1-1-2008

# Multicultural Education from the Private Sphere: Growing Up Filipino-Canadian in a Third-Tier City School

Jennilee Austria
*Ryerson University*

# MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FROM THE PRIVATE SPHERE: GROWING UP FILIPINO-CANADIAN IN A THIRD-TIER CITY SCHOOL

by

Jennilee Austria,
BA, Trent University, 2007

A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2008

## Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this Major Research Paper.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this paper to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

_____

Signature

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this paper by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

_____

Signature

# MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FROM THE PRIVATE SPHERE: GROWING UP FILIPINO-CANADIAN IN A THIRD-TIER CITY SCHOOL



Master of Arts
Immigration and Settlement Studies
Ryerson University

## Abstract

This Major Research Paper is a call for multicultural education in areas that are not perceived to be ethnically diverse. Through my elementary school artwork, journals and notes from St. Therese Roman Catholic School from 1987 to 1997 in Sarnia, Ontario, I suggest that even in classrooms with few racialized minorities, there is still a need for a culturally-responsive curriculum to teach all students about transnationalism and cultural awareness. Using the terms "public sphere" and "private sphere" to denote the borders of school and home, I emphasize the unification of these spheres to enrich the curriculum. With autobiographical methodology and reconstructed memory, I seek to create meanings in my experiences as a second-generation Filipino-Canadian in a third-tier city school to shed light on the issues facing minority children in the school system, and to provide practical approaches to bringing multicultural education beyond Canada's first-tier cities.

**Key Words:**

Multicultural Education, Culturally-Responsive Curriculum, Transnational Identity, Self-Awareness, Autobiographical Methodology

## Acknowledgements

First off, I would like to go back to my study-abroad semester at Western Washington University, where Professor Maria Chavez first introduced me to the possibilities of multicultural education. I have never thought about school or my childhood the same way since then, and I would like to thank her for that.

Furthermore, thank you to my parents, Domingo Jr. and Jasmin Austria, who made this topic possible by meticulously archiving my elementary school journals, projects, and artwork. For your encouragement and support of my many, many adventures to get to this point, maraming salamat.

Moreover, I would like to thank my second family at Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada, the Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance. Thank you for filling in the blanks—both in my own self-awareness and in this research. I am proud to put this finished piece on the shelves of the Magkaisa Centre. Sulong!

Most importantly, I remain indebted to my second reader, Professor Mehrunissa Ali, for her encouraging comments, and to Professor Vappu Tyyskä,
who meant it when she promised during our first meeting, “I will not let you down; I will not let you fall through the cracks.” Vappu, you have been the best supervisor I could have asked for. Thank you for taking me on!

Lastly, I would like to thank the students, past and present, at St. Therese Roman Catholic School in Sarnia, Ontario. They are my inspiration for this work.

## Table of Contents


| Section | Page |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Autobiographical Methodology | 5 |
| The Importance of Elementary School in Socialization | 7 |
| Part One: Spotlight on Second and Third-Tier Cities: Historical Analyses | 9 |
| Existing Literature on Filipino-Canadians in Second and Third-Tier Cities | 12 |
| Statistics on the Immigrant Presence in Sarnia | 14 |
| Presence of Immigrants in Sarnia's History | 15 |
| The Filipino-Canadian Community in Sarnia | 21 |
| Part Two: Identity in the Curriculum: Experiences and Recommendations | 23 |
| Responding to Identity: Belonging and Racism | 25 |
| Responding to Transnational Identity: The Transnational Self-Portrait Project | 28 |
| Teaching Recommendations: The Transnational Self-Portrait Project | 30 |
| Integrating The Private Sphere Into The Curriculum | 33 |
| Teaching Recommendations: Putting the Private Sphere in Show and Tell | 35 |
| Filipino-Canadian Identity: Writing Myself Out of My Own Stories | 37 |
| Teaching Recommendation: Starring in Multicultural Story-Writing | 39 |
| Identity Is for Everyone: Putting the "Our" Into Our Heritage | 41 |
| Teaching Recommendations: The Internet as a Tool to Create Our Heritage | 44 |
| Making Identity Mainstream: Canadian Immigration History | 46 |
| Teaching Recommendations: An Internet Scavenger Hunt For Local History | 48 |
| Conclusion | 50 |

Content | Page

## List of Tables

**Table One**
Sarnia's Visible Minority Population 14

**Table Two**
Generation Status in Sarnia 15

## List of Appendices

**Appendix One**
Kindergarten Self-Portrait 8

**Appendix Two**
Story Assignment, Tagalog Alien 12

**Appendix Three**
Uniqueness Wheel 23

**Appendix Four**
Journal Entry, Different 25

**Appendix Five**
Journal Entry, Someday 29

**Appendix Six**
Speech, Family in the Philippines 33

**Appendix Seven**
Story Cover-Page, Christmas Wishes 38

**Appendix Eight**
World Map, Heritage Roots 42

**Appendix Nine**
Writing Assignment, Samuel de Champlain 46

## References 66

It is an autumn morning at St. Therese Roman Catholic School. Located in the heart of the city, within walking and busing distance for middle-income students, the school's classrooms hold about thirty students each, and the levels go from kindergarten to the eighth grade.

Today, the fifth grade classroom is buzzing with excitement because Miss P. has announced a new project: presenting last names to the class and drawing banners to illustrate them! She is tall, pale, and has fuzzy brown hair, and goes around the classroom, feeding off of the excitement, passing out markers and papers.

"Mr. Archer! I'll bet that you have your name because your ancestors used bows and arrows!"

Shaun glows with pride.

"Mr. Brydges! Guess what your ancestors used to build! Bridges!"

Sean laughs and smiles.

Miss P. stops at a desk in the centre of the room and furrows her brow. "Ms. Austria… I can't imagine how you got your name from a European country! Now, where are you *really* from?"

The girl hates being singled out. Absolutely hates it. "My parents are from the Philippines," she replies, suddenly realizing that this is the first time that she has ever said it aloud. Her shyness falls away and she smiles proudly. "We're Filipino."

"From the Philippines!" Miss P. exclaims loudly. She cocks an eyebrow and asks, "Jennilee, did your parents leave the Philippines because they were fleeing the Marcos dictatorship?"

The girl is stunned. 'Who's Marcos? What's a dictatorship?' she thinks, her mind reeling. Her parents had told her that they came to Canada for an adventure. Unable to answer the teacher's question, she feels the brief moment of pride fall aside and become a question of authenticity. She lowers her head.

This is one of the only times that she will ever hear "Philippines" spoken aloud in elementary school. At ten years old, she wonders if she missed her chance. And at twenty-five years old, she realizes this: there should have been more chances.

# Introduction

In the era of the "global village," it is imperative for schools to consider the multiple perspectives of their diverse student population. With Canada's current goal to attract more newcomers to second and third-tier cities, the needs of their children, whether they are first or second-generation transnational Canadians, should be at the forefront of the discussions of multicultural education. For who is more in need of culturally responsive curriculum than

students who are truly minorities, who see little or no representation of their ethnic groups in local history, mainstream media, or in the school's faculty? There is an urgent need for curriculum that is culturally responsive, anti-bias, and features lessons on transnationalism and identities.

For this MRP, I have adopted the terms "public sphere" and "private sphere" from the Women's Studies discourse and applied it as a call for multicultural education. Meant to describe the dichotomy of women's paid labour in the workforce and their unpaid domestic labour in the home, the terms connect to similar themes of representation and marginalization that arise when looking at racialized minority children in an educational system that does not represent their transnational identities by representing their private spheres of home in the public sphere of school. For when children who are racialized minorities do not see their transnational identities reflected in the curriculum, they are forced to cross the borders from the private sphere of their homelife to the public sphere of school, and to adapt and succeed, they are expected to leave their "cultural baggage" of their multiple dimensions of race and ethnicity behind.

For children who grow up as minorities in their public sphere environments, cultural heritage is not something with which we can interact on a regular basis. While most immigrants flock to the three "capitals of immigrant Canada" (Krahn, Derwing, and Abu-Laban 2003: 1), the reality is that a significant number of immigrants and racialized minorities are present in second and third-tier cities, and that their numbers are increasing (Frideres 2006: 5). Whether the children in educational institutions are foreign-born first-generation or Canadian-born (or even locally-born) second-generation, as racialized minorities in these predominantly Caucasian third-tier cities, they often share the experience of growing up caught between two or more cultures.

As Chin stated in *Subversive Obedience*, when children grow up as minorities, they run the risk of their homelands mainly being "a landscape of the imagination," and being of a certain heritage was "something we were told about more than experienced" (Chin in Wexler 2000). As a Filipino-Canadian growing up in a third-tier city, this was also my experience. The “home” that my parents romanticized in anecdotes to their friends was the main representation of “home” that I had in the landscape of my imagination.

At eight years old, after I visited the Philippines for the first time, I remember returning to Sarnia bubbling with stories about the experience which finally validated my identity as a transnational child; however, after finding few opportunities to bring this empowering, private-sphere experience into the public sphere, I withdrew into myself. In other words, the topic of a "home" which differed from my peers’ "home" never entered the public sphere of my educational experience in a positive way, as is evident from my opening story. As children who are minorities not only in their cities, but in their classrooms as well, talking about heritage can be frustrating. This is why it is worthwhile for students to be able to navigate, evaluate, and share one's transnationalism in the classroom.

However, to obtain transnational identity, an individual's view of his or her authenticity must be considered. As Taylor states in Moses' *Embracing Race: Why We Need Race-Conscious Education Policy*, "one's authenticity stems from the inside, from inner reflections upon one's personal identity," and secondly, it stems "from one's relations with others… [and] the public's recognition of one's worth is a key component" (Taylor in Moses 2002: 26). In other words, personal reflection needs to be coupled with public recognition in order for an identity to flourish.

Moreover, as Taylor writes, authenticity is often determined by physical appearance, birthplace, mother tongue, upbringing, culinary preferences, fashion and mannerisms

(Taylor in Moses 2002: 26). When one does not have all of these components lined up for all to see, he or she can be perceived as "Other"—both by the dominant group, and by his or her own racialized group. Thus, how can children growing up in third-tier cities be encouraged to build an "authentic" transnational character? How can their identities as racialized minorities be considered, thereby allowing their "homes" to be experienced beyond a "landscape of the imagination" (Chin in Wexler 2000)? And more specifically, how can an elementary curriculum emphasize cultural self-awareness in a Caucasian-dominant, third-tier classroom, without alienating the majority?

I was inspired to write about this topic during the summer spent in Sarnia, when I was helping my mother move out of our house. While packing up the house in the third-tier city that had been my family's home for thirty-three years, I came across meticulously saved work from my elementary school years. As a Filipino-Canadian female, born and raised in Sarnia, Ontario, I attended St. Therese Roman Catholic School from junior kindergarten until the eighth grade. In my classrooms, which had about thirty students, there were generally a maximum of four ethnic minorities, of whom I was always the only Filipino-Canadian. The journals, school assignments, and artwork that my parents had saved allowed me to study an entire decade of these educational experiences that spanned the late 1980's to late 1990's for this MRP. In these boxes, I found the key to my childhood, to my educational experiences in Sarnia, and to my inspiration for this work.

The purpose of this MRP is to explore the importance of multicultural education in the elementary school curriculum in Caucasian-dominant second and third-tier cities. In locales which are not perceived to be diverse, where immigrants are written out of the local history and subjected to the “glass ceiling” in their employment, and where cultural groups have to create their own historical literature, children must grow up crossing private and

public-sphere borders every day. Thus, this work also suggests practical teaching recommendations for projects, artwork, and assignments, which will support both the transnational identities of immigrant children and improve the self-awareness of Caucasian children without a specific ethnic heritage.

## Autobiographical Methodology

I chose autobiographical methodology as a way to make this MRP more readable for the audience outside postgraduate academia. As Wilson and Oberg (2002) write in “Side by Side: Being in Research Autobiographically,” their inspiration for using this approach was to produce a “lively engagement” with the readers. In my approach to this work, I I wanted my stories to be easy to read and relate to, I wanted my analysis to be easy to understand, and I wanted to have curriculum recommendations that are easy to implement. A lively engagement, indeed!

The autobiographical approach was necessary not only for its stylistic approach, but also because of the lack of existing literature that was specific to my topic. As Tenni, Smyth and Boucher (2003) write, “[t]he choice to use autobiographical data is often driven by the questions the researcher is asking”; thus, in trying to connect the second and third-tier cities’ goal to attract immigrants and the consequent challenges that their children would face in the Caucasian-dominant educational system, I needed to break new territory and to use myself as a primary reference.

As the narrator and subject of my MRP, I am writing stories, which are meant to serve as a jumping-point for academic research and teaching recommendations. This is effective because, as Wilson and Oberg state (2002), the ground of autobiographical narratives “is their claim to truthfulness.” Therefore, by using my own stories as inspiration

for the academic call for multicultural education and to fill a gap in literature on second and third-tier cities, this methodology "orients itself, even propels itself, towards a public light of day, but so as to reconstitute public space differently" (Wilson and Oberg 2002). To unite the public and private spheres and in exploring a new dimension of multicultural education, autobiographical methodology was the most honest, authentic, and relevant approach that I could have asked for.

However, autobiographical methodology has its limitations. In using my personal experiences as my primary research, I focus predominantly on recommendations for the environment that I grew up in. Thus, in this MRP, I do not touch on bilingual education, first-generation culture shock or Native issues; moreover, as a student from Catholic school, issues of religious diversity are also exempt from my analysis. These are all topics which have been predominant in other works on multicultural education, such as Sonia Nieto's 2002 book, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education.* However, because these issues were not part of my experience in my specific third-tier city, my specific Catholic elementary school, and my specific classroom environment, this is a major limitation in this methodology.

Lastly, the credibility of my memories is another potential weakness. As I reconstruct my memories and relate my childhood experiences with the literature that I am reading today, I realize that I run the risk of creating something which relates to the literature, but which is not genuine. To ensure that every story was as authentic as possible, I tried to balance my personal reflections with scanned copies of my elementary school journals, projects, and artwork, and I hope that the readers will peruse these in the appendices. Situating myself as a Filipino-Canadian female growing up in Sarnia, Ontario in the late 1980's to late 1990's, I aim to provide a valuable voice in multicultural education literature,

and I hope that my childhood experiences can reach a variety of educators, students, and citizens of second and third-tier cities who are outside of academic circles.

## The Importance of the Elementary School in Socialization

When I used to look back on my childhood in Sarnia, I would always wax rhetoric, dreamily emphasizing that it was a completely positive experience. “I never knew I was different!” I would say. “I blended in and nobody ever pointed me out!” I remembered a childhood that never made me feel like the minority girl in the room. I had Caucasian friends, I was active in piano, swimming, and skating lessons, and I even went to Italian school on Saturdays. I remembered blending in and becoming the master of my own domain—characteristics which seemed to mean that I had a positive childhood, a positive third-tier city experience, and a positive school experience—particularly during my formative elementary school years, when my public-sphere socialization began.

As King, Chipman and Cruz-Janzen state, socialization is the “dynamic process that brings human beings into the human group, causing an individual to internalize the ways of the culture and to accept and affirm the values, traditions, folkways, mores, and attitudes of the broader society” (1994: 36). Thus, socialization begins when an individual learns the ways of the group with which he or she must interact, and represents a time in early childhood when children begin a life’s journey of learning about the “human group he or she was born into” (King, Chipman and Cruz-Janzen 1994: 13). Looking back at my childhood with a cursory glance, I would state that my socialization process began in an extremely positive manner, because the instances when I would feel as if I was in a different group than my peers were at a minimum.

However, how positive could a childhood experience have been, considering that I

was a Filipino-Canadian kindergartener in Sarnia, Ontario, who drew herself as a blonde for most of the year? (See Appendix One.) Twenty years later, I look at a year's worth of my five-year-old drawings, and I see a child whose renderings of her physical appearance were interchangeable with those of her Caucasian classmates. What was I trying to hide? Who was I trying to fool? Who did I think I was?

It is incidents like these which call for a system that values a student's cultural background. Looking back, I remember being so happy in school. I was always among the top students in the school, I was well-liked, and my work was always highly praised by my teachers. However, there was a problem. I was being socialized in the same way that the other students were. As Jim Cummins from the University of Toronto states in the foreword of Nieto's *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*, "In view of the fact that cross-cultural contact is the norm both domestically and internationally, it seems obvious that schools should prepare students to function effectively in a multicultural global society" (Cummins in Nieto 2004: xv). To obtain the ability to "function effectively," it is important for teachers to encourage children to be proud of their ethnic heritage. An immigrant identity, a second-generation identity, a mixed identity, and more—all of these should be honoured in the classroom. If a student's identity and self-awareness is not part of his or her learning, then, quite simply, there is something lacking in the curriculum.

The school is often a child's first step into socialization. Thus, even in third-tier cities, the message, "We Value Transnationalism" could make a world of difference. The educational system has a responsibility to represent its students; therefore, in the era of the "global village," there is an urgent need for schools to look at the multiple perspectives of their students (Cummins in Nieto 2004: xv). And as preparation for the global village that exists outside of the third-tier city, multicultural education is of the utmost importance.

# Part One

## Spotlight on Second and Third-Tier Cities: Historical Analyses

This MRP is timely because of Canada's current goal to attract newcomers to cities outside of the three "capitals of immigrant Canada" (Krahn, Derwing, and Abu-Laban 2003: 1). For instance, as Frideres states in his 2006 Metropolis article, "Cities and Immigrant Integration: The Future of Second- and Third-Tier Centres," Canada's provincial and municipal governments have been creating "topic-specific" policies to attract newcomers to second and third-tier cities, which will facilitate immigrants' integration and which will differ from the more homogenous strategies developed by first-tier cities (2006: 3). Using the provincial nominee techniques outlined by the "Attracting and Retaining Immigrants: A Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres" report of the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies and supported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, small cities are providing applied strategies for government, NGOs and private sector stakeholders to attract immigrants (Frideres 2006: 7). Along with site-specific strategies, municipalities are also promoting the findings that newcomers will enjoy less overcrowding, faster integration, and a lower rate of unemployment and job competition (Frideres 2006: 6). Moreover, municipalities are emphasizing that the economic gap between recent immigrants and the Canadian-born is smallest in second and third-tier cities (Frideres 2006: 6), and that incomes are highest outside of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, with immigrant incomes often exceeding those of the Canadian-born (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2005). In short, the message is that in a place where the newcomer population is comparatively smaller than the Canadian-born population, there is greater opportunity to succeed.

The regionalization of immigration is an important trend in terms of revitalizing the second and third-tier cities. The goals range from helping immigrants to gain employment, to overcome the income gap between their earnings and those of the Canadian-born, and to facilitate their integration in Canadian society (Frideres 2006: 6). According to Frideres, nearly two-thirds of immigrants and over three-quarters of all recent immigrants live in Canada's three first-tier cities: Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (2006: 3). To depict the growing multiculturalism outside of the first-tier cities, Frideres states that over 15 percent of immigrants to second-tier cities are from Eastern Europe, Western Asia, and the Middle East and 18 percent of immigrants to the areas are from Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and 10 percent of Southeast Asians move to third-tier cities (Frideres 2006: 5). Frideres states that there are an increasing number of recent immigrants choosing to settle in second or third-tier cities, and it is evident that they are not only from Western Europe.

Many second and third-tier cities may lament the lack of ethnic diversity. For instance, in a February 2008 *Observer* article, Sarnia Councilor Anne Marie Gillis compared Sarnia to Windsor, a second-tier city with a "large ethnic community that draws people" (The Observer 2008, Feb. 14) by stating that the Sarnia-Lambton region is "currently at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting immigrants because it doesn't have a large ethnic population to act as a magnet," (The Observer 2008, Feb. 14). The solution for this lack of competitiveness with other cities was to create a website to attract newcomers, doctors, and highly-skilled workers (The Observer 2008, Feb. 14), the results of which are still forthcoming.

However, as identified by Davis, there is certainly a prevalence of race which already exists in certain locales, even without a heavy representation of diversity. Racialized minorities can be seen doing service work under Caucasians, Caucasians dominate the

entire city rather than entire neighbourhoods, and the representation of Caucasians dominates the city's media (Davis 2006: 57). Davis states that as a Caucasian woman herself, when looking at her daily routine and the prevalence of her racial group, "I am reinforced throughout my day that my culture is in charge, correct, and successful" (2006: 57).

In charge, correct, successful. As a Filipino-Canadian growing up in Sarnia, I had little reason to connect my ethnic group to any of those adjectives. The Filipino women that I saw were four things: homemakers, nannies, cleaners, and medical support workers. The Filipino men were gainfully employed in the Chemical Valley, but there was little opportunity for promotion. As a consequence to the lessons that I was socialized to learn in my private sphere, I may have been the only student in my elementary school classes who knew about the "glass ceiling," and who felt that her entire ethnic group was underemployed, underpaid, and overworked. Perhaps, as a result of this, I felt embarrassed by my ethnic identity. Nowhere is this more evident than in my fifth-grade journal, when I introduce my knowledge of Tagalog, one of the Philippine languages, through the garbled speech of an alien (see Appendix Two for copy of full entry). With "bloop blop gurgles" surrounding his use of garbled Tagalog, it is disheartening to me that this is the only way that I showed my knowledge of another language. Cultural baggage from my private sphere to my public sphere was expressed through the ultimate foreigner with "200 legs, 1 arm, 50 heads and 74909,1065 eyeballs"—something which is truly alarming in its indicativeness of how I subconsciously could have seen my Filipino identity.

Like the majority of racialized immigrant groups in the area, my ethnic group was invisible in Sarnia's history, news, and curriculum. Therefore, I was in dire need of encouragement in the public sphere to be proud of being transnational. I carried cultural

baggage with me into the public sphere every day, and even though my classrooms were Caucasian-dominant by a ratio of three or four racialized minorities to thirty students, I strongly believe that lessons in transnationalism and identity would have been valuable to share and explore in the classroom for all students, regardless of cultural background.

## Existing Literature on Filipino-Canadians in Second and Third-Tier Cities

Although my family took many daytrips, weekend-trips, and summer trips out of the Sarnia area, my elementary-school journals always contained the details of a specific trip which often happened three or four times a year: the trip to Toronto to see our extended family. I remember playing with these cousins, godsisters and godbrothers, and I can recall that they would make fun of the Caucasian friends that my sister and I spoke about in the Sarnia accents that were free of the urban slang that our extended family used. In other words, we were "whitewashed," in both our third-tier friends and in our language. With our Sarnia-bred vernacular more prone to academic English than colourful urban GTA slang, and with our comfort around Caucasians, my sister and I received the message that we were a different breed of "Filipino-Canadian."

However, we were not the only members of this different breed. Surprisingly, there is some existing literature on Filipino-Canadians outside of the three "capitals of immigrant Canada" (Krahn, Derwing, and Abu-Laban 2003: 1). As detailed by Anita Beltran Chen in her "Filipinos" section of the 1999 *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, the following is a list of existing literature on the Filipino-Canadian diaspora in second and third-tier cities.

In 1993, Ruben J. Cusipag and Maria Corazon Buenafe produced *Portrait of Filipino Canadians in Ontario, 1960-1990*, which focuses on Filipino second-tier settlement in Windsor and Ottawa. Moreover, in Anita Beltran Chen's 1998 book, *From Sunbelt to*

*Snowbelt: Filipinos in Canada*, a northwestern Ontario locale is the topic of study in her chapter, "Kinship System and Chain Migration: Filipinos in Thunder Bay." A 1972 University of Manitoba MA thesis by Cleto Buduhan titled "An Urban Village: The Effects of Migration on the Filipino Garment Workers in a Canadian City" explores the experiences of Filipino factory workers in Winnipeg. Lastly, *Tropical Islanders in the Atlantic: A Study of Filipino Experiences in Newfoundland* by Romulo F. Magsino provides valuable insight beyond a single city experience, and tackles the Filipino diaspora's experience throughout the Maritime province (Chen 1999: 512). Windsor, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, and Newfoundland—academic work on all of these locales was groundbreaking for the Filipino-Canadian diaspora outside of the nation's first-tier cities.

Thus, in terms of the two Filipino-Canadian sisters from Sarnia visiting their cousins in the GTA, there was certainly a need for some reassurance that we were not the only ones who did not fit in. For while my family went to Toronto to visit relatives and to fill the trunk to the brim with Asian groceries to last us until the next visit, we were also going to Toronto to feel some semblance of belonging to the Filipino-Canadian diaspora. My sister and I were teased for being the "whitewashed" cousins when we were in the private sphere of the extended family, but as racialized minorities, we stood out in the public sphere of school. In short, this was a confusing way to grow up. What was our identity? Were we authentic? Where did we fit in?

## Statistics on the Immigrant Presence in Sarnia

With the legacies of the existing literature in mind, this MRP will bring another third-tier city to the forefront: Sarnia, Ontario. To get a sense of the city's representation of racialized minorities, a study of its demographics is key. In the latest census, the city

population hovered at 71,419 inhabitants (Statistics Canada 2006). Table One shows the Statistics Canada's 2006 findings according to the city's demographics of self-identified visible minorities:

**Table One: Sarnia's Visible Minority Population**

| **Total Population** | **70, 335** |
|---|---|
| Total Visible Minority Population | 2885 |
| Chinese | 555 |
| South Asian | 790 |
| Black | 530 |
| Filipino | 230 |
| Latin American | 235 |
| Southeast Asian | 100 |
| Arab | 165 |
| West Asian | 10 |
| Korean | 35 |
| Japanese | 45 |
| Visible Minority, N.I.E. | 40 |
| Multiple Visible Minority | 155 |

(Statistics Canada 2006.)

**Table Two: Generation Demographics in Sarnia**

| Total Population 15 Years and Over | 58, 960 |
|---|---|
| 1st Generation | 9975 |
| 2nd Generation | 10, 855 |
| 3rd Generation or More | 38, 125 |

(Statistics Canada 2006.)

From Table One, we see that there are 2885 self-identified visible minorities in Sarnia, which means about 4 percent of the population; furthermore, from Table Two, it is evident that while a small population of Sarnia is comprised of visible minorities, and while long-standing third-generation Sarnians are in the majority, the 20,830 first and second-

generation youth cannot be ignored, no matter what their ethnic background happens to be. Thus, even though the racialized minorities may be dispersed, leaving three or four in each thirty-student classroom, there is still a need for the curriculum to encourage their self-awareness in the Caucasian-dominant third-tier city. To further delve into this issue, I considered the treatment that visible minorities and immigrants have received in Sarnia's history, to connect the level of their presence in the historical literature with their presence in school assignments, projects, and lessons.

## Presence of Immigrants in Sarnia's History

One of the foremost contributors to Sarnia's historical records has been Glen Phillips, a Sarnia native and former president of the Sarnia Historical Society, with a BA and MA in history from the University of Western Ontario. He produced three books about of Sarnia's early history: his 1990 *Sarnia: A Picture History of the Imperial City*, his 1992 *Sarnia: More Picture History*, and his 1999 *Lambton: An Illustrated History of the County*. His trilogy of photographic histories is hailed as some of Sarnia's most valuable historical records.

The beginning of Sarnia's immigrant history goes back to a 1829-30 survey party which discovered that a European settlement had been established in Sarnia since 1790 of French-Canadians who "squatted on land rented from the Chippewas" (Phillips 1992: 7). Although the settlement was devoid of leaders, laws, schools, taxes, doctors, markets, and more, these settlers established a long-standing Caucasian presence in this frontier village that they called Les Chutes, or The Rapids (Phillips 1992: 7).

In 1836, Richard Emeric Vidal, George Durand, and Malcolm Cameron conducted the first township meeting, and in a "classic battle of personalities," they set about to re-

name “The Rapids” (Phillips 1990: 32). According to Phillips, Quebec-born Cameron (Phillips 1990: 32) and the Scottish immigrants lobbied for “Glasgow”; Vidal and his family favoured “Buenos Ayres” as a tribute to their distant Spanish roots, and Durand and the majority of the English wanted “Port Sarnia,” to be named after Sarnia Township, which was named as a tribute to the Roman word of Celtic origin for the Island of Guernsey (Phillips 1999: 23) that had been the former home of Sir John Colborne, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada (Phillip 1999: 19). From this historic battle of the Scottish, Spanish, and British over the locale’s name, one can see the city’s representation of immigrant personalities, even in the Caucasian-dominant environment typical of Canadian cities in the 1830’s—thus setting the historical tone for Frideres’ contemporary claim that if we look at the settlement pattern of recent immigrants, those who are from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Western Europe also tend to reside in second and third-tier cities and/or smaller towns and rural areas (Frideres 2006: 4). In short, chain migration led to the forming of ethnic enclaves of certain immigrants, demarcating from an early stage who was included, who was excluded, and who had power over others.

After over one hundred years of Sarnia’s official existence, the major immigrant-drawing factor to the area was the Chemical Valley. In 1942, Polymer Limited (renamed Polysar, Nova, and presently called Bayer) (Phillips 1999: 85) was established to provide synthetic rubber for the Allies in WWII, and the venture was widely successful. Drawn by this opportunity for profit, Dow, Imperial Oil, and other petrochemical giants were soon lured to the area in the 1950s and 1960s (Phillips 1999: 85). Soon afterwards, Shell Oil, Sun Oil (Suncor), and Cabot Carbon, along with dozens of support companies, followed suit and established themselves in the same area, thus creating the Chemical Valley (Phillips 1992: 18). Prior to Polymer’s founding, Sarnia’s population was 18,734; nine years after its

founding, the population had mushroomed to 34, 697, and ten years later, to 50, 976 (Phillips 1992: 18). This population explosion shows the effects of Sarnia's emergence as "Canada's petrochemical capital in the late 1940s and early 1950s" (Phillips 1990: 9). The city's success in the chemical industry attracted thousands from overseas, establishing Sarnia as a significant immigrant destination.

However, Phillips' historical account of Sarnia's history, through both his text and his chosen photos in his three books, does not serve to honour the economic contributions of non-Caucasian immigrants. In what is his most interesting contrast of wanted and unwanted immigrants, Phillips' 1990 book shows a 1900 photo of Chinese immigrants passing through Sarnia from the American west-coast to Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax through the Sarnia Tunnel Station (Phillips 1990: 30). Phillips writes of the Chinese, "Few of them chose to remain in Sarnia… Instead, they preferred to settle in already established Chinese communities in the larger centres east of Sarnia. The wooden building that this group is shuffling into was referred to as 'the immigration shed'" (Phillips 1990: 30). This brief description depicts the Chinese as a group only willing to live in ethnic enclaves, without acknowledging the intense racism that they faced in the Eurocentric culture of the 1900's. Without recognizing that these "shuffling" immigrants were passing through Sarnia en route to existing Chinese communities because they were widely unwanted during this time, Phillips dishonours racialized minorities in his only reference to them.

This mention of the "shuffling" Chinese immigrants greatly contrasts to his 1992 book's glowing mention of the Icelandic immigrants who were also using Sarnia's port as a mere checkpoint. The Icelandic newcomers passed through Point Edward via the Grand Trunk Railway en route to Western Canada (Phillips 1999: 92). In this instance, Phillips declares that the Icelandic settlers "were another fascinating group" as he writes admiringly,

“Bound for a new life on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, they established the town of Gimli, Manitoba shortly after this illustration was first published” (Phillips 1999: 92). Thus, while the Chinese “shuffled” through the city en route to Chinese enclaves in Canada, the Icelandic immigrants were “fascinating” and were off to create their own enclave. Although both were immigrant groups, and both had no intention of settling in Sarnia, Phillips creates an obvious contrast between Caucasians and the Other, between privileged and unprivileged, and between wanted and unwanted ethnic groups. For a racialized minority growing up in Sarnia, knowing that this racism is part of the city’s famed historical records is horrific. And when students learn about the city’s history in the schools and find that these are the only existing literature on newcomers, who is harmed most by this lesson? Is it the Caucasian students who do not see how this is an example of racism and white privilege, or the racialized minority students who do not see their own legacies represented in their city’s history?

This treatment of immigrants lies in direct contrast to the foremost account of immigration history in Sarnia: the Italo-Canadian Cultural Club of Sarnia’s 1991 *One by One…. Passo dopo Passo: History of the Italian Community in Sarnia-Lambton / Storia Della Comunita’ Italiana di Sarnia-Lambton, 1870-1990*. The Italo-Canadian Cultural Club states that the population began as temporary workers in the 1920s, then farm labourers, and then low-wage labourers during the collapse of the Italian economy in the late 1940’s and 1950s, with families whose wage-earners were employed at Holmes Foundry, Imperial Oil, and the Canadian National Railway (1991: xi-xii). For the Italian community, this book is extremely significant as it covers the Italian women’s experience, Italian-owned businesses, the Sarnia area’s racism against the community, the cultural gaps as a result of many generations in Canada, and the predominant employment of the Italian-Canadians in

Sarnia's construction industry. After reading the book, one gets the sense that although the labourers were indispensable to the local community as the city demanded more buildings, waterlines, sewers and more, their experience was still one of exclusion, racism, and great hardship.

From the rich history of the Italian immigrant group in Sarnia, the injustice that Phillips instigates by erasing the ethnic presence in the area is extremely evident. By choosing to glorify the city's Victorian and Edwardian eras, with the historical coverage of the European immigrants' barn-raisings, trolley-construction, architectural landmarks, leisure activities, and more, Phillips has done a great disservice to the community, and to the capabilities of honouring a multicultural presence in this third-tier city.

In terms of multicultural education, I see that this situation in Sarnia is probably similar to the histories and mainstream presence of other Caucasian-dominant second and third-tier cities. This is one of the main reasons that a culturally-responsive curriculum is necessary in any school with racialized minorities. As a reaction to the animosity in Sarnia, with its glass ceiling of labour and its prejudice against Italians, the Italian-Canadian diaspora created a piece of academia which is the only true immigrant literature in Sarnia.

Lastly, as I read *Passo dopo Passo,* I thought about the experience of the Italian-Canadian second generation in Sarnia. I considered the way that both of our histories were linked to the success of the Chemical Valley. I thought of our shared involvement with the Catholic church, which, naturally, led to our shared coming-of-age in Sarnia's Catholic schools. The Italian community, with its rich stories and heritage, had a longer history in Sarnia than the Filipinos did—but they, too, must have felt neglected in the educational system. Indeed, this was apparent in their creation of Italian School, a private institution which was open on Saturdays and during summers to teach elementary-school-aged

children the basics of the language and Italian games and songs—an educational experience which, coincidentally, my parents made me attend for a year when I was eleven years old.

Did my parents subconsciously enroll me, the only visible minority in the entire building, in Italian School because of this knowledge of our shared experiences, and our shared neglect in the mainstream education? The Italian-Canadians had the capital, the demographic presence, and the history in the city to be able to erect Italian restaurants, grocery stores, tailors, clothing stores and an Italian church—accomplishments which are, to date, far beyond the scope of the Filipino-Canadian community; yet, in the educational system, their heritage was also unappreciated by the curriculum. From one minority looking to another minority group, it seems that the achievements of the Italian-Canadian community in Sarnia are empowering enough to create a mainstream presence in education, and yet, as a racialized minority group, they were still marginalized by mainstream education.

## The Filipino-Canadian Community in Sarnia

With Glen Phillips' erasure of the racialized immigrant presence in Sarnia in mind, it is not surprising that the city's only literature on the Filipino-Canadian community was produced by the diaspora itself. Reynaldo Montemayor, a former chairman of the Filipino-Canadian Community of Sarnia-Lambton, compiled the only existing evidence of this vibrant community in a souvenir programme for the 1998 Kalayaan celebrations in Sarnia which honoured the centennial celebration of Philippine independence. To honour the community which he estimated was comprised of two hundred families (Montemayor 1998: 15), Montemayor had conducted interviews with the older members of the community to

complete his piece, “The Filipinos in Sarnia-Lambton.”

According to Montemayor’s community-based research, in the early 1960’s, the Silao family became the first Filipino household in Sarnia through Mrs. Silao, who had come as a psychiatric nurse. The community’s subsequent need for nurses attracted more Filipinos in the mid-1960’s, when a number of American-employed Filipino nurses with Exchange Visas visited the city and found an opportunity to apply for jobs and permanent residency in Canada (Montemayor 1998: 15). Under the Point System, Canada needed nurses and medical technicians; thus, upon finishing their American contracts, the Filipino nurses moved to Sarnia. With the extreme scarcity of Filipinos in the area, the Silao residence at 409 George Street became nicknamed the “Philippine Embassy” as it often housed the new immigrants until they found places of their own (Montemayor 1998: 15).

In the late 1960’s, the Chemical Valley’s expansion created a high demand for engineers and technicians. Moreover, the city’s growth created a need for medical doctors, and medical technicians (Montemayor 1998: 15). With the sucess of the chemical industry, the immigrant population in Sarnia boomed. By the 1970’s, the make-up of Filipinos in Sarnia grew to include teachers, plant operators, draftsmen, technologists, health care specialists, and their families (Montemayor 1998: 15). Under the Point System’s encouragement, young Filipino professionals came to the area. Their growth in numbers continued throughout the 1980’s, with the emergence of business entrepreneurs, service-sector employees, and “domestic care specialists” (Montemayor 1998: 15).

In the 1990’s, Sarnia saw the second-generation of Filipino-Canadians begin to start their own families, and to leave the area for post-secondary education (Montemayor 1998: 15). And with this observation, Montemayor’s history of Filipino-Canadians in Sarnia ends. From the existence of this sole, obscure piece, it is evident that the history of the Filipino

settlers in Sarnia does not go very far. However, in the relatively short time that the Filipinos have been in the area, as Montemayor states, they have “contributed in their own way to making Sarnia-Lambton a very good place to live in and to raise their children” (Montemayor 1998: 15). However, how could their children have been better supported in the educational system? How could their experiences as transnational children be honoured in the curriculum? And how could the private and public spheres be united to create a school experience which honours this rich presence in the community, and allows students to explore the vast contributions of the city’s “hidden” racialized minorities?

# Part Two

## Identity in the Curriculum: Experiences and Recommendations

In the fifth grade, as an introductory exercise to social studies, we had to fill in a Uniqueness Wheel (see Appendix Three). From this identity exercise, it appears that I was a very normal ten year-old growing up in North America 1993. I had a nuclear family, my favourite foods were spaghetti and pizza, my favourite TV show was Full House, and my favourite hobby was collecting stickers. I liked spelling, and my family chores included taking out the garbage. However, there is another side to me that the “Uniqueness Wheel” did not cover.

As a primary school student, I was quiet, obedient, and conscientious. In other words, I neatly fit into the stereotypes of female and Asian students in North America. Davis states that these roles are part of the “model minority” label, which is a “stereotype threat” to the Asian diaspora because it causes the students to be seen as immigrants or foreigners, and not minorities, and that as a result of this “alien” status based on the model minority

stereotype, most groups of Asian-identified students “blamed themselves for the challenges they faced and did not expect the dominant group to accommodate them” (Davis 2006: 20-21). This description perfectly describes my childhood perception of my role in the classroom.

In terms of class participation and assuming leadership roles during groupwork, I sought and received little attention. I never wanted to stand out, even if I knew the right answer, I shied away from leadership roles even when I knew that the group dynamics were not working, and I rarely spoke except when directly asked a question. The literature in gender stereotyping indicates that “acquiescent female students receive less attention than boys and that the most intelligent female students receive the least attention form teachers (Grayson and Miller in King, Chipman, and Cruz-Janzen 1994: 26), and that this lack of attention is related to the female students’ “apparently untroublesome behaviour and conformity to our accepted female stereotypes and expectations” (King, Chipman, and Cruz-Janzen 1994: 27). Given these academic lessons in gender stereotyping, what does this say about cultural stereotyping? As an Asian-Canadian female who was always a minority in her third-tier city, was I reluctant to speak because I did not think that I had anything else to offer except for these stereotypical traits? Or did I think that being reserved in class was what was expected of me, in the same way that it was expected of me at home? Or was I afraid that sharing my thoughts aloud would mark me as different, and shatter my sense of belonging in my public sphere environment?

Luckily, to further explore these questions, I have concrete evidence of the thoughts and dreams that were bubbling in my mind during my third-tier city education at St. Therese. In the following section, I aim to use autobiographical methodology to unite the records of my experiences growing up Filipino-Canadian in Sarnia with pragmatic suggestions for

multicultural education in Caucasian-dominant elementary schools. I concede that there are wider policy and ideas at work behind the official implementation of culturally-responsive curriculum in Ontario and Canada; however, I seek to take the practical application approach. In the enthusiastic, conversational tone which often characterizes teachers' literature, I aim to encourage educators to use these ideas for culturally-responsive curriculum in second and third-tier cities. I hope that teachers, students, and anyone who grew up outside of a first-tier city will enthusiastically receive these experiences and recommendations.

## Identity and Belonging in the Classroom

When I look back on my childhood in Sarnia, I can remember very few cases of racism. While I would not go as far as to call my third-tier childhood "colourblind," today, I do not recall many instances of standing out. However, in my fifth grade journals, there is a brief entry which reveals another story (see Appendix Four for copy of original):

> Sept. 13, 1993. J.M.J.
>
> There are many problems for a person who is different. For example, I used to be teased a lot because of my skin colour but after a few years I got used to it. I also eat differently. That's a problem because when I go to someone else's house they are eating stuff like pizza. I guess that's why I feel more comfortable in the Philippines.

To this honest reflection on difference, my teacher responded with a single line: "I like to eat a variety of foods!" This reaction shows no interaction with the issues that I brought up—of being teased for physical appearance, of feeling uncomfortable in non-Filipino houses, or of experiencing racism and getting "used to it." By merely replying that she likes to eat a variety of foods and not addressing these issues, my teacher was

trivializing the feelings of a racialized minority student.

She could have responded in a variety of ways. She could have said, “How else do you feel more comfortable in the Philippines?” or “I am sorry that you were teased,” or even a simple, “What kinds of different foods do you like from the Philippines?”, which would have sent the message that she wanted to know more about how I felt different. Instead, my teacher’s trivial response shows no effort to tackle the student’s frustrations with her transnational identity.

When an elementary student at the beginning of her fifth grade feels open enough to express her frustration with difference, the teacher has a responsibility not to distance herself from the student’s grapplings with transnationalism. This can be a confusing, even hurtful experience when a student feels that he or she is alone. While I realize that perhaps my teacher did not want to encourage alienation by further centering me out as a minority in the classroom, there are more effective ways to handle a journal entry about experiencing racism and exclusion than by writing, “I like to eat a variety of foods!” For even when the teacher is from the dominant group, she should not gloss over a student’s dealings with identity, but show an interest in learning more, and in encouraging the student to explore his or her issues in a supportive environment.

When reading this journal entry, I tried to imagine what it would have been like for my Caucasian teachers to approach these issues in a Caucasian-dominant third-tier city classroom. To explore this topic, I predominantly use a piece of recent literature that I feel would be useful for the third-tier city teacher: Derman-Sparks and Ramsey’s *What If All The Kids Are White? Anti-Bias Multicultural Education With Young Children and Families.*

The title of this book raises an important issue: the teachers’ reluctance and fear of approaching topics and problems that Derman-Sparks and Ramsey call “anti-

bias/multicultural education" to embrace the struggle toward social, economic, and cultural equity and to turn the focus of early childhood multicultural education from "appreciating diversity" to working toward social justice (2006: 3). As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey state, there are many factors regarding the teacher's view of his or her own identity and the parents' view of white privilege which can hinder the curriculum's efficacy in discussing racism.

For instance, many Caucasians believe that anti-bias/multicultural education about race and racism would be either irrelevant or harmful to their children. Caucasian parents might protest their children learning about racism, stating that strategies used to redress racism "victimize white people," and that they do not want their children to "feel upset about the current consequences of racism" (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 19). Moreover, Caucasian individuals may see their own economic struggles as a consequence of preferential treatment of racialized minorities, and may not see "how white poverty and the oppression of people of color are different facets of the same inequitable system" (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 19). Lastly, they state that one of the most pervasive arguments against anti-bias/multicultural education is that young children are "colour-blind," and do not notice differences of ethnicity and race; thus, talking to students about difference could lead to the beginning of prejudice (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 19). Meanwhile, if Caucasian parents are denying or ignoring the systemic racism and white privilege that pervades North American society (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 19), how can we expect Caucasian teachers in third-tier, Caucasian-dominant cities to address these issues when they are of the dominant group?

At home in the private sphere, students absorb many of the subconscious messages of race and racism and inclusion and exclusion through their parents and their observation

of their environments, and they bring these messages into the public sphere of school. For instance, Derman-Sparks and Ramsey list that Caucasian children experience the following:

> "They absorb their Caucasian parents' discomfort in neighbourhoods of colour; take for granted that only white people live on their street or are friends of their family; learn that the real authority in the classroom is the white teacher, not the Latina aide; and notice at the clinic that the white doctor, not the African American nurse, is in charge."
>
> (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 42).

The dominant-group parents and teachers sometimes do not recognize that "such obliviousness is a luxury of white privilege" (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 19); thus, as teachers whose physical appearance points them out as part of the "privileged" group, it is their responsibility to show the class that being part of the majority does not mean being oblivious or promoting obliviousness. The curriculum should show that while some children may look different from others, this does not mean that they cannot all work together towards a common goal.

## Celebrating Transnational Identities

In the third grade, I went to the Philippines for my first visit to the country that my parents called "home." It was an experience which forever marked me as a Sarnian with a transnational identity, and it coloured many of my journal entries upon my return. I had finally found a place where everyone looked like me, where everyone ate the same food as my family, and where I could finally begin to learn Tagalog. Although in the month that I spent in the Philippines, I missed Sarnia, I realized that my parents' "home" was the "home" that I wanted to belong to.

This is evident in my fourth grade journal, which states a very brief list of dreams.

Titled “Someday,” the entry states the following three goal dreams in my nine-year-old heart (see Appendix Five for copy of original):

Oct 27, 1992. J.M.J.

**Someday**

Someday I’ll be a teacher and all the kids will want to be in my class.

Someday I’ll be really neat and tidy so my mom won’t think I’m a slob.

Someday I’ll move to the Philippines to be with my grandparents and cousins.

To this entry, the teacher merely wrote, “Good.” However, this heart-covered entry is valuable for the third point: “Someday I’ll move to the Philippines to be with my grandparents and cousins.” For a child growing up in a Caucasian-dominant third-tier city, this dream shows a definite beginning of a lifelong grapple with issues of identity and belonging. Before I even knew how to label it, I was becoming aware of a transnational identity.

Unfortunately, “transnational” was not a word that I learned until my first year at Trent University. I strongly believe that this multifaceted declaration of identity is something which students should learn from an early age. For identities are more than binaries of country of residence and country of origin; they can be pluralistic, with the children are crossing not one border, but multiple borders to express all of the facets of their identities. This is why the concept of transnationalism must be taught as early as elementary school. Not only would this term help children to explain their confused feelings surrounding identity and belonging in Canada, but it would also give them a way to explain their affiliation with two or more “homes.”

In second and third-tier cities, where many of the students might not identify with a

particular heritage, children should be encouraged to look back into the culture of their family history. Self-awareness is often part of the curriculum in terms of a student's likes and dislikes (ie. "I like pizza, I hate spinach"), of hobbies (ie. skating, swimming, and piano), and other cursory things which are easy for most children to write, illustrate, and share. Thus, why not have students write, illustrate and share self-awareness in terms of transnationalism?

## Teaching Recommendation: The Transnational Self-Portrait Project

In many of my kindergarten self-portraits, I drew myself as a blonde little girl (see Appendix One)—a repetitive occurrence which, twenty years later, still alarms me. Thus, for a teaching recommendation, I suggest a self-portrait project—but with a transnational twist. Using various tones of construction paper and markers, you can encourage students to draw their faces, but with a line down the centre. On the right side, have the student's portrait depict their Canadian identity, with the child wearing his or her everyday clothes. In the background, the child can draw his or her favourite toys from home, hobbies, sports, and events which he or she can enjoy in the second or third-tier city, and even his or her favourite foods from the second/third-tier city major grocery store.

For the left side of the self-portrait, have the child depict his or her images from "home"—whether this is the country of origin of their parents, a grandparent, or a country from which he or she immigrated. In this country, what do the children play with, what activities do they like, and what foods do they eat? However, should a student wish to depict multiple, pluralistic identities, encourage them to split their page into as many divisions as they like. Have them depict each country which creates their cultural identity, and to take pride in their multifaceted art piece.

Moreover, for the student who does not self-identify with two or more cultures, there are two options to make this exercise inclusive for everyone. For instance, you can encourage him or her to fill the left side of the paper with a transnational identity of his or her own creation. Ask the student to choose any country and to research it. What are the toys, hobbies, sports, events, and foods that children in the country enjoy? Are they different from the ones that he or she would enjoy in their Canadian hometown? For while a transnational identity is not always possible in terms of presently being of multiple worlds, it will be a valuable experience for any child to learn more about the global village outside of his or her second or third-tier hometown, thus making this an inclusive exercise for your classroom.

The second inclusive option is to make this exercise a truly authentic marriage of private and public sphere. You can give the students advance warning of this exercise by assigning them to ask their families about their childhood. Have them ask their mothers, fathers, grandparents or guardians, "When you were a child, what did you play with, participate in, and eat? What was it like in your 'home'?" Encouraging parents to share their childhood stories can spark connections between children and the previous generation, can allow children to embrace the concept of multiple identities, can narrow the generation gap, and can unite the child's public and private spheres. Illustrating a "transnational" identity that bridges generations still sends the message that everyone is unique, and that discourse about "home" is multifaceted and worth sharing. In this way, this artistic exercise can be inclusive for everyone.

Lastly, in terms of successfully presenting and promoting the transnational self-portrait project in the classroom, there are two caveats for educators. One is offering the right selection of supplies. For instance, you should be prepared with an assortment of

papers, pencil crayons, and markers which can depict the child's correct skin tone and hair colour, so that students know that their self-portraits do not have to be compromised by a lack of toned supplies.

Secondly, another caveat is that you should try to move the children's desks into groups, so that you can move to each group frequently. As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey state, "[t]he process of drawing or talking and reflecting often reveals which social and physical attributes are most salient to children" (2008: 53). Thus, to ensure that the child is encouraged to include as many details as possible, teachers should facilitate group discussions of the images as the children are creating them. While many other educators emphasizing multiculturalism recommend a self-portrait exercise in terms of asking the children to use skin-colour paint to draw themselves participating in their favourite activity (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2008: 53), my recommended project seeks to take this exercise beyond, "What is your hair colour?" and "What do you do in your spare time?" and aims to unite the child's private and public spheres.

Through blending the artistic expression of their self-image and preferences with the verbal exercises of talking to their families, the teacher, and their peers, the transnational self-portraits could be a truly successful project in multicultural education for students who write about wanting to be somewhere else. For while it can soothe some confused feelings that would inspire a student to write, "Someday I'll move to the Philippines to be with my grandparents and cousins," the purpose of the transnational self-portrait project is to emphasize that it is okay to have multiple places to call "home."

## Integrating The Private Sphere Into The Curriculum

In 1990, my first-grade class was inducted into the yearly event of competing in the

speech competition—a springtime ritual in which we were bound to participate for the next seven years. In the first grade, my speech was about my pet bunny—but with a twist—because at the end of the speech, I revealed that Floppy was merely a stuffed animal. In the second grade, my speech was under the heavy guidance of my teacher, who encouraged many of us to write about our First Communion experiences. By the third grade, however, I wrote something very interesting in terms of bringing transnationalism and my private sphere into the public light, in what was to be my only public declaration of a transnational identity. The following is a copy of the good draft of my speech (see Appendix Six for original):

> Good Afternoon
>
> Honourable judges, teachers and fellow students.
>
> How would you feel about traveling halfway around the world?
>
> I went to the Philippines last December. It was a long trip but the plane ride was exciting. We went there to attend my grandparents golden wedding anniversary. After the mass and reception we had short program. The fourteen grandchildren performed a surprise number. Some of them danced, one of them sang, another recited a poem and Jamela and I played a duet on the piano called “Unchained Melody.” My grandparents were so happy. My grandma also cried. I hope I can go back next year and visit them again.

Although this little speech depicts my experience in the Philippines, the main theme of it is family. I did not speak about the tropical food, the picnics by waterfalls and volcanoes, or the overwhelming feeling of finally being in a place where everyone looked like me. Was it because I did not think that any other third-grader could relate to my Filipino adventures? Or was it because I wanted to take the opportunity to embrace one of the rare occasions when I could emphasize the happiness I felt in discovering that I, too, finally had

an extended family, just like my peers?

The major socializing agent in the child's private sphere is his or her family. Whether the student lives with two parents and a sibling, one parent, grandparents, or extended family, the importance of the private sphere's impact on the child is immeasurable; for instance, as Derman-Ramsey and Sparks state, [f]amily is the context in which authentic identity develops" (2006: 56). Learning about family backgrounds provides concrete ways for children to think about their social location, especially if they are racialized minorities.

In third-tier cities, this divide between the public and private spheres of school and home can be a confusing, hurtful border to cross every day. For when a child is part of the "majority" group in his or her home, and then must go to school, where he or she acts and thinks differently from the rest of the class—a difference which is only further exacerbated by his or her physical appearance as an ethnic minority—during speech-time, when he or she must stand in front of the class, public speaking can be an extremely intimidating experience.

Thus, in terms of speeches, I think that my eight-year old self was onto something. Speaking about the Philippines was empowering, and by presenting my trip "home" as a celebration for extended family with whom I was able to participate as a granddaughter and a pianist, I showed further willingness to show belonging in a way that my peers would understand. While my painfully quiet delivery of the speech accounted for my poor performance in the classroom competition, its message is valuable in today's discussion of multicultural education.

## Teaching Recommendation: Show and Tell for the Global Village

While I consider this third-grade speech on my grandparents' wedding anniversary in

the Philippines to be a success in my manipulations of the curriculum to suit my transnational identity, I know that this topic came with very little encouragement from my teacher. As an exercise which is meant to encourage students to practice public speaking, speeches have great potential as lessons in multicultural education. Nonetheless, as an event which comes up only once a year with great formality, perhaps they could be made more informal, but without sacrificing the encouragement of sharing with the class.

In the real world, speeches are improvisational. Children have to think on the spot when introducing themselves, when helping others, when defending themselves, when asking for permission, and more. Thus, why not have informal speeches connecting to the classic elementary school fixture, Show and Tell?

When racialized minority children grow up in Caucasian-dominant third-tier cities, they can often find themselves in an environment where their ethnic groups are not represented. For instance, I remember growing up in a city where my ethnic group was not featured in mainstream media, where we had to drive four hours to get ethnic newspapers in Toronto, and where I rarely saw racialized minorities in the school faculty or administration. Although I cannot speak for racialized minority children in all second and third-tier cities, I know that this is not an isolated experience of one Filipino-Canadian in Sarnia.

Thus, a Show and Tell that allows children to talk about their cultural identity is key. First-generation children could be asked to tell the class about their home countries. Second-generation children could be encouraged to ask their parents about their country or countries of origin. In this way, personal information could be shared to emphasize the existence of the global village in the classroom.

However, in second and third-tier cities, the exercise would have to be made more

inclusive of children who do not identify with a pluralistic identity. Be sure to encourage these students to present about Canada in the same way that students will present about other countries. What do Canadians do for Canada Day? How many people live in Canada? What is Canadian weather like? Have them answer these questions and more. In this way, you will be sure to send the message that Canada is a valued, interesting member of the global village. Lastly, encourage them to ask their families for some ideas, in order to bring the private sphere ideas into the public sphere of the classroom.

Conversely, you can also assign these students to bring an item from Show and Tell from home, specifying that it should symbolize something about their family. By sending the message that something in their private sphere of their households is worth sharing in the public sphere of the classroom, you are supporting a culturally-responsive curriculum, even for students who do not self-identify with a certain culture. Students will surprise you with their offerings. Assign them to rehearse their informal speeches to their parents, siblings, or to anybody who will listen, and tell them to always appreciate the feedback from their audience.

In this way, Show and Tell can build classroom community and can allow you to know your students and their families on a personal level. There is, however, one caveat—as Davis states, you have to participate, too! Davis emphasizes that an effective teacher talks about his or her personal interests. “By sharing yourself with your students, you build relationships,” she writes, and asks the teachers to share their favourite music, sports, crafts, books, travel stories, and more (Davis 2006: 91). So participate in the Show and Tell, speak loudly and clearly, and be proud of what you bring in. And don’t forget to practice!

## Multicultural Story-Telling: Writing Ourselves Into Our Stories

As a minority in a Caucasian-dominant third-tier city, I grew up knowing that on a physical level, I stood out. However, I did not realize the extent to which I was different. Ethnic self-awareness would have benefited me from an early age, and having a teacher or a curriculum to support this would have answered many questions that I did not know how to ask, especially since my identity was constantly changing as I grew up alternating between the public and private sphere borders. One important point in multicultural education is that our ethnic identity is never stagnant. For instance, King, Chipman and Cruz-Janzen state the following:

> "Many individuals do not realize that their ethnic identification can change with the passage of time, with geographic location, with upward or downward social mobility, from the impact of international events, and with their professional and social contacts."
>
> (King, Chipman and Cruz-Janzen 1994: 90)

Everyone, regardless of racial affiliation, experiences the fluidity of identity; thus, all students would undoubtedly benefit from lessons of self-awareness and identity from an early age. As an ever-changing entity subjected to outside influences such as physical location, movements between class status, and global politics, ethnic identity should be grasped even in the youngest years of elementary school to prepare the students for what is to come. Therefore, teachers should not be afraid to approach difference, particularly when it affects everyone.

In the classroom, I did my best to cover up my differences—a phenomenon which was, unfortunately, supported by my teachers and by the school curriculum. For instance, in my elementary school, I had a penchant for writing stories, and this talent quickly established me as the class writer. My work would win contests, teachers would share my

stories with the classroom, and faculty would borrow my work to read to their own classes and to share amongst themselves in the staffroom. As a young student, I was flattered by the attention. However, as a Filipino-Canadian, one thing was apparent from each finished piece: I had written myself out of my own stories.

There were stories about wizards and princesses. Stories about girls playing baseball. Stories about Santa. Stories about unicorns, ladybugs, kittens, and penguins. Stories about sisters who found a magical mask (see Appendix Seven for cover-page). My work was extremely well-received by my school's faculty and students; however, I was never present in my own work. There were never any protagonists, let alone characters, who were racialized minorities. My plots never took place in any environments to which I could relate. Interestingly enough, as previously stated, there was only one time that I allowed myself to show my transnational identity in a story, and this was from the description of an alien who speaks in a mysterious language that is, coincidentally, infused with garbled Tagalog (see Appendix Two for copy of original). As St. Therese did not have any teachers who were familiar with the Philippine language, the fact that the only way that I could infuse my multifaceted ethnicity into my published work was through an alien went unnoticed. At an early age, I was catering to my Caucasian audience.

### Teaching Recommendation: Starring in Private Sphere Story-Writing

Encouragement from my teachers or from the student body to truly bring out the dichotomy of my public and private spheres could have made my stories more poignant, and could have served to help me overcome my unwillingness to share in the classroom. In her 2005 book, *Multicultural Perspectives in Teacher Development,* Grace Feuerverger states that narratives are an effective solution to encourage class participation amongst

both Western-socialized Canadian students and their quieter peers, whether they are newcomers or second-generation immigrants. In her after-school heritage language class, Feuerverger found herself utilizing journaling assignments as a means of not only improving writing skills in her classroom, but also of enabling students to share their "dual cultural and linguistic heritage" with the class (Feuerverger 2005: 187). In bringing their "multiple identities" to the forefront of the class discussion, the students in Feuerverger's case studies benefited immensely.

While third-tier city minority students would benefit from an after-school heritage language class, I realize that teachers must also make allowances for constrained budgets and time. Thus, you could give your second and third-tier city students various topics to write about such as the following:

- Write two paragraphs which compare the "home" that your parent(s) feel, with the "home" that you feel. How are they different? How are they the same?
- An alien comes down from space and asks you to describe what it is like to be part of your family. What do you tell the alien?
- Using yourself as the story's main character, give the reader a tour of your home. What is "home" like?

Asking students to write about "home" is an inclusive exercise. Every student is unique, and every student has a strong knowledge about the house, family, habits and food which contribute to his or her uniqueness. However, for this exercise to be inclusive to all students, if the racialized minority students are Canadian-born, second-generation children who would rather write about their home and family in cursory, mainstream terms, this is the

opportunity for you to show them that they are still adding to multicultural literature, just by featuring themselves as the main character.

Currently, there is a surge of multicultural children's literature which is being released by publishing houses worldwide. The authors are often racialized minorities, and the subjects are as diverse as religious holidays, foods, and locales around the globe. There are books about Chinese girls who grow up in Caucasian families! Stories about Muslim girls who don the hijab for the first time! Stories about African immigrant families who are new to the country! By making the private sphere experience mainstream, these stories are creating a veritable multicultural revolution in the publishing industry. Although in second and third-tier cities, there are not always multicultural bookshops such as Mirvish Village's A Different Booklist, which specializes in English-language children's literature where Asian, African and South American protagonists abound, multicultural children's books with culturally responsive characters and issues are available in most public libraries. I'd wished for these books during my 1987-1997 decade in elementary school, but as it turns out, I was too early for the multicultural book revolution!

Never before have culturally-responsive works been so accessible to be examples for multicultural story-writing. Caucasian students who do not self-identify with an ethnic group can read these to acquire a better understanding of the world around them, and racialized students can read these books to have examples of books which encourage them to write themselves into their own stories, and to value themselves as the main character of their stories. Ensure that these books are available in your school library, and encourage their use in your own classroom. For when a writer is inspired by a good example, only good can come out of it!

## Putting the "Our" Into Our Heritage

To further explain the importance of multicultural education, one must keep in mind that its purpose is not necessarily to "cater" to the individual minorities in a Caucasian-dominant classroom, but to adopt a curriculum that reflects all of the students in the classroom. For instance, in the fifth grade, my teacher gave us a handout titled, "Our Heritage." The instructions for this assignment were to label countries as a class. However, as an assignment which had great potential to be inclusive curriculum, "Our Heritage" failed miserably. For instance, while the Philippines is labeled on this map, it is evident that the teacher did not instigate this, and that it was an action by this particular student—because the Philippines is actually placed in Japan's location (see Appendix Eight).

In the "Our Heritage" world map, instead of labeling the Western European and Asian countries that were the students' countries of origin, the teacher had us label obscure locales like Argentina, Madagascar, New Zealand, Sudan, and even the island of Svalbard! While it is necessary to teach ten year-olds about world geography, I question the importance of teaching children the location of Svalbard in an assignment called, "My Heritage."

Moreover, in "Heritage Roots," not only could we have honoured the minorities in the class, but we could have labeled the class' origins from various western European countries, as well. In my fifth-grade classroom, the demographics included children from British, French, Scottish, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Polish backgrounds, and more. It is likely that this assignment would have been handled differently in a first-tier city, such as Montreal, Toronto, or Vancouver, where first and second-immigrant populations often dominate the classroom, and where many students are racialized minorities. In fact, my teacher's approach to this assignment may have been applicable to some of those

students. However, in my Sarnia classroom, this lesson was completely non-inclusive for everyone. The “My Heritage” assignment shows the harm of a curriculum which equalizes students in a negative manner: it marginalizes them equally by refusing to reflect any of them. If this fifth grade teacher had been thinking along the lines of multicultural education, she would have asked the students for the countries of origin of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. By doing this, we could have studied geography in an inclusive way, and began a lesson on origin and identity in a culturally-responsive manner. And lastly, as a student in the class who felt that in the private sphere, I was seen as “whitewashed,” having a public-sphere experience which represented my heritage and allowed me to share it with my peers would have been empowering.

According to Nieto, curriculum can be defined as the organized environment for learning in a classroom and school that is never neutral because it “represents what is thought to be important and necessary knowledge by those who are dominant in a society” (Nieto 1992 in Freeman 1998: 70). Thus, while standardized curriculum is meant to put all students on an equal playing field by subjecting them to the same lessons as dictated by society’s dominant group, in truth, this is not the case. While some supporters of multicultural education are concerned with standardized testing, I feel that another part of standardization in the educational system harms students: standardized learning. While teachers in third-tier cities may not want to explore multicultural education because of the lack of diversity in the classrooms, avoiding the issues of the few racialized minorities does not put students on an equal playing field—even if, as was my academic experience, the minorities excelled beyond their peers.

Multicultural education in a third-tier city is not about catering to the few racialized minorities in the school; in fact, it can also be about helping “the standard” to see their

privileged identity. For example, when the curriculum contains a majority of Caucasian characters in stories and Caucasian heroes in history, instances of racism are viewed as individual acts, with no connection to institutionalized advantage, white privilege, or history (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 42-43). Even in a Caucasian-dominant school in a Caucasian-dominant second or third-tier city, the concept of “white privilege” should be taught.

As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey state, when we look at the influences on children’s socialization, it is evident that children construct their ideas around the world surrounding them; thus, children are not only being exposed to their private-sphere views of race from family, but to the public-sphere views from the classroom, mass media, and friends (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 43). Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to reflect on the messages about race that the children in their classrooms are learning from the media, community, and personal relationships, and to ask themselves, “Do you see ways that the children in your program are being silenced about race?” (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 43). Even in a third-tier city with few racialized minorities in classrooms, we cannot assume that they are living in “colour-blind” worlds, and that they are navigating their lives without feeling like they are included or excluded from the “majority” or the “standard.” Therefore, even if students do not openly speak or write about the divide between “majority” and “minority” in their public-sphere lives, standardized education must be altered to reflect the classroom community. In fact, if they do not speak or write about these issues, this is more cause for the curriculum to take action.

## Teaching Recommendation: The Internet as a Tool to Create Our Heritage

Exploring heritage by a map is not only straightforward, but it also has the capacity

to build community when students are engaged in the creation as a classroom visual. Thus, have the students research their countries of origin. Using images of their choice pulled from search engines such as Google Images, have them sketch the image in the computer lab using a pencil and paper. Push them to search past the country's flags, and to really delve into a scene which defines the country, such as street scenes, festival scenes, family dinners, and more. While I admit that in this exercise, even a tokenistic representation of a country such as the Great Wall of China or the Leaning Tower of Pisa is valuable, try to have the students go beyond national attractions. Then, in a combination of social studies with art, have the students make good copies of the country's scene that they have sketched with paint, pastels, and markers, which are all bright mediums which will be attractive to the class. Using a classroom world map as the background, have these pictures correlate with the country on the map. Having these pictures on the map brings a display to life and promotes a sense of culture and sharing in the classroom.

Moreover, it sends positive messages for two groups: for those students who choose to depict the Western European countries from which their great-grandparents came, they may feel proud that so many students may share the same ethnic heritage in their classroom, and for students who are the only ones to depict their country, they can acquire a sense of pride in their uniqueness. And of course, to create an inclusive lesson for those students who do not self-identify as transnational, encourage the students to illustrate their own second or third-tier hometown. They can draw the hometown's attractions, or they can draw everyday things that residents see, such as the public library, the main street, or even their street! With a little creativity, the students depicting these images will encourage the class to see another aspect of their second or third-tier hometown, and will emphasize that their hometown is an important part of the world map. Take care to emphasize the positive,

inclusive message that heritage is not necessarily something which only comes from a transnational identity, but from anywhere that the student calls home. Don't forget to make sure that you participate, too—especially if your version of "home" hasn't been taken yet!

## Making Identity Mainstream: Canadian Immigration History

The question of who is "the standard" in standardized education was extremely apparent in eighth-grade social studies, when we studied a unit on immigration. From this unit, it is apparent that even at the senior level, there was a serious disregard for the cultural identities in the classroom, and that my teacher's take on immigration history came straight from standardized curriculum.

From my written piece about Samuel de Champlain, about whom I regurgitated, "[h]is work as a colonizer, explorer, and map maker earned him the title of Father of New France" (see Appendix Nine for copy of original), it is evident that lessons of critical thinking and appreciating my own second-generation immigrant history would have to wait another decade. In my eighth-grade class, some students had immigrant parents from Portugal, Scotland and Hong Kong, and others had immigrant grandparents from England, the Czech Republic, Italy, and more. Thus, why were we taught a version of Canadian immigration history which was more about Champlain and Cartier than about the experiences of the members of our own private sphere?

This standardized approach to Canadian immigration history most worries me when I remember that my eighth-grade classroom had one recent immigrant from Poland. As a student who underwent the immigration process, he could have been encouraged to share his experiences as a transnational student—a sharing which could have sparked a

discussion which would have made Canadian immigration more than the fulfillment of a history requirement and more than a note-taking exercise. Asking our Polish classmate about his immigration experience could have sparked a discussion which depicted Canadian immigration in its truest, most basic form: as an ongoing story.

In third-tier cities such as Sarnia, there is a greater representation of second-generation over first-generation immigrants (Statistics Canada 2006), and in an exercise such as this, it would have been beneficial to the students if Canadian immigration history had reflected them. Indeed, although we copied out the push and pull factors of Japanese, Hungarian, and Sikh immigrants, this unit turned out to be little more than a handwriting exercise, as there were not any Japanese, Hungarian, or Sikh immigrants in the class. This complex lesson could have been made more applicable and inclusive if it reflected the student body, rather than a standardized curriculum.

In any Canadian city, teaching immigration history as a mass movement of the French and British, with tokenistic representation of racialized immigrants is a potentially harmful exercise—especially since, as Frideres states, over 15 percent of immigrants to second-tier cities are from Eastern Europe, Western Asia, and the Middle East, and 18 percent of immigrants from Southeast Asia and the Pacific move to second-tier cities and 10 percent move to third-tier cities (Frideres 2006: 5). However, considering the treatment that immigrants in the Sarnia area received in Glen Phillips' photographic histories, was this to be expected? Should I be happy that at least racialized groups were mentioned at all in this unit?

From my research on immigration history in Sarnia, it is evident that there is a need to raise Reynaldo Montemayor's piece, the only work on the topic of Filipino-Canadians in

the area, out of the status of souvenir programme and into the sphere of mainstream literature such as the Italo-Canadian Cultural Club's *Passo dopo Passo.* A piano teacher, a priest, a high school teacher, and an elementary school teacher from the local Italian-Canadian community compiled this valuable resource on Italian immigrant history in Sarnia. While it may be asking for too much for teachers to be similarly inspired, I believe that classrooms could compile their own Canadian immigration history in a lesson which recognizes transnational identities and various heritages, but emphasizes that although students may think of other places as "home," there is one "home" which they all have in common: their second or third-tier hometown.

## Teaching Recommendation: An Internet Scavenger Hunt For Local History

To explore the touchy issue of prejudice in the classroom, Wolpert (1999) suggests that the children play a game called, "Stereotype or Fact" (Wolpert in Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 121). Wolpert suggests that even preschoolers and kindergarteners should play this game to explore the differences between a stereotype and a fact (Wolpert in Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 121). Thus, the teacher could make statements that are true, such as, "Many children like ice-cream," and statements that are stereotypes, such as "Only boys know how to run" (Wolpert in Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2006: 121). This exercise touches on misinformation and prejudice in an interactive manner, thereby encouraging critical thinking in the classroom.

However, given the technological capabilities in many elementary schools, I would like to take Wolpert's idea to the next level by connecting it to Canadian immigration history and the school's capabilities for internet research. During computer lab time, play Wolpert's "Stereotype or Fact" game in the computer lab as a cyber-scavenger hunt for senior

elementary-school students with the goal of creating a classroom-specific history of the students' ethnic groups in the local area. To connect this seemingly daunting subject to Wolpert's simple lesson, make an extremely provocative statement such as, "Only white men are important figures in our city's Canadian history," and have the students use the internet and school library to disprove the statement by uncovering significant racialized minorities and Caucasian women in local history, and have the students make a list of the individual's contributions, complete with photo and short biography. For students who feel that they cannot identify to an ethnic group, they can be assigned to research a local individual or group of their choice who has impacted the community in some contemporary way: for instance, the family who runs the town festival, the owner of the farmers' market, or the museum curator who operates the local archives. Stress that everyone, regardless of status, contributes to history, and that every member of society is a valuable part of the city's story.

In this way, the daunting project of having elementary school students research and summarize their own local histories becomes exciting, applicable, and unintimidating. To the students, the assignment looks like they have to prove or disprove a single statement through an internet scavenger hunt. Meanwhile, it is much more than that, because this lesson in cultural appreciation reflects them and their shared hometown, with the message that everyone contributes to history. The end project could even be made into a mural of the class' internet findings under the banner, "Fact: These Diverse Individuals Have Contributed To Our City's History."

In a Caucasian-dominant school in a second or third-tier city, exploring stereotypes and misinformation is extremely important. The lesson is also inclusive because it allows Caucasian students to research the contributions of Caucasian females, thereby combining

a cultural assignment with a lesson on gender roles in Canadian history. And lastly, this assignment can be given as a formal project, with students having to work at home and ask their parents about the stereotype. When a parent or guardian is encouraged to consider whether your statement is stereotype or fact, you are bringing the private sphere into the public sphere—something which can enrich any lesson. This exercise can be a lesson for senior elementary school students in research skills, web searching, critical thinking, and it can serve as a starting point for culturally responsive curriculum to connect today's technological society. And best of all, you're showing the students that everyone can be empowered to write their own history!

# Conclusion

This MRP is a call for multicultural education in areas which are not perceived to be multicultural. As a Filipino-Canadian child who grew up in Sarnia, Ontario, I strongly believe that there is an intense need for culturally responsive education. Before starting this MRP, I wondered, if I took this message home to St. Therese's, a school with a handful of racialized minority children in each class, what would they say? Nieto states that some of the common perceptions of multicultural education are that it is irrelevant and divisive, that talking about racism will make the students feel bad, that there is no time for it in the curriculum, and that it can be effectively celebrated through units about ethnic holidays and food festivals (Nieto 2002: 345). I realized that perhaps, at St. Therese, I would be told the same things. Thus, with this in mind, I endeavoured to make this call in the most authentic way that I could think of: through my own experiences, from kindergarten to the eighth

grade.

When making my teaching recommendations, I was careful to create lessons and projects which not only reacted to my schoolwork, but which could also be beneficial and applicable for the Caucasian-dominant environment of third-generation children with whom I grew up. For multicultural education is not about dividing the room into haves and have-nots in terms of ethnicity; rather, it is about creating a curriculum which reflects the student body, which allows them to unite their private and public spheres, which emphasizes parental involvement, which is not afraid of addressing racism, which teaches identity and self-awareness, and which moves beyond the standardized curriculum. And, most importantly, I wanted to emphasize that multicultural education is curriculum which can apply to all students.

From the standpoint of Filipino-Canadian academic literature, this MRP is timely because, due to the Canadian government's desire to attract immigrants to second and third-tier cities, Canada is experiencing rising rates of newcomer settlement outside of the three "capitals of immigrant Canada" (Krahn, Derwing, and Abu-Laban 2003: 1). With the rise of the provincial nominee program and the municipal promotion of second and third-tier cities to immigrants and skilled workers, there has already been a series of media coverage which anticipates this settlement strategy. For instance, at the municipal level, Sarnian MPs are scrambling to create their website to promote the Sarnia-Lambton area in cyberspace (The Observer 2008, Feb. 14), and the Manitoba Premier, Gary Doer, has already had meetings with Alberto Romulo, Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs, to launch a project for immigration recruiters to promote Manitoba (CBC 2008, Feb. 8). In these two recent cases which will mean more immigrants in Sarnia and more Filipinos in Canada, I feel how immigration and settlement is connected to my Filipino-Canadian, third-tier identity, and how

it will be connected to many more generations to come.

Moreover, this research is timely because of the rise of Filipino-Canadian issues in academic literature. There is a wealth of information about the Filipino diaspora's obligation to send remittances, about the Live-in Caregiver Program about mail order brides, and about Filipino underemployment. In addition, with groundbreaking reports through CERIS such as Philip Kelley's work on the underemployment of the Filipino diaspora (Kelley, September 2006) and Harald Bauder and Tom Lusis' work on the Filipino diaspora in second-tier cities (Bauder and Lusis 2007), this is the perfect time to bring Filipino-Canadian second-generation issues to the forefront, and to link these to the issues faced by racialized minority children growing up in a Caucasian-dominant third-tier city.

The goal of this MRP was to create a personal account of my own struggles as a Filipino-Canadian elementary-school student in Sarnia. Using autobiographical methodology, I aimed to connect my own experiences with the issues of newcomer and second-generation racialized minorities in any second or third-tier city. For when a child is a minority in his or her classroom, the importance of curriculum which can aid in the recognition and appreciation of his or her cultural heritage can help the student to navigate struggles in self-awareness from an early age. Thus, why not write it into our own curriculum and represent the classroom demographics, even in locations which are not necessarily perceived to be multicultural?

In a school environment like St. Therese Roman Catholic School, where racial, ethnic, and religious diversity are only present on a minimal level, the curriculum should remind the students that even within a third-tier, Caucasian-dominant city such as Sarnia, issues of transnationalism, identity, and multiculturalism arise every day. In this way, multicultural education is not only about supporting racialized minorities, but it is also about

empowering students to star in their own stories, their own speeches, and their own histories, to truly represent themselves in their own artwork, and to be able to take pride in their place in the global village.

Finally, the following is a quote from Davis to end this MRP: “Of all the Asian-identified groups Lee studied, only Asian Americans challenged the dominant group” (Davis 2006: 21). While the goal of this MRP was not necessarily to challenge the dominant group, but also to work with them and include them in multicultural education, I do hope that soon, Asian-Canadians can have the same reputation for making change as described above.

Even if it took them eighteen years to learn about the Marcos dictatorship.

# References


Bauder, H. and Lusis, T. (2007). “Local, Regional and Transnational Networks and the Integration and Settlement Dispersal of Filipino Immigrants.” Submitted to CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre, 6 pp. [http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/RFPReports/BauderLusis2006.pdf]

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2005). *Recent Immigrants in Metropolitan Areas*. Ottawa, ON: Canada.

CBC. (2008, February 8). Manitoba, Philippines sign immigration agreement.

*CBCNews.ca* [Manitoba]. Retrieved August 9, 2008 from cbc.ca.

Chen, Anita Beltran. (1999). Filipinos. In P. Magocsi (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (pp. 501-513). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Cummins, Jim. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire.* United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Cusipag, R.J. and Buenafe, M.C. (1993). *Portrait of Filipino Canadians in Ontario* (1960-1990).

Davis, Bonnie M. (2006). *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies.* California*:* Corwin Press.

de Melendez, Wilma Robles and Ostertag, Vesna. (1997). *Teaching Young Children in Multicultural Classrooms: Issues, Concept and Strategies.* New York: Delmar Publishers.

Derman-Sparks, Louise and Ramsey, Patricia G. (2006). *What If All the Kids Are White? Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Feuerverger, Grace. (2005). Multicultural Perspectives in Teacher Development. In J. Philion, M.F. He, and F.M. Connelly (Eds.), *Multicultural Teacher Education* (pp.175-200). California: Sage Publications.

Freeman, Rebecca Diane. (1998). *Bilingual Education and Social Change.* UK: Multilingual Matters.

Frideres, J.S. (2006). Cities and Immigrant Integration: The Future of Second- and Third-Tier Centres. In *Our Diverse Cities,* 2, 3-8.

Hellwig, T. and Thobani, S. (Ed.). (2006). *Asian Women: Interconnections.* Canada. Women's Press.

Italo-Canadian Cultural Club. (1991). *One by One…. Passo dopo Passo: History of the Italian Community in Sarnia-Lambton / Storia Della Comunita' Italiana di Sarnia-Lambton, 1870-1990.* In DiCocco, C., Holzer, C., D'Agostini, N., & Ambrose, A. (Eds.) Roma: 3F Photopress*.*

James, Carl E. (2001). Multiculturalism, Diversity, and Education in the Canadian Context: The Search for an Inclusive Pedagogy. In C.A. Grant and J.L. Lei (Eds.), *Global Constructions of Multicultural Education: Theories and Realities* (pp.175-204). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kelley, Philip. (2006). *Filipinos in Canada: Economic Dimensions of Immigration and*

*Settlement* (CERIS Working Paper No. 48). Toronto: Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.

King, Edith W., Chipman, Marilyn, and Cruz-Janzen, Marta. (1994). *Educating Young Children in a Diverse Society.* Allyn and Bacon: Massachusetts.

Krahn, Harvey, Derwing, Tracey M., and Abu-Laban, Baha. (2003). *The Retention of Newcomers in Second and Third Tier Cities in Canada.* (Working Paper No. WP01-03). Alberta: Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration and the University of Alberta.

Lusis, Tom. (2008). Filipino Immigrants in Canada: A Literature Review and Directions for Further Research on Third-tier Cities and Rural Areas. University of Guelph. CERIS Working Paper Series No. 63.

Montemayor, Reynaldo. (1998 June 13). The Filipinos in Sarnia-Lambton in *"Kalayaan 1998": Centennial Anniversary Celebration of Philippine Independence*. Filipino-Canadian Community of Sarnia-Lambton: Sarnia, Ontario.

Nieto, Sonia. (2004). *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education.* Boston: Pearson Education.

Phillips, Glen. (1990). *Sarnia: A Picture History of the Imperial City*. Sarnia: Iron Gate Publishing Company.

Phillips, Glen. (1992). *Sarnia: More Picture History*. Sarnia: Iron Gate Publishing Company.

Phillips, Glen. (1999). *Lambton: An Illustrated History of the County*. Sarnia: Cheshire Cat Press.

Statistics Canada. (2008). *Sarnia-Lambton ON Canada Demographic Overview*. Retrieved July 19, 2008, from http: //www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3538030&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=Sarnia&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=35&B1=All&Custom=

Statistics Canada. (2007, December 4). *The Daily.* Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada. (2006, September 27). *The Daily*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

Tenni, Colleen, Smyth, Anne, and Boucher, Carlene. (2003). The Researcher as Autobiographer: Analysing Data Written About Oneself. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(1).

The Observer. Website to Attract New Immigrants. (2008, February 14). *The*

*Observer* [Sarnia]. Retrieved August 9, 2008 from Cyberplex Inc.

Wexler, A. (2000). Subversive Obedience. *Women's Review of Books*, 17(6).

Wilson, Teresa and Oberg, Antoniette. (2002). Side by Side: Being in Research Autobiographically from *Centre for the Study of Curriculum & Instruction.* Retrieved August 18, 2008 from http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v07n02/contextualexplorations/wilson_oberg/index.html.