INTRODUCTION

By Maryse Potvin, Corina Borri-Anadon, Bronwen Low, Jeff Kugler & Julie Larochelle-Audet

In a context of rapidly growing cultural diversity in Canada, it's important to examine how instructors and policy makers take this diversity into consideration with a view to helping all children gain equal access to education and its benefits. Issues regarding initial and ongoing training and the assessment of competencies relative to diversity challenge government policy makers as well as schools and universities. For more than 30 years now, Canadian universities have included courses on ethnocultural diversity in their various teaching programs (initial and ongoing training), however debate persists in education circles on the nature of the knowledge, know-how and behavioural skills (theoretical and practical) this training should include and on the assessment of future teachers' competencies relative to diversity. Furthermore, faced with these often similar issues — consideration of the realities linked to immigration and diversity, development of equity practices and professional competencies — responses vary from province to province, both as regards theoretical and didactic approaches and the implementation of mechanisms, policies, and training and practice programs.

The international context, moreover, calls on governments to develop "inclusive" and intercultural education policies and school programs based on the rights of the individual in our pluralistic societies; the monitoring of developments in this field of research and public policies is, accordingly, of central importance. Starting in the 2000s, in fact, the World Education Forum in Dakar (UNESCO) outlined an action plan for inclusive education based on the objectives of *Education for All* (EFA), the *Millenium Development Goals* (MDG), and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). UNESCO has developed guidelines on inclusion (2005) and interculturalism (2008) in addition to a number of practical guides (2013).

In Canada, in 2009, Ontario adopted its *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* containing detailed indicators, and the schools followed suit. The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), the *Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions* (COPA) and the Center for Urban Schooling (CUS) have produced a set of tools, courses and resources for school personnel that includes an interactive kit (*Safe@School*), workshops for leaders, and a guide for implementing an inclusive perspective in the school (*Equity Continuum, 2011*).

Quebec has not yet adopted an inclusive policy in education, but it has several policies and programs containing certain objectives for inclusive education, e.g., the *Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle* (1998), which targets, among other things, the development of intercultural competencies in teachers. In addition, a recent report by the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation on *the status of educational needs for 2008-2010* clearly recommends that Quebec adopt a more inclusive approach. In 2013, the ministère de l'Éducation also announced its intention to move in this direction and to proceed with work on inclusion and equity in order to establish government guidelines for diversity and combat drop-out, bullying and violence in the school. Finally, the ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés Culturelles (MICC) changed its name to the ministère de l'Intégration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI) in May 2014 when the Liberal Party came to power.

If the public policies of the two provinces today tend to have similar objectives of non-discrimination, equity and inclu-

sion, it would seem appropriate to compare their policies and practices in that, historically, they developed a fairly different normative discourse on diversity. Whereas Ontario policies involved an approach that was at first multicultural, then anti-racist during the 1990s and, more recently, inclusive (MEO, 1993, 2009), Quebec policy since the 1990s has defined itself as "intercultural", focused more on issues surrounding the integration of immigrants, the sharing of a common public language and the development of a pluralistic and democratic citizenship (MEQ 1998).

This special issue targets, in particular, the policies and practices involved in the initial and ongoing training of school personnel in Quebec and Ontario regarding diversity, inclusion, equity and culturally relevant pedagogy. It derives from two study days entitled "Equity, Inclusion and Culturally Adapted Pedagogy: Training and Experiences of Professional Educators in Ontario and Quebec", co-organized in October 2013 in Montreal by the Education and Ethnic Relations research axis of the *Centre d'études ethniques des universités montréalaises* (CEETUM) and the Center for Urban Schooling (CUS) of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (*OISE/UT*). This event brought together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from the two provincial ministries of education and from school boards in Quebec and Ontario. It was a follow-up to other events organized in Quebec since 2009 - including the *Journées d'études sur l'Éducation inclusive* in 2011, the CEETUM symposium in 2012 entitled *Le développement d'institutions inclusives: formation, transfert des connaissances et accompagnement des milieux*, and two *Sommets des formateurs universitaires sur la diversité ethnoculturelle en éducation au Québec*, in 2012 and 2013 - during which policy makers, researchers and practitioners in school institutions largely expressed their needs in terms of knowledge and sharing relative to these issues.

- The main objective of this Quebec-Ontario study day was to provide an overview of the situation in the two provinces based on four key themes:

- The overall context in both provinces in terms of ethnocultural diversity in the school and the initial and ongoing training of teachers and other professional educators;

- Identification of the knowledge, attitudes and competencies to target in the field of diversity education;

- A critical look at the reception and influence of this training in practice environments;

- A few case studies of innovative practices and experiences.

The present issue highlights the key themes discussed during these study days by combining them into two main parts. The first deals with the historical and political context in the two provinces, and on conceptual approaches and current theories in ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Three articles begin by providing general background on ethnocultural diversity in the school and the initial and ongoing training of teachers and other professional educators in the two provinces. Marie McAndrew (Université de Montréal, U. de M.) and Jeff Kugler (CUS) paint, respectively, a historic portrait of the public policies of the last 30 years dealing with the consideration of diversity in schools in Quebec (McAndrew) and Ontario (Kugler), and offer perspective on the impacts of these policies on teacher training and practice environments. Gillian Parehk (Toronto District School Board, TDSB) enriches this portrait in her text by underscoring the diversity that characterizes the Toronto District School Board based on the latest statistics and highlighting the main challenges involved in the Board's systemic adaptation to diversity.

Next, two articles provide context on the perspectives and orientations adopted by the ministries of education in both provinces. Ruth Flynn (director of the Inclusive Education Branch, OME) presents on the principles and implementation of *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. Isabelle-Anne Beck (Director of the Services aux communautés culturelles du ministère québécois de l'Éducation, de l'Enseigement Supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR), for her part, co-authored an article with Julie Larochelle-Audet (Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM) on the Ministry's recent framework for welcoming and integrating immigrant children, which derives from the *Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle* (1998) and is specifically intended for schools. Their article presents the bases and content of the first four documents of this framework, while pointing out certain characteristics of the current Quebec school context.

Finally, two articles examine theoretical perspectives on the consideration of diversity by comparing and contrasting them and identifying their common points. Joseph Flessa (*OISE/UT*) takes a critical look at the perspective on inclusion and diversity adopted by Ontario policy, particularly its practical application in the schools. Maryse Potvin and Julie Larochelle-Audet (UQAM), for their part, shed light on the points of convergence and divergence regarding the foundations of various theoretical approaches to ethnocultural diversity in education (intercultural, inclusive, antiracist, human rights and citizenship education) as well as on the knowledge, know-how and social skills essential for teachers based on these approaches. They point out, notably, the many points of convergence between inclusive and antiracist approaches.

The second part deals, still more specifically, with the implementation of equity in practices in the school system, notably in activities involving theoretical or basic training, both practical (internships) and ongoing, including innovative initiatives put forth by school boards and support practices in the environments.

As regards teacher training, Corina Borri-Anadon (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, UQTR), Julie Larochelle-Audet and Maryse Potvin (UQAM) report on the design of courses that deal, specifically, with considerations of ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity in education in the various teaching programs of 12 Quebec universities. The article offers perspective on the contents, limits and issues involved in this training. In a complementary manner, the article by Maryse Potvin, Corina Borri-Anadon, Violaine Levasseur and Sylvie Viola (UQAM and UQTR) describes the approach to developing and testing a grid for evaluating the "intercultural and inclusive" competency intended for future intern teachers. This grid, produced with and for internship supervisors and the associated teachers in the schools (which receive the interns), includes observable components and indicators of "inclusive and intercultural" competency aimed at measuring the acquisition of this competency and the passage from "theory to practice" by future teachers. In the same way, Leslie Stewart-Rose (*OISE/UT*) outlines the history, principles and orientations of the teacher training program in urban areas, *Inner City Option*, implemented between 2006 and 2014. This program prepares teachers to work within a context of diversity by putting forward an anti-oppression, transformative and critical approach.

As regards the innovative experiences and practices conducted by school boards, the article by Geneviève Audet and Jacques Ledoux (Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys) discusses the implementation of the *Centre d'intervention pédagogique en contexte de diversité* in this school board. The Centre, the only one of its kind in Quebec, collaborates closely with universities on activities having to do with research-action, ongoing training and educational support in practice environments. Obeng Yaw (Halton District School Board) highlights the winning practices of an approach to inclusiveness and the prevention of violence and bullying implemented by different schools in this school board, while Lance McCready, (*OISE/UT*), Carl James (Université York, YU), Ramon San Vicente, (TDSB), Rachael Nicholls (*OISE/UT*), Raymond Peart (YU) and Olivia Strohschein (*OISE/UT*) present community school programs targeted to boys in vulnerable groups while examining the programs critically and underscoring different issues in terms of effectiveness and implementation. Karen Murray (TDSB) analyzes the training module implemented for the last three years by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) for practicing or future teachers. It includes several training objectives focused on the development of a culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. This module helps teachers gain a deeper understanding of this approach as well as their capacity to apply it in their class and their school, and allows them to explore the components of their own identity and develop critical awareness, inclusive competencies and high expectations with regard to all students. Tanya Senk (TDSB) from the Aboriginal Education Centre, adopts an epistomological view of promising practices in education with First Nation learners in urban environments, practices that are based, notably, on aboriginal art and knowledge with the aim of decolonizing education. Finally, Bronwen Low (McGill University) presents the educational kit *Nous Sommes Ici/ We Are Here* produced by the CURA-funded project "Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and Other Human Rights Violations." This kit intended for teachers presents different innovative activities aimed at enriching Quebec's cultural memory through the life stories of immigrants or refugees.

A final section of this part focuses specifically on plurilingualism. The article by Saskia Stille (*OISE/UT*) presents a plurilingual approach to language education in Toronto. Françoise Armand (U. de Montréal) profiles the ÉLODIL project and presents several types of training (initial and ongoing) for teachers of regular classes working in a pluriethnic and plurilingual environment and teachers of "reception" classes for allophone immigrant newcomers. Last, Zita de Koninck and Diane Querrien (Laval University) scrutinizes the initial and ongoing training of teachers in linguistic diversity at Laval University in Quebec City and the particular issues involved in teaching about ethnocultural diversity in the regions. More specifically, they are part of a project funded by the *Programme de soutien à la formation continue du personnel scolaire* of the ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseigement Supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR), in which ordinary classroom teachers are twinned with "francization" teachers, who thus ensure support for the learning of French.

The abundance of ideas that emerged from these study days reflects the richness of these contributions. In addition to presenting and providing access to the most current and innovative practices in matters of equity, inclusion and culturally relevant pedagogy with respect to both training and the experiences of school personnel in Ontario and Quebec, this special issue lays the foundations for future comparative exchanges that are essential for the deployment of this kind of training and the continuous improvement of our training practices.