Acculturation of Child Immigrants to Canada:

Project on the Acculturative Stress of Child Immigrants and

Possible Strategies to Overcome the Stress

by

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Abstract

Acculturation is a time consuming process. The initial days of acculturation are always associated with anxiety or stress. When trying to acculturate to a new country or environment, individuals have to go through the process of acculturation. Even if the process of acculturation to a new country is difficult, there are several strategies that can be adopted to ease the acculturation process of the immigrants. This project deals with the acculturation of young international students studying in Canada and the role of their parents and teachers in helping them to acculturate. This project is an attempt to share information about acculturation, acculturative stress and acculturation strategies. The outcome of this project is a series of workshops for two audiences: the parents and the teachers of young international students. The workshops designed will provide the audience information on the background, challenges, and strategies regarding the acculturation process of young international students.

Key words: Acculturation, acculturative stress, acculturation strategies, young international students, the role of parents and teachers, workshop.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The number of immigrants to Canada is increasing year by year. One of the major reasons why people come to Canada is the quality of education that Canada provides. Many student migrants are teenagers or adults who have reached an age at which adapting to new academic culture, although time consuming, is manageable. However, there is another group of migrants who are not students and who have young children accompanying them to a new country where they will have to resume their education. Therefore, it is important to explore the acculturation process for immigrant children’s education. Being an international student who is new to Canada, I too have had to adapt to a new academic culture. However, I have always wondered how young immigrants manage the process.

Reading articles regarding the acculturation process of various international students made me realize that the process of immersing to a new culture is not as easy as it sounds. As one grows up, the principles and the practices that the person has followed also deepens its root in the individual. A sudden change to those practices must be a challenge. However, my curiosity never ends to find out how kids under ten years of age manage to immerse themselves in a different educational and cultural society.
Background of the Project

It was with great pleasure and pride that I started my international education in Canada. On the very first day, I realized that studying in Canada is different than in India. Everything is different here, including the way students sit in the classroom, engage in discussions, the learning styles, and even in the way in conversing with the teachers. All these experiences and ways of learning were different than what I used to. Driven with enthusiasm and curiosity, I
discussed my experience of acculturation with my landlord who was also an immigrant to Canada five years ago.

My landlord shared her experience of being a mom to a young international student. They came to Canada on Permanent Residence. At the time of the arrival, their daughter was only five years old. She had never been exposed to Canadian culture nor the language; going to a new school was a night-mare for her. She faced several issues during the initial stage of acculturation. The language was the main barrier for her. Additionally, she did not know how to make friends; the way other children talked, played and even ate was very different than that of hers. Seemingly simple things mattered. Both the child and the mother were confused what would make a good snack or lunch in a Canadian classroom. She used to cry every day.

The child experienced cultural shock. Her parents had tough time worrying how to make their daughter’s school life easier and happier. As a mom, what saddened my landlord the most was the reluctance of her daughter to make friends with her new classmates. During that discussion, at every point, my landlord criticized the educational system which is not, in her opinion, very multi-cultural.

This discussion, along with my curiosity, urged me to gain a deeper understanding about the acculturation process and the related problems. Moreover, I also wanted to know the measures that teachers can adopt to lessen the issues associated with acculturation. The
criticism my landlord raised is solely based on her experience. However, it encouraged me to explore the situation, and that decision led me to do this project.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the present project is to understand the acculturation difficulties that the young international students experience during the initial stage of their acculturation and to
understand the possible remedies to overcome these acculturation difficulties. Importantly, I intend to use this information to design a workshop for teachers and parents of young international immigrant students. The workshop will address the acculturation difficulties and the possible solutions to overcome these difficulties. People who will benefit from the workshop will be the parents and teachers of the young international students and thereby, the young students themselves. By attending the workshop, teachers and parents will be able to find more methods to address the problems of immigrant students.

Families moving to Canada from across the world have chosen to immerse themselves in the Canadian culture in an effort to adapt and improve their life. However, the children of these immigrants undergo several difficulties during the initial stage of their adaptation to a new academic and cultural background. The acculturation difficulties that young immigrants experience include: social isolation, physical illness, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, loneliness and fear (Brown, 2008). I would like to better understand the acculturation difficulties of young international students and the methods teachers can adapt to solve these issues.

The project will also focus on some of the barriers that prevent the primary schools from being multi-cultural. Moreover, another major aim of the project is to contribute to the literature regarding the acculturation of young immigrant students to a new and challenging academic and cultural environment.
The following question will guide the project: *What are the possible acculturation related difficulties of child immigrant students to Canada? And, what are the possible strategies that the teachers and parents of these children can adopt to resolve these difficulties?*
Justification of the Study

Increasing number of international students. It is reported by the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2017) that year by year there is a significant increase in the number of immigrants to Canada. In the year 2016, Canada welcomed 296,346 permanent residents, an increase from 2015 (271,845), and the highest number of admissions since 2010. Of those immigrants, 79% were with families and the majority had children as dependents (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). These statistics affirm the fact that the number of international students are increasing every year as the children of these immigrants seek education from the Canadian schools and universities. Moreover, Dimmock and Walker (2005) argued that international education is becoming popular as part of internationalization.

Interrelation of acculturation and stress. According to Berry (as cited in Brown, 2008), when students encounter a new environment which necessitates a new way of behaving, stress is the anticipated outcome. This is reiterated when Brown (2008) stressed that the first stage of adaptation, that is the culture shock and adjustment is a major issue that international students confront. In addition, Born (as cited in Suarez-Morales & Lopez, 2009) argued that the acculturative process is often followed by a series of stressful mental experiences, and these experiences are often associated with anxiety about the new academic culture. Glover, Pumariega, Holzer, Wise, and Rodriguez (as cited in Suarez-Morales & Lopez, 2009) asserted
that anxiety among international students arise from the fact that they are born outside of the community or country to where they are new. All these contribute to the stress of international students during the process of acculturation. Storti (as cited in Brown, 2008) indicated that stress negatively affects the capacity to study. Hence, it is of paramount importance to figure out the correlation between acculturation and stress amongst the young international students.
Interrelation of acculturation and linguistic differences. Acculturation difficulties may also occur because of the linguistic differences. Persaud (as cited in Brown, 2008) argued that “many international students are particularly placed under pressure by the confrontation with an alien academic culture and the need to become linguistically competent quite quickly” (p. 9).

Brown (2008) suggested that:

stress would be most prominent in the initial stage of the academic sojourn and would diminish once adjustment to academic norms and conventions had been made and once students had developed sufficient linguistic competence to meet the demands of the course.

(p. 7)

It can be assumed that it would take several months for young children to make the necessary adjustments and have a functioning ability in a foreign language. Furthermore, socio-cultural adjustment is especially complicated without linguistic ability (Hofstede, as cited in Brown, 2008). Along with the language factor, assimilation to the new academic culture also adds to the mental trauma. Academic success is at stake for young school-aged immigrants with both new culture and language, and also a significant contributor towards psychological stress (Caroll, 2005). Their language deficiency may also contribute to self-resistance in participating in the class discussion or extra-curricular activities.

Acculturation and the role of teachers. Acculturation and related conflicts are higher among
the school aged child immigrants when compared to the pre-school children. When immigrant children begin their school life, they may confront with several conflicts between the expectations of parents and their peers (Berry, 1997). Teachers can contribute to help ease the psychological dilemma that these young immigrants go through during this initial period. Sonderegger (2004) observed that acculturative stress can be relieved with the social support.
Since teachers are the member of the academic society that the students are in, teachers’ assistance may be of great aid for the school-aged immigrants to acculturate to an entirely new academic culture. Also, teachers can adopt different methods in the classroom to help ease the acculturative stress of these students. Hence, there is a necessity to study the methods that are used in the schools to meet the acculturation needs of the international students.

The motivation to embark on the present project also came from the fact that the Canadian schools are not multi-cultural in nature. It is a fact acknowledged by Shelley Green, the Superintendent of Greater Victoria School District. Shelley Green admitted that schools in Canada have to go a long way to gain the title multicultural (Shelley Green, personal communication, October 20, 2017). Even if Canada can be called as a multicultural country, how far the schools in Canada can prove to be multicultural is a big question. Moreover, it is highly important that the students who are new to the country should feel at ease at the school. Schooling and learning does not only involve content but also culture. International students should also get an opportunity to assimilate to the Canadian culture without much stress or strain. The best possible way in which this can be attained is to educate the teachers and parents of these children regarding the process of acculturation and to equip them with different strategies to address the acculturative issues. I believe that a workshop would help
both the teachers and parents of the children to understand the acculturative issues of international young students and to guide and motivate them accordingly.

Additionally, this project is also motivated from the understanding that even if research examining the acculturative stress among international students is vast, few pieces of literature was found dealing with the acculturative stress of school-aged children who are immigrants to
Canada. By doing a project and workshop, it will add to a greater understanding of the acculturation of young international students.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will be pertinent to the present project:

‘Academic culture’ is the common values and behavioral norms that are prevalent in a school environment. In this study, academic culture refers to the norms and values existing in Nanaimo Ladysmith Primary schools.

The term ‘acculturation’ refers to the process of learning and incorporating the values, beliefs, and language of a new culture. In the present study, acculturation is the process of adaptation of international students to the Canadian culture.

‘Acculturative stress’ is the psychological impact that the immigrant students suffer during the process of acculturation.

In the present project ‘barriers’ can be explained as the restriction or obstacles that make the acculturation process more difficult in the Nanaimo Ladysmith Primary schools.

‘Culture shock’ as referred in the present study is the feeling of confusion and anxiety amongst the young international students when they confront an alien culture, that is, in this context the Canadian culture.

A ‘multicultural school’ is a school that has ethnically and racially diverse student population
and supports each and every student’s culture and tradition.

The term ‘psychological dilemma’ refers to the mental stress students suffer during the process of acculturation.
‘Young international students’ are the children between the age of eight and ten years, and are either immigrants or dependents of immigrants to Canada, and goes to the primary schools in Nanaimo Ladysmith School District.

**Brief Overview of the Project**

The present project will address the acculturative issues faced by the young immigrant students. The project will also consider certain methods that the teachers and parents of these children can undertake to find solutions for their acculturation related issues. As part of the project, two workshops will be conducted: one will have teachers as the audience and the other will have the parents of immigrant children as its participants. The teachers attending the workshop will be those who work under the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District and have young immigrants as their students. The workshop will have multiple sessions and will be designed to occupy interactive sessions. Moreover, experts in the field of immigrant psychology will be invited as guest speakers to make the workshop more reliable and rich in the content.

The next chapter will discuss the existing research surrounding topics such as: acculturation, acculturation stress, acculturation strategies, and the role of parents and teachers towards child immigrant’s acculturation.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Although the experience of acculturation is common among people, articles that deal with acculturation, especially of young immigrants are not abundant. However, I was fortunate enough to find some important articles that deal with acculturation and related themes. The literature reviewed revealed that John W Berry (1988, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2005) is an influential thinker in regard to issues about acculturation are concerned; he has done several studies about acculturation, acculturative stress, and acculturation strategies. The contribution he has given to this psychological field of study is to be noted with high importance. Additionally, other researchers like Sonderegger (2004), Brown (2008), Suarez-Morales (2009), Ballard and Clanchy (1997), and Zvolensky (1999) have dedicated their time to contribute to the body of research regarding acculturation. This chapter reviews what the literature about acculturation, acculturation stress, acculturation strategies, and the role of teachers and parents are as far as the assimilation of new immigrants to any country is concerned.

Acculturation

According to Berry (2005), acculturation is an amalgamation of two course of actions that incorporates both cultural and psychological change. Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) wrote, “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the
original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p.149). Sonderegger, Barrett, and Creed (2004) have defined acculturation as people’s way of adjusting to an entirely new and novel way of living. The definition Berry (1994) has given for acculturation is also highly notable; Berry stated that acculturation is a development of change that people of any marginal ethnic group undergo at the time of their assimilation to an already existing and developed culture that
contributes the majority. Moreover, Berry (2005) has stated that acculturation incorporates understanding other people’s daily habits such as what they eat, what they speak, how they dress and interact with each other and so on. According to Berry, each of these will be different in every community.

Acculturation—or adaptation—in the words of Berry (2005) also refers to the comparatively constant changes that occur in people’s response to the demands of the external culture. According to the author, adaptation is multi-dimensional; psychological adaptation and sociological adaptation. Psychological adaptation refers to an individual’s mental and physical wellbeing, whereas sociological adaptation refers to the way in which an individual interacts and integrates with the new environment. In Berry’s opinion, people who integrate with the new cultural context seem to be well acculturated, and those who marginalize themselves will be least adapted.

**Acculturation Stress**

It is well understood that people get stressed when they are to change from their usual habits to a new and entirely different one. It is natural for any individual to feel under pressure while encountering new and unfamiliar situations. According to Berry and Kim (1988), acculturative stress can be termed an adjustment that takes place when two or more different culture encounter each other. However, Born (1970) stated that the stress related with acculturation
starts when people try to find a solution to the differences between their host culture and the culture of the new country to which they have immigrated.

In Born’s (1970) opinion, the acculturation process itself is escorted with a great deal of issues like discrimination, leaving their native place and friends and other beloved family.
members and so on. Moreover, the stress of learning a new language can count as one of the
topmost stressors (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996).

It is suggested by studies that the stress that is associated with acculturation can be a reason for
several delinquent behaviours (Vega, Gil, Warheit, Zimmerman & Apospori, 1993). Other than
the delinquency that youth may develop during their acculturation process due to the
acculturation stress, young people can also develop depression and dejection (Hovey, 1998). In
addition, Suarez-Morales and Lopez (2009) argued that the apprehension that children might
bear in relation to acculturation not only cause problems emotionally or mentally, but also
affects their performance academically. Sonderegger, Barrett and Creed (2004) have also
discussed the same idea in their work. They found that with the lack of social support, students
who are migrants and part of a minority group usually have difficulty identifying themselves
with the larger group, and consequently end up developing behavioural problems and low self-
respect.

There are many reasons that can account for acculturative stress. According to Suarez-Morales
and Lopez (2009), stress that is associated with immigration can incite a great deal of
unnecessary issues and concerns. This can extend until they are able to cope with the new
culture and the system. Moreover, the fact that they were not born inside the country and their
unfamiliarity with the spoken language there will boost the anxiety level in children. As a result,
instead of seeing the situation of learning a new language as a new and worthy opportunity, children will consider that an additional burden or more intimidating. Ponterotto, Baluch, and Carielli (1998) also found that crisis with acculturation and identifying themselves as a part of a minor group always triggers the anxiety of young immigrants, thereby contributing to poor mental health. Brown (2008) stated that the change in the usual practice can also cause acculturative stress. For example, among students who have come from an educational
background where only teachers speak and students listen; it will be very stressful to adjust to a situation where there is a high level of interaction between teacher and students.

In “Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures,” Berry (2005) stated there are two main reasons why acculturation always creates stress for migrants. Every migrant is trying to give relatively more importance to maintain his/her own culture and identity, and at the same time, wants to identify him/herself as a member of the larger group and to have contact with the people in the other group. Berry also argued that when the experiences of acculturation create problems, the phenomenon of acculturative stress occurs. The three phases associated with acculturation stress occur: culture shedding, culture learning and culture conflict.

Culture shedding happens when immigrant people try to acculturate to the new culture and as a result discard their own culture. When they have to get rid of the culture that they have practiced for years, it contributes to a great amount of stress. The second phase, that of culture learning, takes place when the immigrants try to learn about the new country’s culture and norms. It is then that the third phase arises, which is culture conflict. When these immigrants are confronted with the new culture and norms and at the same time have the influence of their own culture, conflict occurs. Berry (2005) argued that there is a high chance that people withdraw from the acculturation process as they want to get rid of the cultural conflict. The only option for these people to seek integration would be to get into a mutual adjustment between the two cultures so
that there will not be any more conflicts. This mutual accommodation can be termed multiculturalism.

our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, which we do not carry at the level of conscious awareness” (p.178). According to Brown (2008), there are many symptoms that are associated with culture shock such as sickness, low self-esteem, feeling isolated from the society, dejection, anxiety and so on. Moreover, strain can also be caused from the fact that they suffer racial discrimination, have to adjust to a different kind of weather, food habits, reduced social interaction and a very different education system. Ballard and Clanchy (1997) argued that when students enter a new school, they have a preconceived notion about the school based on what they had experienced in their previous academic institution. This happens irrespective of the fact that they have not seen or known about the new school. However, when they come to understand that their expectations do not match with the real experience, they develop stress and strain.

Storti (1990) also noted that since stress negatively influences immigrant students, they end up with anxiety, which does not allow them to concentrate on their studies, thereby resulting in increasing their level of panic. At this point, Ballard and Clanchy (1997) stated that this stress is not only caused by the fact that it is difficult for these new immigrants to cope with a new and different language, but also they have to assimilate to an entirely new academic culture, something that they might never have expected. Persuad (1993) also shared the same idea in regard to the acculturation stress of international students. The author commented that every
student is under pressure as far as academics are concerned irrespective of whether the student is international or from the same place. However, according to Persaud (1993), the immigrant students experience more stress because of the new culture they are confronted with and the need to master the new language. Kim (1988) also supported this statement by saying that encountering a new environment is always accompanied by the necessity to learn new behavior,
which in turn becomes the reason for stress and strain. According to Persuad (1993), this stress continues until the individual adjusts him/herself with the new environment.

In the study that Brown (2008) conducted, the stress that international students developed manifested in many problems such as lack of sleep, weight loss and dejection together with unhealthy physical and mental conditions.

**Acculturative Strategies**

Ballard and Clanchy (1997) commented that the greatest pressure on international students would be, especially in the first three months, the ability to understand what others say and at the same time to convince others what they say and mean. Moreover, the academic success of the international students is solely dependent on the integration of the rules of the academic culture (Blue, 1993). Hence, strategies to adapt to the new academic culture and environment should be developed.

Berry (1997) has termed acculturation strategy as a way to handle the issues of acculturation. According to Berry (1997), often people try to use different strategies in respect to two major acculturative problems. The main issues Berry considers are the necessity to maintain the host culture and the importance of getting into contact and participating with the new culture group. Maintaining a balance between these issues will produce stress in individuals. It is in this scenario that Berry (2005) talked about four different acculturation strategies that can deal with
these issues. The author has named the strategies as assimilation strategy, separation alternative, integration and finally marginalization. The first strategy, the assimilation strategy, happens when people do not want to retain their host culture and want to be members of the larger society. Here, people get rid of their existing culture and identify themselves with the new society that contributes the larger share of that community.
Assimilation can happen in two different ways. People can assimilate to a new culture in their own interest or be forced by someone else. When individuals opt for the assimilation strategy, the process can be compared to the idea of a “melting pot.” Whereas, if they decide to assimilate to the new culture because of someone else’s demand, the metaphor for that would be that of a “pressure cooker” (Berry, 2005). However, Krishnan and Berry (1992) stated that the best and the most convenient way to acculturate would be to choose the assimilation strategy. On the contrary, when people want to retain their host culture and do not want to be a part of the larger community, the second strategy, called the separation alternative, occurs. It happens when people do not interact with the people outside of their host culture group and completely reject the new environment. That said, there are groups of people who want to maintain both the cultures and when these people try to accomplish this task, integration happens.

Integration, according to Berry (2005), can be called multiculturalism. Berry and Kalin (1995) also agreed to this point. They advocated that integration is only possible in societies that are multicultural, with several psychological pre-conditions. The pre-conditions that these authors talked about are the society’s approval of cultural diversity and comparatively less discrimination, racism, and the like. The last strategy as described by Berry (2005) happens when individuals show no interest in maintaining their heritage culture and participating in the new environment. This tendency of people showing little interest in both these cultures is
defined as marginalization (Berry, 2005). Berry also found that people who go through the
integration strategy suffer the least stress, whereas those who adopt marginalization undergo the
most stress.

Regarding the acculturation strategies, Berry (2005) has also conducted a study on
psychological acculturation:
Psychological adaptation to acculturation is considered to be a matter of learning a new 
behavioral repertoire that is appropriate for the new cultural context. This also requires some 
culture shedding to occur (the unlearning of aspects of one’s previous repertoire that are no 
longer appropriate); and it may be accompanied by some moderate culture conflict where 
incompatible behaviors create difficulties for the individual. (p. 13)

In that study, Berry (2005) found that like everything else, individual differences also play a 
great role in the acculturation process. Berry stated that no single person acculturates in the 
same way; instead, the strategies and time everyone adopts depend on their individuality. These 
individual differences are still visible even if people who try to acculturate live in the same 
acculturative community.

Other than individual differences, the communities to which people want to acculturate also 
determine the ease of acculturation. Berry (2005) called the community to which people 
acculturate “the society of settlement.” According to Berry, certain societies of settlement have 
become used to the immigration procedures and might have been formed by immigration over a 
long period of time. Here, because the immigration process has become very common to the 
people of that community and they have been experiencing this historically, existing members 
of the settlement society would extend a helping hand to the new immigrants. The societies of 
this kind will motivate the new immigrants by supporting them through cultural exchange and
helping them to identify themselves as one among their society. Moreover, they assist the new immigrants to integrate by extending social support by being multicultural both in the society and in academics. In addition, the multiculturalism these societies provide can also be visible in their health care field where they act according to the cultural diversity.
Another approach that Berry (2005) discovered in regard to acculturation strategies is related to appropriate conceptualization. Berry argued that culture conflict is sure to happen when people are in the process of acculturation. As a result, individuals may encounter several problems that are controllable in nature. Here, people need to understand the fact that it is definite and is supposed to take place. Instead of blaming the situation or getting unmotivated, people need to accept that acculturation is not an easy process. Instead, people need to study the situation and encounter them irrespective of whatever may be the outcome they have to continuously strive for assimilation. Berry believes this is another way of acculturating, first encountering with all the difficulties, and later succeeding in the situation over time.

**Role of Teachers and Parents**

As we have now talked about acculturation, acculturation stress, and acculturation strategies, it is now the turn to see the role of parents and teachers to help the acculturation process of child immigrants. From all the review discussed, the process of acculturation is not stress free, rather accompanied with a great deal of anxiety or stress. Moreover, the strategies to deal with acculturation and acculturation stress are not simple or easy for children to understand and act accordingly. It is relevant that these child immigrants, especially at the initial stage of acculturation, should receive a high amount of support and assistance from the family and society.
The same idea was reiterated by McNeil, Kee, and Zvolensky (1999) when they advocated that every single individual develops their cultural self during their interaction with and the information they gather from society and family. Sonderegger, Barrett and Creed (2004) also suggested that when children feel good about their own selves, the chances for them to
develop stress and anxiety are low. According to them, instead, children will develop more self-esteem and self-confidence.

Suarez-Morales and Lopez (2009) have commented that it is advisable that children can make someone in their home a role model as far as acculturation is concerned. The family members can show young children how to behave in a culturally different society and maintain a balance between the heritage culture and the culture of the society of settlement. Having a role model in the family whom they can follow and compare will help in reducing their level of stress associated with acculturation. Moreover, Phinney and Chavira (1995) advocated that certain parenting strategies can also help children fight the stress related to cultural adaptation. According to these writers, when parents teach children to socialize with others, even if cultural differences remain, that will boost the self-esteem and self-confidence of the young people.

Moreover, they opined that it will also mold the youth to face racial discrimination and all the more, to be proud about their own culture and heritage. On the contrary, Berry (2005) commented that both parents and children have different opinions about the mutual relationship as far as acculturation is concerned.

However, having said that parents can help their children acculturate to a new culture without causing much mental strain, it should be noted that parents have already very well coped with their acculturation process and are not under stress themselves. Zivcic (1993) questioned the
ability of parents who suffer from stress and anxiety in supporting their kids to face the stress related with acculturation. Moreover, Zivcic added that instead of providing support, parents who undergo stress and strain would act as an extra source of stress for their children. This evidence suggests that, in the same way immigrant children are assisted to acculturate, the parents should also be provided with guidance and assistance. When parents are educated about the right way of
acculturating, they would easily be able to influence their kids and assist them to identify the best strategy for their acculturation process. Moreover, parents should also have the right sense of what their children go through when they try to acculturate. All these thoughts led me to design a workshop for parents so that they understand what acculturative issues young immigrant children encounter and what strategies they can adopt to help their kids overcome those issues.

Other than the help provided by parents, immigrant students also need to get assistance in school to get acculturated to the academic culture of the school. School is a social place where students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds meet and interact. In a study that Sonderegger, Barrett and Creed (2004) conducted, it was evident that the primary school children who received poor social support and interaction showed low self-esteem and self-confidence. Their study also revealed that compared to adults, children tend to acculturate faster to create peer support. Bearing this idea in mind, it is highly important that children receive a great amount of social support. It is important because, in the opinion of Ponterotto, Baluch, and Carelli (1998), the support of society, in which students are members, has a great role in relieving the anxiety level and helplessness. As that is the case, immigrant children should receive guidance and assistance at the school so that they will not be overly pressured and feel dejected or separated. Additionally, Furnham (1997) stated that it is highly important that
schools know and understand about the journey of the international students and arrange, in advance, ways in which children can overcome the stress associated with it. I believe the best person to guide students at the school would be their teachers, since teachers interact with students more than any other person in the school.

The study Brown (2008) conducted also reiterated the idea of teachers’ role in helping students to integrate with an alien academic culture. Brown, through his study, revealed the role
of teachers to ease the acculturation process. The students in his study were able to meet the academic expectations with the help of their teacher. Even more, the students who struggled to achieve success due to linguistic difficulties gradually overcame the distress with the help of their teacher and admitted the support of their teacher through hugs and kisses (Brown, 2008).

This chapter discussed what various experts in the field of acculturation studies talked about the term acculturation, acculturation stress and acculturation strategies. It was understood that the process of acculturation is different to person to person and the time each individual takes for acculturation also depends on his or her individuality. Similarly, the strategies people opt to acculturate also differ with people’s choice. However, there are certain strategies that can prove to be the best as far as acculturation is concerned irrespective of the age or culture of individuals.

Moreover, the literature suggested that parents and teachers can have a great role toward immigrant children to assist and motivate them throughout their acculturation procedure.

The next chapter will discuss about the procedures and methods I adopted to create this project. In addition, it will also give a detailed overview of the workshop for teachers and parents.
Chapter Three: Procedures and Methods

As part of the literature review, I explored different articles that discussed the mental stress that international students go through during the primary stage of acculturation. Additionally, it is important to recognize that both parents and teachers have roles to make the acculturation process an easy one for these kids. Soon after, I realized the contribution my work could make towards improving this situation.

Initially, I planned on a research topic. I wanted to interview some international students and their teachers to understand the experience that individuals undergo, realizing the assimilation process causes stress not only to the children, but also to the teachers. My intention to interview these groups was to receive a better understanding of the experience of the acculturation process and to understand its difficulties. Realizing the difficulties of interviewing young immigrants, I changed my decision and decided instead to prepare a survey questionnaire to children. The planned survey questionnaire had five different statements related to their acculturation process in the classroom and their feelings could be marked down with the help of smiley-face Likert scale. Originally, I had also planned to collect both quantitative and qualitative data; the Box-plot method was to be used to analyze the quantitative data collected from the survey whereas the qualitative data gathered from the interview was to be analyzed and further be coded to look for themes. The proposed sample for my study would have been a
convenience sampling of primary school teachers and young international students from Mountain View Elementary School and Ecole Quarterway Elementary School.

However, the procedure to get to the international students for the survey seemed to be filled with challenges given the language barriers of the consenting adults, the complexities
involved in ethics approval, and some barriers in regard to connecting with schools in an
environment that was, as international student myself, unfamiliar to me.

A discussion with my supervisor gave me new insights and how I create a product to support the
participants that I cared about; this developed my interest in a project rather than a thesis. I
realized that it was not only teachers and students who need assistance in the assimilation
process, but also the parents of the children who require it. The process of adaptation should
begin from home and the people to first motivate and support these children are their parents. As
a result, I proposed to conduct a workshop for both teachers and parents to make the
acculturation process easier for the immigrant students.

The project will have its own contribution to teachers and parents of the immigrant children.
The workshops planned as part of the project will act as a guide for both teachers and parents.
They will be able to understand helpful and hindering actions in the process of assimilation.
Additionally, they will have an insight about the role they have to play in their children’s road to
assimilation to Canadian education and culture. Furthermore, since only a few studies were done
on the issues of acculturative stress among the young international students specific to Canada (e
ven though the number of immigrants to Canada is increasing year by year), this project will
provide a good reference for readers to identify and understand the struggles that young
immigrants experience during the acculturation process, thus reducing the gap in the literature.
Description of the Project Design

This project will examine the acculturative stress that the young international students experience during the initial stage of acculturation. The goal of the project would be to assess the stress and worries that the young immigrant students undergo at schools during their initial stage.
of adaptation to the new academic culture and to better support those students. The project aims
to understand and develop strategies that the teachers and parents can use to ease these
children’s acculturative stress. As parents of these children have a major role to play to help the
children assimilate to Canadian education system and culture, they will also participate in the
project as one of the main audience. Workshops will be conducted as part of the project in
which the acculturation problems of international students will be discussed and measures to
address these issues will be developed.

There will be two different workshops; one for teachers and the other for parents of the
international students. Each workshop will have different sessions; workshop for teachers will
have five sessions whereas workshop for parents will have six sessions out of which one session
will accommodate students also.

Procedures and Methods

I was very definite that the design and the content of the workshop should be helpful to the
participants to achieve the real purpose why it is conducted. Because I was unfamiliar with this
method of sharing information, I worked with my supervisor and explored what a workshop is, d
iscussed possible formats and content information, and how it could be constructed—and the
importance awareness of audience. This helped to build a base for my workshop to imagine and
visualize how it could be presented and what it could look like. After I understood what a
workshop was, I started searching for sample workshops so that I can shape my own.

Once clearly understood the format of the workshop, I started to delve through the content. The literature I read was of great help at this time. I could make the content of the workshop with evidence so that the participants will not be misinformed about any single thing discussed in the workshop. Exploring literature enabled me to understand the role both parents
and teachers of young immigrants play as far as the acculturation process of young immigrants are concerned.

Suarez-Morales and Lopez (2009) have noted that it is always great that if children could learn the lessons of acculturation from parents. According to these writers, parents acting as role models would help children to relieve the acculturation stress. Phinney and Chavira (1995) also supported the idea of parents’ influence on children’s acculturation. Brown (2008) advocated that teachers also play an important role in the acculturation process of young immigrants. The study he conducted revealed how far teachers can motivate and influence international students during the initial stage of their academic journey. Similarly, Furnham (1997) commented that schools should always track the international students’ progress in the academics and also their well being. The thoughts of these researchers helped me to decide the audience of the workshop. I decided that having a great role in the acculturation process, both parents and teachers of international immigrants need a training to ease these students’ acculturation.

I also recognized the importance of the material to be interactive and audience centered. Therefore, I have incorporated certain videos and cartoons related to the content. It was not a tiresome task to find the visuals for the workshop with the help of technology. Importantly, I also realized that the presence of a resource person would make my workshop more informative and helpful. Thus, I decided to meet the mentors at Multicultural Society, Nanaimo, to
participate in the workshop and provide guidance to the participants. It was with great pleasure and enthusiasm that one of them agreed to render a guidance speech for the workshop participants.

The following session will give an overall idea about the audience, environment, equipment used and finally an overview of the workshop in detail.
Description of the Audience

There will be two different audiences for the designed workshops. One is designed towards primary school teachers and the other is designed for parents of young international students. In the last session of the workshop, the international students themselves will also participate. Currently, the workshop is designed with a particular population in mind. The teachers and parents will be from Mountain View Elementary School and EcoleQuarterway Elementary school. These schools come under Nanaimo Ladysmith School District (School District #68) on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The international student and parent population in this group will include immigrants from any nation other than English speaking countries. Moreover, the proposed student population will be in the age group of eight to ten years old. That said, I believe that the basic information of this workshop could be edited and shaped to meet the needs of other teacher and parent populations from other school districts on the Island.

Environment and Equipment

The workshop will be conducted in a calm and peaceful environment. A conference hall or large meeting room will be arranged where a minimum of 40 people can be accommodated with ease and comfort. Chairs would be arranged in semi-circle to increase the intimacy and eye contact among the participants. The room will have excellent lighting and cooling/heating facility accordingly. Other than the comfort of the meeting room, it will also be equipped very
well for the smooth functioning of the workshop. There will be a projector to present the power
point presentations and videos. Good audio-visual facilities would be arranged for better
listening and comprehension. The participants of these workshops will be provided with
refreshments at the end of each session. Moreover, child care service would be provided on site to support parents.

Workshop Overview

The purpose of the workshop is to create awareness among the teachers and parents of the young immigrant students. It will discuss the issues the immigrant young children undergo at school and home. Additionally, the possible strategies to overcome these issues will also be a subject matter of the workshop. The workshop will be conducted separately for teachers and parents. It is important to conduct the workshops separately due to the differences in the audience. While the group of teachers forms more formal in nature, parents will be less formal. Even their roles in the students’ acculturation are different. Teachers and parents influence immigrant children differently. Moreover, the strategies employed at school and home would be far different. All the more, the tone of the content is also different.

The content of teachers’ workshop will be more academic in tone and will include research supported evidence. Whereas, the parents would all be second language speakers, and hence the content for their workshop will be less formal and easy to follow. Workshop for teachers will include five sessions of ninety minutes conducted on a five-week schedule. Every session will happen at the same conference hall and at the same time. Similarly, parents’ workshop will also take place in the same room every time. Moreover, there will be six sessions in the workshop for
parents out of which one session will include the immigrant students. All the sessions will be
activity oriented and audience centered rather than following a lecture method.

**Workshop for teachers.**

**Session one: Introductory session.** The workshop will begin with an introductory session. In
this session, a personal introduction about me and my educational background will be given.
The motivation for doing the project and the purpose of the workshop will also be discussed.

During this session, every participant will get a chance to meet and become comfortable with other participants. By the end of the session, every participant will get an idea about the purpose of the workshop and why their role is important in the acculturation process, and a comfortable community built to begin the workshop process.

**Session two: Understanding the term acculturation.** The second session will provide the participants the real sense of the term and experience of acculturation. All the participants will share what they understand the term acculturation is. After everyone discusses their understanding, a definition for the term will be evolved from their response. Followed by creating a definition, handouts containing cartoons that depict acculturation definition will be handed over to the teacher participants and the definition of the term acculturation will be explained further in detail with the help of literature and videos. With a reflection on the term and their understanding, the session will be concluded.

**Session three: Challenges to acculturation.** Participants will discuss the challenges they witness in their classroom and the feelings of teachers when they see these children under pressure will be discussed. It is highly important that teachers understand the challenges that these students undergo as to find a resolution. Understanding the challenges will let the teachers know the source of stress for the immigrant children and help them accordingly. Each teacher
will share the experience of dealing with immigrant students. From every one’s response, different challenges including academic challenges and social challenges will be identified. A power point about challenges of acculturation of young immigrants will be shown in this session.

Also, the experiences documented in literature will also be reviewed. The whole group will reflect about the challenges and its reasons by the end of this session.
**Session four: Developing Strategies.** This can be considered as one of the most important sessions of the workshop since it deals with developing strategies to address the acculturation issues. Moreover, a resource person in the field of immigrant psychology will be leading a discussion which is the highlight of this session. As discussed, in this session, everyone will work towards finding different methods to solve the acculturation difficulties of the young immigrant students. For that, all the participants will be divided into groups and each group will brainstorm possible methods to solve the issues discussed in the last session. After every group presents their charts, the guest speaker will address the whole audience and discuss some other options that teachers could follow in the classrooms to help immigrant students to assimilate to Canadian culture. The guest speaker will be an eminent personality who deals with the immigrants to Canada and will also be a recognized officer from the Multi-Cultural Society.

**Session five: Concluding session.** Being the last session for teachers, it will start with asking what they gained from the last sessions. Then, all of them will be divided into groups to present role plays. Every group will be given the freedom to choose any of the acculturation difficulties of student immigrants to create a role play. Teachers will act the roles of both teachers and students. The strategies developed will be applied in the role play. The session and the workshop will end by extending thanks to all the participants for attending and spending their valuable time.
Workshop for Parents.

Session one: Introductory session. The first session will be very similar to that of the introductory session for teachers’ workshop. This will also contain an introduction about me and the project, the inspiration for the project and finally the reason why it is done. The session will
build the community for the rest of the workshops and allow parents to understand their role in their child’s acculturation process.

Session two: On the way to assimilate. The intention and purpose of the second session is to gather information regarding how the immigrants consider their assimilation process. Canada being a new and different country for them, the workshop will begin with their feelings and the experience that they believe their children are having. The session will be more of a discussion rather than identifying challenges or defining solutions.

Session three: Challenges to assimilate. The third session of the workshop for parents will discuss about the challenges the children undergo during their initial school days. For that purpose, participants will be divided into groups. Each group will create a poster regarding the acculturation difficulties of immigrant young children. Once all the posters are posted or exhibited to the whole group, the major challenges among all the ones listed will be identified. Identifying the major challenges being the main purpose of this session, it will be concluded with a reflection of parents.

Session four: Supporting kids for acculturation. The session will start with a discussion about the identified challenges in the immigrant children. Parents will be provided an awareness about the importance of finding solutions to resolve the assimilation difficulties of their children. Moreover, there will be a PowerPoint presentation with the help of literature dealing about the
strategies for reducing acculturation difficulties. Even more, this session will host an expert advisor in the field of immigrant psychology (from Multi-cultural society) to deliver a class on how to train these children and how parents should support and motivate them.

**Session five: I am new.** This session will prove to be one of the very important sessions of the whole workshop as immigrant children also participate in this session along with their
parents. As the workshop is ultimately for them, I strongly believe they should also join the workshop so that the workshop will be complete in all the sense. The children participating will talk about their new school and their friends and simply introduce themselves and their school life. A video entitled “I Am New” will be played as part of the session. The video is very helpful for any children who feel like stranger or new to Canada. The video also shows how to make new friends and deal with unlikely situations. The video is supposed to entertain the children at the same time being very informative too.

Further, these children will be divided into groups and be asked to draw what they think and consider their new school is. This session will be very informative for me and for parents to get a sense how children’s acculturation process.

Session six: Concluding session. The session will start with the discussion about the drawings that the children drew in the previous session. Further, participants will be divided into groups and be given different scenarios. Parents will enact these scenarios with the information they had before and what they gained from the workshop. The role play will depict the acculturation issues of students and the strategies that parents can adopt to resolve them at home and to boost the children’s emotional and mental strength by which they can be motivated and conquer their fear or shyness. Once every role play is done, all the participants will be thanked for their kind participation and valuable time by extending a vote of thanks.
This chapter discussed in detail about the process that I went through to design the project.

Moreover, it also provided a detailed overview of the workshop planned as part of this project.

The next chapter will explain—and provide the detailed content and lesson plans of the workshop.
Chapter Four: The Workshop

Once the project and the workshop were designed, my next task was to create a detailed script for the workshop planned. Before going to the details of the workshop, it is necessary to know what is meant by the term ‘workshop’ and why it is good to conduct a workshop for teachers and parents rather than a lecture or meeting. When it comes to the definition of workshop, it can be said that it is another way of training. However, the term training does not mean it should be all crowded with lectures and demonstration; instead workshop is an interactive training, where participants have an equal role with the trainer or the speaker.

By conducting a workshop for both teachers and parents, I intend to exchange the information what literature has provided regarding acculturation, acculturation stress, acculturation strategies, and the role of teachers and parents during the initial stage of acculturation of young student immigrants. Moreover, this workshop can also act as a platform where the participants can share what all acculturation related problems they have confronted in young immigrant children and how they managed to help children get rid of those issues. Exchanging that information and developing new strategies based on the participants’ experience is a key factor as far as this workshop is concerned.

The following information in this chapter provides the actual workshop materials that a presenter would need:
Objectives of the Workshop

The objectives of this workshop are as follows:

1. Participants will get the sense of what is acculturation and why it is associated with stress and strain.
2. Participants will have a platform to discuss their queries regarding acculturation of young immigrants.

3. Participants will discover the challenges to acculturation.

4. Participants will develop new strategies based on their experience and the information from literature.

5. Participants will become more confident with the resolutions developed at the workshop by the time they complete the workshop.

**Sessions**

The workshop for teachers and parents will happen separately due to the differences in the participants’ needs and situation. Each workshop will have different sessions. The workshop for teachers will have five sessions whereas the workshop for parents will have six sessions.

**Workshop for teachers.**

1. Introductory session

2. Understanding the term acculturation

3. Acculturation and stress

4. Developing strategies
5. Concluding session

Workshop for parents.

1. Introductory session
2. On the way to assimilate
3. Challenges to assimilate
4. Supporting kids for acculturation
5. “I Am New”
6. Concluding session

**Time and Set Up**

All the sessions will happen once in a week and it will last for ninety minutes. Hence, teachers will attend 450 minutes of workshop while the parents spend 540 minutes. The workshop will take place in a big meeting room where the tables and chairs would be kept in a semi-circle pattern. The room would be well lit and with heating and cooling facilities. Refreshments will be served on one side of the room so that participants can have access to them any time they need.
Workshop for Teachers: Session #1

“Introductory Session”

Objective:

- Introduce the reason for this workshop
- Discuss the purpose and the importance of this workshop
- Make the participants realize their role in immigrant students’ lives

Handout:

#1.1- An outline of the whole workshop with every detail. (Appendix A)

Activity:

- Introduce myself and my educational background
- Talk about my journey as an international student:
  - Describe the first days of my course as an international student
  - Describe how I struggled to be a part of my new university and classmates
  - Describe challenges I faced to understand the academic culture
  - Describe how I struggled to learn the food habits and so on
- Provide detailed description about the project:
Share motivation for the project

- Explain how I got motivation from the discussion with my landlord

- Explain the story of landlord’s eight year old daughter’s acculturation process and her reluctance to go to school

- Share the difficulties my landlord faced as a mom of international student

- Explore the landlord’s opinion, Canadian school system as not “multi-cultural”
- Define and discuss our understanding of the term

- Explore what the literature says

  - Discuss what Born (1970) stated about acculturation. Born (1970) states that the stress related with acculturation starts when people try to find a solution to the differences between their host culture and the culture of the new country to which they have immigrated.

  - Address Fuertes and Westbrook (1996) comments regarding the stress of learning a new language can count as one of the topmost stressors (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996).

  - Engage Suarez-Morales and Lopez (2009) argument that the apprehension that children might bear in relation to acculturation not only cause problems emotionally or mentally, but also affects their performance academically.

- Describe the purpose of the workshop

  - The workshop is designed with an intention to provide both teachers and parents of international young immigrants to help these kids to acculturate to Canadian system with more ease and little effort

- Participant introductions:
• Teachers will be asked to introduce themselves with their name, where they teach, the number of international students in their class, what expectations/goals they have from participating this workshop. Teachers share their role in helping the international students
At this point, teachers are asked to share what they consider their role is in assisting the international students.

Teachers discuss what they have been doing so far to help immigrant students acculturate to Canadian system of education.

- Share the handouts

- Distribute #1.1- an outline of the whole workshop with every detail. (See: Appendix A)

- Handouts will be provided to every participant and will explain how the whole workshop will be carried out

- Closing Activity

  - Key takeaway points – check out.

- END OF SESSION
Workshop for Teachers: Session #2

“Understanding the Term Acculturation”

Objective:

- Help participants understand the term acculturation

Handout:

#2.1- Cartoon depicting acculturation (Appendix B)

Video:

- Struggling to Adapt: One Syrian Refugee Family’s Story

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CFYoJQKM7A&t=320s

Activity:

- Create a rapport with the participants by asking what they understand about the term ‘acculturation’

  - Begin the session with an informal interaction
  - Ask teachers about the term ‘acculturation’
  - Teachers give free response / conversation
• Derive a definition for the term acculturation from the response of the participants

• From the response of teachers, information will be categorized (white board or charts)

• Will accommodate everyone’s response by generalizing statements

• All the points will be combined to form a working definition

• The newly developed definition will be studied for better understanding the term acculturation

• Give the handouts to the participants
• #2.1- Cartoon depicting acculturation (See: Appendix B)

• After deriving a definition of acculturation, the prepared handout contains pictures that deal with acculturation will be handed out to participants

• A discussion will be generated with what they feel and understand about the pictures

• Learn more about the term acculturation with the help of literature:

  • According to Berry (2005), acculturation is an amalgamation of two courses of actions that incorporates both cultural and psychological change.

  • According to Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936), “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p.149).

  • Sonderegger, Barrett, and Creed (2004) have defined acculturation as people’s way of adjusting to an entirely new and novel way of living.

  • Berry (2005) has stated that acculturation incorporates understanding other people’s daily habits such as what they eat, what they speak, how they dress and interact with each other and so on. According to Berry, each of these will be different in every community.
- Small group conversation about how this information helps inform/challenge/enrich teaching and interactions with our students.

- Share as a whole group.

- Show the video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CFYoJQKM7A&t=320s)
that explains the struggles an immigrant family may go through so that teachers clearly have an idea about the mental state of students in their classroom

- Let the teachers watch the video
- Discuss what they felt after watching the video
- Discuss, in their view, the right and wrong approach the family had towards acculturation
- Connect the learning to their own experiences—and share.
- Wind up the session with the participant’s reflections about the term acculturation.
- Circle conversation with take away points or final reflections
- END OF SESSION
Workshop for Teachers: Session #3

“Acculturation and Stress”

Objective:

- Discuss the stress related to acculturation and its sources

Handout:

#3.1- Printed copy of the power point presentation (Appendix C)

Video:

- Immersion: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6Y0HAjLKyi

Activity:

- Create rapport
  - The session will start with a “check-in” (informal discussion about how they are, how was the last week, any new or motivating experiences to share with the group)
  - Then, there will be a recollection of the last workshop session to maintain continuity
  - The main points discussed in the last session will be repeated such as the
definition of the term acculturation and what the term means

- Discussion on the stress international young immigrants face
  
  - At this point, teachers talk about the international students in their class
  
  - It is made sure that the identity of students are not revealed at any point
  
  - Every participant will discuss the stress that the immigrant students in their class demonstrate
• From everyone’s response, information will be classified and generalized (whiteboard or charts)

• Major and common stress or behavior pattern will be identified

• The duration of the stress related symptoms will also be a discussion topic

• Participants share their experience of how these students perform in academics

• Show the video how a Spanish child suffers because he does not know the language of the new country to which he has immigrated

• After showing the video the response of participants are elicited – partner talk

• Partner to large group - participants share what they think the teacher in the video could have done to help the student

• Discussion on how they evaluate the stress of the immigrant student in the video

• Give the handout to the participants (#3.1- Printed copy of the power point presentation. See: Appendix C)

• Show the PowerPoint about acculturative stress

• Discussion on the PowerPoint will be generated

• Reflection
- Participants will reflect on the discussion on acculturative stress: check-out conversation.

- END OF SESSION
Workshop for Teachers: Session #4

“Developing Strategies”

Objective:

- Develop strategies to make acculturation easy and possible
- Provide information on acculturation strategies by an expert in immigrant psychology

Handouts:

#4.1- plain charts

#4.2- printed copies of PowerPoint (Appendix D)

Activity:

- Check-in
  - Session will start by generating an informal interaction
  - It will be followed by a discussion on acculturative stress and the importance to identify the sources of stress
- Strategies to acculturation:
  - Participants will be divided into groups for further activities. One group will have four to five members in it. Provide blank white charts to the groups
- Group brainstorming session regarding the strategies teachers can do to make the acculturation of young immigrants more supported and less time consuming

- Discuss and transfer their ideas into the chart provided: chart strategies that can ease the acculturation process

  - Will encourage the participants to generate specific strategies rather than generalizing them

- Participants present their charts to the whole group
• Everyone will have the opportunity to go through the charts of other groups

• A discussion will follow:
  
  • to identify the most common strategy recommended by teachers
  
  • to identify the benefits of those strategies
  
  • to understand how to use these strategies in the classrooms

• Show the PowerPoint regarding acculturation strategies (See: Appendix D)

  • There will be a detailed explanation all through the PowerPoint presentation

• Guest Presentation:

  • After the presentation, the resource person from Multi-Cultural Society will address the audience

    • The guest speaker will talk about acculturation strategies that can be employed in schools so that teachers can use them to help the acculturation process of young immigrants

    • Time will be provided for a question-answer session with the guest speaker so that teachers can converse with them if they need any clarification on what the speaker has said.

• Reflection about the session

  • The session will be winded up with the reflection of participants on the
strategies discussed the day

• END OF SESSION
Workshop for Teachers: Session #5

“Concluding Session”

Objective:

- Reflection on what has been acquired from the workshop

Activity:

- Final Check-in
  - How are they doing? How was the journey together? Anything inspiring to share with the whole group?

- Participant Role Play: Participants present role plays depicting the acculturation which includes the acculturative stress and the strategies discussed in the workshop
  - Participants will be divided into groups. The groups will be made randomly by numbering the participants.
  - Each group can select any acculturative stress that have been dealt in the workshop and an appropriate strategy that they consider as the best way to resolve the stress of immigrant students
  - After the presentation of each group, there will be time allocated to provide
feedback to the team members.

- The role plays will be evaluated for the better understanding of its scope in classrooms.

- Each group will be appreciated for the effort they have put in for the role play.

- Participants share their reflection about the workshop.
• Every participant will be given an opportunity to express what they think the benefits of the workshop was.

• They will be encouraged to point out the draw backs of the workshop and to provide alternatives that could have done.

• The response of audience will be considered highly important as to better organize the workshops next time.

• Vote of thanks

• Will extend thanks to all the participants for attending the workshop regardless of the busy schedule they have.

• END OF SESSION
Workshop for Parents: Session #1

“Introductory Session”

Objective:

- Introduce the reason for this workshop
- Discuss the purpose and the importance of this workshop
- Make the participants realize their role in immigrant students’ life

Handout:

#1.1- An outline of the whole workshop with every detail. (Appendix E)

Activity:

- Introduce myself and my educational background
- Talk about my journey as an international student:
  - Describe the first days of my course as an international student
  - Describe how I struggled to be a part of my new university and classmates
  - Describe challenges I faced to understand the academic culture
  - Describe how I struggled to learn the food habits and so on
- Provide detailed description about the project:
• Share motivation for the project
  
  • Explain how I got motivation from the discussion with my landlord

  • Explain the story of landlord’s eight year old daughter’s acculturation process and her reluctance to go to school

  • Share the difficulties my landlord faced as a mom of international student

  • Explore the landlord’s opinion, Canadian school system as not “multi-cultural”
• Define and discuss our understanding of the term

• Explore what the literature says

  • Discuss what Born (1970) stated about acculturation. Born (1970) states that the stress related with acculturation starts when people try to find a solution to the differences between their host culture and the culture of the new country to which they have immigrated.

  • Address Fuertes and Westbrook (1996) comments regarding the stress of learning a new language can count as one of the topmost stressors (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996).

  • Engage Suarez-Morales and Lopez (2009) argument that the apprehension that children might bear in relation to acculturation not only cause problems emotionally or mentally, but also affects their performance academically.

• Describe the purpose of the workshop

  • The workshop is designed with an intention to provide both teachers and parents of international young immigrants to help these kids to acculturate to Canadian system with more ease and little effort

• Parental Introductions
• Parents familiarize themselves by telling their names, the country they come from, how long they have been in Canada, how they feel to be in an entirely new country and so on

• Parents share their current understanding of their role in helping their kids to acculturate easily
At this point, after creating a community, parents discuss what they think is their role in helping their children to acculturate

- Share the handouts

- Distribute #1.1- an outline of the whole workshop with every detail. (See: Appendix A)

- Handouts will be provided to every participant and will explain how the whole workshop will be carried out

- Closing Activity

  - Key takeaway points – check out.

- END OF SESSION
Workshop for Parents: Session #2

“On the Way to Assimilate”

Objective:

• To understand the acculturation process of immigrants and especially their children

Video:

• How Immigrant Learns to Assimilate into Foreign Culture: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8TLY-iRVww](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8TLY-iRVww)

Activity:

• Create rapport with parents

  • The session will begin with an informal interaction (a check-in):

    • The participants will be asked about how they are doing in the new country, how is the weather that day, how they find it different from their own country’s weather and the like

    • The participants will be asked if they have any new experience to share with the whole group
• Show the video on how immigrants can help themselves to assimilate better

  • The video will be shown in a calm and quiet atmosphere

  • The video is all about how an immigrant succeeded to acculturate in to an entirely new country

  • The video will provide motivation to the participants regarding their acculturation

  • A general discussion will be generated once the video is shown regarding what they think about the possibilities of the video in their life

• Building Background – Adult Experiences of Acculturation
• Ask participants how they feel coming to a new country: an opportunity will be provided for each and every participant to speak their experience of acculturation to Canada.

(Depending on group dynamics and size, this conversation will happen in partners, small groups, or with the entire group.)

Participants will be asked to share the advantages as well as the drawbacks of coming to Canada in their opinion.

• They will encouraged to consider the ways their life in their host country and the new country are similar, different, and the joys and challenges of those.

• Consideration of Child Experiences of Acculturation

• Parents are asked about their children regarding:
  • How they like the new country
  • The challenges they are facing in the host country or their friends and family
  • Their experience with the new weather and climate
  • How they feel about the new and different food habits

• A discussion will happen on what parents think about how their kids are doing
in the new country

- Every participant will be given chance to talk their mind

- Session Check-out: take away points.

- END OF SESSION
Workshop for Parents: Session #3

“Challenges to Assimilate”

Objective:

- Identify the challenges immigrant kids face during acculturation

Handouts:

#3.1- Plain charts

Activity:

- Session Check-In:
  - Session will begin with a little formal interaction about the what they did the last week, how was the weather like, anything interesting happened in their life and so on
  - Identification of the challenges they faced during their children’s acculturation process
  - Clear instruction would be given to the participants regarding the discussion
  - They can speak about any situation including
    - The weather
    - Language
    - Food habits
- The routine difference

- Changes in the type of accommodation and the like

- Response will be elicited from everyone

- Poster Making

  - Divide the participants into groups

    - Parents will be divided into groups of four or five people
- Groups will be decided based on the nationality

- In cases where there are only one or two members from any particular country, they will be allowed to join any other group of their interest

- A team leader will be assigned by voting

- Every group will be provided with blank white charts

  - They will be asked to brainstorm before they attempt to make the posters

- The team leader will be advised to ensure everyone’s participation

- Participants will be given the complete freedom to create any kind of poster unless it doesn’t offend any other participant or group

  - Participants make posters regarding challenges of immigrant children

- Discussion

  - Once the posters are made, every posters will be posted on the wall

  - Every group will be given chance to go through the posters of other groups

  - The main ideas depicted in the posters will be considered for discussion

  - From the discussion, major challenges would be identified
• Session Check-out

• END OF SESSION
Workshop for Parents: Session #4

“Supporting Kids for Acculturation”

Objective:

- Discuss strategies to assist kids in the acculturation process

Handouts:

#4.1- Plain charts

Activity:

- Check-in

  - The session will begin with a discussion about the last session
  
  - What do they now think about the challenges after the last session
  
  - How do they identify these challenges in their children
  
  - What are the strategies that they use in their day to day life to address these challenges

- Adopting Strategies:

  - Provide each participant with a plain chart
  
  - Advice everyone to brainstorm various methods they can adopt to overcome
the challenges identified in the last session

- While finding the ways, they are also advised to mention the ways in which they can incorporate these strategies in the everyday habits

- Guest speaker from Multi-Cultural Society
  - The resource person will be invited to deliver a class to the whole group
  - The guest will introduce himself to the audience
    - What is he?
• What is his area of interest?
• Why he is here to speak to them?
• The guest will cover the topics such as
  • What is the psychology of immigrant children?
  • What are the possible stresses that they can face?
  • What are the strategies that can be developed to resolve their stress?
  • What is the role of parents in their children’s acculturation process?
  • How can parents provide assistance and motivation to their children?
  • What is the importance of parents to acculturate first and then teach children to do so?
• There will be an interactive session with the guest speaker so that parents get an opportunity to clarify their questions if they have any
• One of the parents will be invited to deliver a vote of thanks to the guest speaker
• Final Check-out: There will be reflection on what the guest has spoken and the parents feel about the information.
• END OF SESSION
Workshop for Parents: Session #5

“I am New”

Objective:

- Make the immigrant children feel involved

Video:

- I am New: Welcoming Immigrant Students

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sziomv9rp5k

Handouts:
• Colorful blank charts

Activity:

• Session will begin by inviting the children with their parents

• Children will be asked to introduce themselves

  • The introduction will be done as a game

    • Every children will be asked to stand in a circle

    • One child starts the game by saying his or her name, then the next child has to say the first child’s name and then his or her own name, then the third child has to say the names of the first two children and then his or her name and so on.

    • By the time, one round is complete everyone will know the name of the other person and will have created a community

    • This activity will boost the energy of children and they will feel welcomed

• Discussion about children’s new school and friends
Within their family groups, children will share what they think about their new school.

- What are the three things that they like in their new school?
- What are the three things that they do not like in their new school?
- What are the things that are similar to their old school?
- What are the things that are different from their old school?
- Have they made friends in the new school?
- Is it easy to make friends in Canada?

Show them the video “I am New”

- Now the kids are asked what they will do to make new friends.
- How will they invite a classmate to play with them?

Poster Making

- Kids will be divided into groups
- Kids will be provided with colorful charts and sketch pen
- They will be asked to draw what they think about their new classroom and school
- There is no particular instruction on how to draw or what to draw
• They can make the poster in any way that they would like it to be

• Posters are displayed
  
  • Once, the posters are made, they will be displayed for everyone to see
  
  • Children will be congratulated for their beautiful works

• Some more time will be provided for children to interact with other children and create strong bond

• END OF SESSION
Workshop for Parents: Session #6

“Concluding Session”

Objective:

- Reflection on what is acquired from the workshop

Activity:

- Reflection
  - Parents will be asked to share what they felt during the last session
  - What was the feedback of children once they get to their home?
- Role Play: Experimenting with Strategies
  - Participants will be divided into groups of four or five members
  - Participants are asked to select anyone of the problems that their children face during the acculturation process
  - Participants will perform a role play mentioning at least one challenge and the strategies to address it in their role play
  - A discussion will be generated after every group present their performance
- Participants share their experience about the workshop
• They will talk about:
  
  • how the workshop was helpful
  
  • limitations of the workshop
  
  • how it helped them to build a community
  
  • their feedback will be considered very valuable
  
• Final Check out and vote of thanks:
  
• END OF SESSION
Chapter Five: Reflection

Summary

Canada is one of the countries where many immigrants from different parts of the world migrate and immerse. The number of immigrants to Canada is increasing year by year (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). Hence, it is extremely important that the country needs to be multi-cultural and welcoming to the immigrants. Notably, many Canadian immigrants are students. It is the responsibility of the schools and universities to make sure that the newly migrated students are supported physically, emotionally, and academically.

There are many young international students aged between eight to ten years accompanying their parents and studying in Canadian schools. In the article “In Canada’s Public Schools, Immigrant Students are Thriving,” Kavitha Cardoza (2019) stated approximately 30 percent of the students in Canadian schools are immigrant children. The initial days of assimilation to Canada are difficult for these children. Leaving their friends and other family members behind and the exposure to an entirely new country where an unknown language is spoken adds to the problems that face during their acculturation process.

Studies in the field of acculturation reveal that the process of acculturation is always accompanied by acculturative stress. The stress related to acculturation may occur due to
many reasons. The main reason is the confusion created between the host culture and the culture of the new country to which migration has happened. Studies have proven that delinquent behavior is associated with acculturative stress. However, acculturative stress is not something that lasts all through the acculturation process. There are many strategies that help to ease the process of acculturation and thus help in reducing the stress related.
People acculturate differently. Strategies adopted by one individual may not be the same as another person. As in many situations, individual differences play a great role in acculturation process too. Generally, the integration strategy is proven as the best method to acculturate. Integration happens when people try to maintain both their host culture and the culture of the settlement country. Also, for integration to occur, the settlement country needs to be multicultural in all the aspects. It needs to be understood that people who adopt the integration strategy to adapt to a new culture succeed in their attempt faster and easier than people who opt other methods like separation or marginalization.

Moreover, acculturation related stress will be relatively low for these people.

Keeping in mind the role of teachers and parents in the acculturation process, this project proposes a workshop for both these groups to help the immigrant children. The workshop is designed differently for parents and teachers because of the differences in the audience group. Being foreign language speakers, the parent workshop will be less formal in content and activities. However, the workshop for teachers will be formal in nature and supported with evidence from literature. The workshop for parents will have six sessions, out of which one session accommodates their children whereas the workshop for teachers will have five sessions. Both the workshops will have a guest speaker from the Multi-Cultural Society, Nanaimo, Canada. The speaker will be an expert in the field of immigrant psychology.
Reflection

The project was done in order to help the international young immigrants to acculturate to the Canadian living and academic culture easily. Being an international student to Canada, I had to undergo several issues regarding the acculturation process. Everything that I saw in the new country was different to me than what I experienced in my own country. It took me, even as an
adult, several months to adjust to my assimilation process.

Changes were everywhere. The clothing, the food, eating habits, classrooms, teachers and even the public spaces where we sit and relax was different. Moreover, I was confused regarding the academics too. The way classes were handled was different. All these differences in the living and academic culture made my initial days of acculturation tough and difficult.

It was then that I started to think about the young international students who come to Canada with their parents to an entirely new country with no knowledge about the Canadian system. It gave me curious thoughts on how they acculturate to Canadian life style: do they find it easy or difficult? I delved through literature to find an answer to this question. It was an opportunity for me to understand more about the term acculturation and related topics. Literature revealed that acculturation will be difficult for children especially when they do not know the language of the new country.

During the journey of making this project, I learned several important lessons on the theory of acculturation. In my limited pre-knowledge, I perceived that acculturation might be similar for everyone. However, literature has given me new insights about what acculturation is, about acculturative stress and provided different strategies to acculturate. I learned that provided with assistance and motivation children can overcome the hurdles of acculturation. Teachers and parents of these children have an important role to play towards these children’s
acculturation process. Thereby, training for teachers and parents could ease the acculturation of young immigrants in many ways.

My hope for this workshop is that, after the completion, both teachers and parents will have an idea about the mental state of immigrant children and thereby act accordingly to help them.

The class offered by an expert in the field of immigrant psychology will help them to
understand the different thoughts and anxieties of the
acculturating children. The strategies discussed and developed in the workshop could be
engaged by both these groups to help these children in their journey to acculturate. Moreover,
the participants will form a community by the end of the workshop which will help them in
their way forward. Furthermore, the information both teachers and parents gather from the
workshop can be shared in their other peer group or community and thus can help spread the
information and be useful for many other children who suffer from culture shock or
acculturative stress. This will encourage the parents and teachers to motivate and assist
children in their settling process.

I have also discovered that, in order for an individual to integrate to a new culture, the
community should possess certain conditions that promote multiculturalism. The conditions
include society’s approval of cultural diversity and relatively little discrimination and racism.
Moreover, the society of settlement should have a good history of immigration and settlement
which will advocate multiculturalism in that particular society. The role that society plays is one
of the reasons why the workshop has teachers as its audience.

As far as immigrant children are concerned, teachers can play vital roles since the society
surrounding the children will be other students and staff of their school whom teachers can
influence, and thereby create a welcoming society to those children. Once the teachers are
informed and trained on how to deal with the international students, they can help the students to acculturate easily and reduce the stress associated with acculturation. When children feel safe and secure in the school atmosphere, they will develop a positive attitude towards school and will socialize with other children thereby developing more social interaction. This enhanced social interaction will help international young students to acculturate to the whole community gradually and identify themselves as a member of the settlement society.
Implications for Teachers

The project and the workshop associated with the project would help the teachers in many ways to help the international students. The teachers would be able to receive information regarding acculturation and its difficulties from the workshop designed. The workshop will provide teachers an insight regarding the difficulties associated with acculturation in detail and with the help of literature. Teachers can further develop their readings on acculturation with the help of literature mentioned in the workshop. They could make this literature as a beginning guide for them in their way forward. Moreover, the strategies discussed with the expert in immigrant psychology would help them to resolve the acculturative issues that they find in their classrooms. Ideally, that would give teachers confidence to address some of those issues with courage and determination. Moreover, they will develop ability to identify the students’ problems after the participation in the workshop which will be a great benefit of attending the workshop.

Importantly, this workshop might also provide the beginning foundation of a community of practice for teachers. It has the possibility for them to begin a network of support where they can help each other and continue to provide strategies as they work through common challenges and experiences once they return to their own classrooms and their own schools.

Implications for Parents
The parents of international young children would find the workshop very beneficial and useful. Being a parent of an international young student and having seen many other parents struggling to assist their children to acculturate, parents undergo pressure when it comes to helping their child acculturate. Attending the workshop will help the parents to understand and identify the struggles associated with acculturation. Also, they would be able to develop strategies to help their children to learn the culture of the new country and assist them to identify
as the members of the new society. Importantly, after the workshop, the workshop community built by parents will be strong and parents could work together to erase the acculturation difficulties of their children by ensuring social interaction. Parents would be provided information as well as building a network of support.

Ideally, these parents would begin to form friendships and find some other individuals in the group where they might continue a relationship with after the workshop is over. Thus, they could continue to help and support each other into the future days, weeks, and months.

**Implications for Young International Students**

The positive potential implications for the students drive the goals behind the entire project. The project is done to help international young immigrants arriving in Canada. A major influence on these children is their parents and teachers. Once the parents and teachers are trained to deal with acculturation and acculturative stress, it will help these children acculturate easily and thereby reducing their stress.

Ideally, the skills and understanding the parents and teachers learn will result in students have a less stressful and more supported acculturation process. It will help them to perform in their academics, to become a comfortable member of their new community, and to make new friends. In particular, the session titled “I Am New” in the workshop for parents will help the students to make new friends and get rid of their fear in addressing strange audience. The
entire workshop is designed to help the international young students and their acculturation process.

On a personal level, I believe it is possible that the children might also find friends and supports within group. One day brings the children – and families – together. It is possible, and hopeful, that it will be the beginning of both these children, and their parents making connections
within their new home that can provide relationships and possibly even friendships with others who share their experiences.

**Implications for Me as a Researcher**

As a researcher, I have learned and discovered many things regarding acculturation. I discovered that the field of acculturation studies could use more attention. Importantly, majority of the already existing acculturation studies are mainly concerned about the teenagers or adults and their acculturation. Only a few studies are accounted for the acculturation of the child immigrants. This has strengthened my interest in the field of acculturation studies.

The job of a researcher is not easy and smooth. I have acquired enough patience and perseverance throughout the journey of this project. I have also learned to value and appreciate the works of other researchers. The whole process helped me to learn how to evaluate other works, to support the topic of inquiry with already existing information, to draw and to build connection between works of other researchers. The entire process of making this project has awakened the researcher in me and made me realize my strengths as a researcher.

Becoming a researcher has enabled and developed my reading skills. Critical reading is one of the skills that I believe I have developed being a researcher. Moreover, the whole process of making this project taught me the importance to trust our intuition and to follow our area of
interest. The whole process of researching is easier and more interesting when it is based on the interests that we already have. And, during this process, sometimes our intuitions are validated. However, other times they are surprised, and then learning and growth occurs.

Another lesson that I learned as a researcher is that even difficult things are possible. If one really wants to, challenges can be met. I have learned about committing to a task, working hard to make it happen, and accomplishing goals.
Suggestions for Further Development

Even if the project has many things to offer to the parents and teachers of the international young immigrants, and to the whole society, I admit that there are some limitations to this project. The literature on which the project is based is mainly about the international students in different age groups whereas my project deals with students of a specific age group.

Furthermore, while my project deals with the international students to Canada, the literature I accessed deal with students to many different countries. This can be considered as a major limitation that I could not get access to literature that deal with the migrants to Canada.

Another limitation of this project is that, currently, the audience intended for the workshops are only from one particular School District (School District#68). The workshops would be stronger if it could include more participants from other School Districts on the Island.

However, I have further plans in future to continue to build this project. Making a community of international migrants would help to spread the findings of the project in more detail and useful way. Being a part of a community would help all the immigrant children identify themselves members of a new society and settle without much stress. Creating a website and a face book page are targets related to this project. It would be a great idea to start a website or face book page to share the information regarding acculturation process since those are widely accepted as social networking and can reach to thousands or millions of
people at a time. Moreover, as time progress, I hope to do more research with the
international young students as participants so that more reliable information regarding their
acculturation process can be collected and analyzed.
Conclusion

This project will contribute to the literature of acculturation studies, especially the acculturation of young international students to Canada. The major intention of this project is to help the international young students, their parents, and their teachers in the acculturation of these immigrant children. Additionally, it also has a final purpose—to motivate other researchers to become more interested in field of acculturation studies.
References


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# Appendix A

Handout #1.1

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<td>4</td>
<td>Developing Strategies</td>
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<td>5</td>
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Appendix C

Handout #3.1
Appendix D

Handout #4.2
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