so someone ended up getting a Smartboard in the computer lab, and so someone who had some experience with a Smartboard offered to give a Smartboard PD. Just sort of took it upon themselves to do that. It was not provided by the school.

Trish (Thailand) and Richard (Thailand) both spoke of sharing an office space with other teachers from the Canadian side of the school. Trish (Thailand) stated, “Teachers were in one
large office space, so we learned from one another there, but we rarely had in-service time.”

Richard made a similar statement: “I found it different in the sense that the staff had a lot of space for collaboration because of the open-concept office we worked in.” Larrie (Thailand) explained, “Having a staff all coming from the same area creates opportunity for collaboration.”

All three teachers from Thailand indicated the value of working in close proximity with other individuals of a similar ideology. Sheldon (China) suggested that this type of connection and collaborative relationship should be encouraged to improve teaching and learning. He recommended that schools promote “a continuing connection between teachers, already there both native and foreign, to collaborate together, more often, and effectively.”

Kerby (China) and Iowna (Egypt) discussed how teachers would often rely on the experience of more seasoned teachers to support them. Kerby highlighted the importance of quality mentors. She explained how one major weakness of provincially affiliated schools was young teachers straight out of university with less seasoned teachers as mentors. I was lucky to have the chance to work with our curriculum coordinator, and this really helped my first teaching experience. I saw a lot of other first year teachers who did not have this same opportunity and were left to develop their lessons and units with less advice.

In addition to this, Iowna (Egypt) explained how other more experienced teachers would support these new teachers with the cultural change. Iowna (Egypt) pointed out, “The veterans helped the newbies. The veterans took us to the spots where, if you needed a little taste of home, they’d take you there. If you were really dying for that ‘Oreo cookie’ because you needed something Canadian.”

A unique PD experience that occurred in South Korea to place when four different provincially affiliated schools gathered together for a full-day PD session. Andrew (South Korea) said, “We had our first [name of province] offshore professional development day in November 2015, with specialized subject meetings for [name of province] teachers working in
Korea.” Mike (South Korea) explained, “Professional development is frequent through emails, training, and professional days with other international schools in the country.” Kevin (South Korea) added that this was a good PD strategy and that if he were to recommend how the school could improve its PD strategy, he “would collaborate more with other offshore teachers about what works and doesn't work for them.”

**School Culture.** Teachers reported that they formed family-like bonds with one another, through shared experiences with unique cultures. Apart from their occasional frustration with local administrators, teachers spoke positively about their personal and professional experiences. Teachers explained that parents and students believed in Canada’s international reputation for quality education.

Most provincially affiliated school teachers described the professional experience and the school culture to be positive. Luke (Thailand) stated, “My initial plan was to stay at the school for 10 months. It was extremely positive; therefore, I extended my contract to two full years.” Johanna (China) explained, “The experiences with the students was great, as it was with the Canadian staff.” Teachers explained that this was as a result of teachers undergoing a shared cultural experience that was both unique and challenging.

Marilyn (Thailand) articulated,

The experience outside of school was very enjoyable. It was neat because we were such a big group. Although we were the foreign teachers, we were the only teachers in our area. It gave a much more authentic experience. It helped that there were 25 of us experiencing the same thing.

Gwen (Egypt) described how the group bonded together like a family because of their shared circumstances:

But we were a family. At Christmas time, I through a big Christmas party. It was Christmas time and we were all missing home, and it was the Canadians and Americans.
and British people. All the teachers. It was a lot of people coming together. We missed our moms and families and parents.

Iowna (Egypt) also described the family dynamics that arose from living and working together:

Ya, people were mostly happy. In the beginning, the first three years that I was there, we were the original people. We were having the time of our lives. As we grew, we added more teachers and the dynamics would change and it got a little clique-y, a little dramatic. It happened. We were living together, working together, and we were each other’s friends and family.

According to many teachers, this positive bond between teachers carried over into their professional environment. Marilyn (Thailand) explained, “It was valuable to work with such a group of peers and other teachers and people to bounce ideas off of.” Mike (South Korea) highlighted a supportive staff as one of the main strengths of this model of Canadian education: “A very supportive staff, both English speaking and Korean.” As Marilyn (Thailand) explained, when teachers developed a social connection, they felt more supported in their professional environment: “I was fortune to have a really good group of friends where the people who didn’t know as many people or didn’t have as many connections felt a little less supported.”

Although most teachers expressed that their experience was positive, a few teachers expressed some frustration with the local administrators. Johanna (China) explained, “The Chinese administration though, were often shockingly bad and frustrating to work with.” Nathan (Thailand) reaffirmed this notion: “My personal experience living in Thailand was good but the actual professional experience was not. While my immediate supervisor was excellent, the foreign head department was not and was consistently acting unprofessional or undermining.”

According to teachers, students at provincially affiliated schools seemed to respond positively to the Canadian way of teaching. Sheldon (China) stated, “The students were eager to learn and plan their future.” Richard (Thailand) explained, “Students seemed to enjoy it and were exposed to more than one way of learning.” Marilyn explained that students treated teachers with
respect and kindness: “They were very respectful of teachers as a whole in that culture. When we walked into the classrooms, they would stand up and greet us. They really respect you.”

Families and parents also seemed to appreciate the provincially affiliated model of Canadian education. As Greg (Egypt) explained, “Many families who had family that already lived in Canada, or hopes of moving to Canada, sent their children to the school.” As Marilyn explained, the local community went out of their way to make the foreign teachers feel welcomed and supported: “They really wanted to engage, you know, all the foreign (Canadian) staff around, they were always giving a lot of gifts or just trying to connect . . . like always trying to take you out for dinner and things like that. They were really welcoming that way.”

Teachers expressed that provincially affiliated schools provided a positive international reputation of Canadian education. As Luke (Thailand) elucidated,

There is a lot of balance in Canadian education, along with infused subjects into all core areas. [Name of school] is very heavily driven upon marks and academics. [Name of province] teachers place emphasis upon effort, creativity and celebrate differences. [Name of province] teachers at [name of school] encourage movement, balance their teaching in literacy – more than just writing and reading sight words – and broaden perspectives on western culture. [Name of school] welcomed teaching in regards to traditions in Canada, religion, politics and even personal testimonies. They celebrated Canada Day with great pride and really adopt Canada as part of the school culture.

Greg (Egypt) reiterated this belief, stating, “I think it helped build a positive vision of what Canada is within Egypt.”

*English Language Learning.* Teachers reported that language immersion, as well as an immersion in Western culture, prepared students for university in the Western world. Academic language noted to be particularly challenging for ELLs.

Many teachers explained that they felt confident that an immersion model for language learning was effective. Gwen (Egypt) stated,
It was an immersion model. . . . These kids, their first language was Arabic. They’d come to kindergarten and they couldn’t speak English. That’s why they had an EA, because they needed a translator. As an immersion kid, I thought immersion school was the way to go. When you are in a one language school growing up . . . it’s a different upbringing.

Kevin (South Korea) described why he believed the immersion model was effective: “I think it's a great way for the students to learn how to speak English in a proper way. It exposes them to not only academic language, but social language as well.”

Teachers described how students were immersed in English language and a Western culture. Marilyn (Thailand) commented, “So we did tie a lot back to Canada . . . we celebrated Canada day . . . They really did embrace our culture, but it was hard to merge it.” Jon reinforced Marilyn’s statements:

By being immersed in a Canadian classroom model, students are not only learning the language but the cultural values and norms of a Western society. This will likely have long term benefits if they were ever to find themselves working or living in an international setting.

As Andrew (South Korea) explained, “100% of students are ESL students.” This fact resulted in a number of different challenges for teachers. Katie (Thailand) explained, “Students would rely too much on their primary language and would not always apply themselves.” Lynda (Thailand) pointed out how one of the biggest challenges was the language barrier within the curricular content. Often, when preparing a lesson, I'll have to be extra-cautious about verbiage. Sometimes content is unable to be imparted to students because even with definition break-downs, the language/concept is lost in translation and cultural backgrounds.

Kerby (China) explained that each teacher approached the role with varying degrees of attention toward language instruction. She stated that new teachers needed to be “in whatever the subject . . . a language teacher. Some teachers were more willing to take on this role than others. Teaching students in an international setting requires that teachers focus more on vocabulary and understanding.” Language learning occurred through language immersion in learning.
experiences, enabling teachers to focus on curricular content while simultaneously instructing students exclusively in English. Katie (Thailand) added, “Students were able to learn English through the subject content and not just during English class.”

One challenge that teachers faced when using an immersion model of education was that academic language became particularly difficult to teach. Mike (South Korea) stated,

Regarding the use of Canadian content, it is challenging to make ESL students understand what is being said in English to begin with. But when attempting to teach in English and also about content that they cannot connect with, their understanding is very low.

Iowna (Egypt) made a similar comment:

I taught for the children . . . Whatever their needs were . . . EAL students. My curriculum was adapted for the language barrier, but I still taught the same way that I do here. We had to focus more on what the words meant before I could get into the content. I had to get good at making sure that tiny little messages got through first before I could move on to the other stuff. Every time you switched content, you had to go through it all that again.

Students who entered school later in their education struggled more with the English language than younger students. Kerby (China) remarked that a major challenge for teachers was dealing with

the language levels of some students. We had a transition program that accelerated students English levels so that they could be integrated into the regular international programs. But this was much more successful when integrating students at the grade 7, 8, and 9 levels. Above this was quite difficult, and expectations of parents/administration was sometimes unrealistic.

Mike (South Korea) said, “Due to low English students, some course work is above the comprehension level of some students. This happened mostly in social studies, as the language and concepts are challenging to instruct with low language learners.”

As a result, teachers needed to adapt their instruction and the curriculum to address the language needs of their students. Rick (Thailand) commented, “There is also this program called
GrapeSEED that campus one uses to teach English.” As Kerby (China) explained, additional training in EAL instruction would be helpful for teachers in provincially affiliated schools: “Having a CTESL certificate would greatly enhance a teacher’s ability to be effective.” Marilyn (Thailand) remarked,

I think we learned how to adapt language learning in. It wasn’t really the primary objective – though it should be. We hit the groove. We realized that was ultimately what we should be doing. I remember the second year I marked and purposefully did just that. In Thailand, one school offered teachers special training to prepare them for the challenge of working with language learning.

**Resources.** Teachers reported that limited access to curriculum-specific and culturally relevant resources created challenges for curriculum implementation. Insufficient technological resources were also problematic.

Schools reportedly struggled to access Canadian-specific resources that were directly needed to effectively implement Canadian curriculum. Greg (Egypt) explained, “Resources are limited in certain countries” and teachers needed to “come prepared from Canada . . . I would bring more resources and prepare more in Canada before leaving, in order to have more materials to teach with.” Sheldon (China) also stated, “English resources are limited; I would bring more with me a second time around.” Katie (Thailand) stated, “A lack of resources and manipulatives was challenging.” Greg (Egypt) recommended that this issue be communicated more effectively to teachers who were preparing to work at provincially affiliated schools: “I also think it’s important to communicate to teachers who are coming to the school to be prepared for limited resources.”

In addition to Canadian resources being difficult to access, some teachers expressed that Canadian resources were sometimes difficult to use in foreign contexts. Mike (South Korea) noted,
Using Canadian curriculum texts (for example Math Makes Sense) is challenging for students. Some of the texts have too high of a written level for the students to gather the information from and needs to be formatted by the teacher to be able to be understood by all students. Other texts have too many [name of province] references, and some obscure references that cannot be accessed for more information while abroad.

Teachers indicated that Canadian resources were often challenging to use with EAL students. Emily (Egypt) articulated, “The resources that are used in Canada make some things harder here.” Lynda (Thailand) recommended, “The school could put more money towards . . . an increase in access to supplies, tools and experiences for students.”

A few teachers described the resource room at their school. Gwen (Egypt) explained the challenges that she faced when trying to order new resources for their school: “I was in charge of the resource room. Eventually, I grabbed the catalogue and ordered a bunch of stuff . . . and then it never got through because of customs.” Marilyn (Thailand) discussed their school library and the efforts that were made to stock it:

They have a library of books that had built as it (time) has gone on. I know the first year I think they had a really tough time with their resources, but it has grown. They have a library, but it was mostly Thai books. Buying English books was never really a priority. I don’t know if that has really changed.

Marilyn explained that reading interventions had recently become regular practice at these schools. These interventions were required for special educational programs: “I know with the reading program and reading resources, they were starting to get reading programs like Reading A-Z and Fauntas and Pinnell for those five students from each class. Intervention type stuff. We tried to go for other resources as well.

A lack of technological resources was cited by teachers as an issue. Twylla (Thailand) stated that in her school, “classrooms lack the typical technological resources that schools possess in Canada.” Gary (UAD) remarked, “The school also lacked technology. It didn't have a
computer lab or devices in the classroom. There was only one computer in each class. This made integrating technology difficulty.”

In Thailand, two teachers expressed frustration with a lack of easy access to technology. Lynda (Thailand) postulated, “I'm not sure if the underlying reason is culture, but there is a lack of access to technology and certain supplies.” Larrie (Thailand) exclaimed, “It would be fantastic if we didn't have to ask permission each and every time we would like to use technology to support a lesson.” He also suggested, “Online resources would make materials accessible, even though we are not in Canada.”

**Curriculum.** Teachers reported that the open and flexible design of Canadian curricula was universally applicable in all contexts. Curricular adaptations accommodated differences in culture and language, and deficiencies in time and resources.

Most teachers affirmed that the Canadian curriculum was effective for student learning. Carla (Egypt) referred to it as a “strong curriculum.” Greg (Egypt) also stated, “[Name of province] has a strong curriculum and it was well-received by parents at the school.” Gary (UAE) explained that Canada had a “strong curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity.” Michelle described the Canadian curriculum as one that was compatible and could be used around the world: “The Canadian curriculum is one in which a teacher can easily make connections with other area of the world. Project-based learning works really well in situations like this.”

Several teachers indicated that they used the curriculum regularly when planning. Jon (Thailand) explained that he used the Canadian curriculum more in provincially affiliated schools than he did when working in Canada: “We are required by our administration to report
back on each piece of assessment we give and we must formally assess 80% of the SLOs. I use the curriculum documents way more here than I would in a Canadian classroom.”

Many teachers suggested that the way that the curriculum was designed provided openness and flexibility for teachers to cater their lessons to meet the needs of non-Canadian students. A few teachers explained that teachers who were new to the profession often struggled to implement the curriculum effectively in these foreign contexts. Richard (Thailand) asserted,

I believe having fairly open models is really beneficial, as they often allow more versatility to the environment. However, it is at times difficult – especially as a new teacher – to know where to begin with such open models. I think having more mentors in these environments would be extremely helpful.

Nancy (Japan) made similar remarks: “Most teachers are unaware of the curriculum expectations, and as a result follow them very, very loosely.” However, Jon (Thailand) recommended, “More freedom in how the curriculum is implemented might provide more room for creative and authentic teaching practices.”

Although these teachers suggested that the Canadian curriculum was strong, not all teachers shared Michelle’s belief regarding the compatibility of the curriculum with the local culture. Many teachers articulated that they tried their best to implement the curriculum as it was written; however, expectations of student achievement often had to be adjusted. Johanna (China) stated, “We all certainly tried our best. Oftentimes we would have to adjust expectations, but I don't think there were many instances of outright modifying curriculum.” Sheldon (China) explained, “The outcomes remained the same. The curriculum needs to be revised and minimized depending on the level of the students, but it needs to be done at the school level.”

Lynda (Thailand) stated,

I know we all definitely plan it that way. I feel that behavior and classroom management skills, as well as development of empathy for ESL learners is on par with the Canadian
experience. However, implementation of curricula, unit plans and in-depth topic coverage falls short of Canadian expectations.

Matthew (China) noted, “I think the biggest challenge is using a curriculum that is years ahead of the comprehension of these children. Many of our teachers struggle with using the given textbooks as they are too hard for them.” Mike (South Korea) commented, “The Canadian form of curriculum needs modification to teach abroad, but the general outcomes are still covered.”

Teachers explained how adaptations were frequently made to the curriculum when teaching social studies. Content was very Canada-centric in the content areas such as the Canadian government, Canadian history, and Aboriginal issues. Teaching local students about the Canadian government was challenging because the concept was often very different from what they had experienced growing up. Emily (Egypt) stated, “Some of the curriculum is too Canada-specific, and loses a lot of meaning in other countries. Examples include teaching multiple courses on Canadian history, Canadian government structure, learning to do Canadian taxes.” Matthew (China) reinforced this notion:

Talking about Canadian government is so out of reach for these kids, and I feel like it's inappropriate for them. These parts of the curriculum need to be identified and redone for the context in which they are being taught. It makes no sense to spend a whole semester on a topic of which they have no context.

Canadian history was another content area that teachers identified as difficult to implement exactly as it was written in the curriculum. Sheldon (China) stated, “In the case of history class, it was difficult for students to relate.” Iowna (Egypt) explained,

Canada is this whole other country with a whole other history. We didn’t have the pharaohs, we had the settlers and the voyageurs that traveled the country. We had to be able to teach it in a way that they could actually use the information. It was hard to make a connection.
Carla (Egypt) stated, “Prior knowledge is needed when using some of the curriculum, which most students did not have. Students here did not care about the geography of [name of province] or Canada.”

One aspect of Canadian history that was particularly challenging for teachers was the inclusion of an Aboriginal perspective. Teaching students about Canadian Aboriginal issues and history was identified as being problematic for many teachers. Mike (South Korea) expressed his challenges when implementing the curriculum: “Grade 4/5 curriculum of Aboriginal life and government . . . even with video support, they have no reference to what an Aboriginal person could be.” Greg (Egypt) explained, “There were a lot of social studies adaptations made, especially for teaching Aboriginal outcomes.” Kevin (South Korea) stated, “Our curriculum follows the [name of province] set of standards. The learning outcomes require us to talk about some First Nations people. I am currently teaching a grade 1 class who really cannot relate to First Nations people in Canada.” Andrew (Egypt) suggested trying to find ways to relate the Aboriginal perspective with local indigenous groups: “[the curriculum] is obviously Canadian centric . . . using lots of First Nations stories, when Bedouin stories would work better.”

The notion of adapting the curriculum to merge both cultural perspectives into student learning was highlighted by many teachers. Mike (South Korea) stated,

Content that they cannot connect with their understanding is very tricky. Being able to cut certain Canadian content from the program that would have no connection to students who have never lived in Canada would be very helpful for both teachers and students.

Andrew (South Korea) explained that students need “to relate Canadian content, to Korean cultural, and to societal realities.” Luke (Thailand) recommended,

There are ways to implement the model of education and curriculum while still acknowledging and respecting the Thai culture. Some things, even like A-Z reading, make assessment difficult when the subject matter is very far removed from the students’ realm of knowledge and understanding.
In some cases, challenges arose from the differing cultural perspectives of the Canadian curriculum and the societal norms of the local population. Religious ideology of the local population had an impact on what and how content was taught. These diverging views were exemplified in a variety of ways. Andrew (Egypt) explained, “One has to constantly explain the relevance of things to the Egyptian children. Like what Easter is.” Gwen (Egypt) provided a few examples of these thorny cultural issues:

I remember when we started getting into the higher grades and started covering things like, wars and all that stuff . . . you’re not allowed to talk about religion, not allowed to talk about the Holocaust . . . not allowed to talk about the health curriculum . . . can’t talk about penises and masturbation or any of that stuff . . . you can’t speak ill of the president.

Another element of culture that needs to be considered when discussing cultural adaptations to curriculum was language. Most of the students who attended provincially affiliated schools were ELLs. Teachers explained how they adapted their instructional strategies and, in some cases, the curriculum to account for this. Andrew (Egypt) explained, “The school I am teaching at has a student body made up of Arabic first language speakers.” Matthew (China) stated, “Despite being an international school, the students are predominantly ESL learners. Therefore, the curriculum content is often too difficult and as teachers, we need to begin with the basics on most topics.” Kristie (Egypt) expressed, “These students are second language learners so it takes more effort to get them to write in proper English for sure.” Luke (Thailand) articulated, “All students were EAL, therefore, language had to be altered and simplified, particularly in the science curriculum.” More than 75% of the teachers who participated in the research highlighted the need to alter the language to make it understandable and relevant.

Cultural adaptations, however, were not the only form of curricular adaptations that needed to be made.
As both Lynda (Thailand) and Nathan (Thailand) explained, teachers often made curricular adaptations because of time restrictions. Lynda (Thailand) described feeling a “constant sense of failure . . . due to time constraints, much of the curricular specific learning outcomes end up being cut out.” Nathan reaffirmed this point: “The curriculum used is often extremely reduced due to limited instructional time.”

Textbook requirements were identified as a reason that teachers would need to make special adaptations to the Canadian curriculum. Larrie (Thailand) explained, “We are required to use 70% of a textbook that does not match curriculum.” Both Nathan (Thailand) and Rick (Thailand) emphasized teachers’ frustration with this issue. Nathan (Thailand) asserted, “This campus actually uses a Thai-Canadian blended model and the textbooks are written for a Singapore curriculum, so it leans more towards Thai-Singapore curriculum.” Rick (Thailand) pointed out,

Another difficult pill to swallow was the whole “we teach the [name of province] curriculum” farce. In reality, we teach out of a textbook made in Singapore that the parents pay an unbelievable amount of money for, so if we don't get through at least 80% of it, we will pay for it dearly. This means that at no point are we really teaching [name of province] curriculum.

Mike (South Korea) suggested that policy makers allow teachers to use other resources for instruction: “Continue to promote the Canadian education system, but allow for other resources and content to be covered that could still teach the general outcomes for each grade level.”

Canadian Methodology. Teachers ascribed to Canadian methodology because it focused on student-centered, hands-on, and differentiated learning. Language barriers and cultural differences were reported to create challenges for student learning, instruction, and assessment.
Most teachers made statements that affirmed that Canadian teaching methodologies were effective in provincially affiliated schools. Both Luke (Thailand) and Cyrena (Thailand) made positive statements about Canadian education. Cyrena (Thailand) remarked, “They are Canadian assessment strategies, therefore, teaching methodologies are student-centered. This model is effective for teaching and learning successfully.” Luke (Thailand) added, “There is a lot of balance in Canadian education, along with infused subjects into all core areas.”

Teachers also described Canadian teaching methodologies and the effectiveness of using them in these international contexts. Technology, hands-on teaching strategies, and differentiation were highlighted as effective teaching methods. Matthew (China) explained, “They use a wide variety of strategies and mediums to reach students, my favorite being student-centered and technology-driven.” When asked why this model of Canadian education was effective, Johanna (China) responded, “Giving students opportunity to engage in learning in a method other than sitting and listening to lectures and rote memorization, which is all they get in the Chinese system.” Lynda (Thailand) remarked, “I think students enjoy the hands-on, multiple intelligence approaches. When I do have the opportunity to use technology, the students always involve themselves more in active discussion.” Luke (Thailand) commented,

The school was very open to teaching practices involving differentiation, group work, learning centers, and hands-on activities. All of which had not been implemented in the school before. Creativity and working with peers to best support students made it a very successful endeavor.

Canadian teachers explained that their teaching methodology differed when teaching abroad. Students were primarily EAL learners and, as a result, teaching methodology needed to change. Sheldon (China) stated, “Some adjustments were necessary. Knowing the culture one goes into is certainly helpful in linguistic barriers or cultural norms.” Gwen (Egypt) reinforced this statement: “I teach for the children that I taught. Whatever their needs were. EAL students.
We had to focus more on what the words meant before I could get into the content.” Johanna (China) provided a few examples of strategies used to attend to this language gap: “Using visual aids, group work, projects, portfolios, and other creative ways were good ways to get around any language barriers.”

Other cultural challenges to teaching were also identified. In Egypt, religion had an impact on teaching methodology. Kristie (Egypt) explained, “Teaching in a predominantly Muslim country does not always allow for open discussion on certain issues regarding other religions and beliefs in social studies programs.”

Several teachers from Thailand stated that behavior management was more challenging abroad than it was in Canada. Teachers cited differences in culture as one reason for this. Jon (Thailand) remarked,

The difference between Canadian and Thai methodologies sometimes causes dissonance in the students’ behavior. Being used to a fairly conservative school model, they do not always behave appropriately when given more freedom in their day. English teachers are inherently seen as more fun and academically less rigorous. Because our educational philosophies are not as traditional as our Thai counterparts, and the school is half and half in terms of instruction, it can be very daunting to approach interactive or student-led activities in the classroom. Classroom management is a whole different experience here.

Other rationales were also provided. Marilyn (Thailand) pointed to the language gap, large classes sizes, and outdated classroom resources as the primary issues influencing classroom management:

There were a lot of classroom management issues because teachers didn’t know how to communicate behaviorally because there was such a gap of understanding. But also because there were 30 kids in lines at desks on wooden chairs . . . there was this old school feel to it a little bit: chalk boards, things may have changed since then, but just the amount of books was limited. And textbooks and notebooks and workbooks. That was all very different. Felt like we were going back in time a little bit.

Nathan (Thailand) and Larrie (Thailand) both explained that providing reasonable consequences was also challenging due to cultural ideologies between teachers and local school
administrators. Nathan stated, “This school in particular had no consequences for improper behavior like bullying or violence at all.” Larrie (Thailand) reiterated this notion: “It’s hard to provide reasonable consequences because of culture.”

Some teachers pointed out that assessment strategies differed in provincially affiliated schools. When asked about the biggest difference between the Canadian model and the local model of education, Johanna (China) commented, “Assessment. Instead of just relying on a series of tests, as the Chinese model does, we allow for homework, projects, quizzes, tests, and exams. We give students a wider variety of ways to show learning.” Other teachers explained that local government regulations or local administrators held firm to their own practices in assessment. Marilyn (Thailand) explained,

I think that first year, the ideas of exams and testing . . . assessment just looks a lot more formal over there. Lots of standardized testing. It’s hard because you want to respect what their standards and expectations are . . . Right now I do work in specialized . . . very diverse little learners and I just see the need for them to learn differently. The extra challenge there for them was the language part . . . those students who were having a particularly hard time couldn’t explain to me what they needed.

Provincially affiliated schools were required to adhere to the same standardized tests that were used in Canada. Emily (Egypt) explained that this sometimes presented an unfair challenge to students: “Sometimes provincial exams are quite biased in their assumptions of previous or general knowledge.”

A few teachers articulated that methodology was often influenced by local culture, focusing heavily on academics over critical thinking and creativity. Gary (UAE) recommended, “There needs to be a bigger emphasis on creativity and critical thinking rather than facts.” Marilyn (Thailand) described the situation in the school where she had taught:

At [name of school], they start the kids as soon as they are potty trained. They start in nursery school. When I first started, I had an hour a day with 1 and ½ year olds: with these little kiddos who could barely speak Thai. Their curriculum was counting 1 to 10
and saying hi and hello and things like that. So there was this huge emphasis on academics. . . . The classes were full - like 30 kids and they were divided into 5 grade 1 classes called P1, P2, etc . . . And, P1 was the strongest group of kiddos. It was kind of tiered a little. They said they didn’t do that, but it was clear that they did.

Marilyn (Thailand) added that some remedial reading programming was starting to be put in place as she was leaving the school: “They did start a reading recovery program of sorts. The five kids in each class that were struggling the most would be pulled out and they would work on extra literacy activities . . . That was kind of a new attempt.” She believed that this programming was effective.

**Student Learning.** Provincially affiliated teachers reported that because their students learned critical-thinking, social, and leadership skills in a cultural environment that resembled Canada, students developed unique world perspectives and knowledge that prepared them for Canadian universities. However, teachers expressed some concerns about the differing learning styles, intrinsic motivation, and academic expectations of their students. Inconsistent parental support was also cited as an issue.

When describing the benefits of using a provincially affiliated model of education abroad, several teachers articulated that this form of education prepared students for university in Canada. Michelle (China) explained, “The students are better prepared for attending high school and university in the countries they are planning on moving to.” Kerby (China) recounted, “Curriculum was set. In many overseas schools where a business model is implemented, the curriculum can be somewhat lacking. When graduating from [name of school], students had the same educational opportunities as students graduating from Canadian institutions.” Greg (Egypt) added, “There are many students looking to come to North America to study post-secondary. There was a lot of inquiry and investigating that the students wanted to do about Canada.” Kristie (Egypt) noted, “It allows students to continue on in a post-secondary institution outside of
Egypt.” When asked about the greatest strength of provincially affiliated model, Kevin (South Korea) responded, “Canadian content-reading materials, ability to understand Canadian life, ability to move into a Canadian education if they choose.” These teachers highlighted the importance of preparing students for life in Canada.”

Teachers identified several learning outcomes that result from using a Canadian model. Several teachers explained that this model of education promotes critical thinking, creativity, social skills, and leadership skills. Emily (Egypt) highlighted this sentiment: “Our students learn to think critically.” When asked about the greatest strength of the offshore model of Canadian education, Mike (South Korea) asserted, “The encouragement on the students to be individuals and using critical thinking skills. Rote learning is key in Korean schools, and these students benefit greatly from our methods of individualizing their education and providing opportunities to explore and learn through doing.” Matthew (China) remarked, “They also have more opportunity to develop skills of critical thinking and creativity.” Johanna (China) also conveyed that she believed that this model of education was effective for promoting creativity: “We had so many that were ‘bad students’ according to their Chinese marks that blossomed under a system that allowed more freedom and creativity.” Sheldon (China) reflected, “After students adjust to teams and group work, they are usually chatty and comfortable. A teacher needs to have good conversational skills to get students interacting.” When asked about the strength of this model of education, Andrew (South Korea) explained, “Leadership. This program avoids the traditional political hierarchy of student government. Students have time to explore their leadership style through a series of collectively run student activities/events.”

One persistent theme that emerged from the data from teachers was that using this model of education abroad provided student with the opportunity to get an alternate perspective on the
world and develop a deeper cultural understanding. Matthew (China) affirmed, “I think it exposes them to a more well-rounded view of the world, as they have the opportunity to have discussions about different family models, views on religion, beliefs about women and their roles in society.” Kristie (Egypt) elucidated, “The significant strength would have to be the fact that the children are exposed to more worldly views and a sound education system.” Gwen (Egypt) said, “Teaching people, wherever they are, teaching them about our culture, it opens up the same pathways for us as it does for them . . . It makes the world smaller which is really nice.”

There were conflicting views on students’ ability to adopt this model of learning. Matthew (China) argued, “They respect the Canadian culture and way of life, so they are very welcoming of it, even if they find it difficult to understand topics specific to North American culture.” Lynda (Thailand) stated, “I'm very thankful I get to apply the model and strategies I've learned in my education. It also seemed to resonate with students and captures their interest, as it deviates from their base strategies.” However, other teachers suggested that students came to the Canadian schools with a different mentality. At an Egyptian school, Kristie clarified,

These children are not as motivated as Canadian children so it is difficult sometimes. . . . The work ethic here is not conducive to critical thinking. Everything is done in a “when I get to it” manner instead of working on something right away. It can be frustrating sometimes when you are used to hard work and thinking before acting.

In China, Sheldon pointed out that students sometimes come to the provincially affiliated school with a preconceived notion: “There are some students who come to the school expecting more than what the program offers. Thinking all the classes will be fun and games.”

Teachers explained how there were issues with the provincially affiliated model of education that presented challenges to student learning. Jon (Thailand) and Andrew (South Korea) explained that when students entered school after being previously educated with more local methodology, they found learning in this model to be challenging. As Jon (Thailand)
pointed out, “Moving beyond the rote learning and memorization and fixation on the correct answer has been a challenge throughout the year.” Andrew (South Korea) reinforced this notion: “Some Korean students have difficulty adapting to open-ended questioning, group work, and discussions when they transfer from the Korean public school system.”

Kristie (Egypt) and Brad (Egypt) explained how parents sometimes contributed to issues with student learning. Brad (Egypt) said, “It is difficult to implement the concept of rubrics and hard to justify to parents why their child is not getting a 100%.” Kristie (Egypt) noted,

It's sometimes too much to expect anything to be done at home. In Canada, we are always sending homework, and for the most part parents are making sure that the children get it done. That has been my experience. Here, parents take children on vacations in the middle of the school year, stay home whenever they feel like it, and are not sitting with the child to make sure work gets done.