

An Investigation of Teachers' Role Definitions in Nunavik

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This study examines perceived teacher role definitions in educating Inuit students in Nunavik. Recent work in Aboriginal, critical, and anti-racism education, along with the Cummins model, build on poststructural theory and constitute the conceptual framework of this research project. The methodology includes individual interviews, short-answer questionnaires, and Likert-scale questionnaires completed by a group of former Kativik School Board members. The data suggest that teacher role definitions may have both positive and negative effects on Inuit students through their classroom and community interactions.

Introduction

Research in the field of Aboriginal education suggests that a strong base in the primary culture and language predisposes students to develop biculturalism, bilingualism, and eventual academic success (Annahatak, 1994; Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 1994; Crago, Annahatak, & Ningiuruvik, 1993). Recent studies propose that many Canadian Aboriginal students do become bilingual and bicultural (Fuzessy, 1997; Barnhardt, 1994). Nevertheless, overall academic achievement among these students remains weak. They appear to remain prone to academic underachievement and/or failure (Mackay & Miles, 1995; Rains, 1992). Although biculturalism and bilingualism among Aboriginal students appears to affect educational outcomes positively, they cannot guarantee success in overall educational outcomes. This goal of this article is to examine further potential factors that may illuminate ongoing underachievement by Aboriginal students, and specifically Inuit students in the Canadian context.

The conceptual framework for this study is built mainly on the Cummins (1996a) model, which unites theoretical elements drawn from critical, poststructural, antiracism, and minority education theory. Cummins posits a model that outlines many of the social and educational conditions favorable to the creation of opportunities for student empowerment in schools and the communities they serve. It highlights the essential role of educational structures and the teacher in providing opportunities for the empowerment or the disabling of minority students. In addition, the conceptual framework draws on the work of Battiste (1998), McLaren (1997), Sleeter (1993), Willinsky (1990), and others in order to provide specific suggestions and examples concerning the anti-racist and empowering classroom. As such, the guiding research question addressed by this conceptual framework in this study is the following: In what ways and to what extent do the teachers of the Kativik School Board create contexts of empowerment in their interactions with Inuit students?

To address this question, qualitative data relating to the conceptual framework were gathered. Former Kativik School Board teachers completed individual inter-

views, short-answer questionnaires, and Likert-scale questionnaires. The data suggest that perceived teacher role definitions may have both positive and negative effects on Inuit students through their classroom and community interactions; however, teachers may not be consciously aware of the negative ways their perceived role definitions can affect student outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

The affirmation of the cultural and linguistic identity of students is a significant educational issue in the diverse framework of North American society, which gains importance with the realization that it is students of difference who face the biggest challenge in obtaining academic success in our present educational and social systems. Decades-old studies have demonstrated the educational and social bias in favor of the dominant and/or mainstream North American ideology and its students (Persell, 1977). This realization is not new, yet despite concerted efforts to the contrary many school failures for Aboriginal students persist (Mackay & Miles, 1995; Nunavik Education Task Force, 1992; Ogbu, 1987, 1995a, 1995b; Rains, 1992).

As a result, the topic of educational empowerment of Aboriginal students in mainstream North American school systems is generating an extensive body of research (Collier, 1993; Eriks-Brophy, 1991, 1992; Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 1994; Fuzessy, 1997; Lipka, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c). This literature identifies several key issues for the success of students. The theoretical framework advanced by Cummins (1996a) lends unity to the wealth of literature about student empowerment. It provides a structure on which to integrate research findings and theories from the fields of bicultural education, bilingual education, critical and feminist education, poststructural theory, and anti-racism education.

The theoretical framework advanced by Cummins (1996a) unites the wealth of literature cited above. His theoretical framework for educational empowerment integrates many of the research findings and theories outlined both above and throughout the remainder of this article. Cummins suggests that empowerment through education includes both a cognitive and an emotional element. He elaborates on this notion by asserting that empowerment through education is the result of a collaborative creation of power in the classroom between teacher(s) and student(s). It is also central to the Cummins model that educators cannot collaborate in the creation of power, and thus in the empowerment of minority students unless they themselves are active participants. Should teachers not be active in this collaboration, they are likely to maintain the use of the transmission model of education in which facts are deposited into students to be regurgitated later at test time. Cummins (1996b) also suggests that students from minority cultural groups will only succeed academically to the extent that the pattern of interactions in schools can challenge and/or reverse those between their own culture and that of the majority culture.

Therefore, Cummins (1996a) suggests that empowering education should be an interactive process between teachers and learners in which everyone contributes to the learning process. Cummins believes that empowered teachers must become aware of their role in the replication of societal structures of dominance and oppression through the education system (Cummins, 1987, 1994, 1996b). Teachers can and do perpetuate these structures of dominance, albeit at the unconscious

level much of the time. They do this by accepting the validity of what Persell (1977) and Grant (1977) term the hidden curriculum and the pervasiveness of the mainstream ideology in schools, a form of "social hegemony." It is through the development of a conscious awareness of their roles in this reproduction that educators can counteract and help to negate this social hegemony. Nel (1993) refers to this process as the development of informed empathy toward minority students. Cummins' (1987, 1994, 1996a) discussion of these elements is reminiscent of the pedagogy of Paulo Freire and the literature on critical and feminist education theory.

Cummins (1987) believes that there is usually no intent on the part of educators to discriminate against their students. It is felt that educators interact with their students based largely on ideologies and assumptions that perpetuate relations of power and hegemony in society (Cummins, 1987; Persell, 1977; Sleeter, 1993). Cummins suggests that students can experience disempowerment educationally in much the same manner as their cultural communities experience disempowerment through their relations with the larger society and its institutions. Through a commitment on the part of teachers to adhere to anti-racist education strategies, student success can be made available through mainstream education.

Cummins (1996a) lists four institutional characteristics of schools where the interplay between the role of educators and the educational structures in which they teach can encourage opportunities for the empowerment or disabling of minority students through their educational experiences. He suggests that each of these four characteristics can be conceived of as a continuum. One end of each continuum describes an educational setting in which opportunities for minority student empowerment are most prevalent. The opposite end of each continuum describes educational settings in which opportunities for the disabling of minority students are most prevalent: (a) "Cultural/Linguistic Incorporation"; (b) "Community Participation"; (c) "Pedagogy"; and (d) "Assessment." Nel (1993) suggests that a fifth element should be included in Cummins' model: (e) minority students should be made familiar with mainstream culture and school practices. As such, students will be better equipped to handle the demands of the mainstream culture in the classroom.

Cummins (1996a) suggests that recognition of and changes in these four areas (five if we are to include Nel's suggestion) by educators can help them to meet the empowering end of the continua and enable student success in mainstream classrooms. These four areas of educational empowerment or disabling have been substantiated in the research literature for over two decades (Baral, 1987; Campbell & Farrell, 1985; Eriks-Brophy, 1991; Gilbert II & Gay, 1985; Grant, 1977; Lipka, 1994b, 1994c; Sleeter & Grant, 1986). Cummins (1986, 1987, 1994, 1996a), Grant (1977), Lipka (1994c) and Shor (1980) offer many examples of how critical educators can and do encourage and create educational opportunities for empowerment of both teachers and students in schools across North America.

Educational Research in the North

Ideally, the bicultural education of Inuit students should affirm the students' culture and the students' language, because language is one of the most significant elements of any culture. Moreover, the students' own language paves the way to a

clearer understanding and comprehension of the second language and culture (Wright, Taylor, Ruggiero, & Macarthur, 1996). The perspectives of the above studies are relevant to North American Inuit students and correspond to the position of Kleinfeld (1979) and Barnhardt (1990). These authors studied St. Mary's, a Catholic boarding school in rural Alaska. St. Mary's has had much success in the bicultural education of Yup'ik students. Kleinfeld and Barnhardt note how St. Mary's adapts mainstream educational expectations to the traditional Yup'ik value system. Barnhardt (1990) cites the emphasis placed on Yup'ik culture and values in the school's philosophy, goals, and objectives. St. Mary's also places an emphasis on cultural values by engaging parents and community members to contribute and adhere to consistent Yup'ik values and attitudes.

Kleinfeld (1975) also notes that the role of the non-Yup'ik teacher is important in contributing to the success of Yup'ik students. She suggests that these teachers should possess warmth and high standards of achievement for their students, as these characteristics are most consistent with Yup'ik student success. These characteristics are also consistent with Yup'ik cultural values. Similarly, Lipka's (1994b) work with Alaskan Yup'ik students demonstrates how traditional cultural knowledge can be incorporated into the school's math and science curricula and pedagogy. For example, Lipka (1994b) notes that Yup'ik culture traditionally used a numbering system that saw 20 as the base unit, as opposed to the 10 of the dominant culture's mathematical system. By incorporating this concept into the mathematics program, cultural knowledge is reinforced, as is Yup'ik culture itself. Lipka (1991) also suggests that culturally relevant pedagogy is a key to enhancing success in Yup'ik classrooms. Further, Lipka (1989) suggests that the community should be a vocal and active player in determining the curriculum of the school and the social and cultural significance of that curriculum. Such a model sees an increased legitimacy placed on both the school and the community that surrounds and supports it.

Similarly, the Baffin Divisional Board of Education began implementation of the Piniqtaqvut Integrated Program in the late 1980s. The design of this program offers Inuit students "learning experiences [that] reflect the cultural and linguistic strength of the Inuit" (Baffin Divisional Board of Education, 1989). The program was commissioned at the request of Inuit community members during a regional survey in the 1980s. The respondents indicated their wish to implement curricula consistent with Inuit culture in the schools and communities of the Northwest Territories (NWT).

Tompkins (1993) documents many of the positive changes that Piniqtaqvut helped foster during her four-year tenure as a principal in Anarapaktuq, NWT. She reports on the complex process of change that took place in the context of the implementation of the philosophy and spirit of Piniqtaqvut in her school. O'Donoghue's (1998) research also takes place in the shadow of Piniqtaqvut in the setting of Nunavut and NWT. This study chronicles the events leading up to, and the results and recommendations of a regional teacher consultation about professional development and professional learning. This process was named Pauqatigiit. The regional survey of both Inuit and non-Inuit educators was developed by a committee of regional teacher and educator representatives of which

O'Donoghue was a member. The objective of the survey was to develop a plan of action for professional development and learning in the area. O'Donoghue (1998) suggests that ethically based critical practice should serve as the focus for educator learning and professional development in the region. She feels that this would best address the need for support expressed by educators during the Pauqatigiit.

Educational Research in Nunavik

Research in Nunavik by Crago (1992), Crago et al. (1993), Eriks-Brophy (1991, 1992) and Eriks-Brophy and Crago (1994) suggests that in classrooms taught by non-Inuit teachers, interaction patterns violate Inuit norms and sensitivities, and this is linked to poor academic achievement. Eriks-Brophy's (1992) study explores the social interaction and discourse patterns of Inuit-taught classrooms in Nunavik. Eriks-Brophy suggests that the composition of discourse and interaction in these classrooms has the potential to enhance the educational experiences of Inuit students. The study proposes a model of the forms and functions of conversations that typically take place in Inuit classrooms. This model supports the findings of Crago's (1988) study that suggest Inuit families demonstrate significant differences in their communicative interaction patterns from those of the mainstream.

Eriks-Brophy (1991) explores the topic of questioning Inuit children and compares the Inuit model in Inuit-medium classrooms and Inuit homes in Nunavik. She concludes that although Inuit teachers seem to use the question-and-answer routine in their classrooms—one that is apparently incongruent with cultural practice in the home—they do so in a way that is congruent with Inuit culture. Questions asked are addressed to the group as a whole rather than to individuals in particular. Responses are not evaluated by the teacher, but rather modeled for the classroom and only corrected if serious errors occurred. Eriks-Brophy suggests that this lack of individual attention and evaluation are consistent with Inuit cultural practice in the home as students are not asked to display their knowledge for adults or to relate their experiences for them.

These examples suggest that cultural values have a profound effect on the education of Inuit students. It is suggested that teacher-student classroom interaction patterns that are congruent with the values of the primary culture can enhance the educational experience of students. Such interaction patterns also act to solidify cultural identity by affirming the value base of the culture in question. These findings suggest that Inuit interaction patterns should be replicated in the classroom in order to enhance Inuit student success. This work is corroborated by Corson (1992), Stairs (1994), Roberts and Clifton (1988), and Lipka (1991). The findings in Nunavik are also consistent with the pioneering work of Philips (1972) on this topic. Philips suggests that if language interaction patterns mesh between teachers and students, successful educational outcomes are more likely to result. Therefore, an incongruity of cultural values and communicative interaction patterns may reduce Inuit and other students' access to meaningful learning experiences.

Crago et al. (1993) report that language socialization patterns are changing with the passing generations in Inuit society. This may be due partly to the improved access to telecommunications and mass media in remote Aboriginal communities. Younger Inuit mothers are opting to incorporate elements of the dominant

"Southern Canadian" interaction patterns into the language interactions with their children, apparently with awareness that such patterns correspond to those the children experience at school. With the school responding to the community and the community responding to the expectations of the school, a two-way bicultural and bilingual framework can thus be hypothesized to be in operation. Cazden's (1988) work also lends theoretical support to this position. Cazden concentrates on the cultural organization of teaching and learning in mainstream classrooms and illustrates how student failure can be related to an incongruity found between the home and school culture. Bredo, Henry, and McDermott (1990) supply further evidence for this assertion.

Patrick (1994) discusses the question of Inuit students in Northern Quebec spending much of their classroom time being taught by non-Inuit teachers in the second language of the students. By the time these students reach the late secondary levels of education, they may have adapted in part or in whole to the school practices and expectations of non-Inuit teachers and administrators. They have possibly become functionally bicultural and bilingual as evidenced by the findings of Fuzessy's (1997) study. Fuzessy's findings suggest that most first-year Inuit college students studying in the Montreal area were categorized as having a bicultural cultural identity. In addition, the conclusions of Crago et al. (1993) point to the changing language socialization patterns in some Inuit homes. All of these factors suggest a possible reduction of cultural incongruity in classrooms led by non-Inuit teachers. Yet it remains unknown whether this reduction of incongruity is enough to enhance student success.

Taylor (1990) suggests that one of the most important factors influencing Inuit student success in Nunavik is located in the social organization of the schools and communities of Nunavik. His research examines the role of language in the development of identity among Inuit children. The study suggests that despite the widespread use of Inuttitut in the schools and communities of Nunavik, the second languages of English, and to a lesser extent French, maintain a higher sociolinguistic status in Nunavik. The research suggests that both school and community should increase the status of Inuttitut in order to reduce the negative sociolinguistic effect the divergence can have on the development of Inuit self-identity. Further research indicates the appearance of subtractive bilingualism among some Inuit children (Wright et al., 1996): that is, an increase in English ability is accompanied by a decrease in Inuttitut ability among these children. This may be related to the sociolinguistic status of English vis-à-vis that of Inuttitut. Similarly, Taylor, Wright, and Aitchison (1997) also report that subtractive bilingualism may exist in the schools of Nunavik. In addition, they suggest that a dichotomy may exist between the home and the school with respect to attitude toward language instruction. It appears that the sociolinguistic make up of the community located the responsibility for the education of English and French with the school and the responsibility for the education of Inuttitut in the home. Clearly these two locations should both play a role in the development of all languages. The study suggests that the sociolinguistic situation in the community may contribute to confusion in the self-identity of young Inuit. Bilingualism and biculturalism are thus not clear-cut outcomes of the bilingual education system in place in Nunavik.

Henze and Vannett (1993) caution against placing expectations too high with respect to biculturally focused education and its benefits to the individual. They speculate that the metaphor of walking in two worlds is too demanding for many students. Rains (1992) provides evidence that appears to substantiate Henze and Vannett's warning. In Rains' study, young Inuit continue to underachieve academically and drop out of school in one of the communities of Nunavik. It appears that becoming bicultural and bilingual does not necessarily guarantee success in school-based skills and knowledge for Inuit students. This finding resurfaces world-wide despite the implementation of compensatory programs aimed at reducing school failure (Cummins, 1986). This discrepancy in academic achievement is thus in need of further exploration and explanation.

Method

The research uses qualitative methods and analyses. The rationale for this choice of methods is the suitability and pertinence of the chosen methods to answer the research question stated above. As research in the theoretical framework is not widespread, the instruments and methods must largely be created or modified with this specific research project in mind. Thus a qualitative methodology that incorporates mixed qualitative methods is the most efficient way of obtaining useful results for the study. Brewer and Hunter (1989) state that the choice of mixed methodology (in this case mixed qualitative methods) enables the researcher to "attack the research problem with an arsenal of methods that have non-overlapping weaknesses in addition to their complementary strengths" (p. 17). Thus the methods outlined below complement each other and add to the strength of the research findings. This is echoed by Green (1989), who believes that a mixed methods approach makes use of the triangulation of research methods in order to obtain convergence in the research results.

The research comprises semistructured individual interviews and short-answer and Likert-scale questionnaires. This trio of qualitative methods is chosen for this study for the following reasons. The researcher's experience as a former employee of the Kativik School Board comprises a large part of the motivation to pursue this study. As such, the researcher's role becomes an interpretative one in which experience helps guide the research (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). In addition, Morse (1991) points to the appropriateness of qualitative research methods and data in cases where there is not a wealth of existing research on the topic, or where relevant theory may be incorrect or inaccurate. Given the lack of practical research concerning the conceptual framework and the research problem at hand, a triangulation of qualitative methods is appropriate here. Last, the triangulation of qualitative methods allows for a comprehensive view of the research data.

Results and Discussion

The guiding research question in this thesis explored the perceived role of non-Inuit teachers in affecting the education of Inuit students in Nunavik. More specifically, the research project tries to uncover the possible role(s) non-Inuit teachers may play in classroom and community interactions, and by extension what role(s) they may play in the educational outcomes of Inuit students. The theoretical framework locates the study in minority education literature and uses the Cum-

mins model as a theoretical starting point for the analysis of data. Poststructural theory, anti-racism theory, and critical theory and practice also situate the analysis of data for the study. The data suggest that non-Inuit teachers possess the potential to affect their Inuit students, both positively and negatively, by virtue of their roles in the classroom and in the community. Cummins' framework suggests that non-Inuit teachers can contribute to the education of their Inuit students both in terms of creating opportunities for empowerment and disabling through school and community experiences. However, the analyses suggest that non-Inuit teachers may most often affect their Inuit students in a less than empowering fashion. Perceived cultural dissonance between non-Inuit teachers and Inuit students appears to be one of the main contributors to this lack of opportunity for widespread empowerment of students in the classrooms of Nunavik, and possibly also to student disabling. The analyses suggest that this cultural dissonance occurs mainly unconsciously in non-Inuit teachers, at both the individual community and societal levels.

The issue of a predominantly non-Inuit teaching force responsible for the classroom education of Inuit youth in Nunavik is central to this study. Short of a majority or entirely Inuit teaching force, which is not a realistic goal over the short term, non-Inuit teachers will continue to educate Inuit youth well into the next decades. It is safe to assume, based on the self-reported data and analyses, that the conscious intentions of the non-Inuit teachers while in Nunavik are centered on the success of their Inuit students. Yet mainstream culture may still permeate the thoughts and actions of non-Inuit teachers as well as their teaching style and curricula.

The ideology and values of mainstream culture are often reported as being at odds with the culture and values of the Inuit. For example, one former teacher, Roxanne (pseudonyms are used throughout), mentions certain cultural practices such as hunting and fishing that contributed to the rate of absenteeism in her former classrooms. And another interviewee, Bonnie, verbalizes this concern quite succinctly:

It is because you know ... their philosophy is very different ... I mean because I got to know my students quite well when they were not in school I would call. I would say hey where is Jeffrey? And they would answer and there was nothing wrong with what they answered for them ... they would say he is sleeping. So, your next sentence is are you going to wake him up? No, when is he going to come to school? When he wakes up. So you see their thing is that nature and everything played a big role so it was like he is sleeping and I am not going to wake him up and when he wakes up he will go to school.

She suggests that the problem lay with the values of the two cultures assigning different levels of importance to the Inuit cultural practices versus the value of education.

Interactions between non-Inuit teachers and Inuit students thus appear to occur within the confines of relationships rife with cultural dissonance. For example, two of the respondents characterize their view of the divergent expectations between the Inuit communities and the non-Inuit teachers as a definite clash between two cultures. For example, Python questions the role of the teacher in

Inuit society. He suggests that the system of education prevalent in the South and transported to the North may not be ideal for the culture in which it finds itself.

Because I don't think the Inuit culture is really one where you have ... some jackass standing in front proselytizing about the way things are you know? It's ... so alien or foreign to Inuit culture which would be for everyone in the group to sit around and talk about whatever ... or hunting or something per se ... you know ... Oh I felt like an alien when I was there, it was like I was dealing with a very, very difficult situation.

He believes that in order to be successful in teaching in the North, one must not try to force himself on the students, but rather follow the mood of the students as they "don't give a hoot who you are ... you have got to follow them more, you know." Similarly and more succinctly, Eric also places the topic of cultural clash as central to his time in the North. He states that he went to the North with the intention of adapting to Inuit culture and not expecting the culture to adapt to him. Yet he suggests that it is impossible to fully remove one's principles and ideals and thus he appears to have encountered difficulties as a result:

There were two discourses ... and two discourses that were very different from one another. First, there was the discourse coming from the School Board that ... that said we had to teach the same curriculum to the students in the North with the same materials used in the South. And then there is the other discourse ... that is more realistic in the community ... that says we should teach our curriculum ... until Easter, because it is not certain that we will have any students in our class after Easter.

He goes on to state that it was impossible to accomplish the delivery of the curriculum in such a short time frame. He also suggests that too many students are placed in inappropriate grade levels and thus do not possess the academic skills necessary to complete the programs of study with any success. In his opinion, this only exacerbates the problem of student achievement, and he suggests that there is a direct link to the clash between cultures at the root of the issue.

Teacher-student relations in Nunavik are perhaps predisposed to difficulties as a result of the cultural dissonance suggested in this study. Community-school relations also appear to be working at cross-currents to each other, and this again appears to be related to misunderstanding and mistrust between the non-Inuit teachers and Inuit communities. For example, a common feeling among the respondents is that the parents were not much involved in the education of their children, and nor was the community at large. Fred comments as follows.

I think ... if parents were ... *involved* ... *participated* ... more ... asked more questions. Our only contact was like once a year when they came to visit the school. I must say also that there was and there is ... a language barrier at the time. Where you had to have a translator whenever you met a parent ... so ... I do not know how an Inuit teacher might respond to you on this question ... what their take would be on this. But, from my point of view, from what I have seen ... I did not find too much parental involvement.

Eric echoes this statement:

It was not the same thing ... it is not the parents' role ... maybe not role but the participation of the parents with respect to the education of the students is completely different than what we experience here in the south. It is completely different.

The responses indicate that there were those parents who were interested about the education of their children, but the suggestion is that this interest level did not translate into an active role in the school. The respondents appear to have confused this lack of direct parental involvement as lack of interest on the part of Inuit parents. Another contributing factor to community-school relations appears to be a possible mistrust of the school proper on the part of Inuit community members, a result of historical subjugation and its associated colonial practices. But the role of non-Inuit teachers and the mainstream ideology(ies) they carry to the North with them are also important elements in the equation as seen above.

So the non-Inuit teachers find themselves confronted with the mysteries of a new culture in which they are most probably represented as the minority in any given community for the first time in their lives. The struggles they undertake to adjust and to accomplish a demanding professional obligation all the while probably affects the conscious and unconscious state of the teachers quite heavily. And it is this effect, bathed in a perceived sense of cultural dissonance between mainstream culture and Inuit culture, that seems to contribute to the educational disabling of Inuit students on a scale that is difficult to determine.

Limitations

The limitations associated with this research are twofold in scope. First, some of the limitations of the study are associated with the exploratory nature of research in the field of Inuit education. The literature about the role of the teacher in providing educational success to Inuit students in Nunavik is limited. Therefore, the study relies on existing literature about Northern education as well as Aboriginal and minority education. This research depended partly on earlier literature in the field as a basis to develop instruments that act as starting points for more specific research in the field. These instruments may not have elucidated access to all of the relevant experiences of the respondents. The study employed a theoretical framework that addressed the larger field of minority education, but this does not necessarily respond to the particularities of Inuit culture as it exists in Nunavik. As a result, the theoretical framework presented in this study may weaken the results by focusing too heavily on one body of literature. Second, certain limitations also exist in the design of the study. For example, the choice of only former and not current Kativik teachers for inclusion in the study may have skewed the findings by virtue of possible selective memory or reconstruction of events on the part of the former teachers. In addition, interviews with current Inuit teachers and students could also have supplemented the data and provided for an alternative view regarding the role of the non-Inuit teacher and the cultural reference points section as a whole. These choices were based in the necessity of circumstance rather than the preference of the researcher, but they leave the findings with a certain margin of error that could otherwise have been reduced. However, the findings remain relevant as a starting point for future research in the field as they provide a higher level of focus than currently exists regarding the issues surrounding the role of the non-Inuit teacher in educating Inuit youth in Nunavik.

Conclusion

It is difficult to suggest what, if any, changes can be made to reduce the potentially negative effect non-Inuit teachers may have on their Inuit students. Perhaps more elaborate cross-cultural training, training in Inuit pedagogy, mentoring of non-Inuit teachers by Inuit teachers, and Inuttit language and culture classes for non-Inuit teachers could help reduce cultural dissonance in the non-Inuit teaching force. Cultural dissonance on its own is not a negative entity. It is rather the process of coping and coming to terms with cultural dissonance that appears to affect the interactions between non-Inuit teachers and their students and host communities. Should an effort be made to present cultural dissonance as a learning opportunity implicit in the teaching experience in Nunavik, a more positive effect may result. Further research in the area is required to determine concrete actions for the reduction or redefinition of cultural dissonance among non-Inuit teachers in Nunavik.

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