From multicultural to intercultural – urban to rural higher education institution setting in southern & central Ontario (Canada) for international students

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Dedication

To my wife, for her unconditional support, family management during this project, and for being my companion in global adventures.

To my children, whom I am sure will be global citizens of tomorrow, and see the world thru many perspectives.

To my parents, who gave me a taste of travel, culture and education.

To my family, although far…always very near…on earth or not.

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FROM MULTICULTURAL TO INTERCULTURAL – URBAN TO RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION SETTING IN SOUTHERN & CENTRAL ONTARIO (CANADA) FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Abstract

KEYWORDS: intercultural, intercultural competence, diversity, higher education, ESL, multicultural, faculty, instructors, urban, rural, international students, international education

The present research is an integral and final part of my Master's degree in Didactics of English Language Teaching. The focus of this study was to see the intercultural competence of ESL instructors teaching at public post-secondary institutions in the metropolitan area of Toronto (Canada), and outside of the metropolitan area within a 75km – 200km radius. A qualitative and quantitative data collection was performed by methods of a questionnaire. This was delivered to a total of 50 ESL instructors, 25 in each area: urban and rural. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections: educational background, international travel experience, teaching background/ experience. The study demonstrated that the instructors from the urban area had a higher intercultural awareness level in comparison with their colleagues from the rural surrounding area. Instructors from the urban area had more exposure to an international environment, or had taken educational programs overseas. Their counterparts had less international exposure, and predominately majority with domestic education only. Conclusion was reached that in part this intercultural difference was also due to a lower intercultural awareness preparation or onboarding by the institutions and/or the lack of intercultural competence curriculum in teacher training programs.

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

It is known that Canada is a country that was established by immigrants and still strives in welcoming people from all corners of the globe that wish to settle. The current Ministry of Immigration has opened the doors to qualified individuals and families, and facilitated the process of international students to study in Canada and possibly remain in the country after their studies. The current Immigration Levels Plan outlined by the Canadian Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) establishes a 3-year target, from 2021 to 2023, in welcoming into the country over 1.2M (IRCC - Immigration 2021) new permanent residents of Canada.

Multiculturalism is present in every major urban city and its suburbs, the country is well known internationally for its multiculturalism. However, is this present in every corner of the country, or with time, as the 3rd and 4th generation of immigrants are born, and move out from the metropolitan and suburban cities, does this concept fade out? In larger Canadian cities, and their suburbs, such as: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver; a diverse multicultural population is present and remains flourishing since it is the landing pier for most newly arrived immigrants that already have relatives or friends settled in these areas, and with this in mind, it is easier for them to establish a new beginning in a foreign land.

In regards to education, classrooms in these cities have embraced multiculturalism for decades, and government funded initiatives have contributed into yearly budgets that help specific school boards with the development of specialized ESL. Toronto is home to a young student population where more than 50% of students speak another language at home instead of English. The school system welcomes every year new students that have just recently arrived in the country, and at the same time, 1st year students that were born in Canada, but are at school learning English for the first time.

As for newly arrived immigrants seeking ESL in order to enter the workplace, or to communicate within their new surroundings, IRCC has provided funds for community centres

and educational institutes to provide a free LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) based learning program. Currently, the focus of the LINC program continues to be English for job search skills, but everyday English (booking of medical appointments, visits to the doctor, grocery shopping, small talk, etc.) has also been incorporated into the curriculum. Special attention is now given to Canada's rich multicultural society. One of the must haves in the curriculum content is that curriculum must include Canadian content, and this is to diffuse "Canadian values" to these students (Thomson and Derwing, 2004). All materials used in class must provide Canadian content (i.e. newspaper articles, sample government application forms, and textbooks must provide reference to Canadian geography, society, and history).

For the last three years Canada has also seen an increase in international student enrollment at their colleges and universities. This growth as a result to global political implementations by foreign governments that were direct competitors in international recruitment: US election of a nationalistic leader, Donald Trump, and his views in a closed border system. In the UK, the BREXIT referendum and tighter immigration rules to stay in the country at the end of studies for international students. Domestically, the election of a liberal leader, Justin Trudeau, and a more open policy towards immigration for international students studying in the Canadian school system. Even with the current global pandemic caused by COVID 19, this has made the federal government entice foreign student enrollment into the post-secondary education system. As such, the government authorizes foreign students to study remotely from their home country, and upon graduating they may apply for the Post-Graduate Work Permit and come to Canada when the situation is favourable and work and gain work experience. This demonstrates the importance of international students to the Canadian economy and society.

All of these scenarios have caused a growth of over 50% in international student enrollment in Canadian higher education institutions (Canadian Bureau for International Education 2018). Colleges and universities that had an international student population of 2% - %5 over their domestic enrollment 3-5 years ago, are now witnessing an international enrollment of 15% - 30% over domestic numbers. With international seats being closed a year to a year and a half prior to program start date at the most well-known Canadian institutions, international students have sought other options in Canada in where to study. With this, institutions in more distant places from the core cosmopolitan cities are now welcoming international students. This is a great outcome on internationalization of Canadian institutions, and has helped offset the decline in overall student enrollment due to the decline in domestic enrollment based on the

demographic decline of school aged pupils. The main issue arising with this rapid growth is: are these more distant universities/ colleges interculturally competent prepared to welcome, and teach these students, in comparison with their counterparts from metropolitan areas?

Aims of the Study

The main question of my work focuses on the following:

Is a multicultural staffed institution better prepared academically with an intercultural mindset?

The aim of the research was to verify if there was a difference in intercultural awareness and competence, the further we are from a diversified urban surrounding. Did this existence or not of intercultural awareness and competence impacted an international classroom setting? Was faculty more culturally diversified closer to an urban setting? Was there similarity between multicultural and intercultural in an education setting? Was there a conceptual difference towards international students when we compared the results obtained from ESL and non-ESL faculty? If there was a difference, could this be a highlight that language teaching can also serve as a pedagogical basis towards the building blocks of an individual and the progression of societies? (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013; Porto, Houghton and Byram, 2018).

The first part of my study focuses on the literary review by providing a contextual background approach that supports my study. The second part explains the research criteria used and its methodology, followed by the results encountered. Additionally, with the results encountered in this study, this paves way to a conclusion with suggestions that can be followed and further analysed in future related research.

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This topic of research also aligns with the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. One of the focus during the introductory session of this action plan at the UN in 2015, was point 25 on the New Agenda. This point outlined the importance of global states providing inclusive and equitable education at all levels to all, no matter what sex, age, race or ethnicity. Focusing also to indigenous, migrants, and those in vulnerable situations. These

learners should be given the building blocks to acquire the required knowledge and skills to participate actively in society (Nations, United 2015).

Point 36 of the agenda clearly defines the importance of intercultural understanding between people. Signing states of the agreement have clear acknowledgement of the diversified cultures of global states and that all cultures and civilizations, may contribute and are fundamental players in the development of a sustainable world.

This topic aligns with two of the 17 major goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with special focus on two of the goals: Goal 4 (Quality of Education) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Chapter I: Literature Review

Introduction

I will have as a basis for this study the definition that intercultural competence is one's cognitive knowledge towards the global view and how one views, feels, and handles each scenario based on one's own knowledge of cultural differences (Bennett,1986; Hammer and Bennett, 2001; Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman, 2003; Hammer, 2008). The further we move out of a multicultural urban setting does one encounter a more global secluded society with a less intercultural mindset, a society in not being capable in seeing itself in the other's eyes by establishing combined strategies towards a global perspective? (Sequeira, 2018). The further we move from an urban cosmopolitan region are we also shifting from a cosmopolitan citizenship vs. national mindset (Osler and Starkey, 2010)? Or, can there be a nationalist first approach towards education where importance is given primarily to the nation specifically in an ESL class setting (Alviar-Martin and Baildon, 2016; Myers, 2016). Or, is it possible that that this region is part of the global educatiors utopia that all etnic and racial differences are minimized, and all treated fair and equally (Banks, 2004)?

I will also focus on the building blocks of one's cognitive knowledge of interculturalization. Are faculty members that are bilingual or multilingual at an advantage point to their counterparts that are monolingual? Does one's critical thinking take into consideration historical facts, or potential religious beliefs? (Canagarajah, 2012; Sequeira, 2018), a point that is of great importance in today's world where 'woke' or 'cancel culture' has gained great relevance in the everyday dictionary. An instructor needs to be aware of their surrounding, one can easily offend without having the intention of doing such.

How relevant can intercultural competence be to these institutions? It is true that we are witnessing an increase in employment postings requiring experienced instructors in intercultural environment. To an extent many post-secondary institutions in Canada, have now created the post of Diversity and Inclusion officer, manger, director, and their progressive hierarchy in their institutional organization chart. Is this approach a priority established by these institutions, the possibility of having an existing onboarding training on intercultural competence, or providing professional development in such area? To some it may be acceptable, but to others they may be opposed to such.

[…]developing intercultural competence in learners cannot be considered a generally accepted priority as yet. Many do not seem to be familiar with its concepts while some are plainly opposed to them. (Lenz and Berthele, 2010:26).

The student body outline has diversified in the last fifty years. Students and faculty are no longer the majority of a higher Caucasian social class. We can now witness students of diversified economical social backgrounds, of different racial groups, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and from several different countries (Michalski; Cunningham; Henry, 2017). At some institutions, this diversity is also present in academic faculty, but in institutions further from the metropolitan areas, this diversity is not as noticeable.

I.1 Intercultural Competence

During the questionnaire and interview portion of my work to evaluate intercultural competence, I will take into consideration basis on intercultural competence assessment where one must keep in mind two important factors: western vs non-westernized concept on interculturalization, and another factor leading into sub-factors: critical thinking; attitudes, openness, and curiosity in acquiring and evaluating knowledge (Deardorff, 2009).

I will verify if the instructors have the intercultural competence combination of knowledge, attitudes, understanding, and skills that all together allow one on its own or with others the ability to: respect and understand others that show different cultural traces from one's own; interact appropriately, efficiently, and with respect with other such people; build encouraging and productive relationships amongst each other; understand themselves and one's unique multicultural links with other cultures when interacting with such cultural differences, and the ability to handle the cultural unknown. (Barrett, Byram and Lázár, 2014). It is the experience that our global perspective changes over time, the way we saw the world at fifteen years of age, is not the same as we view the world at forty and onward. We learn that each culture is different, and these can have differences in various traits: religion, geo political, and cultural norms. All these experiences enrich our cultural perspectives and our own way of living.

Instructors that teach a second language not only, require the grammatical, semantic, syntax, and correct pronunciation of the language, but also require the intercultural competence that goes along with teaching foreign learners, as Sercu (2006) conveyed. For these teachers to be able to help their students develop their intercultural competence in class, these teachers need to have had the ability of acquiring this ability themselves. This acquisition provided to them during their upbringing, exposure to other cultures, or taught to them at elementary school, university, or a specialized pedagogical program.

Byram (1997), outlined that intercultural competence was summed into a group of "Savoirs" (Knowledge), these traits contained traces of knowledge from which someone was pertinent to, and to other cultures. In language, these traits can influence the way one learns and conveys within a new language.

Savoir apprendre/faire (knowledge to learn/ do) the capability for one to discover another's culture and use this ability to communicate with another.

Savoir comprendre (knowledge to understand) the capability for one to comprehend another's culture and cross-check characteristics from this other culture with their own.

Savoir s'engager (knowledge of engagemet) capability to critically appraise one's own culture and other's.

Savoir être (knowledge how to be) capability of openness and alert to review stereotypes, bias and negative points, in comparison to other cultures.

The monocultural mindset vs. the intercultural mindset. Teachers with an intercultural mindset are more effective with students that originate from a culture different from theirs (McAllister & Irvine, 2000), this happens when teachers develop an understanding of student's cultural "point of view", and with this, are able to adapt a more efficient learning environment that incorporates student's cultural cognitive learning environment. This point is also evident in Bayles (2009) study, that defends that years of teaching cultural diverse students increases in a higher intercultural competence score in their IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) by providing a greater sense of intercultural experience to the instructor outside of their regular teaching environment. Other academics have also found that several factors such as

demographic factors, age, education level, length of time as a teacher, and length of time in a foreign culture or contact with a foreign culture, are all primary factors in intercultural competence (Fretheim, 2007; Lai, 2006; Mahon, 2006; Park, 2006; Westrick & Yuen, 2007).

An educational institution that welcomes international students, or englobes a multicultural domestic student population, has to adapt to these cultural differences. Some common examples are the way that some universities and colleges have created a prayer room on campus to meet the religious beliefs of some of their students. As such, many of these institutions in Toronto have adapted, where a prayer room for Muslim students was created. In the past, these students would have to miss most of the school day on Friday to be able to pray (since this is considered the most important prayer day of the week). To avoid this level of absenteeism, a prayer room with a division for male and female students was created. There are also other prayer rooms on campus called multi-faith centres that are adapted to all. Here is a case where the institution had to adapt to welcome other minority religious beliefs onto campus.

The prime focus of an educational institution is to provide curriculum that is generally accepted by all cultures in order for students to succeed (Gay, 2000), this tailors a cultural diverse curriculum that can be taught to all. As always, the focus of delivering such a curriculum is aimed at the educator, and the regular need of professional development to prepare faculty for cultural diversity in the classroom (Banks & Banks, 1989), and the need to be culturally prepared in three areas: proficient (Lindsey, Roberts, & Jones, 2005), competent (Diller & Moule, 2005), and responsive (Gay, 2000). The main issue that some colleges and universities do have in Canada is in enacting these cultural competence development programs with faculty due to faculty policies enacted by the unionized environment. This was addressed by the vice-president and provost of University of Toronto when a small percentage of faculty arbitrated for becoming unionized: "…(being union free) has allowed the institution to become one of the leading research universities…our goal…is to preserve what is great about the university and reform responsibly in areas where strengthening our collegiality is in the best interests of faculty." (in Globe and Mail, UofT Faculty Consider Option to Unionize, May 12, 2018). To keep up with global trends and needs, an institution has to be able to adapt quickly to keep a competitive edge.

I.2 Teacher Training

As an educator, one must be aware that each student is a separate identity, possibly part of a cultural mosaic that defines a multicultural nation. What we see is not always what we may understand the other to be or believe, leading into Hall, E. (1976), Cultural Iceberg Model. What is visible in each other is our behaviour and beliefs, what is hidden are our values, and thought patterns

One of my focus on this research is to verify until what degree are these instructors culturally trained. Many teacher training programs lack the integration of intercultural competence components that highlight the main differences in culture and the different global teaching and learning styles (Deardorff, Cushner and Mahon, 2019), producing teachers that lack the necessary fundamentals in a diversified ESL classroom, creating ill prepared teachers (R. Sequeira, 2014). Even with the most detailed training or possible institutionalized onboarding preparation, there will always be some detail left out, or some new culture that enters the classroom for the first time, it is impossible for teachers to know all at all times (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002), but be prepared to learn. It is by providing the required skills through education: intercultural understanding, respect, and appreciation, that we can develop intercultural competence. (Barrett, Byrm and Lázár, 2014).

Language teaching at times is the initial point of contact that some learners have with an outside culture and in a multicultural classroom, they not only have access to the culture behind the L2 they are learning, but also access to learn about each culture represented in a diverse classroom setting. Language teaching can then be considered a contribution to the evolution of diversification in today's global world.

> […]language teaching can and should contribute to educational processes, to the development of individuals and to the evolution of societies. (Pinto, Houghton and Byram, 2018:485).

Many times, second language teachers, and teachers of other subjects don't realise the cultural cross-currents in their classroom setting, and at times don't take advantage of these for a productive pedagogical debate where students can interact and expose their different viewpoints to their colleagues. At times, they are also not aware of how their own cultural

viewpoints might affect the way they lead a class, or the possible subtle or unintentional negative message to their students (Bodycott, 2006).

Chapter II: Action Research

Context

My study focused on selecting two geographical areas, and studying instructors from post-secondary public institutions that teach ESL (English as a Second Language) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) to international students whose L1 is not the English language. Most students attending these public institutions have an aim of upgrading their English skills in order to enter a post-secondary program (Diploma, Certificate, Bachelor, Masters, Post-Grad, or PhD).

All instructors that participated in the questionnaire were teaching in a public college or university, and all of these institutions were registered by the Languages Canada Association. This association certifies that all language instructors hold at least a Bachelor's degree (may be in any field, not necessarily education or English), and a TESL (Teaching English Second Language) Canada approved language training program or its equivalent (minimum of 100 hours of theory and 10 hours observation, plus 10 practicum hours). This association also tracks and monitors best practices of each member institution. Maintaining the focus on the public education sector also allowed to have all institutions under the same ministry controlled and financial budget screening environment, and within the same hiring criteria set by all public institutions.

II.1 Geographical Regions of Research

II.1.1. Region A (Outside Metro Area)

Instructors that participated where registered faculty with the public colleges and/or universities located outside of the Toronto metropolitan area at a radius of 75km to 200km, where over 80% of its population was born in Canada, and only now is witnessing a growth in immigrants and international students. Many times, instructors from these settings are less inclined to leave the place where they were born, and prefer to teach within a 100km radius from where they were born and went through schooling (Cushner and Mahon, 2009). I would like to see if a post-secondary institution in this setting is prepared (their instructors) to embrace

an international student population, in comparison with post-secondary institutions from an urban multicultural setting.

II.1.2. Region B (Metro Area)

Instructors from public colleges and/or universities located in the metropolitan area of Toronto, a multicultural city where 55% of its population was born overseas, considered to be one of the most multicultural cities in the world. A city that for over 40 years has seen diverse groups of immigrants coming from all corners of the globe to settle. Having at least half of its population born overseas, it is common to see more foreign-born teachers teaching ESL. This leads us to the Native-speakerism question, where there are many that defend that teaching a foreign language should be via a native speaker of that language (Holiday 2005; Houghton and Rivers 2013). Today this concept is seen as both prejudice and discriminatory. Is the hiring of non-native speakers visible in these institutions? I would like to see if a post-secondary institution in this setting is better prepared to embrace an international student population, in comparison with post-secondary institutions from a non-multicultural setting.

II.2. Methodology

With the objective of analysing the intercultural competence level of the participating faculty, I used the method based on the European Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA Project 2007), with the questionnaire that was delivered to the faculty members. This is an intercultural situational based questionnaire, that scales several areas of one's intercultural profile: behavioural flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for others and empathy. As such, this method of questionnaire has as a basis for intercultural competence learning, Michael Byram's framework (1997; 2009):

> Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviours; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role' (Deardorff, 2006).

I will ask each faculty participant questions regarding specific events and/ or experiences that have impacted each one's perspective on culture. This concept outlines key synergies with

other academics that have outlined that several factors such as demographic factors, age, education level, length of time as a teacher, and length of time in a foreign culture or contact with a foreign culture, are all primary factors in intercultural competence (Park, 2006; Mahon, 2006; Lai, 2006; Fretheim 2007; Westrick and Yuen 2007). I will use both qualitative and quantitative research from data gathered via questionnaires and will be applied to faculty from all institutes.

In the interview section, I will focus on gathering information of how faculty is trained to handle cultural differences in class and what tools are provided for this, giving them an opportunity as well to elaborate on the scenarios in hand and at the same time permitting me to explore the views of the participants (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010), by asking open ended questions.

No matter what the end result of this study will be, one must keep in mind that intercultural assessment is an ongoing study towards the learning progress of intercultural competence:

> The ultimate goal of assessment is to…improve…learning. (Banta and Palomba, 2014)

II.2.2. Data Management

The questionnaire was developed on Adobe Creator and distributed via email to individual instructors, and head of ESL departments. The Adobe PDF questionnaire had an embedded "click and submit" end link where participants would click and a completed copy of the participant's questionnaire would be automatically sent via email to my personal inbox. By this means, no personal information such as name or email was collected. Email received from this questionnaire was received onto my email inbox from an undisclosed sender. Data collected was inserted onto an Excel spreadsheet for tabulation, analysis, graphic design and comparison.

A total of 55 questionnaires were received (26 from Outside Metro Region, and 29 from Metro Region). For statistical balance, the number of questionnaires to be analysed was rounded to the nearest possible multiple of 5, and 25 questionnaires from each region were selected based on order of receipt.

II.2.3. Ethical Concerns

In order to maintain confidentiality of participating faculty from this study, and undisclosed institutional participation, only regional locality of teaching practice was asked. Questionnaires were sent to faculty members teaching at public institutions located in the city of Toronto area, and public institutions located outside of the Toronto region within an outside radius of 75km to 200km. By this means, this research is not targeting a specific institution or faculty group within or outside of Toronto. Participants were not asked to self-identify by name or institution, and on questionnaire it was outlined that all answers to the questionnaire would be handled with outmost confidence.

To note, the questionnaire had to be modified from its original version. The point that was modified was the first question. In the first version, I asked for the name of the institution where participant was currently an instructor at. This question infringed with institutional policies at all public institutions, and participants were hesitant to participate because of this. If I wanted to maintain this point, I would have to submit my questionnaire to the academic senate body at each university and college for review and approval. No doubt that this would set a delay and a possible denial or not from some institutions in participating. To highlight as well, that my main focal point of study are the instructors and not the institution. A more global and undisclosed question was placed instead: City or town where I currently teach? This is a more ambiguous answer and doesn't reveal the institution since there are several public colleges located in the Toronto metropolitan area, and within the outside selected radius of study.

II.3. Questionnaire Part A

This section of the questionnaire is a set of 13 direct questions (identifying questions) focusing on the instructor's background: education and teaching career. Focus of this section is to divide participants by locality of teaching: metropolitan area or outside, and verify if education level and international teaching experience are key points in forming a richer intercultural competence level in instructors.

II.3.1. Results Part A – Participants Background

To better understand the background of our participants in regards to their level of education, years as a teacher and the areas where they have taught, these questions were part of Part A on the questionnaire.

II.3.1.1 Educational Background

Most of the participants from Outside the Metro Area Toronto (OMAT) hold a Bachelor's degree (60%), while the rest have an actual Master's level degree (36%). As for the participants from the Metro Area of Toronto (MAT) these values flip. Most participants hold a Master's degree (60%), or a PhD (20%), and the remainder (20%) hold a Bachelor's degree (cf. figure 1).
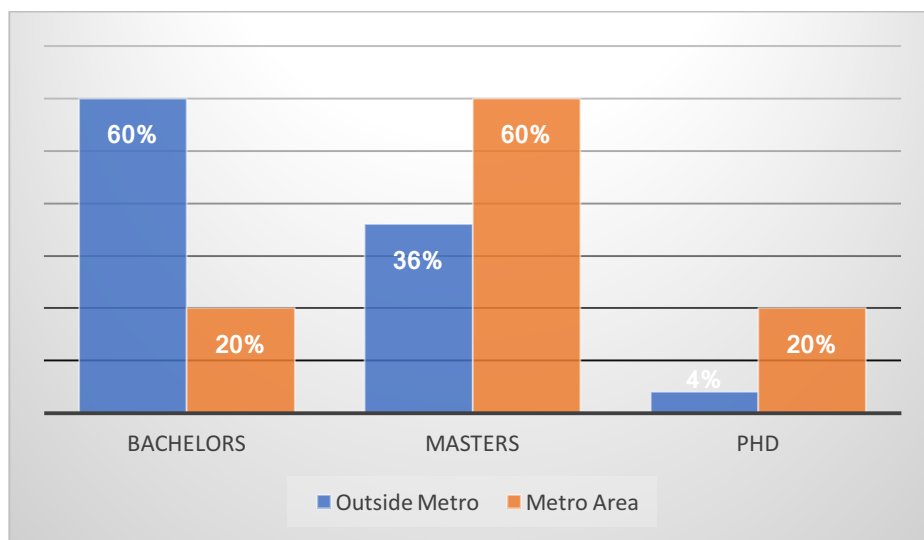
Figure 1. Level of education (Q.2 Background)

It is also important to know in what field of studies our participants hold their degrees in (cf. figure 2). In both areas, the main area of studies is English Language &/or Literature (OMAT: 64%, MAT: 68%), in the MAT some also hold a degree in the field of Education (28%), while in the OMAT the other prevailing participants hold a degree in a non-relevant field of English studies nor Education (28%), the remainder (4%) had a degree in Education.
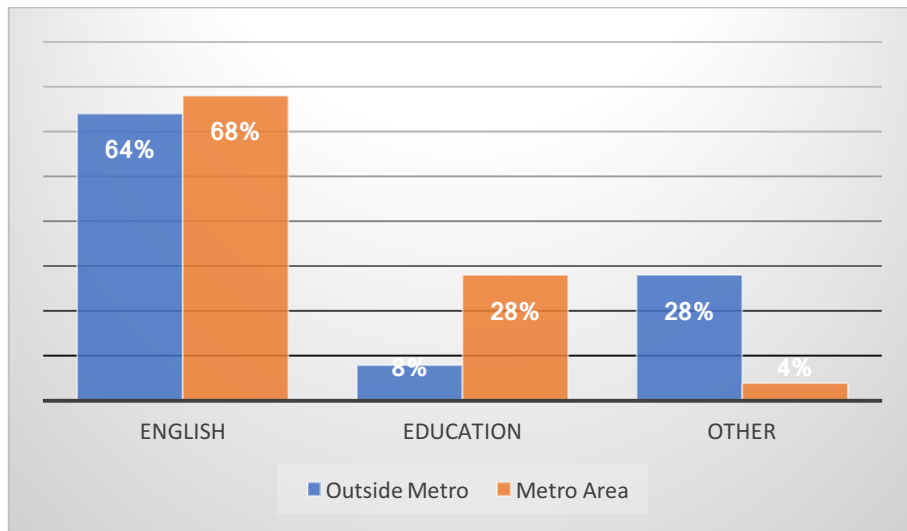
Figure 2. Area of studies (Q.3 Background)

II.3.1.2. Monocultural or Multicultural Elementary Schooling

Another question that had answers from opposite sides of the scale for both regions was in regards to the cultural composition of their schooling during their personal upbringing (cf. figure 3). The grand majority (80%) of those from OMAT were part of a monocultural schooling, whereas on the opposite side of the spectrum, the majority (76%) from MAT were part of a multicultural school environment.
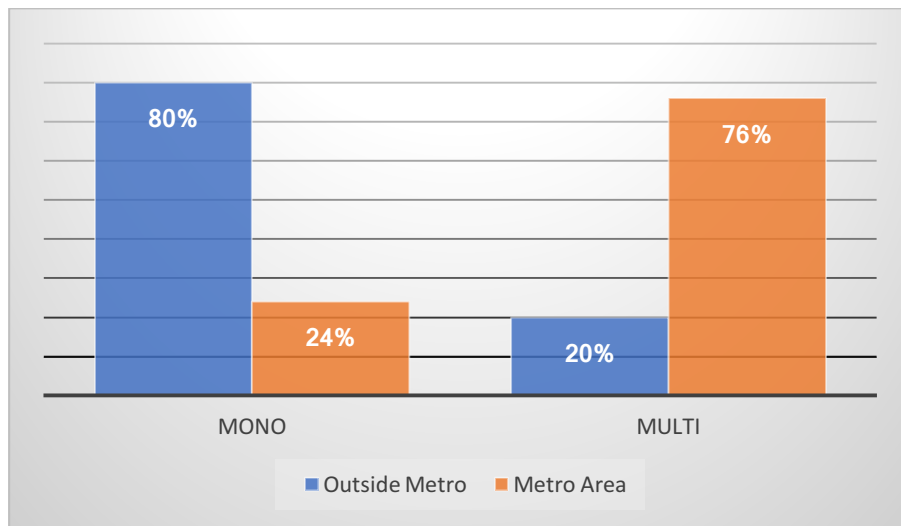
Figure 3. Type of education (Q.9 Background)

II.3.1.3. Foreign Educational Background

For this research, I also found it important to verify if the instructors had any exposure to a foreign education system, in other words, if they too had studied overseas at some point (cf. figure 4). It was interesting to see that majority (68%) of instructors from MAT had at some point studied overseas in comparison to their counterparts in the OMAT, only 20% had had some exposure to a foreign educational system for themselves.
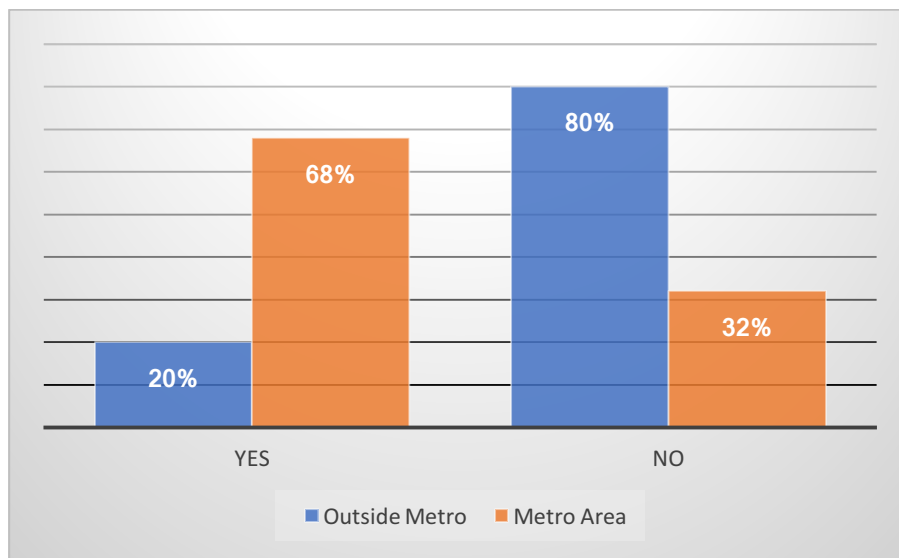
Figure 4. Studied abroad (Q.4 Background)

The next question was in regards to the length of time exposed to this foreign education system (cf. figure 5). Majority studied overseas for a period greater than 9 years (OMAT: 80%; MAT: 41%), with an exposure of more than 9 years, there is a possibility that these instructors were possibly born overseas or studied most of their lives overseas. 24% of participants from MAT studied for a period of 1-4 years overseas, while the remaining (35%) studied for a period of 5-8 years. The remaining (20%) participants from OMAT, studied for a period between 5-8.
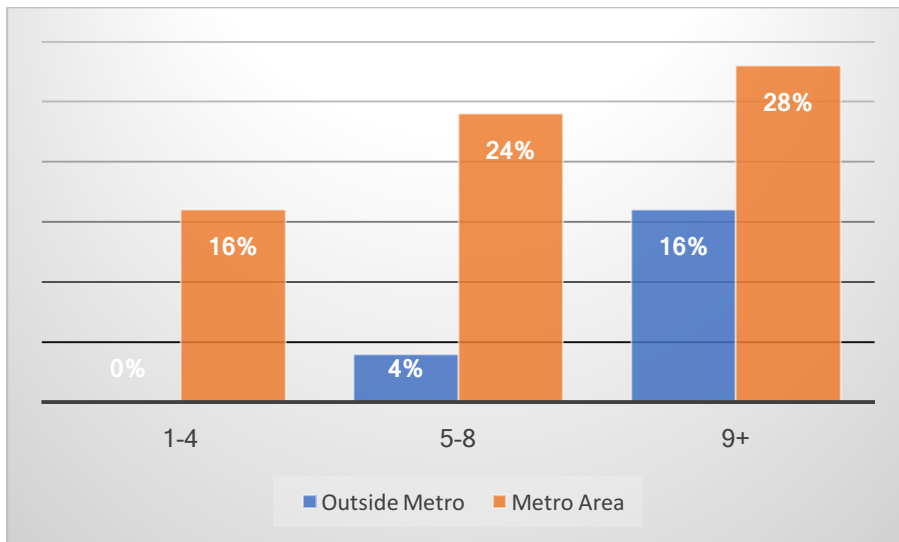
Figure 5. Years of studies abroad (Q.4a Background)

As from where this foreign education was studied (cf. figure 6), majority was exposed to an European educational system (OMAT: 80%; MAT: 71%). There was more diversity noted in regards to previous location of studies for participants from MAT: Asia (6%), Middle East (18%), Africa (6%), Oceania (6%). As for OMAT, the remainder instructors had been exposed to an Asian (20%) educational system.
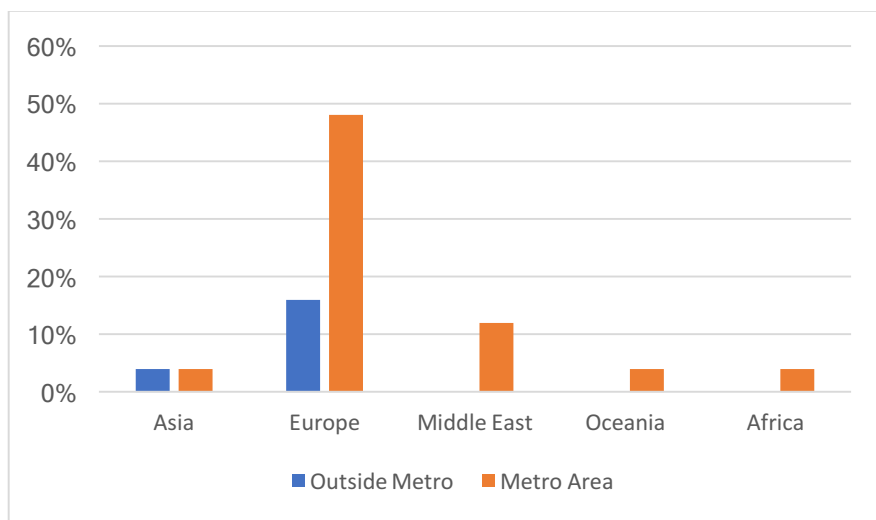
Figure 6. Region of study abroad (Q.4b Background)

II.3.1.4. Foreign Teaching Experience

In regards to instructors having taught overseas during their career (cf. figure 7), it was interesting to notice that all participants from MAT (100%) had taught overseas for a certain period of time (cf. figure 8), while their counterparts from OMAT, only 64% had taught

overseas, still more than half had foreign experience teaching abroad. Majority of the instructors from MAT, had taught at least 4-6 years (36%), to 7-9 (36%) overseas, 20% had only taught between 1-3 years. As for instructors in OMAT, majority had a shorter overseas teaching experience of 1-3 years (50%), 25% had studied 4-6 years, and 33% had taught between 10-12 years.
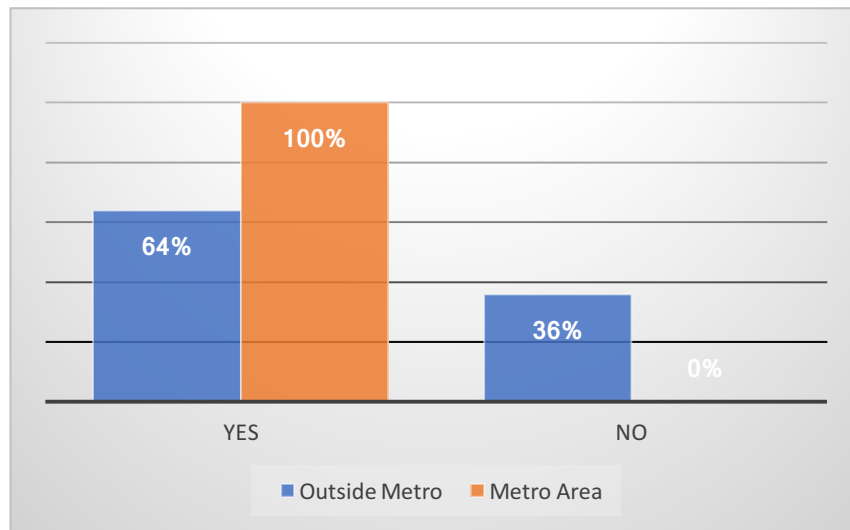
Figure 7. Taught abroad (Q.5 Background)
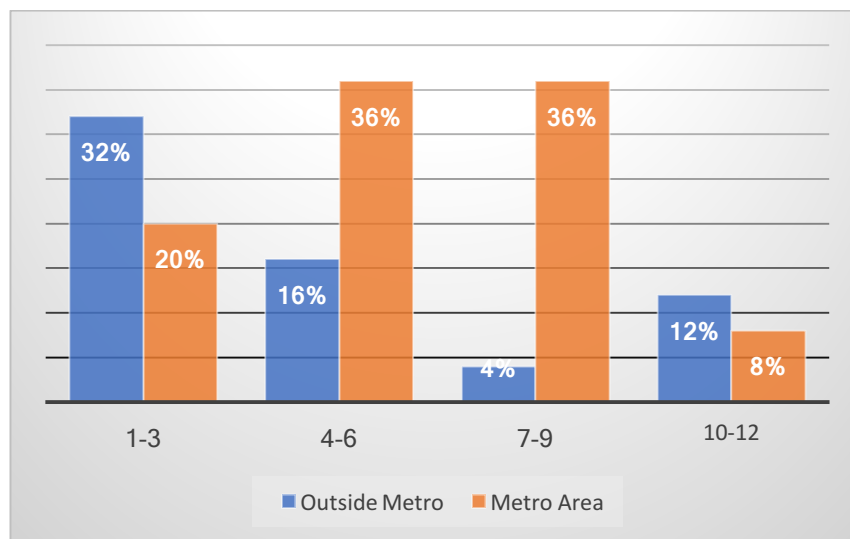
Figure 8. Period of time teaching abroad (Q.5a Background)

It was also noticeable that faculty from both regions had taught basically in the same global regions (cf. figure 9) Asia and Europe. Although, OMAT was more concentrated in Asia (75%), than MAT (56%). MAT was almost equally present in Europe (52%), and with some participants having taught in the Middle East (16%), and Oceania (4%). OMAT also had some exposure to the Middle East with 19% of instructors claiming to have taught in this region.
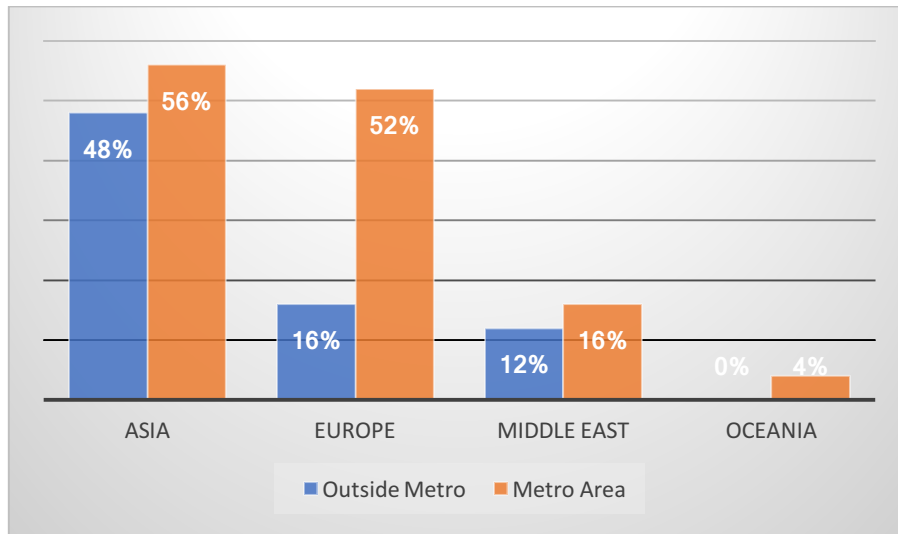
Figure 9. Region teaching abroad (Q.5b Background)

II.3.1.5. Years of Experience in ESL

In this field (cf. figure 10), an opposite result was also visible when comparing the number of years taught by participants of both regions. Those in the OMAT region had less years of experience in comparison with their counterparts from MAT. From the OMAT region most had taught for 6-10 years (48%), or were at the beginning of their career, teaching from 1-5 years (24%). Those from MAT region had predominately been teaching for a longer period of time, most from 16-20 years (36%), and 21-25 years (32%). As initial beginners in the teaching career, 1-5 years, 8% were in that phase, while 12% had at least 6-10 years of teaching experience.
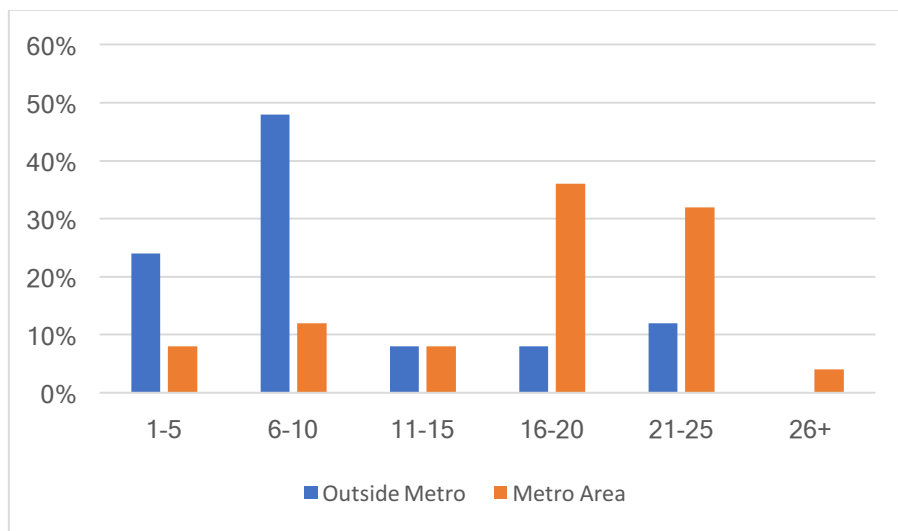
Figure 10. Years teaching ESL (Q.9 Background)

II.3.1.6. Foreign Language Dominance

The capability of speaking more than one language was also monitored (cf. figure 11). It was evident that majority (56%) of the participants from OMAT were monolingual, being English (L1) their only language spoken, no knowledge of a second language. While those from MAT with monolingual skills were at 12%. Majority (44%) of the MAT participants were bilingual (I will note that the bilingual term used here doesn't reflect the bilingual term known in Canada as French and English, bilingual term here is the general term: knowledge of L1 and another language – L2). As for OMAT, 32% were bilingual. 36% of those from MAT were trilingual, and from OMAT, only 4%. To note that an equal number of 8% had polylingual (here greater than 3 languages) language knowledge.
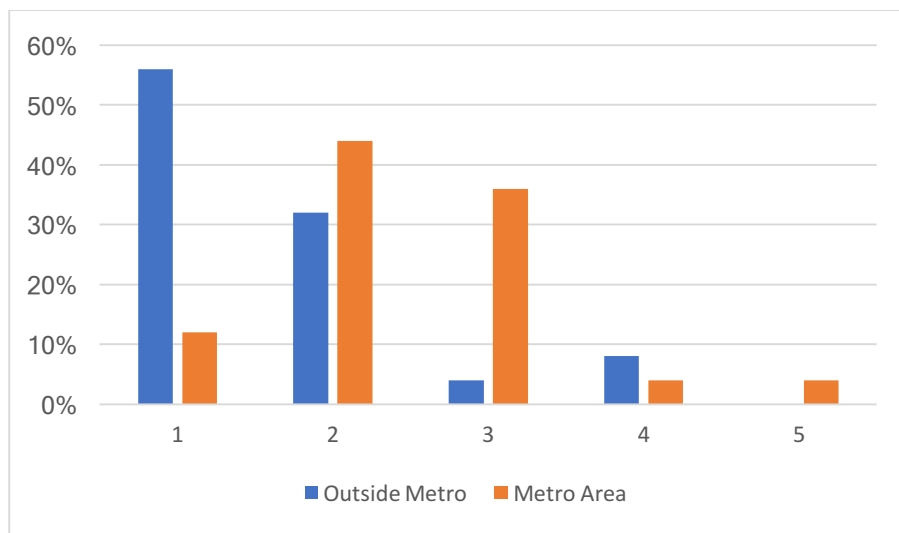
Figure 11. Languages spoken (Q.8 Background)

II.3.1.7. Global Travel

With aspect to global travel (cf. figure 12), we found out that those from MAT had more exposure to the outside world in comparison with those from OMAT. Majority (56%) of the participants from MAT had visited between 16-25 countries, while only 20% of those from OMAT had visited the same number of countries. The majority (36%) of instructors from OMAT had visited between 6-10 countries.
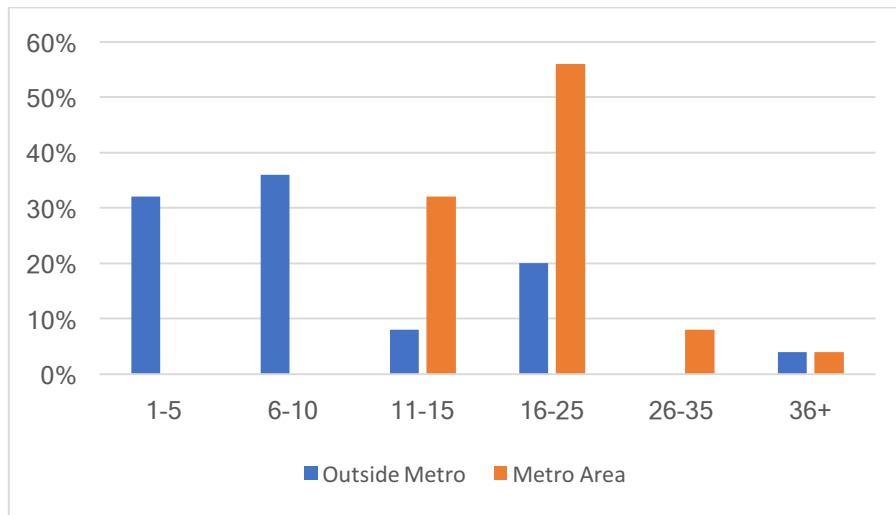
Figure 12. Countries visited (Q.6 Background)

II.3.1.8. Summary of Instructors Background – Metropolitan Area Toronto (MAT)

The instructors that participated in this questionnaire and were from the MAT region had a higher level of education, on the educational scale MAT showed more holders of Master and PhD degrees. Majority also held degrees in relevant areas to English and/ or education. During their elementary level education, they outlined being part of a multicultural school environment. All of these participants, no exclusions, had overseas ESL teaching experience and to an extent between 4-9 years in length. Most had taught in Asia or Europe. Majority have been teaching ESL for over 16+ years. More than half of the participants from MAT had also studied some time overseas, showing a possible elementary education from overseas, to post-secondary studies. This can also translate that some of these participants could have been born overseas. To this fact, most of this foreign education prevailed from Europe and Middle East.

It was also possible to verify that majority were bilingual or polylingual. Most were also vivid globetrotters, non-had travelled to less than 11 countries, majority had visited anywhere from 11 to 25 different countries.

II.3.1.9. Summary of Instructors Background – Outside Metropolitan Area Toronto (OMAT)

As for the participants from the OMAT region majority had only a Bachelors level degree, some as well held a Masters. Majority had studied the field of English language studies but a significant number also held degrees in a non-relevant area to English language or education.

Some did have an opportunity to teach overseas as well but to a shorter duration, mostly from 1-3 years. Most also taught in Europe or Asia. Very few studied overseas, and those that did, studied for a period of more than 9 years. It is also visible that most studied in a monocultural school environment.

The greater number were monolingual, there were a few that showed bilingual language knowledge. All have also traveled overseas but visited fewer countries, most had visited 1-10 countries.

II.3.2. Results Part A - Participants Travel Habits

With travel, one has the opportunity to open up to the world and become a true global citizen. The possibility to learn from a first-person experience. One can learn how the other culture lives as a first-person hand on experience, one can immerse into a different culture and see how this part of the world lives. How they communicate to each other, how time might be managed differently, and how they see the outside world. There is the opportunity to attempt to communicate in the local language, or put into practice what one has learnt from second language learning. At the same time, it is an opportunity in becoming your culture's own ambassador overseas, to transmit to others what your culture is also like. As such, I found that this would also be of importance to sound in this questionnaire.

II.3.2.1. Communicating Icebreaker

When it comes to communicating or trying with some effort to communicate in the local language (cf. figure 13), most of the participants from MAT tried often (52%), sometimes (24%), and always (24%). As for the instructors from OMAT the results were slightly lower, most would sometimes (44%) try, while others would often (24%), there was the same amount that would rarely (24%) try to communicate in the local language.
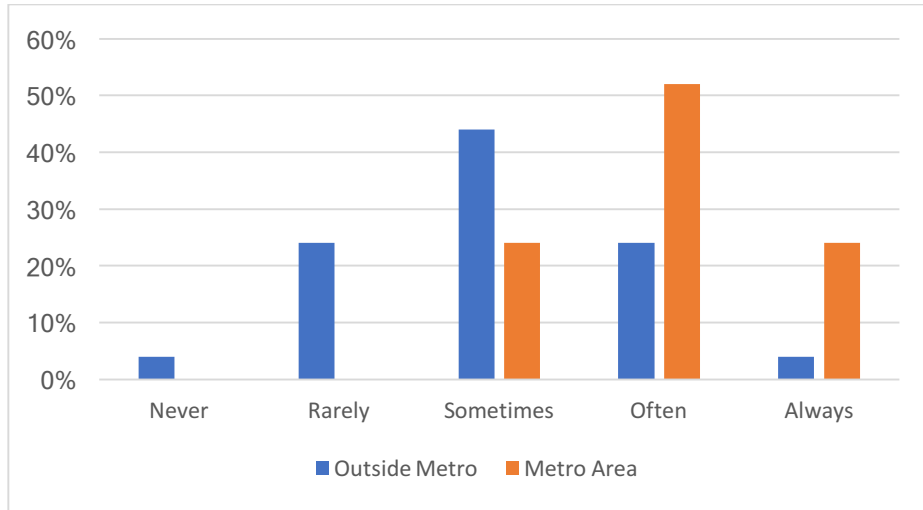
Figure 13. Communicating in local language when abroad (Q.1 Travel)

II.3.2.2. Blending In

As for adapting to the local norms and culture (cf. figure 14) both regions would try sometimes to always, only some from OMAT would rarely (8%) try to adapt. Although, those from MAT would try with more determination, majority would try often (52%), while the remaining would always (44%). Those from OMAT would concentrate on trying sometimes (40%), and almost divided by often (28%) to always (24%) trying to adapt to local norms.
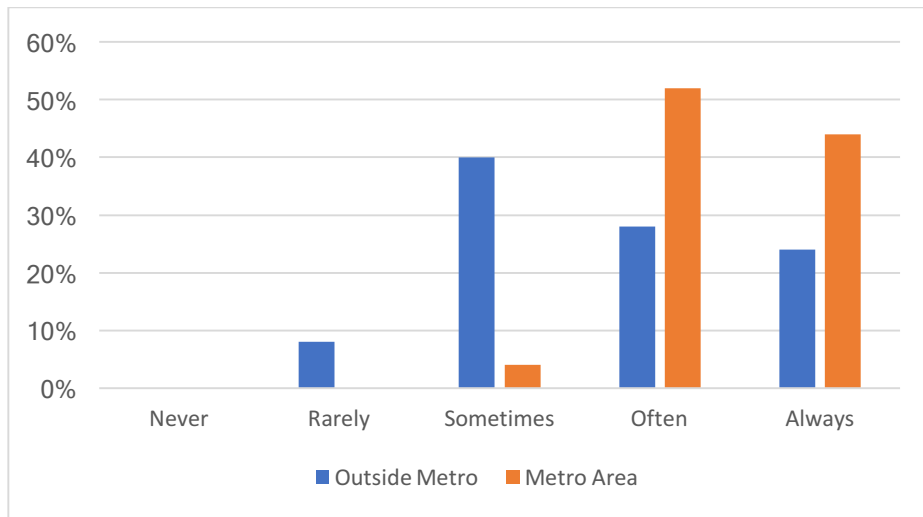
Figure 14. Adapting to local norms abroad (Q.2 Travel)

II.3.2.3. Sense of Time

Concept of time also changes with culture; lunch hour shifts drastically around the globe. In North America 12pm equals lunch hour, Portugal 1pm, and their next-door neighbour 2pm. I found it important to see how our participants face time adaptation during their travels (cf. figure 15).

The instructors from MAT had the tendency of trying to adapt more profoundly to the local hours of where they were visiting (maintaining regular hours: rarely 64%, never 24%, sometimes 12%). While the instructors from OMAT had the tendency of not letting go too easily of their regular hours. In regards to maintaining their regular daily hours they responded: sometimes 32%, often 28%, always 12%, 24% would rarely maintain, and only 4% would never.
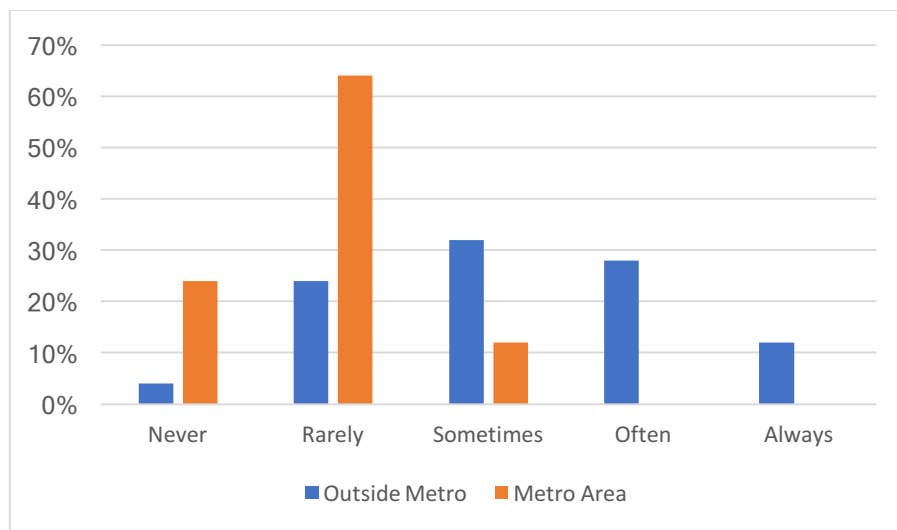
Figure 15. Maintain regular hours abroad (Q.3 Travel)

II.3.2.4. Westernized World

The question sounded if western ideology was the norm in today's world (cf. figure 16). There was a slight difference in answers when comparing MAT and OMAT. MAT had a more central approach, where majority replied that sometimes (80%) this was the norm, often (16%), and only 4% replied that it rarely was. As for OMAT region, the scale leaned more towards a global westernized ideology, close to half replied that it often (48%) was the norm, while 16% defended it to be always. Only 24% believed it to be present sometimes, while 12% rarely.
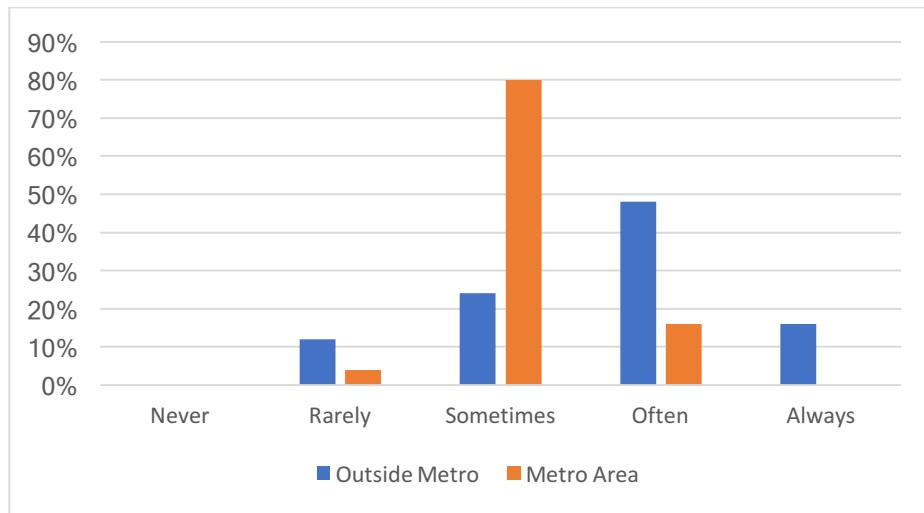
Figure 16. Western ideology global concept (Q.4 Travel)

II.3.2.5. Summary of Instructors Background – Metropolitan Area Toronto (MAT)

In this section, we were able to verify that the instructors from the MAT region were more involved and immersed with the culture and people of the country they were visiting. Majority try as much as possible to communicate in the local language; and adapt to the local norms, rules and traditions.

Being overseas, they also leave behind their usual schedules for eating, and sleeping, they try to integrate within the local traditional hours. In regards to westernized ideology in the global environment, majority believe that sometimes this is the predominant ideology in some areas of the globe.

II.3.2.6. Summary of Instructors Background – Outside Metropolitan Area Toronto (OMAT)

In regards to the participants from OMAT region, we verified that these were still somewhat heavily connected to their own culture or not as open to immerse in the local culture and traditions, when we compare to the MAT participants. They would try sometimes to communicate in the local language, but a great percentage would not try. Some would try to adapt to the local culture, but most were still attached to their regular schedules for eating and sleeping. As for westernized ideology, they had a stronger belief that this was mostly more often present in the globe.

II.3.3. Results Part A – Teaching

The following 16 questions focused on instructors teaching habits, methodology, and intercultural awareness. Here the aim was to verify if there was any possible difference or similarities between each of the regional groups being studied.

II.3.3.1. Intercultural Training

It was important to search if institutions were providing the required intercultural training to their staff, or if staff had this training from some previous experience or education program (cf. figure 17). The discrepancy in intercultural training between the two regions was evident. Majority of instructors from OMAT were never (44%) provided this training, or rarely (36%) provided. While those from MAT had often (52%) been provided this training, or were sometimes (32%) provided intercultural training.
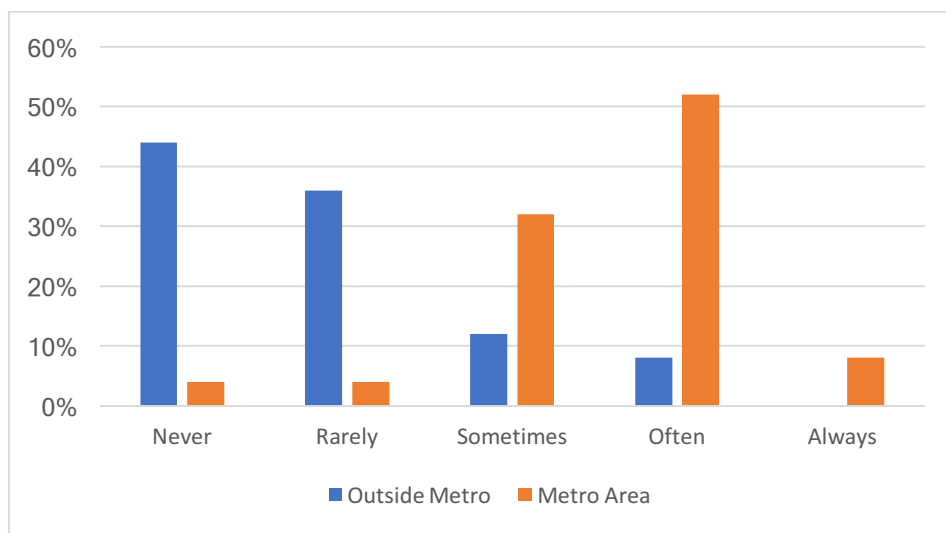
Figure 17. Intercultural Training (Q.1 Teaching)

II.3.3.2. Global Work Environment

What was the working environment of faculty and staff (cf. figure 18)? Those teaching in the MAT answered that 92% of them teach in a mixed cultural workplace. As for the instructors in the OMAT region, the richness of a global workplace environment was not present in such great deepness. Only 28% were always working in a global environment, while the remainder often (32%) to sometimes (28%).
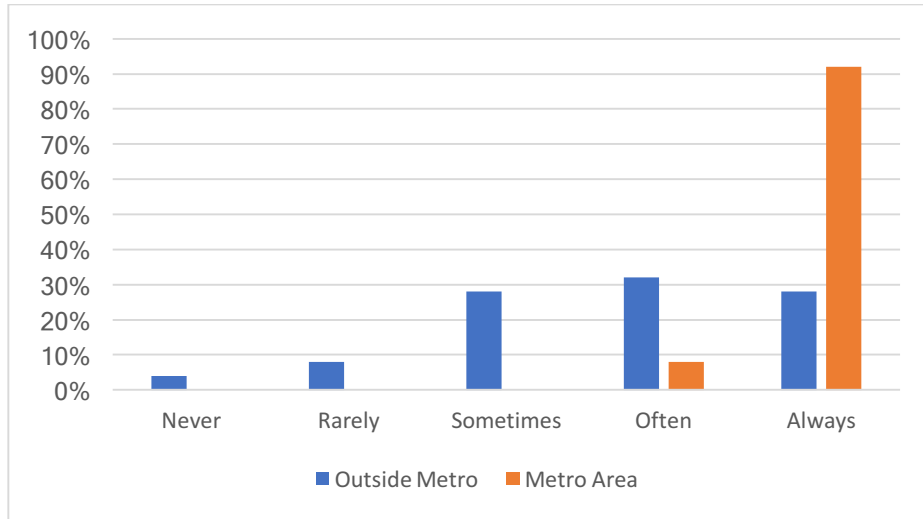
Figure 18. Mixed cultural staff environment (Q.2 Teaching)

II.3.3.3. Diversity Comfort in Classroom – Teaching

Instructors from both regions scored into the high comfort zone in teaching student of diverse cultural backgrounds. However, all those from MAT claimed that they all (100%) always felt comfortable in this diverse teaching environment. While, only 60% of the instructors from OMAT claimed an always comfort level, the remainder 40%, often felt comfortable teaching in such an environment (cf. figure 19).
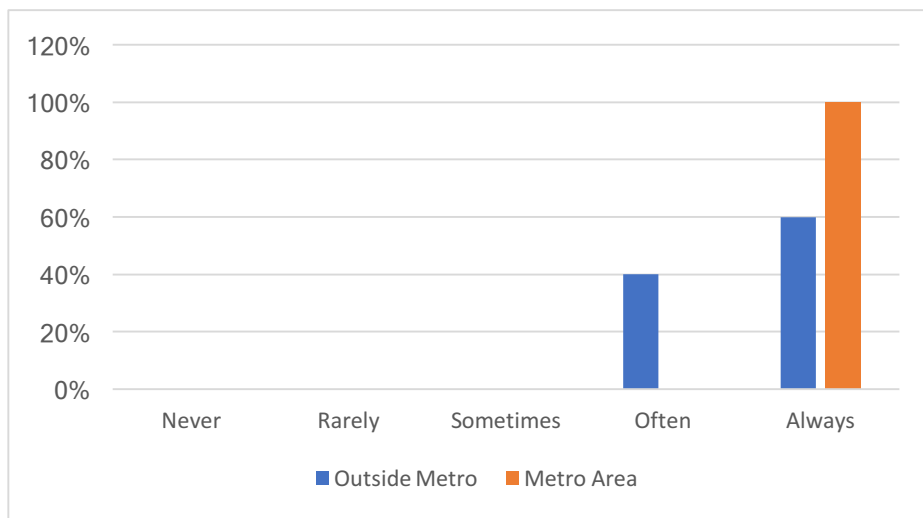
Figure 19. Comfortable teaching diverse students (Q.3 Teaching)

II.3.3.4. Awareness of Foreign Educational System

Educational system differs from each country at times even in each country there are internal different systems. How aware were our instructors of their student's native educational system (cf. figure 20)? Those from the MAT region were always (48%) or often (48%) aware of their student's foreign educational system. While the instructors from OMAT had less knowledge of these foreign systems. Majority claimed, that sometimes (60%) or rarely (28%) they were aware into which system constituted their student's educational upbringing.
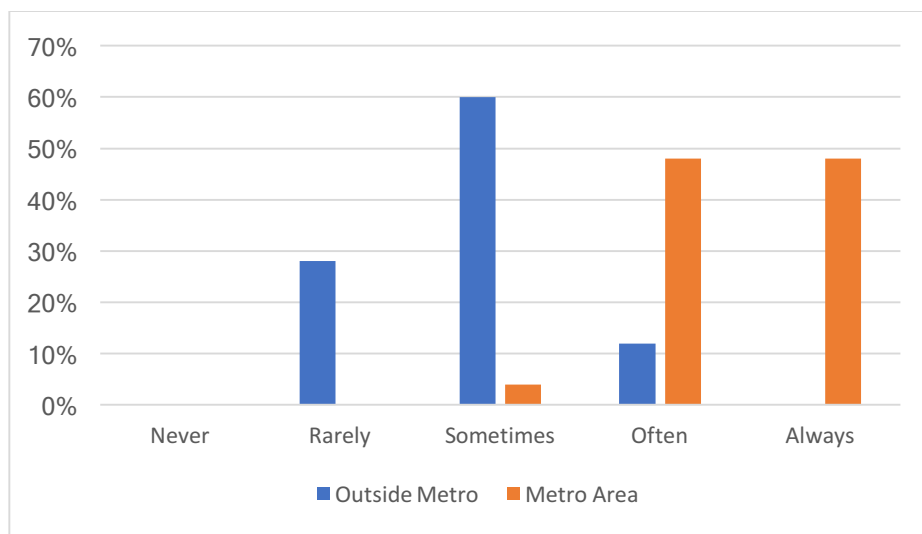
Figure 20. Aware students' foreign educational system (Q.4 Teaching)

II.3.3.5. Student's Cultural Background

With the aspect of understanding their student's cultural background (cf. figure 21) and all of which could be attached to student's cognitive environment, the findings were of great interest and showed a discrepancy between the two regions. All respondents (100%) from MAT replied that they were always fully aware of their student's cultural background. As for the instructors from OMAT, the results were divided equally into the categories: sometimes (32%), often (32%), and always (32%) aware of student's cultural background.
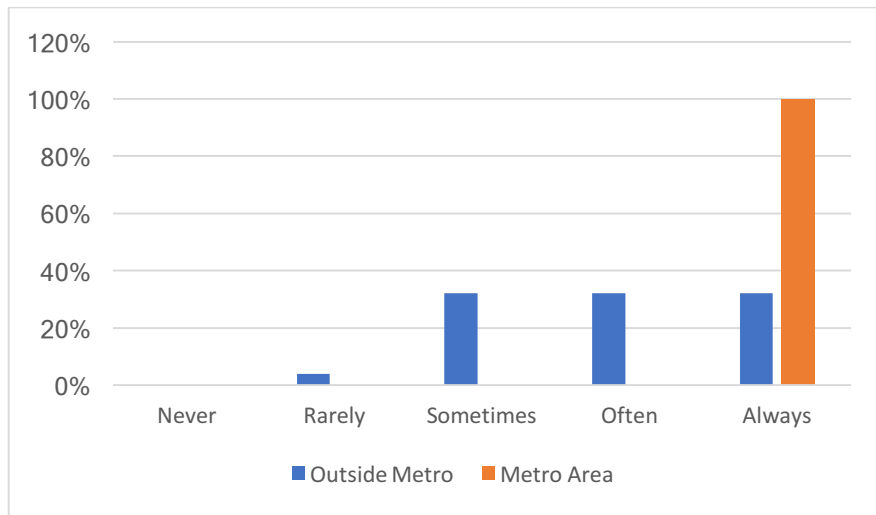
Figure 21. Knowledge of students' cultural background (Q.5 Teaching)

II.3.3.6. Global Teaching and Study Habits

Is the teaching philosophy the same globally, are learning outcomes the same in South America and the Middle East, does testing have the same load on final grades? I wanted to see if instructors believed that teaching and study habits were the same globally, or different (cf. figure 22). Majority of respondents from MAT believed that it is never (84%) the same, and in some cases rarely (16%). Those from OMAT, had a more spread out opinion in range: they outlined that teaching and study are usually rarely (36%), and sometimes (32%) the same, while in cases it can also often (24%) be identical. Only 8% emphasized that teaching and study habits were never the same globally.
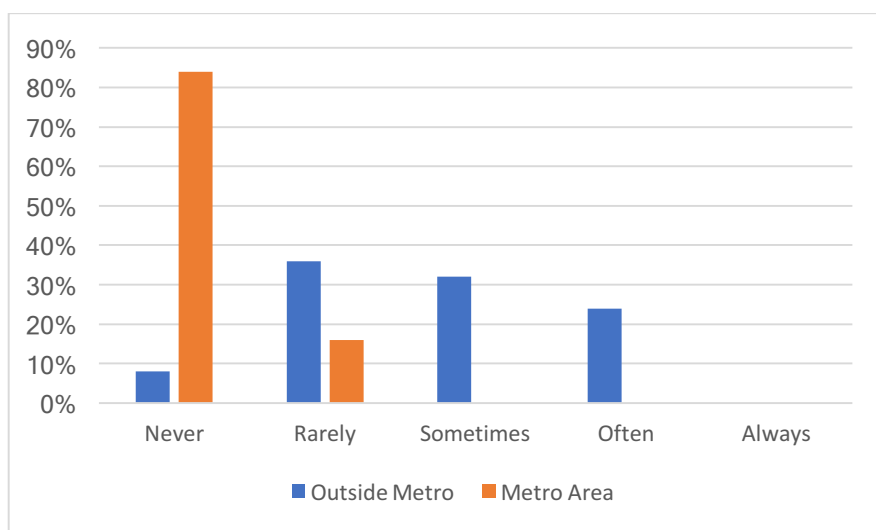
Figure 22. Global teaching and study habits (Q.6 Teaching)

II.3.3.7. Classroom Participation – Cultural Background

I provided a classroom situation to see how instructors from both regions would reply: If a student doesn't participate in class, it is because he/she is shy, not because of cultural background (cf. figure 23)? Both groups replied within the rarely to sometimes category but with different weight per region. Majority of the instructors from MAT believed that rarely (64%) lack of participation is due to shyness, while it might be the case sometimes (32%). Those from OMAT, believed that actually, lack of participation can sometimes (60%) and rarely (28%) be due to shyness, and not a cultural trait.
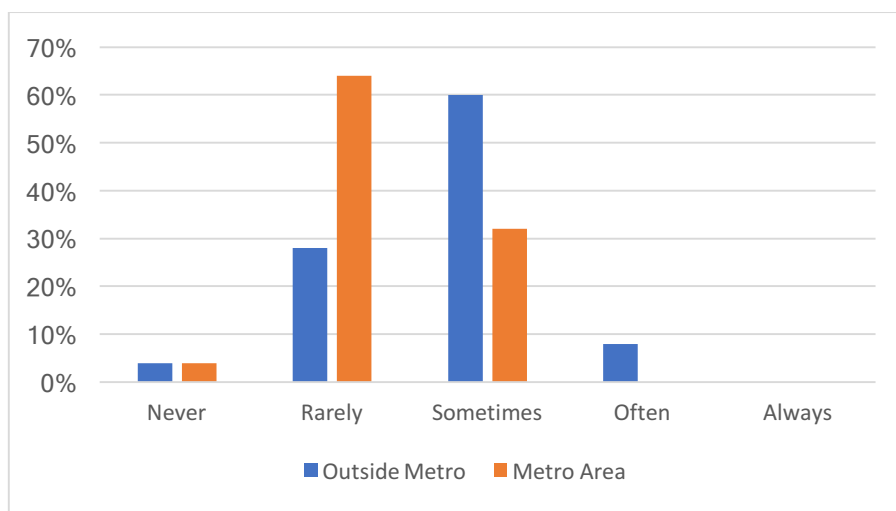
Figure 23. Cultural background and classroom participation (Q.7 Teaching)

II.3.3.8. Culture vs Language Instruction

As an ESL instructor, are these instructors more focused in teaching ESL or Canadian culture to their students (cf. figure 24)? Surprisingly, there was a different focus when comparing answers given from the two regions. The priority for instructors from MAT was to focus on ESL teaching: often (72%), always (20%). As for instructors from OMAT, their focus was often (44%) and always (8%) on teaching ESL, but a grand percentage also replied that their focus is also sometimes (44%) on teaching ESL, finding that language and culture teaching were at the same importance level.
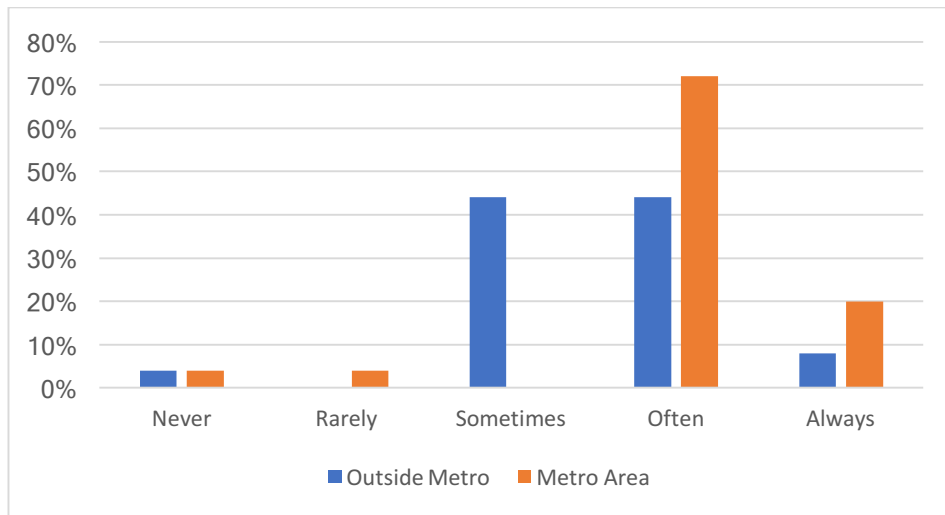
Figure 24. Teaching priority ESL vs. culture (Q. 8 Teaching)

II.3.3.9. Classroom Behaviour

Participation in class differs from country to country, in some countries a raise of the hand is made prior to replying to a teacher, or being given permission to speak by the teacher. With other cultures, it is common for those who believe to know the answer to a question to speak out their opinion. I asked the instructors if one replies to a question raised by the teacher by speaking out the answer without raising their hands, if this was considered disrespectful (cf. figure 25)?

Majority of those from the MAT region considered this to never (32%) or rarely (52%) be disrespectful. 16% agreed that it might be at sometimes disrespectful. The instructors from OMAT, also majority claimed that it was rarely (48%) disrespectful, but we had a higher reply rate in regards to sometimes (40%) disrespectful.
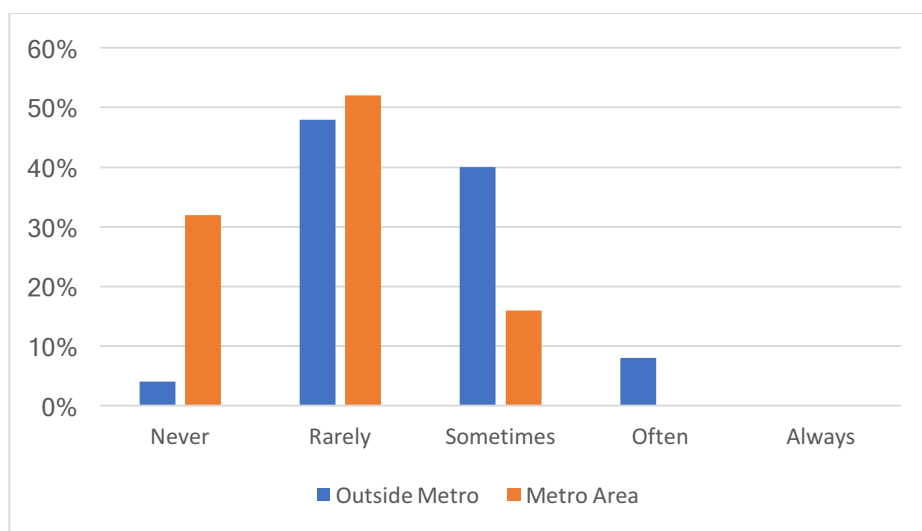
Figure 25. Speaking out in class (Q.9 Teaching)

II.3.3.10. Culture, Expectation, and Performance

The idea behind this question was to see if a possible stereotype would or could be prejudice towards a possible grade or expectation from the point of view of a teacher (cf. figure 26). Both regions claimed that never or rarely did this cause a prejudice of their student's performance. I will outline that there was a difference of degree in the reply. Majority of those from MAT answered that this never (84%) or rarely (8%) caused a concern in the level of expectation of student's performance. Those from OMAT, majority claimed rarely (64%) or never (28%) would this affect their expectations.
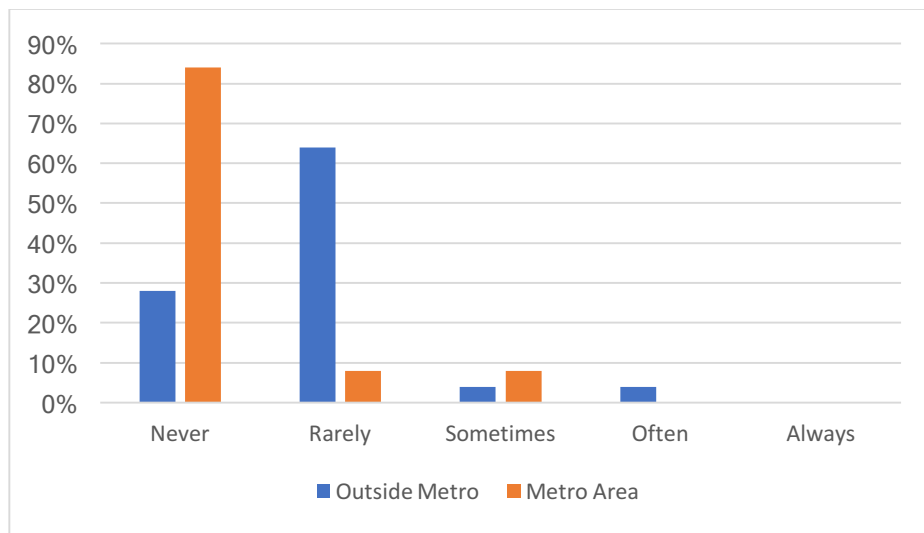
Figure 26. Culture, expectation, and performance (Q.10 Teaching)

II.3.3.11. Student's Cultural Presentation in Classroom

Were instructors open to the concept of allowing students to share their personal cultural stories in the classroom or comparative stories with the new welcoming culture (cf. figure 27)? Both regions were open and always allowed for their student to expose these personal cultural stories in the classroom, or compare their culture to the local culture. The instructor from MAT answered 100% to always, while those from OMAT replied 88% to always, and 12% often allow for this to take place in class.
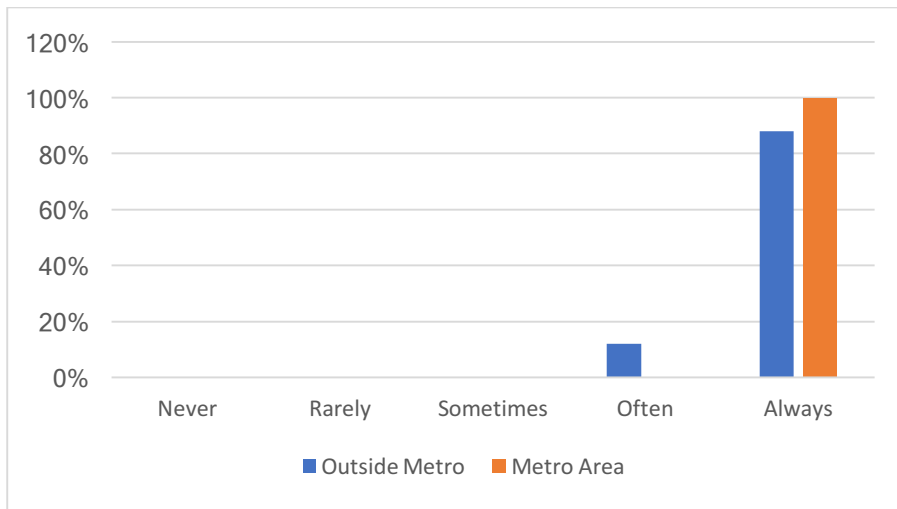
Figure 27. Students' cultural presentation in class (Q.11 Teaching)

II.3.3.12. Curriculum Adaptation to Culture

Curriculum can be a sensitive issue to some cultures, one must be cautious of the unintentional sensitivity to some. With this, I wanted to see if instructors took into consideration the background of their students while preparing curriculum for their lessons (cf. figure 28). It was visible that majority of the instructors from MAT often (48%) and always (36%) adapted their curriculum accordingly, there were also a small 12% that would sometimes consider adapting. As for instructors from OMAT, their adaptation to curriculum based on cultural background of their students was slightly less flexible. Majority replied that sometimes (52%) and often (20%) they would adapt. We also had some that would rarely (12%) or never (4%) adapt their curriculum.
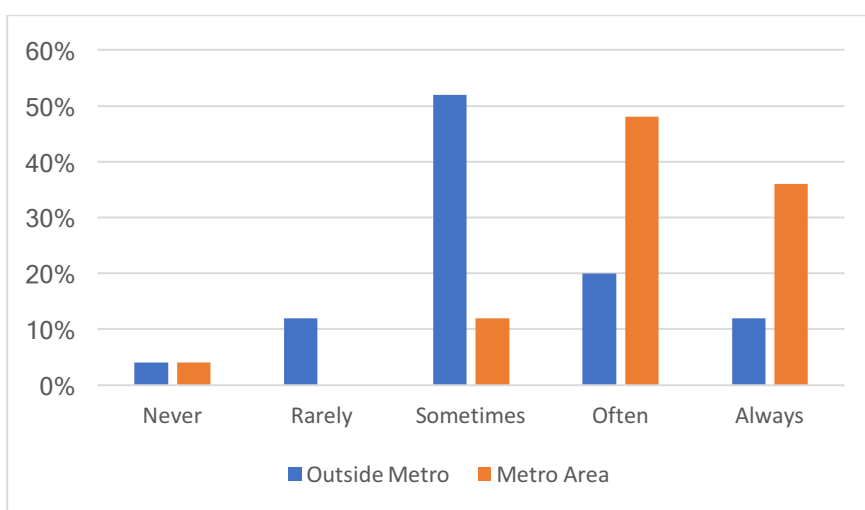
Figure 28. Curriculum adaptation to culture (Q.12 Teaching)

II.3.3.13. Monocultural or Multicultural Curriculum Approach

In part, this question resembles in theory with the previous: curriculum content related. I wanted to verify if by reformulating the question there would be a different answer, but results were very similar. As classrooms become more diversified, I wanted to verify if these instructors were still using monocultural video and texts, or were adapting to their international classroom environment (cf. figure 29). All instructors from MAT, claimed they don't use a monocultural approach. As for the instructors from OMAT, the replies were more spread on the reply scale. Majority claimed that sometimes (36%) their texts and videos are monocultural, but also at times rarely (28%) or never (20%). There was still a percentage that said that they often (16%) follow a monocultural approach.
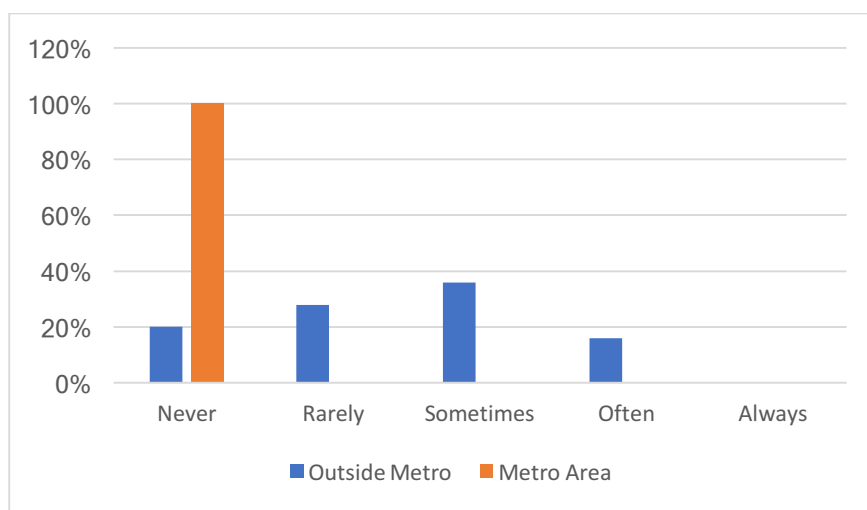
Figure 29. Monocultural curriculum approach (Q.13 Teaching)

II.3.3.14. Classroom Ethics

In some cultures, teachers only call out on those that raise their hands, in others students speak out their answers as soon as a question arises, while there are also some cultures that the teacher will select randomly those on whom they wish to hear an answer from, no need for a hand to be raised. With such, I was able to verify that either region diversifies on the way they pick their student to answer questions, but do outline that in both no one selected that they only call out those that raise their hands (cf. figure 30). As for MAT, instructors never (68%), or rarely (28%) call upon those that raise their hands. While those from OMAT, sometimes (44%), rarely (36%), and often (16%) call on those that raise their hands.
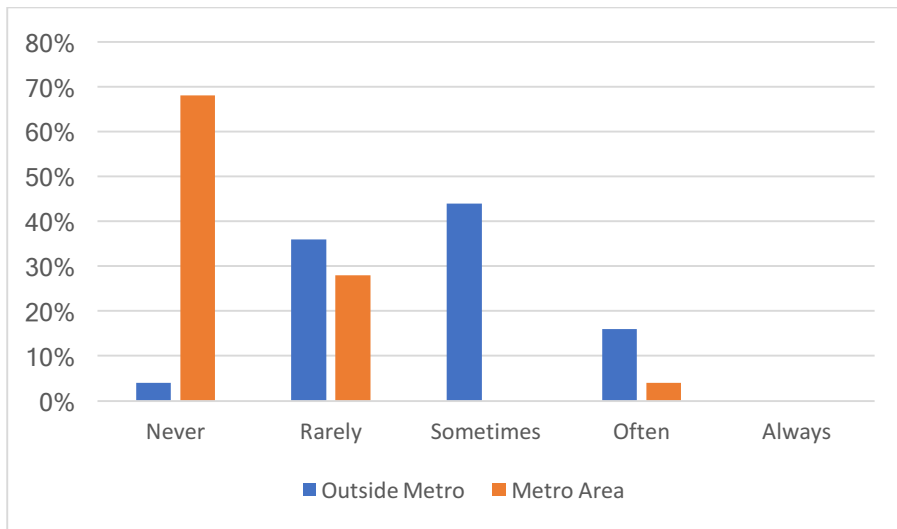
Figure 30. Classroom ethics: raising hands to answer (Q.14 Teaching)

II.3.3.15. Diversified Answers

Is there only one correct answer? Not grammatically or syntax error in a sentence, but there are many ways of viewing the world and this might lead to several answers. I wanted to verify if instructors were open to this diversity (cf. figure 31). The instructors from MAT, defended that rarely (60%) or possibly sometimes (36%) there is a single answer to a question. The instructors from OMAT, had a slightly different opinion, they defended that sometimes (56%), often (24%), and rarely (12%) there was a single answer.
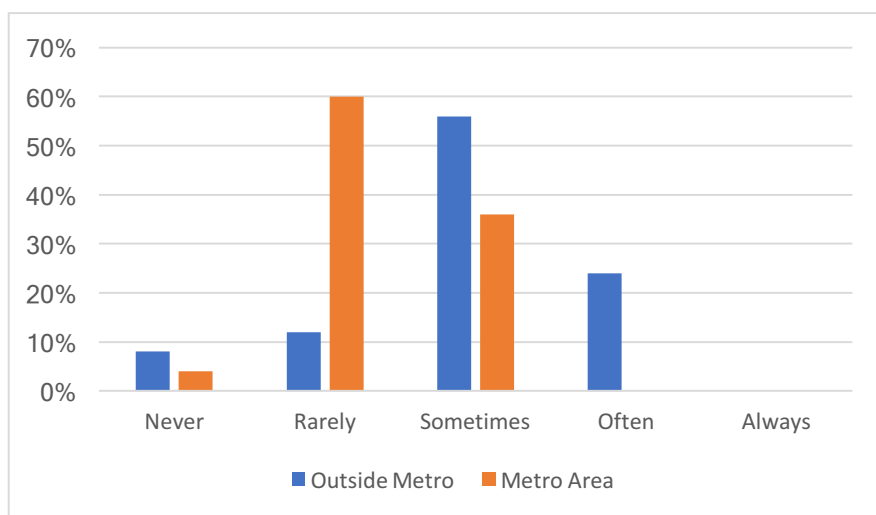
Figure 31. Only one correct answer (Q.15 Teaching)

II.3.3.16. North American Mainstream

Similar to the previous question, there are usually different ways of reporting an event, depending on which source is portraying the story and from which global perspective. With this, I wanted to see if the instructors were using news sources and articles from several sources, including outside of North America (cf. figure 32). Here I was able to verify that the two regions were not using the same methodology. The instructors from MAT replied that they never (56%), or rarely (44%) only use articles from North American news sources. While those from OMAT, often (56%), sometimes (20%), and rarely (20%) only used North American sources.
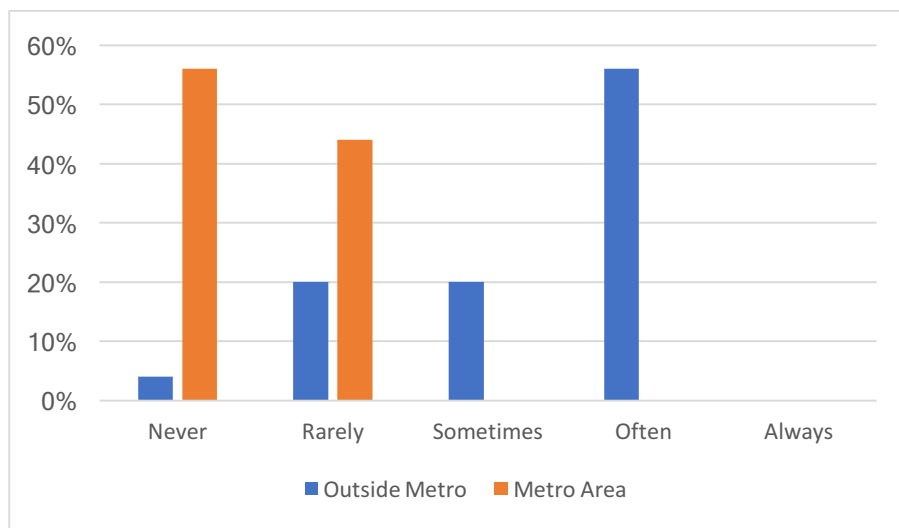
Figure 32. North American curriculum prevalence (Q.16 Teaching)

II.3.3.17. Summary of Instructors Teaching Concepts and Cultural Awareness–Metropolitan Area Toronto (MAT)

By conducting this section of the questionnaire, I was able to get a more realistic intercultural awareness of the instructors from the MAT region.

Most demonstrated that they have had some intercultural training, although not still a strong percentage. Majority were all working in a mixed cultural environment, and they had no personal barriers in teaching students from mixed cultural backgrounds. Most had some knowledge of the educational system of their student's home country. All had a strong understanding of student's cultural background, customs and traditions.

In regards to in-class instruction, interaction, and methodology, most teachers agreed that the study habits and teaching methodology globally are not all the same, and that classroom participation is different globally as well. Their priority as an ESL instructor was to focus on teaching English and not concentrate on the culture behind the language. If they had any possible stereotypes of a given culture, they would not allow those to predetermine student's potential performance. They were aware that their different ways in seeing a given situation, and to this they were aware that at times, there could be more than a single answer to a given question.

They all allowed their students to share their cultural stories in class, and teach others about their own culture, traditions, and customs. Most modified their curriculum to adjust to student's cultural background. All media and texts used in class were of diverse cultural richness to englobe a reflection of their multicultural classroom. They sourced North American news sources for stories, but also included news sources from outside of North America in order to enrich a worldview.

In summary, these instructors were more open to an international teaching environment, and ready to adapt to cultural needs to make curriculum more adaptable to student's background or to englobe the classroom into a global perspective.

II.3.3.18. Summary of Instructors Teaching Concepts and Cultural Awareness– Outside Metropolitan Area Toronto (OMAT)

Most of the instructors from the OMAT region had very little to non-existent intercultural training, and were working in a somewhat lightly mixed multicultural setting. They claimed to feeling at ease teaching international students, and had some knowledge of the educational system of where their students were coming from, but there were also a few that claimed that they had very limited knowledge of foreign educational systems. As for their students' cultural background, they claimed to have some knowledge of their culture, customs and traditions. They claimed that they were unbiased in regards to possible connotations of certain cultures, and student's performance.

As for teaching and study habits overseas, more than half believed that these were the same globally, and this also reflected in questions related with classroom behaviour where they had a higher ratio in claiming that some behaviour in class was not culturally related (ie. answering to questions without raising hands). Their priority as an ESL instructor was divided by teaching Canadian culture and ESL to their students.

They allowed students to share their own cultural stories in class, and teach others about their culture. They were less flexible in adapting curriculum to fit students cultural background. Mostly believed that only sometimes there is a possible second answer to a question, not having in mind other cultural beliefs. Texts and videos used in class had a more monocultural approach, and for in-class stories, they focused mostly on news sources from North America.

In summary, these instructors were also inclined to welcome other cultures and learn from them, but when it came to teaching they were less inclined to demonstrate a global environment and instead focus on a more monocultural (regional) Canadian curriculum. In retrospective, it is important to note as well that very limited intercultural training has been provided to these instructors.

II.4. Questionnaire Part B – Classroom Cultural Variations

It is known that each culture has its own way to learn and to be taught. What is a common behaviour to one, might be impropriate to others. Teachers that start teaching a diverse cultural range of international students at some point are confronted with the question: Is this common practice? The teacher must also have the role of outlining to students what is expected from them in regards to participation, grading, and study habits. At the same time, they must understand how the international student sees the local education when compared to their own, from back home. It is a learning module for both.

The idea with this part of the questionnaire, was to verify if instructors from both regions had experienced any of the described situations, and if they had, were the able to identify one of the possible cultures. It is important to outline, that all of these situations are also possible with any culture, since even among one's own culture there is a degree of diversification.

Due to the current global pandemic of COVID 19, it was impossible to observe diverse ESL classes in-person since March 2020. All public institutions in the province of Ontario are delivering online ESL classes. As such, enrolment has dropped in comparison with pre-COVID times, where all of these classes were of high diversity and enrolment. I created a list of classrooms scenarios that I would be monitoring during the possible in-person observation, I reversed the supervisor role, and have had the instructors complete by answering what possible nationality reflects such scenario.

II.4.1. Eye Contact

Student A avoids making eye contact with the teacher while speaking to him.

Student A	JPN	CHN	KOR	IND	RUS	UAE	KSA	CAN	Any
Outside Metro	4	1	1	**8**	0	3	6	2	1
Metro Area	2	0	0	0	1	2	**13**	0	0

In several cultures (i.e. Southern Asia) making eye contact with a teacher (or someone of higher authority) can be a sign of disrespect. In some Middle Eastern countries women also try to avoid making direct eye contact with males (if not family members).

In this question, both regions were able to identify the two areas where people sometimes avoid making direct eye contact. Instructors in MAT identified by majority Saudi Arabia, and OMAT majority India.

II.4.2. Speaking Out vs. Raising Hand

Student B raises her hand to reply to her teacher while **Student C** speaks out the answer at once.

Student B	JPN	CHN	KOR	VNM	IND	DEU	RUS	CAN	Any
Outside Metro	**10**	2	2	2	0	1	0	**12**	1
Metro Area	**18**	0	0	3	1	6	1	0	0

Student C	MEX	COL	BRA	PAN	ESP	ITA	UKR	RUS	KSA	IRN	TUR	CAN
Outside Metro	6	3	**7**	4	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	2
Metro Area	9	0	**7**	1	5	4	0	0	1	0	0	1

In many cultures, it is common for people to talk all at the same time, and interrupting each other. This is common in Southern Europe and Latin America. In other cultures, silence is paramount and you only speak when you raise your hand or are asked (some countries in Asia, and Nordic regions).

Both regions were able to identify the two common groups. Both MAT and OMAT instructors, identified Japan as the possible region for those that raise their hands to answer to a question. It is interesting to note that for Student B, OMAT instructors also identified Canadian students. Which in case is true, due to Canada having in some regions Nordic culture present as well. As for Student C that speaks out, both regional instructors were also able to identify Mexico and Brazil as possible regions where students speak out.

II.4.3. Silence and Status

Student D never raises or speaks out the answer, but is aware of the answer.

Student D	JPN	CHN	KOR	VNM	IND	PAN	DEU	FRA	UKR	KSA	CAN	Any
Outside Metro	**7**	2	4	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	**7**	1
Metro Area	**13**	0	0	8	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

In some cultures, interrupting another person of older age or higher hierarchal structure can be considered rude. This can be present in some Asian our Southern Asian cultures.

Instructors from MAT and OMAT identified Japan as a possible region. The second possible region for those from MAT region was Vietnam. It was interesting to note, that once again, instructors from OMAT selected Canada as another possible region (this time equal to the same percentage that also answered Japan).

II.4.4. Questioning the Teacher

Student E questions the teacher in regards to the grammar rule being taught, saying it is different from what was learnt in his home country, **Student F** is in shock that **Student E** is questioning the teacher.

Student E	CHN	KOR	BRA	PAN	DEU	FRA	RUS	ERI	KSA	TUR	CAN
Outside Metro	4	**10**	1	1	2	0	5	1	1	1	2
Metro Area	0	**19**	1	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	0

Student F	JPN	CHN	KOR	VNM	IND	KSA	CAN
Outside Metro	9	5	1	0	6	0	8
Metro Area	16	1	1	2	3	2	0

Directness in communication is a common trait in some cultures (i.e. most Eastern European Countries and Commonwealth of Independent States), where communication is made directly to the point. If the speaker doesn't have a strong level in L2 than to some it might sound impolite.

To other cultures, asking questions or showing doubt to an instructor is a point to avoid since this can show that the student might believe that the instructor can't do their task of teaching, or can imply in challenging a teacher, and this Is not seen as a positive attitude to some. Many times, students from these regions (some Eastern and South East Asian countries) might agree that they do understand a given task or instructions, but actually don't understand, and don't want to show this.

As for study methodology, in some cultures studying is done "by the book" all grammar rules or problems are followed according to all guidelines as per textbook. In others, students like to practice and challenge scenarios and not use memory as a record of rules, but rather practice for perfection.

As for the survey, both regional instructors selected in greater number the same possible country for the student that was challenging the teacher (South Korea). As for the student that was shocked that there was someone challenging a teacher, the also replied with the same possible country: Japan. Also, to note, once again instructors from OMAT selected Canada as a possible country for "student F": student in shock.

II.4.5. Plagiarism

Student G doesn't understand why his teacher failed his assignment because it was a "googled" essay.

Student G	CHN	KOR	VNM	IND	MEX	PAN	RUS	SOM	ERI	UAE	KSA	CAN
Outside Metro	**14**	0	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	0	2
Metro Area	**18**	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	5	0	2	0

Plagiarism can be an issue in every corner of the globe, but to some non-western societies where one believes that an ideology doesn't have ownership but belongs to all, and encouragement is given to memorize important passages from great writers and philosophers and know how to use these in everyday scenarios, but no need to cite or give reference of such, since this can be considered disrespectful. To students from these regions, plagiarism is not considered an intellectual crime, but the opposite to such.

In the scenario given, both regional instructors outlined by majority, China as one of the possible countries. Certainly, there are other possible countries as well, but both instructors selected the same country. To outline that China is the major source of international students to most of the institutions within our research scope.

II.4.6. Silence over Disagreement

Student H disagrees with the teachers point-of-view but is afraid to show his view or disagreement.

Student H	JPN	CHN	KOR	IND	CAN	Any
Outside Metro	**11**	3	3	**9**	2	1
Metro Area	**8**	0	0	**17**	0	1

This scenario is similar to the previous mentioned point "Questioning the Teacher", to outline that in this particular scenario the focus is in the fear in showing disagreement with the instructor, and therefore silence prevails. As outlined previously, in some Asian cultures disagreeing or showing disagreement with a teacher or a higher hierarchical member, is a sign of disrespect.

Both regional instructors identified by majority the same two countries but with different number of votes. Instructors from OMAT outlined Japan and India (order of relevance), and as for instructors from MAT it was India and Japan.

II.4.7. Group Work and Solo

Student J prefers to work on his own when it comes to group work, **Students K and L** perform better when placed in teams.

Student J	JPN	CHN	ESP	DEU	UKR	RUS	TUR	CAN	Any
Outside Metro	0	1	0	2	**7**	6	1	**10**	1
Metro Area	1	0	1	**11**	1	**18**	0	0	0

Student K&L	JPN	CHN	MEX	COL	BRA	PAN	ECU	ESP	ITA	UAE	KSA	CAN	Any
Outside Metro	0	1	**15**	3	**12**	3	2	1	1	3	3	5	2
Metro Area	1	0	**22**	2	**19**	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	0

In some cultures, there is a higher tendency for students to perform better, or interact with more enthusiasm when placed in groups (Latin America, China, Middle East), while in other cultures they tend to concentrate and achieve better results when working on their own (Nordic countries, Central Europe, Eastern Europe). On another note, to some cultures being placed in groups for classroom discussion or group work, can be perceived as a way for a teacher not to do their part: teach (Asia).

To this, I had different answers from instructors from both regions when comparing the two. For Student J, we can see that majority from OMAT responded to students originating from Canada, Ukraine, and Russia. Those from MAT replied that Student J originated from Russia and Germany. Both follow the possible countries where students feel more at ease working on their own. It is interesting to see OMAT teachers outlining Canada, when those from MAT did not mention Canada.

In regards to students K&L, instructors from both regions replied to the same possible countries: Mexico and Brazil, outlining Latin America countries where students feel comfortable in working in groups.

II.4.8. Summary Classroom Cultural Variations

With this exercise, I was able to verify that both groups of teachers: MAT and OMAT had in the majority of cases identified the same top possible culture, or even two possible cultures. If they didn't identify the same country, they would identify countries within the same global regions with similar cultural similarities.

An interesting trend that I was able to notice, was that on several occasions, the instructors from the OMAT region identified Canada as a possible country for some of the situations. While, with instructors from MAT region they never gave Canada as an answer. It is possible that the stronger linkage to Canadian culture encountered within instructors from OMAT region, or the fact that majority of the instructors were born, lived, and worked within their place of birth, and had gone thru the Canadian educational system all their lives, a clear identification of why Canada was given as a possible answer. The results were similar to the study conducted in 2009 by Cushner and Mahon, where most recent new teachers are teaching within 100 miles from their birthplace. Although that study was conducted in the United States, but it is evident that there are similar findings from rural Canada. When we analyse the answers from instructors from the MAT region, throughout this exercise there was only one instructor that selected Canada as a response. It is possible that this can be the cause of most instructors having a more global experience, and the possibility that some of the instructors originating from the MAT region were born overseas and did not go thru the Canadian educational system. The other possibility is that they viewed these questions within the perspective of an ESL teacher, and therefore there is a great chance that a Canadian student would not be studying ESL. The possibility of this happening would be if they were to teach students originating from the province of Quebec, where French is the official language in the province. This also leads us to outline that many of these instructors from rural Ontario, live in a different cultural reality from their pupils, at times their understanding of a foreign culture or lack of preparation on interculturalization places them in a different realm from their students as per Cushner et al, 2009:

> "Teachers and teachers in training, it appears, live in vastly different worlds from the students in their charge."

II.5. Open Interview Stage

For the open interview section of the research, I interviewed a total of 6 instructors, 3 from each geographic region. These interviews were performed using the ZOOM webinar platform due to the restrictions at the time imposed by the provincial government due to the global pandemic, COVID 19. All interviewees taught at different institutions, and voluntarily participated in this section. Focus of the question was to identify what tools, if any, were provided to them by their institutions on interacting with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This was an open-end question, allowing them to develop the answer and share further information if they wished. I will provide a summary of the replies and a comparison between regions.

II.5.1. OMAT Region Interviews

All three participants from OMAT regions outlined that there was hardly any training provided by their institutions, and they would like to see more training provided since for the last 2-4 years most were teaching students from regions that they have never had taught before.

One instructor outlined an episode that a colleague did not understand why a group of her students from a certain country in Latin America were not able to use the internet for an online assignment. The instructor believed that all young generation were tech savvy, and understood the use of online search engines to conduct research for a possible essay assignment. They were later informed that students from this region did not have high speed internet in the area where they were form, therefore they hardly had any access or training on how to use this. The instructor outlined that if they had been briefed on the educational background of these students, then this scenario would have been avoided and they would have begun with a class of introduction to Information Technology and ESL.

Another instructor outlined that only recently have such topics of intercultural development have been brought up by their institution. This instructor believes that this had started recently with issues in North America in regards to racial discrimination in society. There had also been some local incidents within the region where the institution belongs to. Some international students had encountered some discriminatory issues with local community members. This instructor also defended the need of intercultural development training within the institution,

but the institution should also provide programs or events to open up its doors to the local community so that they can learn how to accept these international students into the local community.

Two instructors also outlined the importance of their institution to interact with other public institutions within the bigger municipalities to share information on how they coped years ago with the influx of international students and what training they made available. Theses instructors reminded that this issue is nothing new to these institutions, and possibly no need to reinvent the wheel. They also stressed on the importance of having qualified faculty or staff members with a stronger knowledge on overseas mobility programs for students and staff.

II.5.2. MAT Region Interviews

All of the instructors from MAT region communicated that at least for the last ten years, their institutions have seen a healthy enrollment of international students. They have seen a bigger nationality mix of students in comparison to the past. In the past, most of their international student were from several countries in Asia, Europe, and Middle East. Today they were seeing students from smaller countries in Latin America and Africa. All did show interest in seeing more training in the field of cultural development at their institutions, and the importance of time to be provided by their institution for such.

One instructor commented that their institution provided intercultural training to new faculty members, and when they received certain projects from overseas, they were given a cultural brief and students were provided with brief Canadian culture online sessions prior to arrival in Canada.

Another instructor mentioned that their institution provided faculty with the opportunity of presenting at local, national, and international seminars and events on ESL practices and theory, some of the topics that some instructors had presented had been at times linked with culture in the classroom. They were given a period per year to work on this personal development goal.

There was also an instructor that referred that their institution had for the last several years provided students with a "buddy program". This allowed for a small group of international

students (4-5 students) to be paired with a domestic (Canadian) student. Students would have 45-minute chat sessions and they would talk about issues that were relevant to their interest and common areas. Students were within the same age group and this worked well, since both sides learned from each other, and some have become lifelong friends.

II.5.3. Interview Summary

Cross checking the results from the questionnaires and the aleatory interview with the instructors from each of the regions, it is clear that the results align. There is a need and interest for and from instructors of the OMAT region of their institution in providing intercultural training, and at the same time, the possibility of these institutions to open up to their local community in order for all to have a better of understanding of each other's cultures. From the findings, it is evident that this international growth has happened recently and it is possible that institutions and local community were not prepared for this sudden growth of international students, and more importantly of how to welcome and be home to these new cultures. It is of importance to outline that both instructors noted that it would be of importance to their institution to have qualified personnel on staff with the knowledge on overseas mobility and exchange experience in order to help in interculturalization of their students and staff. This is similar to the findings from Goode, 2008, in his study on staff members leading global mobility programs at institutions with their lack of previous knowledge on such.

As for the instructors from the MAT region, the results from the interview and questionnaire clearly show that they have a higher intercultural preparedness and experience level. It is also interesting to see that they have integrated programs within their institutions to help international and domestic students in interacting with each other, and learning from each other, this is one of the important steps of building intercultural competence. Another important point, is that these instructors receive support from their institution on providing reports and presenting locally or internationally on their experience as an ESL instructor in an intercultural classroom.

Chapter III - Discussion and Conclusion

III.1. Summary of Research Questionnaires and Findings

Is a multicultural staffed institution better prepared academically with an intercultural mindset?

This was the basis research question of my research, that was conducted to 50 ESL instructors (25 participants per region) in the public post-secondary institutions within the Metropolitan Area of Toronto, Canada (MAT), and outside of the Metropolitan Area of Toronto (OMAT) within an outside radius of 75km to 200km. The aim was to study the personal background, travel experience, and teaching experience of each instructor and verify if there was a pattern that showed of any of these three fields increased intercultural competence of the instructors, and if it did, where were we to find the majority of these instructors? In an urban setting? A rural area? Or, possibly in both?

From the compiled results of the research, I was able to reach a conclusion that certainly there was an evident difference in intercultural competence between the instructors from the two selected regions. The instructors from the Metropolitan Area were more aware of their student's cultural background, the educational system from their student's home country, and at the same time they showed profound interest in integrating into the local foreign culture when travelling overseas. These instructors also showed a higher level of academic qualifications, overseas teaching experience, and majority spoke two or more languages. As for curriculum design, these instructors were also more tolerant to adapt their curriculum to suit their students cultural and/or religious background, and at the same time use media and texts that portrayed a rich diverse culture, and not solely focused on North American sources. This showed evident traces of these instructors being able to see how others see a different culture, and providing the tools for others to learn from each other and accept the cultural differences.

The instructors from the Outer Metropolitan Area of Toronto, showed a less intercultural competence from their counterparts. They showed a less comfort level in teaching a classroom

of mixed cultures, they struggled with understanding their student's educational system from their native country, they believed to a greater extent that the studying and teaching methodology was similar globally. As for curriculum, they were less flexible in adjusting according to their student's background, and were more inclined in including texts and media only from North American sources. As for their educational background, majority possessed a Bachelor's degree as their highest academic degree, they had less international and domestic teaching experience when comparing with instructors from MAT, and those that had taught overseas had taught for a shorter period. Majority spoke only their native language: English. When traveling overseas, these participants showed less interest in blending in with the local culture and language. Although, in-class they also promoted the possibility of their students sharing stories from their own culture in order for all to learn.

With these results, I reach the conclusion that indeed a multicultural teaching environment, or one that includes staff with international experience leads in a better prepared academic teaching environment in regards to intercultural competence. I also conclude that the further we are from a multicultural metropolitan area (notable in Southern and Central Ontario, Canada area for the purposes of this research), the less diversified experienced staff we possibly may encounter at an institution. As such, the more difficulty students will encounter in being accepted culturally, or for others to have a better understanding of their culture, customs, and traditions. In regards to teaching, the less knowledge and awareness their teachers have in understanding how they study, learn, and participate in a classroom environment.

III.2. Conclusion and Further Consideration

With this research study, I was able to outline the discrepancy in intercultural competence between ESL instructors in the Metropolitan area of Toronto, and those located outside of the metropolitan area within 75km to 200km. These institutions located within the outer region have seen an expediential growth in international students and had to adjust accordingly in hiring instructors to teach these students.

It is true that all of these instructors possess the required ESL qualification to teach ESL, being this a TESL Canada Level 1 certification program. This program consists of 100 hours of theory, focusing on reading, writing, and grammar skills teaching, plus common skills and

strategies in teaching. It also includes 10 hours of classroom observation, plus 10 additional hours of teaching time. Majority of these programs don't include a single chapter or focus on a very important fundamental pedagogical skill in ESL teaching: Intercultural Competence. These instructors don't have the awareness of how the background educational system of most of their students consists of, or the common cultural aspects linked with each of these cultures, these findings are evident in past similar studies as well where it is evident that many new teachers lack the cultural diverse knowledge to work with their students, and that they grasp this knowledge with time (Desveaux and Guo, 2011; Goddard, 2013) . It would be of great importance to these future ESL instructors, if there was such focus on intercultural awareness included in the curriculum of these courses. Instead, it is up to each individual to acquire this experience overseas or with personal experience in their classrooms as time goes by.

Another important consideration would be for these institutions to include a personal development program for all instructors on Intercultural Awareness and Training, and make it a mandatory course on their institutional on-boarding process when hired as a faculty member. By focusing on the cultural background of their predominate international student population, this would help not only faculty but also a smother integration of their international student population at the institution. This will help with student's performance, integration, and retention.

It is common to see many institutions and organizations posting employment openings requiring experienced or knowledgeable new hires in equity, diversity, and inclusion, but it is also up to the institution to provide these required building blocks to build or fortify an institution on such points. As we verified through the research, many of our participants acquired this experience on their own and through time. These cultural building blocks were not provided with their academic education, and to some, nor by their employers. This is one of the clear outlines in the UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Point 4.7 of Goal 4 (Quality Education), provide skills and knowledge required to promote sustainable development, human rights, global citizenship, gender equality, and gratitude towards cultural diversity. This is up to an institution to provide the required building blocks through education, and educating each other on how to see the world through several lenses.

It is also empirical for such institutions to be able to provide international educational mobility learning opportunities to their faculty and staff, and at the same time open the institutional

doors to foreign academic faculty and staff to join inbound mobility programs with their own faculty and staff as well. These international mobility programs allow for participants to learn how foreign institutions are dealing with certain scenarios, and many times participants realise that these are common scenarios to their own. These exchanges also lead to future research or collaboration projects, and another source of promoting the such required intercultural competence in an international academic environment.

> "This topic has gained considerable currency at this time because there is a worldwide demand for the graduated of our education institutions to be "global citizens," "world minded," "globally engaged," and "interculturally competent." (Paige and Goode, 2009)

This research was concentrated on ESL instructors and focused within the geographic region of Southern and Central Ontario (Canada). It is important to outline that this can also be adapted to teachers of other subjects at all levels of the educational system, and in other geographic regions that teach to international students. It is important for teachers to be able to comprehend their international students, and help them adapt to their new surroundings, and provide the building blocks to allow all in class to comprehend and build on their own intercultural competence. It is through education that we can shape tomorrow's world.

A suggestion for a future research would be to verify the results obtained with institutions that would be willing to integrate the recommendations mentioned in the paragraphs above and analyse the overall progress of faculty, and the performance of their ESL students, and compare these to other institutions that continue to follow an unchanged strategy. Research on teacher's intercultural training is still a field with a reduced level of research or study it would be of interest to provide greater insight into this field.

> […]research focused on teachers' intercultural training is a relatively unexplored, marginal research field with few empirical studies[…] (Hinjosa and Lopez, 2018: 75)

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APPENDIX – A   ESL Teacher Self-Awareness

I would like to ask for your help by answering the questions below to the best of your knowledge. The answers gathered will form part of a Masters research in English Language Teaching. Your answers will be kept in strict confidence. Thank you for your input and participation in this research.

Assessment

Part A

BACKGROUND

1	City or town where I currently teach:	
2	Highest level of education:	
3	Field of education studied:	
4	Have you taught overseas?	
	a) If "yes", how many years?	
	b) If "yes", where?	
5	Have you studied overseas?	
	a) If "yes", how many years?	
	b) If "yes", where?	

6	What countries have you visited?	
7	For how many years have you been teaching ESL?	
8	What languages do you speak?	
9	As a student in elementary and secondary school, were you in a monocultural or multicultural classroom environment?	

	TRAVEL	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	When you are overseas do you try to communicate in the local language?					
2	When you are overseas you try to adapt to the local norms?					
3	Overseas I continue within my regular eating hours: ie. Lunch at 12pm, dinner around 6pm?					
4	Western ideology is the norm in today's world?					

	TEACHING					
1	Have you received Intercultural training from your employer?					
2	Do you work in a mixed cultural staff setting?					
3	Do you feel comfortable teaching students from different cultural backgrounds?					

4	Do you have clear knowledge of the educational system from where your students come from?					
5	As a teacher, it is my responsibility to become knowledgeable of my students' cultural background.					
6	Teaching and study habits are the same globally.					
7	If a student doesn't participate in-class it is because he/she is shy, not because of cultural background.					
8	My priority as a teacher is to teach ESL and not Canadian culture.					
9	Students that speak out an answer by not raising their hands are disrespectful to their peers?					
10	My understanding of certain cultures affects my expectations of a students' performance?					
11	I allow students to share their own cultural stories in class.					
12	I don't modify my class curriculum based on students' cultural background.					
13	All my texts and videos in class reflect a monocultural approach?					
14	When asking questions in-class, you only call out students that raise their hands?					
15	There is only one correct answer?					
16	When preparing exercises, I only include articles from North American news sources?					

Part B

There is no correct or wrong answer below, to the best of your knowledge try to identify where the students below are originally from. Some might have more than one possible answer.

Student A avoids making eye contact with the teacher while speaking to him.
Student B raises her hand to reply to her teacher while **student C** speaks out the answer at once, **student D** never raises or speaks out the answer, but is aware of the answer.
Student E questions the teacher in regards to the grammar rule being taught, saying it is different from what was learnt in his home country, **student F** is in shock that **student E** is questioning the teacher.
Student G doesn't understand why his teacher failed his assignment because it was a "googled" essay.
Student H disagrees with the teachers point-of-view but is afraid to show his view or disagreement.
Student J prefers to work on his own when it comes to group work, **students K** and **L** perform better when placed in teams.

Student	Possible Country
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
J	
K	
L	

Click to Submit

Thank you for your participation