**Kindergarten to Grade 12 English as a
Second Language
Literature Review Update**

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LITERATURE REVIEW

PURPOSE

This document represents an examination of current literature (2005-2009) related to English as a Second Language (ESL) for kindergarten to Grade 12 students. Such a review is timely in light of record-setting immigration levels. According to Statistics Canada (2005), by the year 2017, nearly one-quarter (22%) of Canada's population is expected to be comprised of immigrants, and between 21% and 25% are predicted to be native speakers of languages other than English or French. Since 2002 Alberta has received between approximately 15,000 and 20,000 new immigrants each year (Alberta Employment and Immigration, 2007; 2009), creating increased need for adequate ESL education in the province.

The current literature review builds on a 2005 review[1] examining literature in five thematic areas: 1) predictors of English as a Second Language (ESL) student achievement, 2) evidence regarding the effectiveness of various program delivery models, 3) evidence and best practice suggestions for various instructional methods, 4) various dimensions of school leadership practices for creating an optimal ESL environment, and 5) best practice recommendations in diagnostics and assessment for ESL students.

SEARCH STRATEGY

Similar search strategies were used in both the 2005 and 2009 literature reviews. To locate relevant publications. ERIC and PsychInfo were searched. Keywords defining the population (English as a second language, ESL, limited English Proficient, LEP, non-English speaking, bilingual, linguistic minorities, immigrants, newcomers) were combined with keywords describing skill acquisition (e.g., reading, literacy, language acquisition, second language learning, communication), performance (e.g., achievement, drop-out, performance), teaching methods (e.g., teaching methods, instructional methods, teaching activities), specific teaching approaches (e.g., integrated language, corrective feedback, balanced literacy), models of instruction (e.g., models, pull-out, sheltered, immersion, transition), assessment (e.g., assessment, diagnostic, proficiency) and leadership (e.g., leadership, principal, school practice, best practice). The reference lists of relevant retrieved documents were also cross-referenced for additional publications.

In addition, the current literature review included a search for recent publications by all authors included in the 2005 review. It was also limited to publications between 2005 and 2009[2], particularly research with applicability to the Alberta context.

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[1] See Howard Research & Management Consulting Inc. (2005). *Kindergarten to Grade 12 English as a Second Language Literature Review* (examined 1995-2005 literature).
[2] Earlier literature has been included in some areas in order to provide a sufficient level of background information.

NOTE: For the purposes of this review the following abbreviations are used:
    L1 – First Language
    L2 – Second Language

PREDICTORS OF ESL ACHIEVEMENT

For the purpose of this review, achievement was operationalized to include both academic achievement as assessed in schools or through jurisdictional achievement testing, and school drop-out rates. Recent studies indicate that ESL students attain median achievement levels at between the 12th and 45th percentile depending on the model of instruction (Thomas and Collier, 2002) but face high-school drop-out rates that far exceed the average of non-ESL students (Derwing et al., 1999; Fashola, Slavin, & Calderon, 1997; Watt & Roessingh, 2001). Similar findings related to the underachievement of L2 ESL students are reported in countries such as Sweden (Westin, 2003) and the United States (e.g., Gunderson & Clarke, 1998; Wayne & Collier, 2002).

The following predictors of success and achievement for ESL students have been identified in the literature.

Proficiency in First Language

A comprehensive meta-analytic review of the literature indicates that proficiency in first language is a strong predictor of academic success in L2 and in L2 language acquisition[3]. These findings are confirmed by others as well (August & Hakuta, 1997, Ernst-Slavit, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997). It is thought that academic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge, and learning strategies developed in the first language all transfer to the second language (Collier, 1995). There is a growing body of evidence supporting cross-language transfer of phonological awareness (August et al., 2001; Cisero & Royer, 1995; Gottardo, Yan, Siegel & Wade-Woolley, 2001; Lindsey, Manis & Bailey; 2003) reading errors and fluency (August et al., 2001; DaFontoura & Siegel, 2005; Geva, Wade-Woolley & Shaney, 1997), reading comprehension (Jimenez Gonzalez & Haro Garcia, 1996), letter and word knowledge (Lindsey et al., 2003), print concepts (Lindsey et al., 2003), and sentence memory (Lindsey et al., 2003). [4]

It has also been suggested that the acquisition of the first language is associated with ethnic self-identification which, in turn, may contribute to academic success (Bankston & Zhou, 1995).

Update:

Recent literature also corroborates the transfer between L1 and L2. According to Haynes (2007), L1 literacy can provide a foundation for skills when learning English, regardless of the English Language Learner's (ELL's) age. For example, older ESL students who are literate in L1 can apply L1 reading knowledge (such as predicting what will happen next in a story) to L2 while younger children will be able to transfer concepts appropriate for their age (e.g., knowledge that different letters of the alphabet have different sounds). It can be more

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[3] An extensive review of this early literature is provided by Zhou (1997).
[4] The current literature review discusses such concepts under *Cognitive and Linguistic Factors* below.

difficult for students to understand concepts that do not exist in their L1s. According to Roessingh (2008), age of arrival and L1 proficiency (as assumed by high socioeconomic status) are the best predictors of overall achievement on Alberta's English Language Arts exams.

Some of the literature, however, suggests limits to this transfer. For example, August et al.'s (2006) review of an array of studies related to Spanish-speaking ELLs reported a link between L1 and L2 reading skills in cases where children can also read in their first language (i.e., as opposed to having only oral language). Proctor, Carlo, August & Snow (2006) reported a link between levels of Spanish vocabulary and English reading abilities, with more benefit for more fluent English readers specifically. August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow's (2005) research indicates that English language instruction should capitalize on L1 if it has cognates (i.e., words with similar spellings and meanings in two different languages) in common with English.

However, not all authors share this view. For example, Lesaux, Lipka & Siegel (2006), believe that there is uncertainty about the applicability of models pertaining to first language reading comprehension to cases of second language reading. Figueredo's (2006) review of 27 previous studies in this area found both positive transfers (whereby L1 knowledge can help facilitate L2 proficiency) and negative transfers (strategic but inappropriate transfers) between L1 and L2 (15 out of 27 studies showed evidence of both). Rolla San Francisco, Mo, Carlo, August & Snow's (2006) study involving bilingual grade one students showed that Spanish literacy instruction (and, to a lesser degree, Spanish vocabulary) was predictive of the application of typical Spanish spellings to the English context, indicating that "in the absence of access to spelling instruction in a second language, children will fall back on the knowledge they have acquired in their first language" (p. 640). There is an indication, however, that ESL students rely less on L1 knowledge as they became more knowledgeable about L2 spelling rules (Figueredo, 2006).

Due to the relationships between of levels of L1 and L2 proficiency, it has been suggested that English Language Learners (ELLs) be exposed to their native languages in the home in order to provide an opportunity to converse about topics that they do not yet have the proficiency to discuss in English. Eventually ELLs will be able to transfer the concepts and skills from their L1 learning to L2. It is also reportedly better for ELLs to be exposed to a rich L1 than an incorrectly used L2 (Haynes, 2007).

Proficiency in Second Language

In examining educational achievement, it has been found that student's English proficiency at point of entry is a strong predictor of high school drop-out rates (Watt & Roessingh, 1994a, 1994b, 2001). Research also indicates that those with limited proficiency in English are at a greater risk of drop-out than mainstream English students who are in turn at greater risk of drop out than fully bilingual students (Rumbaut 1995; Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Wayne & Collier, 2002). Watt & Roessingh (2001) describe the successful high-school ESL student as having a good educational background and having studied English prior to arrival in high school.

Update:

Recent literature confirms that that ESL students who can speak well are less likely to repeat a grade or drop out of school and more likely to go on to post-secondary studies (e.g., Black, 2005). In addition, research with younger children indicates that ELLs entering kindergarten orally proficient reach reading levels on par with their native English-speaking counterparts by grade five. In contrast, those entering kindergarten with only limited proficiency maintained "large, persistent deficiencies" (p. 865), even among those who reportedly learned English rapidly in kindergarten. However, this study also revealed that controlling for differences in ELLs' demographic make-up (including ethnicity, socio-economic status, and school demographics), reduced the effect (Kieffer, 2008).

A recent study by Lesaux, Lipka & Siegel (2006) comparing the reading comprehension of grade four ESL students who began kindergarten with little to no English experience with the comprehension skills of native English-speakers found that after five years of immersion the ESL students had not developed the same syntactic skills as the native English-speakers. However, nearly three-quarters of the ESL students did attain comprehension levels appropriate for their age by grade four, suggesting that "limited exposure to English, and lack of proficiency in English upon entering school, do not necessarily result in subsequent low comprehension scores" (p. 120).

Amount of ESL Instruction

No studies were identified that have directly examined the relationship between amount of ESL instruction and academic achievement of L2 learners. Available research focused instead on hours of instruction required for L1 English speakers to obtain a certain level of proficiency in another language. Archibald et al., (2004) reporting on recommendations put out by the Foreign Service Institute, report that the average learner (whose first language is English) requires approximately 240 hours of instruction for languages such as French, Italian and Spanish and up to 720 hours for languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean to achieve an intermediate-high proficiency level. Over a three year period, assuming a 40-week school period, this corresponds to between 1.5 to 4.5 hours of instruction per week (60 – 180 hours per year). An approximate doubling of these amounts would be required to achieve advanced levels of proficiency. The variability in recommended instruction time is related to linguistic distance, that is, the difference between L1 and L2 in terms of alphabet, form, syntax and grammatical structure (Walqui, 2000b).

It has been estimated that students with limited English language proficiency need two years of ESL education to develop interpersonal communication skills and five to seven years to develop academic language proficiency (Collier & Thomas, 1999; Roessingh, 2000).

Evidence also suggests that more intense distribution of instructional hours (e.g., 80 minutes a day for five months versus 40 minutes a day for 10 months) may lead to greater reading proficiency in French (Lapkin et al., 1998).

Update:

The literature did not reveal any recent analyses on the amount of ESL instruction as a predictor of ESL achievement.

Past Performance

Research indicates that past academic achievement in L2 is the single most important factor in predicting current scholastic performance in L2 (Hardwick & Frideres, 2004). The authors suggest that when students first enter a school they must have access to expertise and teaching skills that allow them to achieve early success – most important for immigrant youth when they first enter the Canadian school system.

Update:

The current search did not result in any recent studies in this area.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement has been found to be an important predictor of educational achievement in the general population (Hardwick & Frideres, 2004). While research indicates a great deal of variability in familial and community support for recent immigrants (Salili & Hoosain, 2001), Hardwick & Frideres suggest that programs designed to involve immigrant parents in their children's school activities and educational programs are very important to support their academic achievement.

Update:

Literature continues to document the importance of parental involvement to ESL achievement, much of it providing finer details for a better understanding of this link. For example, a series of recent case studies with immigrants who had previously attended an ESL program at a Calgary, Alberta high school concluded that "the teacher is the key" to help build trust, first with ESL students, then to parents and families, and eventually the larger immigrant community. This trust is related to students' and parents' support of a given ESL program and is necessary for students' to gain from such a program (Roessingh, 2006b).

Duursma et al.'s (2007) research study of 65 grade five ELLs (native Spanish-speakers) across four US cities reported a link between families' home language preferences and children's level of proficiency in both English and Spanish. That is, where families preferred to speak English at home, children typically had higher levels of English. However, in cases where children initially began to learn to read in Spanish, fathers' preference for a given language was found to be a predictor of better vocabulary in that language (English or Spanish) while mothers' preference was not. In cases where children first began to learn to read in English, the language preferences of both mothers and fathers predicted vocabulary proficiency. It is noteworthy, however, that the language children use to communicate with their siblings was an even stronger predictor of English proficiency than their parents'

language preferences. Overall, however, the authors concluded that parents' English use at home is not a requisite for children's English proficiency. August et al.'s (2006) review of an array of studies related to Spanish-speaking ELLs reported a similar conclusion.

In addition, Stagg Peterson & Ladky (2007) recently solicited input from 61 teachers and 31 principals across 32 Ontario elementary schools (specifically those where at least one-fifth of the school population was comprised of new immigrants) in order to examine barriers to parental involvement in their children's English language learning and strategies to support that involvement. Multiple barriers were noted, including language differences, parents' other responsibilities limiting their time (e.g., work, making ends meet, other children in the home), more frequent home moves among immigrants (requiring children to change schools), other attitudes/behaviours around learning (e.g., lack of emphasis at home on practices such as reading to children), and English only policies (in some schools) that may emphasize the separation between English-speaking school staff and non English-speaking parents at home. Practices in place across schools in the study to help encourage parents' involvement included trying to "bridge" the cultural gap, generally through school staff members' participation in professional development activities (e.g., ESL/multicultural courses, conferences, workshops) or other community events (e.g., diversity celebrations). School staff members also reported trying "to help parents see themselves as teachers alongside their children's teachers" (p. 887), noting a number of specific activities parents should use to support their children's English development. Staff members also took steps to make schools feel more welcoming to parents of other cultures.

It is interesting to note. however, that the school principals in this study often had more positive perceptions of current parental involvement than teachers did. For example, while 30% of teachers reported that parents of ESL students helped in classrooms, over 80% of principals indicated that "parents participated in their children's schooling to the greatest degree through accompanying classes on field trips" (p. 893). In addition, while no principals indicated that parents' English challenges prevented them from participating in their children's English literacy, 12% of teachers did (Stagg Peterson & Ladky, 2007).

Resources/Funding

Though literature directly linking ESL resource and funding distribution to academic success was not identified, some inferences can be drawn. Watt & Roessingh (2001) found that while provincial funding cuts did not significantly affect high school dropout rates, they did appear to have an impact on drop-out trajectories for intermediate ESL students (e.g., they dropped out from the system earlier after the funding cuts than they had before the cuts).

Update:

Although the current review did not indicate recent analyses of the link between resources/funding and ESL achievement, Van Ngo (2007) suggested that "responsive funding allocation" was a key component to effective ESL instruction in Canada.

Individual Differences

The literature indicates that individual difference variables such as attitude and motivation are important in the acquisition of second language proficiency (Clement & Gardner, 2001). It has been found that attitudes about a particular language (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 1999; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997) and self-confidence (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) are important pre-cursers to motivation to learn (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 1999; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997) and that this motivation is, in turn, an important predictor of success (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 1999; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997). Experiencing success is found to further influence feelings of self-confidence (Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 1999; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997).

Update:

Recent literature reports individual differences related to gender and background. A study of fifth grade Latino ELLs students reported a link between gender English vocabulary where females' levels of proficiency were found to be higher than those of males. The authors suggested that this effect may have been due, for example, to differences in girls' and boys' activities away from school (e.g., more reading for pleasure among girls) or social differences (e.g., boys' less positive school attitudes) (Duursma et al., 2007). Short & Echevarria (2005) reported that English language learners' background knowledge affects their language achievements. They cited as an example a Vietnamese students' ability to write about topics with which they are familiar (e.g., growing rice) and possible inability to write about topics with which they may be completely unfamiliar (e.g., exploring outer space). The authors further noted that even ESL students within the same family may bring with them considerably different backgrounds (e.g., academic experience, number of years of schooling) that impact their English language achievement.

Age at Time of Arrival / Length of Residence

Review of the literature in the early 1990's indicates that older children learn a new language more quickly, but that over the long run younger children obtain higher levels of proficiency and academic achievement (Klesmer, 1993). More recent research, however, suggests that length of residence rather than age of arrival is a more important variable to consider because the age effects assume an underlying developmental model that is extremely difficult to substantiate in applied settings, whereas length of residence is based on an exposure model that is more readily testable (Fledge & Liu, 2001). In applying stringent statistical controls, it is found that length of residence is predictive of the acquisition of a second language but is likely moderated by the amount of exposure to the second language (Fledge & Liu, 2001; Fledge, Yeni-Komshian & Liu, 1999).

Update:

As noted previously, according to Roessingh (2008), age of arrival and L1 proficiency (as assumed by high socioeconomic status) are the best predictors of overall achievement on provincial English Language Arts exams. The author's recent study involving the English Language Arts examination outcomes of grade 12 ESL students in an urban Alberta

academic high school concluded that "older is better, and less is more" (p. 102) in that students who had arrived at older ages (15 to 17 years of age) did well with relatively small English vocabularies (compared to their native English-speaking counterparts), possibly due to their ability to strategically transfer L1 understanding to L2 with less of a vocabulary base than might have been predicted. In contrast, those who had arrived had younger ages (i.e., 12 to 14 years old) lacked sufficient proficiency in both L1 and L2 to achieve academic success before graduation. A "booster year" when such students are around 14 years old was suggested. Differences between those receiving no ESL support and late ESL support were also compared among students who had arrived between six and eleven years of age. More benefit was observed for the youngest-arriving. The author added that it was never too late for ESL support but that earlier ESL instruction likely would have given students a chance to catch up to the vocabulary of their native-English speaking counterparts by the time they graduated.

In addition, because of the concept-related difficulties that young ELLs have in acquiring Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), research has theorized that the best age to immigrate is 15 or 16, when youth already have concepts such as metaphors established (Roessingh, 2006a). A recent study following ESL learners throughout their schooling in a Calgary high school with a special ESL program found that the progress of those learners who arrived between the ages of six and 11 was most concerning: for those given little ESL support, their learning tended to plateau partway through their secondary school education (Roessingh, Kover & Watt, 2005). This study also notes the relatively high success rates of ESL students who were late arrivals to Canada (i.e., junior high and senior high arrivals).

The specific length of time required to master English varies in the literature. Black (2005) reports on Canadian research with 1,000 kindergarten children who could not speak English. Findings indicated that with intensive instruction in the areas of word identification, spelling, and reading comprehension, these children were on par with their peers by grade two. The author also notes similar findings in the USA. Lipka & Siegel's (2007) study of grade three students in Canada found that ESL students' reading and cognitive abilities were similar to those of their native English-speaking counterparts after four years of English education. Lesaux, Rupp & Siegel (2007) reported that while kindergarten English language learners' literacy skills fell behind those of their native English-speaking counterparts in Kindergarten, by fourth grade their literacy skills were generally on par. Haynes (2007) suggests that student success requires two to three years in ESL or bilingual classes.

In addition, results differ for different levels of English proficiency (see Black, 2005; Haynes, 2007). More specifically, Black (2005) reports findings from Florida State University stating that different levels of English take different lengths of time to master, ranging from one to two years for basic interpersonal communication (also known as "playground English"), to five to eight years for cognitive academic language.

A recent examination of 16 native Japanese-speaking adults and 16 native Japanese-speaking children during the early years in the United States found that adults had an initial advantage in terms of segmental perception and production. The authors presumed the difference to be related to differences in previous education, as all of the adults had at least six years of written English study in Japan while only one child had studied English previously. Yet after living in the USA for one year, the children's oral production scores

improved significantly while that of the adults did not improve (Aoyama, Guion, Flege, Yamada & Akahane-Yamada (2008).

According to Haynes (2007), it is a myth that children learn second languages either "faster or easier" than adults, although children may master English accents better than adults. Several other recent studies have also examined the degree of foreign accent. Tsukada et al.'s (2005) study found better English vowel discrimination among native Korean children as compared to native Korean adults. Similarly, MacKay, Flege & Imai's (2006) study of long-time Canadian residents who had immigrated to Canada either as children or young adults reported more pronounced foreign accents in the latter. Foreign accents were less noticeable among those who had arrived as children only if they infrequently spoke their first language. Other research demonstrated that while native Korean children in North America had milder foreign accents than their adult counterparts, their accents were still more noticeable than native-English speakers (even among children who arrived at a young age and had been attending English schools for four years on average). The authors attributed children's milder accents to more L2 stimuli for children rather than a critical period (Flege et al., 2006). The Aoyama et al. (2008) study noted above also reported that while children who had arrived at younger ages were observed to have less noticeable accents, overall their speech remained noticeably foreign-accented after more than one and a half years in the USA.

Socioeconomic Status

Thomas & Collier (2002) have found that socioeconomic status influences from 3% to 6% of language minority students' achievement as measured by standardized tests. In addition, socioeconomic status is found to be predictive of the rate of acquisition of the English language by ESL students (Bunch, Abram, Lotan & Valdes, 2001).

Update:

Recent studies related to ESL children also note links between one's socio-economic status (SES) and level of ESL achievement. As noted above, Roessingh's (2008) Alberta-based research notes age of arrival and L1 proficiency (as assumed by high socioeconomic status) to be the best predictors of overall achievement on Alberta's English Language Arts exams. Scheffner Hammer & Miccio's (2006) review of previous research reported that low income preschool children typically demonstrate lower levels of phonological awareness and ability to identify letters of the alphabet, as compared to those of a higher SES background (although these skills typically improve in kindergarten with reading instruction).

In addition, Kieffer's (2008) study (as discussed previously) revealed that controlling for demographic make-up (including ethnicity, socio-economic status, and school demographics) reduced the effects of students' level of oral proficiency in kindergarten on their reading abilities in grade five. Kieffer also refers back to the work of Lesaux, Rupp & Siegel (2007) and others indicating that the roles of socio-economic status and learner status may be confused to the point that it can be difficult to determine which differences are due to SES and which are due to learner status.

Following the British Columbia Ministry of Education's assertion that rates of high school success (e.g., in terms of provincial examination results and graduation rates) are higher among ESL students than native English-speaking students (80% versus 78% graduation rates respectively), Toohey & Derwing (2008) conducted a study to determine if such success is actually a function of SES. Overall, they concluded that BC's figures are "accurate" but "misleading," (p. 188). For example, even though more ESL students graduate, many do not complete the provincial exams required for entrance to postsecondary institutes. There was also an indication that higher graduation rates were linked to higher SES (e.g., more graduates were from well-to-do areas of the city as opposed to poorer zones). As well, graduation rates were higher among ESL students whose families had entered Canada via the independent classification system (whose parents tend to be members of a skilled, professional or entrepreneurial workforce) than those whose families had entered under the refugee or family classification (i.e., sponsored by a family member in Canada).

Previous Schooling

Years of previous schooling in L1 is found to be the most predictive variable of academic success among ESL students regardless of L1 language, country of origin, socioeconomic status and other demographic variables (Collier, 1995). It has been reported that in U.S. schools where all instruction is provided in English only, ESL learners with no previous schooling in their first language take 7 to 10 years or more to reach age and grade level norms of their English speaking peers (Collier, 1995). Those with 2 to 3 years of previous schooling take 5 to 7 years to catch up to their English speaking peers.

In a nation-wide longitudinal study conducted in the USA, it was found that the amount of formal schooling in L1 was the strongest predictor of success in L2 (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Similar findings have been reported in British Columbia, Canada (Gunderson and Clark, 1998).

Update:

Previous schooling is discussed within various sections above.

Teacher Credentials

Research suggests that teachers of ESL students need to have training and experience in language acquisition to ensure they can deliver educational programs appropriate to the developmental levels of ESL students (Berman, 1995). It has also been recommended that credentials of ESL teachers should include fluency in a second language (Berman, 1995; Coltrane 2003). Other research indicates that best practice for ESL instruction includes teachers who have knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of second language learners (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996), and specialized knowledge of approaches to acquisition of a second language (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Coltrane 2003; O'Byrne, 2001; Vilarreal, 1999). A recent meta-analysis of effective ESL programming identified teacher experience and expertise as a major factor of effective ESL programs (Roessingh, 2004).

Update:

ESL achievement continues to be linked to teacher credentials and quality of instruction. Gersten, Baker, Haager & Graves (2005) report a link between better student outcomes (i.e., English levels similar to native English speaking children) and higher quality classroom instruction, particularly the use of explicit teaching; "differentiating instruction" for lower performing students; and more/better vocabulary, phonics, and phonemic awareness instruction. Likewise, a California study of fourteen grade one teachers of ELLs found a strong correlation between observers' ratings of teachers' instructional practices and the reading advancement of their students (Baker, Gersten, Haager & Dingle, 2006). However, research indicates that considerable gaps continue to exist in this area, noting that teachers are not adequately trained for ESL instruction (Gunderson, 2008) in Canada, the United States, and many other countries (Pappamihiel, 2007) (see also Short & Echevarria, 2005). Teachers' lack of knowledge about how to teach ESL students effectively may be partially responsible for lower levels of academic success among English language learners as compared to native English-speakers (Chen, Kyle & McIntyre, 2008).

Following are two additional predictor areas not previously discussed in the 2005 literature review: cognitive and linguistic factors and size of school immigrant population.

Cognitive and Linguistic Factors[5]

The 2009 literature review update revealed a wealth of literature related to cognitive and linguistic factors that predict English language learners' abilities in various facets of language proficiency. For example, in a recent study comparing native English-speaking and ESL children, Jongejan, Verhoeven & Siegel (2007) found that phonological awareness was the greatest predictor of both native English-speakers' and ESL students' word reading and of ESL students' spelling in grades one to four (it is the strongest predictor of spelling in native English-speakers only in grades one and two). Lesaux, Lipka & Siegel (2006) noted a relationship between ESL students' level of syntactic awareness, phonological awareness, and working memory in both kindergarten and grade four with reading comprehension skills in grade four.

Low & Siegel (2005) attributed differences in native English-speaking and ESL sixth grade students' reading comprehension to the same three cognitive traits (syntactic awareness, phonological processing, and working memory), noting that syntactic awareness (i.e., students' understanding of proper grammatical structure) of ESL students falls behind that of native English speakers. Lipka & Siegel's (2007) recent examination of the reading skill predictors of grade three native-English speakers and ESL students found that while five key factors (letter identification, lexical access, phonological awareness, syntactic awareness, and sentence memory) were significant for native English-speakers, only two (letter identification and sentence memory) were significant for the ESL students.

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[5] Other authors who discuss cognitive and linguistic factors include August et al. (2006); Chiappe & Siegel (2006); Fien et al. (2008); Fitzgerald, Amendum & Guthrie, 2008; Geva & Yaghous Zadeh (2006); Gottardo & Mueller (2009); Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2005; Gottardo, Chiappe, Yan, Siegel & Gu (2006); Gottardo, Colins, Baciu & Gebotys (2008); Jean & Geva's, 2009; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008; Lafrance & Gottardo (2005); Nakamoto, Lindsey & Manis (2007; 2008); Neufeld, Amendum, Fitzgerald & Guthrie, 2006); Páez and Rinaldi (2006); Proctor, August, Carlo & Snow (2005); Proctor, Carlo, August & Snow (2006); Scheffner Hammer & Miccio (2006); and Siegel (2008).

Other

The current review revealed research showing that ESL adolescents from a Mexican background who are second- or third-generation Americans in schools with large immigrant populations achieve better school outcomes than non-ESL students. However, first generation adolescents in schools with a smaller immigrant population lag behind other non-ESL students (Callahan, Wilkinson & Muller, 2008).

Similarly, Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller & Frisco (2009) reported that first-generation ESL students fare poorly in schools enrolling relative few immigrants while second-generation students benefit most from ESL placement when they attend schools with many immigrant students. Academic marginalization may occur among first-generations as a result of few course offerings (due to small budgets), limited availability of trained teachers, and scheduling constraints, status as outsiders, teachers' lowered expectations of their abilities based on their identification for ESL services. Conversely, in high-concentration schools, ESL placement favours second-generation students, which may be due to exposure to first-generation co-ethnic peers, exposure to recent immigrant information networks, and the value that recent immigrants place on education. As well, second-generation students may be regarded as experts by their teachers, placing these students in a position of respect or authority. Finally, because of the high number of ESL students, they are considered mainstream. Overall, however, there are persistent low levels of academic preparation for higher education entry requirements regardless of generational status, ESL placement or concentration of immigrant students. It is suggested that if education is the gateway to economic and social success for immigrant children, critical attention must be paid to students' access to content area college preparatory academics.

Summary

The strongest predictors of academic success of ESL students include proficiency in first language, proficiency in second language, past academic achievement in L2 and the amount of formal schooling prior to ESL instruction. Apart from being strong predictors, the evidence supporting these relationships is also relatively strong. More modest evidence supports that the amount of ESL instruction time, parental involvement, age at time of arrival or length of residence, individual differences (including motivational factors) and socioeconomic status are also important predictors of success of ESL students. In addition, there is also some evidence suggesting that teacher credentials and resource investment may also be related to academic achievement of ESL students.

Update:

Since the last literature review, there has been an abundance of new publishing on predictors of academic achievement. Much of the more recent literature indicates findings in line with those reported in 2005 (including proficiency in L1 and L2 (albeit with limits), parental involvement, individual differences, age of arrival / length of residence, SES, and teacher credentials as predictors). The literature is also branching into other directions (e.g., reporting gender differences, asserting that ESL teacher credentials are lacking in many places, and increasing discussion of the ability of cognitive and linguistic factors as predictors). At the same time, there appears to have been little new research into areas

such as amount of ESL instruction, past performance, and previous schooling, possibly reflecting trends in the field of ESL overall. Although recent literature is providing ample evidence in the areas that are predictive, for the most part it does not provide concrete insight into *which* factors are currently considered to be the most predictive. The exception, however, is Roessingh's (2008) study reporting age of arrival and L1 proficiency (as assumed by high socioeconomic status) as the best predictors of overall achievement on Alberta's provincial English Language Arts exams, thereby providing valuable insight.

PROGRAM DELIVERY MODELS

There are a number of different English as a Second Language (ESL) program delivery models described in the academic and grey literature. Schools may deliver more than one type of model to accommodate different students at different stages of language development. ESL programs serve students in three general stages of development: reception, transition, and integration (Vancouver School Board, 1996). These graduated stages categorize students according to their different needs for instructional support based on their proficiency in English.

Transitional models of ESL program delivery can be further situated along a continuum ranging from *inclusive* programming (the needs of language learners are met in a setting they share with mainstream English speaking peers) to *exclusive* programming (the needs of learners of English as a second language are met in a setting they share with other ESL peers). The choice of delivery model is likely influenced by both student need as well as contextual factors (e.g., number of ESL students in a school, availability of ESL supports etc.).

The following sections review different ESL program delivery models discussed in the more recent academic and grey literature. Models situated along the stages of development continuum are used as major organizers. Models described along the inclusive-exclusive continuum are described within the context of transitional models.

Newcomer Programs

Newcomer programs are relatively short-term school programs that assist non-English speaking students in their introduction and transition to the English language. These programs are most appropriate for students with little or no English (reception stage), students that are older than their grade level peers, students at risk of dropping out of school, and/or for those whose needs are greater than ESL programs can provide (Short, 1998). In some instances an entire school may be dedicated exclusively to newcomers (Feinberg, 2000) and typically instruction is offered in both the students' first language and English (Short, 1998). These programs can last from weeks to months (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002; Short, 1998) and are often located in designated schools within a jurisdiction. After completion of the program students are placed in regular ESL language support and academic programs in their home schools (Short, 1998).

There are very few studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of newcomer programs (Short, 2002). Of the two studies located, one provided a more descriptive account of what a

well-planned program should look like (Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez & White, 1999), while the other presented some evidence of student language and academic growth but no assessment of the effectiveness of the model in comparison to other support models (Short, 2002). Generally speaking, proponents of the newcomer program model suggest that well-implemented newcomer programs should focus on English language attainment and integration of recently immigrated or refugee students into mainstream schools and society (Feinberg, 2000; Hertzberg, 1998).

Update:

According to Haynes (2007), for best results, newcomer programs should be broad and district-wide. The author provides a series of tips for newcomers' first few weeks of school. First, it is important to demonstrate a welcoming school atmosphere by: 1) implementing policies for inclusiveness, 2) helping to reduce new students' anxiety (e.g., by providing an English "buddy," 3) providing additional ESL instruction), 4) providing diversity training for all staff (including support staff, cafeteria staff, and bus drivers), 5) taking the time to learn about the language and culture of newcomers', 6) understanding newcomers' names (and not trying to "Americanize" them or give them nicknames), 7) involving newcomers' parents, and 8) implementing programs geared towards newcomers and their families. Second, teachers can take key steps to organize their classrooms to best serve newcomer ESL students, such as: 1) collecting ESL materials, 2) labeling ESL materials and situating them in a special area of the classroom, 3) setting classroom routines, 4) connecting newcomers to English "buddies," 5) using varied techniques to communicate adequately with newcomers (e.g., using visual aides or body language), and 6) frequently ensuring that students understand (e.g., by asking specific questions and allowing students to answer in a variety of ways, such as drawings or gestures; such means are typically more effective than asking whether students understand, as many will say yes regardless of whether they do in fact understand).

Transition Programs

Transition programs are commonly viewed as a staged approach from sheltered to inclusive/integrated programs. ESL teachers or aides typically deliver transition programs with varying involvement of mainstream teachers as emphasis shifts from second language development to more content-based mainstream class material (O'Byrne, 2001). Transitional program types include sheltered programs, pull-out programs, adjunct programs and inclusive programs. Supporters of sheltered programs argue that programs specifically directed to ESL students better mobilize resources and address learner needs while supporters of inclusive programs argue that immediate access to the mainstream classroom setting is critical for learning L2 (de Jong, 1995). Others suggest that the transition from sheltered approaches to integrated classes should be based on language proficiency and that the shift from sheltered to integrated classrooms should be gradual, and that even fully –integrated ESL students still require after-school support (e.g., tutoring) to ensure their academic success (Nelson, 1996; McLaughlin & McCleod, 1996).

Transition programs can vary greatly from a modified English course for students who have already graduated from the school's ESL program to help them transition to a mainstream English class (O'Byrne, 2001), to programs that begin with 90% instruction in L1 and move

to 100% instruction in L2 over a number of years (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Given this variety in transitional programming it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of this model overall. There is evidence, however, that transitional programs are more effective than fully- integrated programs (Thomas & Collier, 2002). For example, high school English language learners immersed directly into the English mainstream show much higher drop- out rates than those that started with 10% L2 and transitioned to 100% L2 over a number of years (Thomas & Collier, 2002). In addition, these transition students reached median achievement levels on standardized tests at the 45th percentile compared to the 12th percentile for fully- integrated students (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

<u>Sheltered Programs</u>

Sheltered (self-contained) programs are taught by ESL teachers and consist exclusively of ESL students. A sheltered ESL program is typically directed at beginner ESL students and provides students with focused English language instruction in a comfortable environment. Sheltered programs with small classes better accommodate the heterogeneity of the students' backgrounds and alleviate the isolation and frustration that newcomers can experience (Curtis, 1995) while increasing English proficiency (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999). Although timetabling is difficult with a half day program (especially in schools with rotating timetables), it allows students to interact with English speaking peers at school more than a full day program allows (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999; Curtis, 1995).

Update:

Much recent research has focused on sheltered programs[6] specifically. Sheltered programs can be stand-alone programs in any grade or subject or they can provide a complement to a bilingual program (Haynes, 2007). Hansen-Thomas (2008) describes five main features of sheltered instruction: 1) implements cooperative learning within heterogeneous student groups, 2) highlights content vocabulary and academic language, 3) makes use of L1, as appropriate, 4) incorporates "hands-on activities", and 5) involves explicit teaching/learning strategies. The author highlights the importance of using all features rather some but not others and encourages the use of sheltered instruction in kindergarten to grade 12 classes.

Sheltered instruction has reportedly evolved in recent years to become incorporated into mainstream classes comprised of both ESL and native speakers (although it can still be limited to ESL students only). Sheltered classes can be led jointly by ESL and content teachers or by content teachers with background training in sheltered techniques. However, teachers typically need to "buy in" to this method in order to use it properly (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). At the high school level, sheltered instruction may be realized through sheltered subject classes whereby ESL students learn a given subject (e.g., Algebra) in a manner similar to the mainstream curriculum but in classroom of only ESL students (Rossell, 2004/2005). Subject areas such as mathematics and science generally already incorporate sheltered instruction strategies (e.g., hands-on learning). There is an indication that "good" teaching typically includes features of sheltered instruction, regardless of whether teachers know it (Hansen-Thomas, 2008).

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[6] Sheltered instruction is also known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) (Hansen-Thomas, 2008).

Rossell (2004/2005) disagrees with literature reporting various differences between sheltered classes and mainstream classes, indicating instead that teachers of both types of instruction speak at the same speed and use a similar number of visual supports. However, the author adds that anecdotal feedback from teachers indicates that sheltered classes encompass less information and provide more repetition to help students learn. Many US schools reportedly label instruction as bilingual when it is in fact sheltered immersion where students are taught mostly or completely in English rather than in their native languages. As such, rates of bilingual education are actually inflated over actual figures. Similarly, López & Tashakkori (2006) note that many so-called bilingual programs are simply classes of ELLs, homogeneously grouped for instruction in English.

A number of recent publications discuss specific models using the sheltered approach. For example, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model first developed by Echevarria, Vogt & Short (2000) offers a structure for sheltered instruction according to eight factors necessary for ensuring that students can understand instructional contents: 1) preparation, 2) building background, 3) comprehensible input, 4) strategies, 5) interaction, 6) practice/application, 7) lesson delivery, and 8) review/assessment (see also Honigsfeld & Cohan, 2008; Echevarria, 2005; Haynes, 2007). Echevarria, Short & Powers (2006) recently examined the SIOP's impact on the development of academic literacy in 346 English language learners in grades six to eight in the United States. The authors concluded that students instructed under this model earned higher expository essay writing scores (similar to classroom assignments) than their counterparts in a comparison group, indicating that SIOP is helpful in terms of academic writing. They suggest further research be conducted in reading and content-area examinations.

Honigsfeld & Cohan (2008) examined the combination of SIOP with a lesson study approach (whereby teachers look at and attempt to improve the effectiveness of their instructional strategies) as a means to enhance the professional development of teachers of ELLs who lack previous training or certification. The authors concluded that the combination of the two further improved instruction and learning. Pray & Monhardt (2009) describe a method of incorporating SIOP with science instruction, adding that such a technique can also help native English-speakers to understand complex scientific language. Settlage, Madsen & Rustad (2005) use of SIOP for a science lesson led the authors to recommend changes to SIOP's objectives around contents and language (when used for science instruction). For further discussion of SIOP, see also Hansen-Thomas (2008); Whittier & Robinson, 2007).

In addition, the Cognitive Academic Learning Approach (CALLA) provides another example of sheltered instruction (see Hansen-Thomas, 2008; Haynes, 2007). CALLA combines the four key language development areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) with content areas built around the curriculum for a given grade. In addition to learning and practicing different strategies, students are to know the names of strategies, understand how they can help them learn, and be able to apply them to various content areas (Haynes, 2007). Although the literature search did not result in new analyses of CALLA, Haynes (2007) cited a 1996 study (see Chamot et al., 1996), indicating better outcomes in areas such as problem-solving among ELLS using the CALLA approach versus ELLS not using this approach. However, in 2006, the results of a five-year evaluation of California's Proposition 227 by which English language learners are to receive instruction "overwhelmingly in

English" via sheltered or structured English immersion means was inconclusive regarding whether any instructional approach is better than others (Parrish et al., 2006).

Pull-out Programs

A pull-out program refers to students attending mainstream classes but who are pulled-out to receive dedicated ESL support. Alternatively, in secondary schools, students are given blocks of ESL time in place of content courses. Pull-out classes can be taught by ESL teachers based in a specific school or itinerant teachers who travel among schools bringing their own materials with them (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999). Pull-out classes are thought to better accommodate beginner and low-intermediate ESL students, especially in schools where there are few ESL students (Duke, 2001). The benefit of the pull-out approach is that it provides concentrated instruction based on student need. As well, small class sizes allow greater instructional support and more opportunities for students to practice speaking English than they would be able to in mainstream classes (Duke, 2001).

Update:

More recent research indicates that pull-out models are typically employed in locations with fewer ELLs who have wide range of L1s. Students in a pull-out may be grouped according to grade and level of ESL proficiency. Students are typically pulled out for a minimum of 30 minutes per day Monday to Friday. Overall, pull-out programs are reportedly a popular option for ESL instruction (Haynes, 2007). Karanja (2007) also discusses the pull-out model in terms of a "withdrawal" program in high schools in a small city in British Columbia. In this case, students from various grades and ESL proficiency levels were grouped together for ESL instruction, for which both pros (e.g., more proficient students can help their less proficient peers) and cons were identified (e.g., the pace of the class may be more geared to less proficient students, potentially holding back some of the more proficient students). Ochoa & Rhodes (2005) noted that pull-out programs may also be accompanied by a "push-in" strategy whereby students are pulled-out for ESL instruction for a portion of the day then pushed into the regular classroom for the rest of the day.

Adjunct Programs

An adjunct program model links language instruction in English courses with content courses in order to allow ESL students to learn academic content while learning appropriate language and study skills (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002). The content area is taught by a teacher with expertise in subject areas, while the adjunct course focuses on linking content with English language instruction. This combination of linked class content requires interdisciplinary collaboration between mainstream and ESL teachers. Adjunct programming has been found to be successful in a variety of settings (Roessingh, 1999; Seaman, 2000; Villarreal, 1999).

Update:

Little recent literature appears to be focused on adjunct programs. However, Carrier (2005) discusses linking language concepts with a science course specifically. According to the author, native English-speakers may face considerable challenges in learning scientific vocabulary, a difficulty that is compounded in ESL students. The author further notes that

teamwork between ESL and science teachers is essential, particularly as science textbooks fail to cover language structures while ESL textbooks fail to focus on discipline-specific language. Each teacher has a role to play. Science teachers should clearly identify and communicate literacy objectives with their students and ESL teachers. ESL teachers, in turn, should help students learn the science literacy objectives in conjunction with language objectives such as sentence structure, ultimately assisting ESL students to understand science concepts better and participate more fully in class both academically and socially.

Inclusive Programs

In an inclusive program (also called in-class), students learn curriculum content while they learn English. ESL teachers or teacher aides work with ESL students in the regular classroom setting, but it is the classroom teachers who do the modification of class work for the ESL students. Collaboration among ESL and mainstream teachers is essential (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999) to ensure clarity and coordination of teaching, assessment and record keeping roles (Edmonton Catholic Schools, 2003). This type of program is recommended in elementary classrooms to allow ESL students to participate in all regular classroom activities and in secondary classrooms to allow ESL students to take a wider variety of courses than they would if they were pulled out of regular programming (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999; Edmonton Catholic Schools, 2003).

Update:

The current literature search revealed little new research on inclusive programs. However, concepts pertaining to the inclusive model have been discussed. For example, Haynes (2007) describes a collaborative approach whereby ESL teachers provide on-site support to mainstream classroom teachers during content teaching, a model reportedly most effective when all English language learners in a given grade share the same classroom teacher. Ochoa & Rhodes (2005) note the importance of exposing ESL students to class concepts to ensure that they do not fail to keep up in their studies but also highlight the need to alter content-based instructional strategies to levels appropriate for students' stage of English proficiency. In addition, there is an indication that ELLs "benefit from the same kind of beginning reading instruction that works for English-speaking children, but they need more of it, and need immediate intervention to correct pronunciation and other errors" (Black, 2005, p. 38). Note that related information is also provided under *Integrated Language and Content Based Teaching* in the *Teaching Methods* section of this report.

Comparison of Transitional Programs

In general, research indicates that models which foster collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers (adjunct and inclusive models) have a greater positive effect on immigrant student achievement than pull-out or isolation (sheltered) programs (Thomas & Collier 1997; Collier & Thomas, 1999; Seaman, 2000; Villarreal, 1999). Thomas & Collier (2002) found that the highest quality ESL content instructional approaches can close about half of the achievement gap between mainstream and ESL students. High quality programs are described as well implemented, non-segregated programs that are sustained for five to six years (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Update:

There is an indication in more recent literature that the effectiveness of programs decreases as one moves along the continuum from sheltered programs to pull-out and eventually towards bilingual programs (transitional, two-way bilingual, and bilingual maintenance programs) (Rossell, 2004/2005).

Integrated Programs / Mainstreaming

Integrated programs (also referred to as mainstream programs) place ESL students into mainstream content-based classes. Depending on availability, students enrolled in integrated programs may also receive ESL support outside the classroom but they do not receive specialized ESL support in the classroom apart from what a mainstream teacher can provide.

As discussed previously, there is evidence to suggest that early and full integration in mainstream classes can be detrimental to ESL student achievement. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that accelerated integration into academic mainstream may lead intermediate level ESL students to drop out of high school sooner than those in sheltered programs (Watt & Roessingh, 2001). It is generally accepted that integrated programming is best for students' whose English proficiency, concept development, and cultural awareness is at a more advanced level (Alberta Learning, 1996; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999). Effective integrated classes make educational opportunities available to all students, function effectively through student involvement and cooperative learning, and consider the language needs of all the students (Korkatsch-Groszko, 1998).

Update:

According to Haynes (2007), the ultimate goal is to transition ESL students into mainstream programming as rapidly as possible. Research posits that because ESL and mainstream teachers have different perspectives on teaching and different disciplines, it is important that attention be placed on fostering collaboration between the two sides (Arkoudis, 2006). Based on observations in Australia, the author argues that collaboration requires the ESL teacher gain some epistemological authority within a particular subject, which often requires a special skill set allowing them to approach the conversation strategically. Coming from a somewhat different angle, other literature has suggested that successful collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers involves ESL teachers approaching the collaboration with the tone of making helpful suggestions (rather than mandating practices), teachers accessing common planning time, teachers having the skills necessary for collaboration, and collaborating on assessment (Nordmeyer, 2008). These recommendations have implications for staff development.

Hammond (2006) provides an example of an effective mainstream content approach with a group of 12 and 13 year newcomers to Australia described as "academically gifted" students from diverse backgrounds learning English as a second or third language. In the example, rather than modifying the curriculum to suit the students' needs, the ESL teacher instead took three key steps to instruct the students in a particular unit (in this case, the study of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*): 1) combining the academic language used with the

course contents, 2) "the systematic teaching of and about academic language" (e.g., regarding genres, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling) and 3) "'playing' with language" (e.g., discussing the contents in everyday language). Overall the author argues that successful language and content-based teaching need to be both highly challenging and highly supportive. End-of-year assessments showed that these ESL students outperformed their native English-speaking counterparts, thereby lending support to a mainstream curriculum approach.

One particular study notes the absence of scaffolding, or sheltering, for ESL students in Texas' mainstream classrooms. A law in the state of Texas requiring all ESL students to take the same standardized tests as their non-ESL peers after three years in the U.S. is based on the implicit assumption that language acquisition takes a maximum of three years. However, research points out that language acquisition can take between five and eight years. This divergence in practice and expert opinion prompted a case study of ESL students' experiences in a Texas middle school after having spent one or more years in a sheltered ESL program. The study showed that ESL teachers in the sheltered program incorporated more interactive learning into their lessons than did mainstream teachers in the middle school, and ESL students noted the absence of opportunities for interactive learning, given that they felt their learning was enhanced by this learning tool (e.g., having students follow along with the teacher as he or she worked through an example). It is argued that the lack of interactive learning in mainstream classrooms makes ESL students less likely to succeed, and argues that more time in sheltered ESL programs is warranted to enhance student success (Curtin, 2005).

A gap in ESL literature is reported in terms of capturing teachers' perspectives on mainstreaming models. In an attempt to fill this gap, Wang, Many & Krumenaker (2008), present a case study of a grade nine social studies teacher from a diverse US high school with a relatively high number of ESL students. The teacher did not have a formal ESL background and taught a class comprised of both ESL and native English-speaking students. Results indicated that the teacher regularly modified his teaching to accommodate the ESL students' needs. The authors concluded that some modifications were appropriate and aligned with best practices (e.g., cooperative learning, providing visual aides) while others were inappropriate and may have compromised students' learning (e.g., cutting down content of lessons, using materials appropriate for lower grades). The authors suggest that approaches to mainstreaming should combine facets such as providing ESL training to content teachers, combining ESL and contents through team-teaching, and making use of bilingual groups and materials.

See the *Integrated Language and Content Based Teaching* in the *Teaching Methods* section of this report for further discussion of mainstreaming.

Summary

Ideally, ESL programming helps students in both their English language development and in subject matter content.

Evidence suggests that models that focus more on English language development rather than subject matter content are most beneficial for students with very limited L2 proficiency

and that these programs should be relatively brief, that is, for a period of weeks to several months at most. For those whose proficiency in L2 is at beginner to intermediate L2 levels, evidence is more supportive of transitional models, in particular those models that reflect close collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers and integration of language and content instruction. These transitional programs should be sustained over a longer term (five years or more). Full integration of ESL students into mainstream classes appears most appropriate for those ESL students with advanced levels of proficiency in L2. After- school support even for these ESL students, however, is still recommended.

Update:

Recent literature continues to discuss similar models of program delivery. However, the volume of publication in the area of sheltered instruction indicates that this is becoming an increasingly examined approach, particularly in the United States. Literature also indicates shifts and overlaps in the way approaches are being implemented .Research indicates that different models will result in different effects on bilingual literacy and cross-language relations (Branum-Martin et al., 2006). However, there is reportedly no evidence to suggest that different types of ESL services will lead to *faster* English acquisition. Rather than focusing on a program's "label," there is a suggestion that one should instead consider aspects such as teacher qualifications, the adequacy of ESL materials, the use of appropriate instruction techniques and ensuring that students are not promoted to all-English programming before they are ready (Haynes, 2007).

TEACHING METHODS

The literature is replete with recommendations on instructional methods for ESL learners. Many approaches are the same as those recommended for non-ESL early learners of English. Recent research demonstrating the effectiveness of various approaches for second language learners is cited wherever possible.

Integrated Language and Content Based Teaching

The teaching of a second language can be described along a continuum of approaches from content-based, where subject matter content (e.g., math, science, social studies) is the primary focus of instruction, to language-based, where language structure is the primary focus of instruction (Met, 1998). Typically, research on immersion programs (content-based) indicates that content mastery is not adversely affected by instruction in L2 (Pelletier, 1998; Turnbull et al., 2001; Turnbull et al., 2003; de Jabrun, 1997)[7]. Besides studies demonstrating the effectiveness of content-based teaching strategies, research also indicates that students require focused attention on the grammatical and structural properties of L2 to ensure linguistic accuracy (O'Byrne, 2001; Short, 1997; Swain, 1996). Currently, it is widely recognized that mainstream teachers in integrated classrooms need to address both language learning as well as content learning as an integrated approach (e.g., Alberta Learning, 1996, 2002; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998; Pica, 2000; Swain, 1996; Watt et al., 1996).

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[7] See, however, Marsh et al., (2000) for an exception with respect to examining late English immersion students in Hong Kong.

Update:

Overall, research notes that in order for mainstream classrooms to support the success of ESL students, classroom content must be accessible (Nordmeyer, 2008). One way to achieve this is to use English *intentionally*: to teach ESL students academic English. A study of one particular teacher's approach to science in an ESL classroom shows that teaching the central terms associated with a particular science unit, and then going beyond the terms themselves by using them in back-and-forth in-class science discussions and activities enhances understanding of the terms, language in general, and the scientific topic of interest (Mohan & Slater, 2005). A study looking at a comparable approach to language and content in a high school science class comes to similar conclusions (Mohan & Slater, 2006),

Literature also looks at practical applications for teaching ELL science. Westervelt (2007) presents particular strategies for inquiry-based ELL science learning in a hands-on, outdoor setting. These approaches are grounded in a scaffolding scheme created by the author. Carrier (2005) (as discussed earlier) also presents strategies for writing science literacy objectives (i.e., the literacy skills required for success in a particular area of study) in order to support ELL students in science studies.

Other research looks at content-based teaching in disciplines other than science. Salinas, Fránquiz & Reidel (2008) present a case study examining a high school world geography class and one teacher's approach to integrating ESL learning into the class. A variety of different approaches were used to foster students' learning, including graphic organizers, realia, hands-on work, visual cues, and an emphasis on vocabulary. A particular strength of the teaching method of interest was its tendency to value prior learning and experiences (which took place at home, school and in the community) as a basis for future learning. Further, the topic of the class was thought to be especially relevant and engaging for newcomer students.

Integrating language and content instruction in a mainstream educational setting often requires collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers. Research has found that during collaboration a number challenges have the potential to arise. Looking at the interactions between an ESL teacher and a science teacher while undertaking curriculum planning, one study highlights these challenges (Arkoudis, 2005). In particular, the balance of content and language instruction is influenced by the relative power of the two teachers (e.g., which one will be in charge of teaching). As well, the nature of the subjects being taught (e.g., applied or more discussion-based) influences the ability of the two parties to plan together and balance language and content, and it may be difficult for a teacher with a particular background to effectively describe one's own point of view and/or understand another's. The author argues that instead of focusing on content and language as separate, a conversation regarding balancing content and language in the classroom could focus on good teaching practice in order to promote sharing.

Other research looks at the importance of partnerships between universities and public schools in order to improve outcomes for ELLs in content-based language programs. One particular study looks at a relationship between a university and a public school which was aimed at creating upper-elementary-school math and science curriculum for ELL students with the aim of having them transition into the mainstream over two to three years (Silva, Weinburgh, Smith, Barreto & Gabel, 2008/2009). The curriculum itself had learning goals

which related to both content and academic language development. The unexpected benefits of the partnership included professional development, better coordination within the teacher preparation program as a result of professors' experience together in the school setting, and networking between ELL parents and faculty.

Finally, some research has proposed that one promising way to approach content-based language instruction is to use what is known as the Connections Model (Bigelow, Ranney & Dahlman, 2006). The model emphasizes the balance between content and language, and, acknowledging that language is often overshadowed by content in practice, encourages teachers to think more about language.

Corrective Feedback

Second language learners can be exposed to both positive feedback and negative feedback on their use of language. Positive feedback provides learners with models of what is acceptable while negative feedback provides learners with information about what is not acceptable (Long, 1996). Research on corrective feedback for second language learners indicates that corrective feedback may play a role in stimulating recognition of gaps by the learners between their outputs and target language (Kim, 2004). Additional evidence is required, however, to clarify how and to what extent other factors such as proficiency, L1, age, linguistic features and task effects play a role (Kim, 2004).

It is suggested that in the early stages of language acquisition, errors can be corrected in a "sensitive" way but that as English is acquired direct correction can hinder students' efforts and discourage the use of L2 (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002). Instead, it is recommended that corrective feedback be provided through modeling. Supportive evidence of corrective feedback is also reflected in the mainstream instructional literature (Marzano, 1998) where teachers are identified as having the responsibility of providing feedback so students can internalize correct usage of language (Marzano, 1998). Alberta Learning (1996) provides guidance on using corrective feedback in its *English as a Second Language: Elementary Guide to Implementation*.

Update:

A recent experiment looked at the effect of four different types of feedback on student accuracy in a writing task: 1) direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; 2) direct corrective feedback and written meta-linguistic explanation; 3) direct corrective feedback only; and 4) no corrective feedback (Bitchener, 2008). Students were given a 30-minute writing task, were supplied with feedback (according to their treatment group), and were then administered a different 30-minute writing task. The study found a significant effect of written feedback (e.g., an explanation and an example) on writing accuracy which still remained two months after the initial feedback was delivered. Further, writing accuracy in both the "direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation" treatment and the "direct corrective feedback only" treatment was found to be significantly higher than in the "no corrective feedback" treatment.

Another strategy for feedback delivery is to have a student's peers provide feedback. Rollinson (2005) reviews a number of arguments for and against using peer feedback in an

ESL writing class and notes that while the practice can be beneficial in a number of ways, the main challenges may include time constraints, student attitudes towards whether their peers are qualified to provide feedback, and difficulties with supervision. The paper argues that proper set-up can address these challenges by clearly establishing procedures and training students, and goes on to outline how this set-up might occur in order to achieve successful results.

Research has also shown that independent student review can be an effective method of gathering feedback. When advanced ESL students engaged in comparing their own compositions to a native speaker's text, ESL students were able to correct their own errors and improve their grammatical accuracy (Vickers & Ene, 2006). Vickers & Ene (2006) provide an example of the structure of one such activity.

In terms of the nature and perception of feedback, research has also investigated aspects of teachers' written feedback. One study looks at the extent to which feedback is provided, whether students' perception of teacher feedback correlates with teacher self-assessment (i.e., teachers' perception of their own feedback to students), and whether teacher self-assessments and performance are correlated (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Survey data and teacher-written feedback was collected from teachers and students in an intensive ESL program and analyzed with the above research questions in mind. Results showed that teacher self-assessment was highly correlated with student perceptions, but the correlation between teacher self-assessment and actual written feedback was less strong. Teachers were not well aware of the extent to which they were providing more local (e.g., grammar) than global (e.g., organization) feedback. Importantly, students indicated that they were satisfied with the amount of feedback being provided by teachers. The study suggests that increasing teachers' awareness of the types and amount of feedback they give may improve the quality of feedback throughout the writing process.

Interaction / Cooperative Learning

Highly interactive classes that emphasize problem solving through thematic experience provide the social setting for language acquisition and academic development (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Cooperative learning has been found to be effective for promoting the academic achievement, language acquisition, and social development of English as a second language learners (Calderon & Slavin, 1999; Ovando & Collier, 1998). Recent works also cite many earlier studies supporting the effectiveness of collaborative interaction on the language acquisition process (e.g., Thomas & Collier, 1997; Roessingh, 2004; Swain 2001). It is emphasized that a collaborative classroom is more than a successful workgroup but one in which students recognize and use one another as resources to build a collective body of knowledge and develop skills to put knowledge into practice (Savage, 1996). Recommended best practice is that classrooms be organized for collaboration and interaction of ESL students with native English-speakers (Alberta Learning, 1996, 2002; Alcala, 2000; de Jong, 1995; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998; McLeod, 1996; Villarreal, 1999; Walqui, 2000a, 2000c).

More recent literature supports that a similar collaborative approach should occur between teacher and ESL student. Effective interactions in terms of L2 development are reported

when both teachers and students are active participants in the construction of language and curriculum knowledge (Gibbons, 2003).

Update:

Providing opportunities for ESL students to learn through cooperative activities has been noted as a successful instructional strategy throughout the literature (e.g., Nesselrodt, 2007). There are a variety of ways that ESL instruction can incorporate interactive and cooperative learning into the classroom. Recent research has investigated how literature circles and project-based instruction can be beneficial to ESL learners. A specific study looking at the implementation of literature circles and reflecting on results found that students enjoy the interactive learning process, and the circles provide students an opportunity to practice using language in a real-world setting (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005). It is emphasized that small groups provide students the safety in which they are able to gather clarification and meaning. It was also suggested that the use of multicultural literature further enhances a feeling of connectedness and mutual appreciation.

In terms of project-based teaching, literature relays the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. A study of the specific project-based instruction used extensively in the ESL program at a high school in Vancouver, British Columbia, looked at learner perception of this approach to learning (Beckett, 2005). Student opinion was mixed, favoring the approach because it challenged their thinking but also noting that it was stressful and took a lot of time. The negative aspects of project-based instruction were especially relevant for those students who were used to the learning activities in their home countries. The author notes that this may point to a cultural or philosophical influence on students' reactions to this type of ESL programming. Importantly, other research highlights the possible pitfalls of using task-based teaching, noting that it may encourage students to ignore form and use sub-optimal communication strategies in an effort to complete tasks while under pressure (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007/2008). This research recommends that task-based teaching be implemented using pre-, during-, and post-task activities which serve to minimize this risk.

The literature suggests that another approach to content-based, interactive instruction is the use of *interclass* collaborative projects (Kasper & Weiss, 2005). With interclass projects, the expansion of collaborative learning beyond the classroom leads to additional gains in terms of self-efficacy and critical thinking. Kasper & Weiss (2005) share one approach to implementing interclass collaborative projects in an ESL classroom.

Interaction may be especially important to ESL learners because of the information learners are able to gather during a conversation. Theory posits that conversational interaction is effective in language learning because it helps learners to gather meaning and includes recasts (implicit corrective feedback) (Mackey, 2006). Some research has suggested that this type of learning is effective particularly because it brings learners' attention to (or, helps them notice) L2 forms. In an experiment where ESL learners were provided with interactional feedback (to questions, plurals, and past tense forms specifically), and where information on noticing was collected (via various forms of learner recall), learners' noticing was largely varied but trends showed that learners most often noticed and developed in response to interactional feedback on question forms.

Also relevant to collaborative projects is research looking at whether the familiarity of the project or task influences learning outcomes. In investigating how interaction during familiar and unfamiliar tasks may affect ESL learning, Mackey, Kanganas & Oliver (2007) studied communicative tasks between pairs of seven and eight-year-old ESL students. When students were unfamiliar with task procedure (or task content), the number of clarification requests and confirmation checks were significantly higher than when students were familiar with task procedures (or task content). Conversely, when students were engaged in familiar tasks, the incidence of comprehension checks was significantly higher than with unfamiliar tasks. While students in unfamiliar tasks provided more feedback, those in procedurally familiar tasks had more opportunities to use the feedback (no differences were found in terms of content familiarity), and those in tasks with familiar procedures and content ended up incorporating the feedback more often.

Balanced Literacy

The balanced literacy approach (Pressley, 1998) combines the language- rich activities associated with whole language with explicit teaching of skills needed to decode and form words and sentences (Calgary Board of Education, 2004). This approach blends holistic literacy opportunities like reading literature and composing with skills instruction in phonics and comprehension strategies (Pressley, Roehrig, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002). There are many studies supporting this approach with English monolingual early learners (see Pressley et al, 2002 for a review). A recent study of ESL students in British Columbia indicated that a balanced early literacy program is as effective for ESL learners as it is for English speakers in the early grades (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003). Cummins (2003) states that when it comes to English language learners, "*Virtually all researchers endorse some variant of a 'balanced' view of reading instruction that incorporates varying amounts of explicit phonics instruction together with an emphasis on extensive reading as students progress through the grades (p. 10).*"

Update:

Results of recent research align with the above findings. In looking at the effects of providing English-language development (ELD) instruction separately from reading and language arts instruction, researchers found that, for a sample of 85 kindergarten classrooms over a period of one year, ESL students enrolled in programs with separate ELD blocks scored significantly higher in oral language and literacy, However, despite its significance, the relative size of this effect was small (Saunders, Foorman & Carlson, 2006). The authors note that in those classrooms with separate ELD blocks, a larger percentage of instructional time was allocated to language-related subjects. Further, in looking at the effects of bilingual versus English-only instruction, students learned more Spanish letter names under the former type of program and learned more English letter names under the latter type of program.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) may be acquired by learners within approximately two years of arrival (Roessingh & Kover 2002). It is recognized that these

basic skills are required for early communicative competence but that academic language proficiency is required for academic success (Swain 1996, Cummins, 1999). With communicative approaches the goal is for the learner to develop communicative competence in L2 (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). It has been suggested that the development of oral communication skills should precede English reading instruction unless a reading foundation has already been established in L1 (International Association resolution (1998) cited in August, 2003; Snow, 1998). Other evidence, however, suggests that oral communication skills and literacy skills can develop concurrently (Geva & Petrulis-Wright, 1999 as cited in August 2003; Fitzgerald & Noblit, 1999), and that reading instruction enhances oral communication development (Anderson & Roit, 1996).

Update:

Recent literature related to BICS is discussed alongside *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* in the next section.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

Models of ESL instruction that are based on the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) approach are widely accepted as best practice (e.g., Alberta Learning, 1996; Calgary Board of Education, 2004; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1999). CALP-level communication skills are much more cognitively demanding than BICS and require understanding of metaphor and symbolism and may take as long as seven years to master (Roessingh & Kover 2002).

To promote an ESL student's academic language proficiency, research supports instruction that is cognitively challenging, based on academic content and focused on the development of critical language awareness (Cummins, 1999). Such a Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) integrates instruction from content curriculum in high priority content areas, academic language development based on content, and explicit instruction in learning strategies (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996). In 1996, Chamot and O'Malley recognized that there was limited information about the effects of CALLA programs on student achievement but did cite some program evaluation studies which indicated promising results. Unfortunately, there is still a dearth of evidence supporting CALLA. Montes (2002), in comparing classrooms that incorporated CALLA versus those that did not in the same South Texas Schools, found that though students in both types of classrooms improved, more improvement in academic performance was found among CALLA students.

Update:

Recent literature shows mixed evidence on the relationship between CALP and student outcomes. Interestingly, one particular study found that while Spanish CALP scores were significantly related to higher rates of reading growth in English, there was no significant relationship found between higher CALP scores in English and higher reading growth in English (Laija-Rodriguez, Ochoa & Parker, 2006). However, there is experimental evidence that CALP is associated with proficiency test scores (Crook Grigorenko, 2005). A sample of

low-performing sixth grade students[8] was selected into an intensive language instruction program for an eight-week period of instruction (utilizing the CALLA method). For those students in the sample without diagnosed learning difficulties (i.e., those students not on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)), the post-program proficiency test scores were significantly higher than pre-program scores. Further, when compared to students who had not been selected into the intensive language instruction program (higher-achieving students), those in the treatment group had realized greater increases in scores.

Some recent research suggests that the concepts of CALP and BICS may not be useful when looking at ESL learners in early childhood. Specifically, there may not be a distinction between CALP and BICS for young ELLs (Aukerman, 2007). That is, for those who have not established CALP in either L1 or L2, the concepts that underlie CALP are unfamiliar. This implies that young ELLs' biggest challenge may be the ability to understand a concept, rather than the language in-and-of itself. Further, in the author's opinion, learning a concept requires young children to tie concepts (and the associated language) to context, and thus meaning. The research goes on to argue that the key to early language learners' success is ensuring that language is connected to students' experiences.

Other literature presents BICS and CALP as a continuum. The metaphor of an iceberg has been used to describe the continuum, with BICS being represented by the portion of the iceberg which is above the surface, and CALP lying below the surface (Roessingh, 2006a). When learners are young, they become familiar with "here and now" language, and gradually transition into understanding "there and then" language and metaphoric competence.

Comprehensible Input

Comprehensible Input strategies ensure that a student understands a teacher's written or oral communication. Strategies include having students provide a behavioural response to an oral or written request, selecting among alternative responses, drawing a picture of what was heard, answering questions, condensing information, providing endings to a story, or message rephrasing, among others (Alberta Learning, 1996). The use of the comprehensible input strategy is somewhat contentious and research indicates mixed results of the effectiveness of this approach (Leow, 1997).

Update:

One recent experiment looked at the effect of gestures and facial cues on an ESL audience's listening comprehension (Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005). Intermediate and advanced ESL learners were presented with videos of a native speaker giving a lecture. Participants were divided up into three treatments: those who were exposed to audio, gestures and facial cues; those who were exposed to audio and facial cues, and those who were exposed to audio only. For advanced ESL learners, the audio-face treatment resulted in the highest levels of listening comprehension, while for intermediate ESL learners the audio-gesture-face treatment resulted in the highest levels of listening comprehension. The

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[8] Note that there was no information on the ESL make-up of the sample. It is possible that the sample did not contain any ESL students, although use of the CALLA method (a sheltered means of ESL instruction) would suggest that ESL students were involved.

authors cite this as evidence that visual cues are able to enhance ESL learning and note that the effect of teaching learners to pay attention to visual cues may be a valuable area of future research.

Related to the comprehensibility of instruction, a comparison of the effects of oral-only instruction and integrated (oral plus written) instruction on oral language development outcomes for two kindergarten students showed that integrated instruction led to greater gains for the students' oral language abilities (Kim, Y., 2008).

Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to "providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). The teacher of second language learners facilitates this support and as students become more proficient, the scaffold is gradually removed (Hammond, 2001). Scaffolds use repeating language and discourse patterns and help ESL students understand how ideas are organized and presented to enhance understanding and communication of ideas (Alberta Learning, 1996). Research indicates that the interaction of discourse and content-based activities leads to higher levels of thinking and understanding but only when scaffolding is used as a discourse support (Wellman, 2002). Research also indicates that ESL students benefit from this approach (Gibbons 2003; Mohan & Beckett, 2001). Observational studies, however, indicate that teachers do not always provide effective scaffolds for ESL students (e.g., Arreaga-Mayer & Perdermo-Rivera, 1996; Gersten, 1996).

Update:

Recent literature contains further illustrations of successful approaches to scaffolding. One study explores a "scaffolded reading experience" (SRE), an approach to teaching using texts in order to accomplish both English reading goals as well as learning about subject matter (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004/2005). SRE includes a series of supportive activities (undertaken pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading) which can be applied with all types of text. Aside from supporting students through L2 reading, the series of smaller activities throughout the reading exercise has the added benefit of ensuring that students are not overwhelmed by one larger task. As an example of an SRE activity, pre-reading questions may be presented by a teacher in both English and Spanish.

Another case study tracked the progress of three classes of ESL learners in a Vancouver secondary school as their teacher used a number of different scaffolding techniques (e.g., explanation, discussions, repeated exposure to vocabulary) in order to assist students in acquiring and using higher-level vocabulary (Lee & Muncie, 2006). Results showed that these scaffolding techniques led to increased rates of vocabulary use and retention (as compared to students only encountering the word during reading and receiving the teacher's explanation). The study also notes that students were more likely to recall lexical phrases than single words.

Related to scaffolding to support ESL learners, researchers have found that ESL supports decrease the incidence of disruptive behaviours (Preciado, Horner, & Baker, 2009). In

particular, researchers have looked at the relationship between problem behaviors and reading engagement during independent reading activities. A study of four Latino ESL students in a US elementary school found that a reading activity at least one grade level higher than a student's current ability led to a higher likelihood of problem behaviour. The use of a Language-Matched Instructional Priming (LMIP) program, which prepared each child with the content, vocabulary, and instructions he or she would face the next day, led to a decreased incidence of problem behaviors during independent reading.

Mentors

Alberta Learning (1996; 2002) recognizes the importance of buddying to learn daily classroom routines and peer tutors to provide academic support to ESL students. Others have also recommended the peer tutoring approach as a best practice approach (e.g., Cohen 2003; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998; Shore, 2004).

An examination of the autobiographical narratives of 40 former ESL students indicates that shyness and fear are major barriers to academic participation early in the adjustment process for newcomers (Watt, Roessingh & Bosetti, 1996). Researchers suggest that linking newcomers to an L1 speaking "buddy" or mentor may significantly alleviate the initial feelings of isolation which are a key contributor to early withdrawal from high school (Watt, Roessingh & Bosetti, 1996). It has also been demonstrated that integrating younger-arriving ESL learners with older-arriving ESL learners enhances L1 development and facilitates language development in L2 (Roessingh & Kover, 2002). Additional research indicates that pairing English language learners with skilled readers of English helps ESL students read more fluently and accurately (Li & Nes, 2001).

Update:

Recent research re-iterates the value of pairing students. Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins & Scarcella (2007) recommends devoting 90 minutes per week to instructional activities in which pairs of students at different ability levels or proficiencies in English work together. Haynes (2007) also recommends buddying for newcomers.

Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is recognized as a best practice approach (Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998) particularly for younger learners and those at beginner ESL levels (Drucker, 2003). LEA involves having students tell a story of an experience they have had while the teacher records the story (Rigg 1981 as cited in Drucker, 2003). It is believed that this strategy reduces the "cognitive load" of lessons by allowing students to draw on their prior knowledge and life experiences (Miller & Endo, 2004). LEA is a scaffolding strategy that allows students to progress from oral expression of English to reading and writing of English (Albert Learning, 1996). Beginner ESL students may be asked to draw and verbalize a story. They may then move to dictating a story, co-authoring the story with the teacher. Through careful guidance by the teacher and progression in small increments, the student moves to the writing of their own stories and reading of stories written by others (Alberta Learning, 1996). Research indicates that using LEA in an early childhood setting raises the

metalinguistic awareness of students in dual language programs (Montague & Meza-Zaragosa, 2000).

Update:

The literature search did not result in any new studies in this area.

First Language Support

A growing body of evidence suggests that first language support significantly impacts ESL student achievement levels and recommendations are often made to encourage L1 use and development through L1 support (e.g., Watt et al., 1996; Bankston & Zhou 1995). ESL students schooled entirely in English do make dramatic gains in the early grades but then typically fall progressively behind the achievement levels of English students (Thomas & Collier, 1997). It has been suggested that early success often misleads teachers and administrators into assuming students will continue to make dramatic gains.

Research indicates that early arrivers (five to seven year olds) would acquire English more rapidly if they were provided a minimum of two years of language instruction in L1 (Thomas & Collier, 1997). In addition, it has been found that schools with exemplary ESL student achievement results all used the student's primary language as a means of developing literary skills, a tool for developing content, or both (Nelson, 1996).

An examination the relationship between L1 and L2 proficiency across 15 studies indicated that reading in the primary language promotes second-language literacy and that free reading in L1 makes a strong contribution to continued L1 development (Krashen, 2003).

Research supports that if language minority students arrive at a school with no proficiency in English they should, if possible, be taught how to read in their native language while acquiring proficiency in English (Krashen, 2003). While this level of support is not usually feasible, providing other supports to maintain a student's first language is recognized as best practice in several provincial jurisdictions (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999, Alberta Learning 1996, 2002). In Alberta Learning's *English as a Second Language Elementary Guide to Implementation* (1996) it is recommended that teachers ensure as much first language support as possible is available, promote positive attitudes toward all languages in the class, make the classroom multilingual through pictures and signs, encourage students to write in their own language, and assure parents that their children should continue to speak their first language at home. An overall respect for a student's first language and allowing students to use their first language is recognized as a best practice approach (e.g., August, 2004; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998).

Update:

A review of a number of experimental studies providing comparisons of bilingual and English-only reading programs for ESL students argues that bilingual programs are preferable (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). In particular, the authors note the benefits of teaching native-language reading and English reading separately each day. For example, it allows the acquisition of English skills at the same time as valuing the language students use at

home and it acknowledges that many reading and language skills are shared across languages (that is, success in one language can lead to success in another).

The literature also discusses the link between L1 and L2 CALP scores and reading growth using a sample of bilingual second and third grade students in transitional classes (Laija-Rodriguez, Ochoa, & Parker, 2006). While students in general had higher Spanish CALP scores than English CALP scores, higher Spanish CALP scores were significantly associated with higher reading growth in English (although the effect itself was relatively small). Further, higher English CALP scores were significantly associated with higher reading growth in Spanish. Interestingly, there was no significant relationship found between higher CALP scores in a particular language and higher reading growth in that same language.

In addition, Malabonga, Kenyon, Carlo, August, & Louguit (2008) found that the CAT (Cognate Awareness Test) which measures cognate awareness in Spanish-speaking English Language Learners (tested in 4th and 5th grade) appears to be sensitive to the ability of Spanish-speaking children to use knowledge of Spanish words to discern the meaning of their English cognates. This study provides support for positive cross-linguistic transfer of cognate knowledge for Spanish-speaking ELLs with sufficient L1 vocabulary knowledge but not necessarily for those with insufficient L1 vocabulary knowledge. Findings are consistent with Cummins' 1979 theory that ELL children first need to reach a threshold or minimum proficiency in their L1 for it to transfer to their L2.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness instruction allows the learner to attend to, isolate, and manipulate individual phonemes. This awareness supports the phoneme blending necessary for decoding words (Roberts & Neal, 2004). Phonemic awareness upon entry into kindergarten and first grade has been demonstrated to predict the acquisition of reading ability (Snider, 1997). An examination of the effectiveness of phonemic awareness instruction in five year old ESL learners indicated that compared to a control group, students who received instruction in this approach showed greater phonemic awareness, phonics knowledge, and scored higher on standardized tests of reading and writing one year later (Stuart, 1999). There is widespread expert agreement that phonemic awareness is an important component of the development of decoding skills and that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness together with a significant focus on reading contributes to early reading comprehension skills (see Cummins, 2003).

Update:

Researchers studied a sample of 45 ESL students as they moved through kindergarten and grade one and found that English articulation was significantly associated with phonemic awareness when children were tested at the end of kindergarten (Roberts, 2005). Further, English articulation was significantly associated with word reading, word decoding through phonics, and word recognition when children were tested at the end of first grade. In addition, phonemic awareness was significantly associated with word reading when children were tested at the end of first grade. The results imply that articulation instruction may be especially fruitful when working with early ELLs.

Writing Workshop

In writing workshops students in the classroom work independently on self-selected pieces of writing. The teacher moves from student to student monitoring progress, offering suggestions, helping children write and rewrite their drafts. Typically, however, teachers of ESL students tend to view feedback as a passive process and focus on "fixing-up" a finished product rather than as a developmental process (Hyland, 2000). Research indicates that ESL writers require extensive communication about approaches to writing and feedback strategies and not just feedback based on writing problems (Hyland, 2000).

Update:

The literature research did not result in any new studies in this area.

Modification

Using a modified approach, teachers match the difficulty of a written text to the reading levels of learners. This is done through isolating sentence complexity, reducing the frequency of specialized vocabulary and amount of contextual support (Calgary Board of Education, 2005). Programs that group children according to reading level with a focus on language development at each level (Slaven & Madden, 1999) and those that use visual and printed contextual information to provide explicit word meaning (Neuman & Koskinen, 1992) are found to be effective in improving word learning and increasing vocabulary knowledge for language minority students.

Update:

See the *Integrated Programs / Mainstreaming* section presented earlier for examples of modification.

Comprehension Strategies

A major component of reading comprehension is vocabulary (August, 2004). Comprehension strategies include a wide range of approaches to ensure students are able understand written materials. Strategies can include SQR3 (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) and other types of graphic organizers (Calgary Board of Education, 2004). Other strategies include providing background information before being exposed to text, encouraging pre-reading on a topic, introducing key vocabulary, and having students note parts of the text they do not comprehend.

Though no recent research was located that directly assessed the effectiveness of comprehension strategies specific to the ESL learners, research indicates that first grade vocabulary predicts more than 30% of reading comprehension variance in grade 11 learners whose first language is English (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Various approaches have been found to improve vocabulary acquisition in L1 English learning contexts including computer use (Davidson, Elcock & Noyes, 1996), incidental exposure (Schwabenflugel, Stahl & McFall, 1997), repeated exposure (Senechal, 1997), pre-instruction (Brett, Rothlein, & Hurly, 1996), and direct instruction (Tomesen & Aarnouste, 1998). The use of these

approaches and others for enhancing vocabulary comprehension are recognized as best practice approaches for all early language learners (e.g., National Reading Panel, 2000) and for ESL learners in particular (Hernandez, 2003; Perez & Torres-Guzman, 1996).

Update:

More recently, rich descriptions of vocabulary have been shown to be especially effective for preschool learners. A study of 70 ESL preschoolers showed that when the children were exposed to stories accompanied with rich descriptions of target vocabulary words, as opposed to being exposed to the stories without the rich descriptions, they made significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition (Collins, 2005). In addition to rich descriptions of vocabulary words, initial English receptive and expressive levels as well as a higher frequency of at-home reading were associated with improved vocabulary acquisition.

Realia (Real Life)

By presenting information through diverse media, realia helps to make English language input as comprehensible as possible. In a meta-analysis of instructional methods for English Language learners, Marzano, (1998) found that the realia approach is effective in early levels of English proficiency, but that these methods should give way to more abstract approaches (e.g., comparison, metaphor and analogy) as English proficiency improves.

Update:

The literature research did not result in any new studies in this area.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

Total Physical Response (TPR) reflects teaching language through physical (motor) activity (Richards & Rodgers, 1998, p 87). TPR includes comprehensible input and a focus on relevant content rather than grammar or form (Crawford, 2003). It is recognized as an effective method for reinforcing concepts and vocabulary (Gersten & Baker, 2000) and has been found to be most effective for L2 learners when it is applied maximally and in combination with storytelling and using student questions to introduce grammatical explanations (Skala, 2003).

Update:

A more recent study compared the effects of Total Physical Response by Storytelling (TPRS) methods to traditional methods of teaching a foreign language in a high school setting (Kariuki & Bush, 2008). Results showed that those students assigned to the TPRS group significantly outperformed those assigned to the traditional group in terms of vocabulary achievement.

Explicit Instruction

Explicit instruction incorporates modeling and identifies for students the strategies and skills used in the context of reading and writing. There are a number of empirical studies that have

demonstrated that early elementary students at risk of reading failure benefit from explicit instruction (Castle, Riach, & Nicholson, 1994). Specific to the ESL population, a recent meta-analysis of over seventy studies indicated that explicit types of instruction in L2 are more effective than implicit types across a variety of targeted outcomes (Norris & Ortega, 2000). It has been found that explicit instruction plays a key role in language acquisition (Zhang, 1998) and enables students to internalize elements of linguistic structure and make active use of these in written text (LaPlante, 2000 as cited in Archibald et al., 2004). Explicit instruction techniques are recognized as best practice for all language learners (National Reading Panel, 2000) as well as L2 learners (Norris & Ortega, 2000).

Update:

In an experiment looking at the effectiveness of primary-tier reading instruction combined with either 1) evidence-based, direct instruction reading curricula with explicitly targeted skills (in small groups of three to six students) or 2) balanced literacy instruction (in groups of six to 15 students), students appeared to make greater literacy skill improvements in evidence-based, direct instruction settings (Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Arreaga-Mayer, Wills, Longstaff, Culpepper & Walton, 2007). Recent research underscores the benefits of direct instruction, especially for those students at risk of having reading problems. Gersten et al. (2007) recommend that focused small-group interventions for such learners should include explicit instruction on phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The authors also recommend that high quality, direct vocabulary instruction be provided throughout the day.

Promoting Diversity

The environment in which a student learns has been described as being just as important as teaching approaches and strategies (Drucker, 2003). It has been suggested that the most important thing teachers can do to create a positive learning environment for ESL students is to respect rather than judge the English learners, their homes and communities (Meyer, 2000). Wherever possible students should see their history, literature, and cultural experiences reflected in the classroom (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999, Alberta Learning, 1996, 2002; Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998).

Update:

The literature also touches on the challenge of engaging a diverse group of ESL students. Kerner (2007) presents a variety of ideas for instructional activities and assessment strategies aimed at engaging a wide audience of ELL students in creative ways and supporting their language development (e.g., video, graphic art). Given that student engagement in subject matter is related to how well the students can relate to the subject matter, the author emphasizes the importance of ensuring the subject matter in each activity is connected to the shared experience of the class. The paper presents activities which are designed to be implemented with minimal preparation. See the discussion of *Diversity Sensitivity* (to follow, under *Leadership*) for further discussion of strategies aimed at promoting diversity.

Other Specific Supports

Other supports recommended for ESL students in the classroom include:

➤ Offering instructions in print as well as verbally (Watt et al., 1996)
➤ Allowing ESL students to begin homework in class to ensure homework is understood (Watt et al., 1996)
➤ Peer tutoring or homework groups (Watt et al., 1996)

Update:

Also included in the more recent literature as important supports for student success are:

➤ Providing students adequate time to complete tasks (Nesselrodt, 2007)
➤ Frequent, ongoing monitoring of student progress (Nesselrodt, 2007)
➤ Suitable textbooks (recent research, however, has highlighted the failings of current ESL texts: a discrepancy between real-life English language use and the use of language in ESL textbook suggestions, and textbooks' lack of teaching the use of language in the proper context) (Jiang, 2006)

Using Multiple Methods

Kubota (1998) warns that viewing current popular methods of ESL instruction as panaceas leads to neglecting the specific needs of students. It is widely recommended that teachers become flexible in using the various approaches so that they more are responsive to the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive needs of individual students (e.g., August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Ernst-Slavit, Moore, & Maloney, 2002; Gersten, 1996; Kubota, 1998; Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003; Miller & Endo, 2004; Oxford, 1996).

Update:

Recent research underscores students' need for and use of a variety of approaches to language learning. Amongst a sample of 55 ESL students in a pre-university language learning program, researchers looked at the relationship between students' use of language learning strategies and L2 proficiency (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006). Results showed that intermediate students used learning strategies more often than both beginner students and advanced students. Further, those who used learning strategies advanced more quickly than others. The most popular strategies used by the sample overall were metacognitive strategies. However, the most popular strategies amongst the advanced students were social strategies. The least popular strategies overall were affective and memory strategies. The differential use of strategies by different learners and learner levels suggests that teacher intervention needs to be varied in order to address student learning needs and learning styles.[9]

One study of a particular unit taught in a high school English literature class showed the merits of using a multimodal approach to enhance ESL students' academic achievement (Early & Marshall, 2008). The unit encouraged groups of three students (with at least one

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[9] Alberta Education (2007) is one resource which identifies a variety of strategies targeted at diverse student needs.

member who had a unique L1) to use visual and verbal means to interpret literary works through the use of symbolism-based visual representations, and also allowed the students use of L1. The vast majority of students reported that the unit had assisted with their interpretation of the literary work, and over 60% of students were given a passing grade on an essay assigned to them at the conclusion of the unit (noted as being remarkable in light of expectations).

The following are additional topics relating to teaching methods which were not previously discussed in the 2005 literature review: incorporating technology, the Universal Grammar framework, music therapy, arts-based curricula, pronunciation instruction, genre-based language instruction, and the rational close procedure.

Incorporating Technology

There are a number of studies in the recent literature which deal with the import of technology in promoting successful language learning. The types of technology which are identified as having promise for ESL learners include video, computer-mediated communication (CMC), "chatbots", multimedia technology, simulation games, audioblogs, and corpus-based lexicogrammar search engines. Many of these technologies can be referred to as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). According to Lai & Kritsonis (2006), CALL can provide the opportunity for independent and flexible learning; be less expensive than traditional instruction; provide experiential learning; increase interaction between students, teachers and peers (e.g., through chat groups); target individual needs; increase motivation by increasing interest in learning tasks; and easily track data. The authors also note that the disadvantages of CALL include its possibly high initial cost, the need for students to learn the technology, an absence of quality programs targeted at speech, and a lack of flexibility (e.g., in response to an individual's particular learning difficulty). They go on to argue that understanding the benefits and shortcomings of this technology can help us to ensure that students are properly equipped to gain the best L2 education possible.

Given that the degree to which teachers incorporate CALL into their learning depends on the teachers' own perceptions of the value of the technology, research has looked into teachers' perceptions of CALL (Kim, H. K., 2008). Amongst a sample of 10 teachers, the general perception was that CALL was supplementary to teacher-centered learning. This opinion is in contrast to discussions in the literature regarding the ability of CALL to create a student-centered learning experience. The author argues that there may be a need to help teachers to redefine their roles relative to computers.

In the discussion of the use of technology in instructing ESL students, one issue that arises has to do with schools' access to technology. In fact, research notes that too few schools have access to various types of technology, despite its value to ESL education (Lee, 2006).

Video

One piece of research discusses the design of the Brigham Young University Technology Assisted Language Learning Group's video-based dramatic narratives embedded in instructional software targeted at ESL learners (South, Gabbitas & Merrill, 2008). The video

narratives are intended to provide context-rich learning and are based on the assumption that individual experience consists of meaningful sequences and as such individuals relate to and find it easier to interpret narratives. While any type of video can hold power, the benefit of a narrative video over a non-narrative, shorter video is that a narrative is expected to provide depth, engage the audience, and be authentic. Results of piloting the narratives show that students are responding positively to the learning tool.

Computer-Mediated Communication

One study of ESL elementary-school students observed students' use of an electronic discussion board for three computer-mediated communication (CMC) activities (Zha, Kelly, Park, & Fitzgerald 2006). Data collected over a six-week period showed that students participated more in collaborative activities than individual activities, increasingly used written communication for individual expression and entertainment, and their corrected own language use upon observing peers' language use. Further, use of informal language increased as familiarity with the online environment grew and as students observed each others' messages. There was not measureable use of peer-assisted learning such as students inquiring about the definitions of words or correcting each other. However, research indicates that longer-term exposure to the discussion board and the use of specific activities which foster peer-assisted learning may increase these tendencies.

Another study using CMC (in particular, where each ESL subject engaged in an online chat with a researcher) looked at whether participants noticed recasts (i.e., implicit negative feedback) (Lai, Fei, & Roots 2008). Results showed that recasts were most often noticed when they were provided immediately following the subjects' errors and when they related to word choice (as opposed reformulation of fragmented sentences or spelling, for example). This effect was found despite the fact that recasts dealt with word choice in fewer than half of the total number of recasts. Working memory was also found to be significantly associated with noticing recasts which were not directly contingent to the subjects' errors. In treatments where subjects participated in pre-writing, recasts which occurred immediately following errors were noticed more often than in treatments without pre-writing. It is hypothesized that pre-writing allowed participants to free up cognitive resources during the chat thereby enabling them to take more notice of recasts.

Chatbots

In terms of emerging technology, some research is looking at software known as "chatbots," which essentially enable an ESL learner to have practice conversations with a computer (Coniam, 2008). However, research notes that while the technology is progressing, chatbots are currently not error-free and, as such, may not yet be useful in an ESL education context.

Multimedia Technology

Ten ESL children were partnered with nine educational technology graduate students to allow the children to create multimedia stories which related to their culture and experiences (Peng, Fitzgerald & Park, 2006). The stories created by the children reflected their cultures, a feature which was enhanced by their ability to utilize multimedia technology, and allowed the children to honor their own culture and become educated about others'.

Simulation Games

Observations of second- to eighth-grade ESL students using educational computer software (e.g., simulation-type games) have revealed that the software encouraged students to engage in collaboration with their peers (e.g., in response to problems they encountered) (Lee, 2006). Because computer simulations have been getting more recognition as tools for ESL learners, Ranalli (2008) explores the use of the mass-market SIMs™ computer simulation game for a university ESL learning context. Experience with using SIMs (complete with accompanying resource materials created by the researchers and designed to support ESL users) led to statistically significant improvements in learner vocabulary. Further, learner response to the supplementary materials and to the game itself was favourable.

Audioblogs

Hsu, Wang,\ & Comac (2008) review one instructor's approach to ESL instruction using audioblogs (in this case, personal journals): students record oral assignments and the instructor responds to each in order to promote learning. The feedback provided by the instructor indicated that students were meeting their learning goals, and student feedback indicated that they were enjoying the audioblog learning process. The authors underscore the importance of instructor feedback as being key to student learning, suggesting that the successful use of audioblogs would involve regular assignments and quality feedback. The paper also notes the benefits of using audioblogs as a technology, including ease of use (e.g., the technology was easy to learn), affordability (students in this example recorded their audioblogs on cell phones), and organizational benefits (e.g., assignments are easily archived).

Computer Searches of Corpus and Contextualized Lexicogrammar

A study of the impact of integrating corpus and contextualized lexicogrammar in EFL and ESL instruction (by allowing students the use of computer searches of the British National Corpus to obtain a variety of examples of the proper use of words or phrases in context) found that this type of instruction was beneficial in building a variety of language skills, awareness and understanding (Liu & Jiang, 2009). Further, feedback from students indicates that the learning itself was enjoyable and interesting.

Universal Grammar Framework

A Universal Grammar (UG) framework, based on the idea that there is a common structure to all languages and a common way in which human cognition approaches language, has been used to theorize about the underlying structures of language learning (e.g., L1-L2 connections) (Kirkwold, 2007). Kirkwold (2007) discusses how classroom instruction can be informed by the UG framework. For example, the model implies that there are particular instances when student errors should be corrected through implicit learning (e.g., input) rather than explicit learning (e.g., instruction) and vice-versa. The choice of optimal teaching method requires consideration of the complexity of L2, how L1 may interfere with L2 learning, and the commonalities of both L1 and L2.

Music Therapy

Music has been successfully applied to ESL learning, both in an early childhood education setting and a middle school setting. Paquette & Rieg (2008) argues that presenting language through music helps to engage young children in an interesting, creative learning environment. For example, songs can be used to teach language skills, or students can be encouraged to read directions in order to make their own instruments. Other research presents a study looking at ESL middle school students who were engaged in a variety of music-therapy activities over the course of a 3-month period (activities were related to academic topics and included singing and musical games, among others) (Kennedy, 2005). Pre- and post- story retelling tasks showed that there were significant differences in story comprehension and language development between the sample of students who had engaged in musical therapy and a control group.

Arts-Based Curricula

There is evidence that arts-based instruction leads to beneficial outcomes for ESL learners. A study comparing outcomes for Spanish-speaking ESL students being exposed to arts-based curricula or through traditional methods (Spina, 2006) found that while those in the arts-based program showed improved scores on Spanish tests, those in the traditional program showed declines. Further, those in the arts-based program showed more improvement in English skills and reading skills than the students in the traditional program. The author hypothesizes that because arts offer a variety of modes of expression, the greater understanding and communication actually serves to strengthen verbal communication.

Pronunciation Instruction

Some recent research has touched on aspects of pronunciation instruction. Theory implies that functional load (FL), a measure of the degree to which two phonemes differentiate two words, should inform the choice of ESL pronunciation curriculum (Munro & Derwing, 2006). Experimental evidence provides further support for this recommendation: the perception of accentedness and understandability of L2 speech was more highly influenced by high functional load errors than low functional load errors.

Genre-Based Language Instruction

Genre-based language instruction allows writing instructors to base their teachings on the texts being studied in class (Hyland, 2007). Because genre-based instruction provides more context for the material being covered, research argues that students are better prepared for real-world participation. For example, genre-based instruction focuses on the structure of language in particular contexts, such as occupational, academic or social, and the reasoning for that structure. Hyland (2007) reviews the principles which underlie genre-based language instruction, and outlines how this technique could be approached in a classroom, touching on planning around themes, sequencing learning, peer interaction, scaffolding, and assessment.

The Rational Cloze Procedure

One study found that the use of the rational cloze procedure (RCP), involving the deletion of vocabulary words from a passage of text and having students "fill in the blanks", led to significant gains in ESL students' receptive and productive vocabulary, and an increased ability to use the vocabulary in other contexts (Lee, 2008). The use of RCP in lessons was also shown to have the benefit of promoting teacher-student interaction.

Summary

All of the instructional methods described above have been recommended as best practice approaches though there is still some debate about the effectiveness of two of the approaches: corrective feedback and comprehensible input. Several instructional techniques are supported by research as beneficial when applied to ESL students. These include: integrated language and content-based teaching, balanced literacy, cognitive academic language proficiency, scaffolding, mentors, language experience approach, phonemic awareness, realia, total physical response and explicit instruction.

Update:

More recent literature highlights further promising practices in ESL education, with a great deal of attention on incorporating technology into ESL instruction. Technology is looked at as having a variety of benefits for learners, including providing a student-centered learning experience, engaging the learner's interest, and supplying opportunities for collaboration and interaction. Other particular instructional techniques which are shown to hold promise for the future of ESL education include music therapy, arts-based curricula, genre-based language instruction, and the rational cloze procedure.

LEADERSHIP

Roessingh's (2004) meta-analysis of 12 major studies on effective ESL programs indicates that the school principal plays a crucial role in supporting staff development, promoting collaborative work, allocating internal resources to high need areas and inviting parents to play an active role in their child's education. These aspects of leadership as well other aspects identified in the recent literature are discussed below.

Family and Community Involvement

Encouraging family and community involvement is identified as an important component of school leadership in many jurisdictions (e.g., British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999, 2004; Alberta Learning, 1996). Many researchers and scholars have identified the importance of involving parents of ESL students in their children's school activities (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Boothe, 2000; Hardwick & Frideres, 2004; Rosberg, 1995; Villareal, 1999; Wei & Zhou, 2003). This includes ensuring that all school communication is accessible to language minority parents (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Boothe, 2000), enhanced regular contact between teachers and language minority parents (August &

Pease-Alvarez, 1996, Coltrane, 2003; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998; Miller & Endo, 2004; Shore, 2004), and involving community members as volunteers (Boothe, 2000).

Update:

Barriers to parent involvement have been identified previously in the literature (Kauffman, Perry & Prentiss, 2001). Such barriers include: lack of time due to child-rearing or work obligations, parents experiencing discrimination in their own schooling histories, economic stress, language barriers, cultural attitudes about authority, preferred styles of communication, and attitudes and assumptions of school personnel (e.g., school personnel may think parents are apathetic).

Various authors have found a strong correlation between parent involvement and students' scholastic achievement (Lareau, 1989; Epstein & Sanders, 2000), and because of this, suggestions have been made to include diverse activities at home or in schools to help parents engage in children's schooling (Kauffman, Perry & Prentiss, 2001). Epstein & Dauber (1991) have advised schools to help parents build conditions for learning at home, understand communications from school, become productive volunteers, share responsibilities in their children's learning curriculum at home, and include their voices in decisions that affect the school and their children. Other recommendations (Pecoraro & Phommasouvanh, 1992) for greater parent involvement include:

Building on the culture and experiences that new immigrant parents bring to Canada:

- ➢ Building on the culture and experiences that new immigrant parents bring to Canada
- ➢ Building bridges between new immigrant parents' experiences in their new and native countries
- ➢ Helping parents to perceive themselves as teachers of their children (in partnership with teachers at school)

Further, the school should hire bilingual administration and teaching staff, provide cultural awareness training for teachers and principals, make available translation services for written communication going home, make available translation services for verbal communication in formal and informal meetings of parents and school personnel, and integrate bilingual and multicultural materials in regular classroom instruction (Kauffman, Perry & Prentiss, 2001). Schools should also provide parents with explicit responsibilities to support their children (Epstein, 1995), and encourage parents to write personal histories for their children to read (Eccles, Kirton & Xiong, 1994).

In a recent study, Staff Peterson & Ladky (2007) identified that teachers need to be aware of parents' perceptions of authority and the role of their first language as a tool for success in their children's literacy. In their study, Staff Peterson & Ladky noted several successful strategies aimed at increasing parent involvement:

- ➢ Teachers took professional development courses (three 80-hour non-credit courses)
- ➢ The school board hired translators (or had bilingual teachers)
- ➢ Administrators and support staff acted as translators and encouraged parents to read and write to their children in their native language
- ➢ The school used dual language books and encouraged parents to talk about their jobs and daily lives, and tell stories to serve as models of readers and writers

> ➢ Parents were invited to attend monthly parent nights of student performances and teacher presentations about literacy programs
> ➢ Homework was assigned which encouraged ESL students to use English and their mother tongue in meaningful communication contexts
> ➢ Parents were made to feel welcome in the school

A Canadian study examined communication between parents of Chinese immigrant students and high school ESL teachers in a Parents Night (PN) event organized to increase understanding of a particular ESL program. Research found that the PN is a highly appropriate forum to discuss the aims of an ESL program with new parents but not to negotiate conflict with experienced parents who want their child to exit the program (Guo & Mohan, 2008). A school-level ESL parent committee can help to mediate between parents and ESL teachers. The author also suggests that to raise the high school completion rate of ESL students, a whole school support policy is required, along with bilingual education, credit for ESL courses, and changes in teacher education programs.

In their study of principals, teachers, and immigrant parents in elementary schools in Ontario, Ladky & Peterson (2008) identified strategies that were successful in formal and informal parent involvement. These included strategies to increase parents' English fluency and help to increase parents' comfort level with system expectations through:

> ➢ Communication through notes from school (newsletters)
> ➢ Increased opportunities for exchanges with teachers (e.g., signing homework, open-door policy)
> ➢ Providing ESL classes for parents in the evening
> ➢ Culture night
> ➢ School BBQ

Formal parent involvement strategies suggested include: use of translators at parent teacher conferences, and having ESL students themselves lead the conferences.

Opportunities for First Language Development

Encouraging and providing opportunities for L1 use is recognized as a key leadership strategy in many jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta Learning, 1996, 2002; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999; 2004; Donaldson, 2000). For some time, authors have suggested that attitudes of public and school officials toward use of L1 should go beyond tolerance to encouragement (e.g., August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996). Primary language use has been described as a central pillar that supports literacy development across instructional approaches for English learners (Dalton, 1998). It has been recommended that schools actively promote clubs and activities that are aimed at strengthening skills in their ESL students' first languages (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Bankston & Zhou, 1995), that ESL students should be encouraged to use their first language whenever necessary (e.g., Nichols, Rupley, & Webb-Johnson, 2000; August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996), that L1 development at home or in the community be supported and encouraged (Miller & Endo, 2004; Rosberg, 1995; Shore, 2004), and, if feasible, that schools with large numbers of ethnic-group members offer instruction in L1 (Bankston & Zhou, 1995).

Update:

Authors continue to identify strategies for first language development. For example, Salazar (2008) supports advanced placement classes in L1 (in the author's case, Spanish), extracurricular opportunities to acknowledge the value of first language, and opportunities to engage with and build on first language skills.

Support

ESL students in mainstream classrooms require structured support in the form of teaching assistants, aides, or volunteers to help them cope with the language demands of learning in the school context (Alberta Learning, 1996). It is also recommend that schools are flexible in their use of instructional time and expand the time when needed (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996), and that continued ESL support in the form of monitoring and resource-room support programs is provided even after students are considered fully integrated (Watt et al., 1996). Schools are expected to facilitate access to resources that support effective implementation of ESL services in many jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta Learning, 1996; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2004; ESL Task Force, 2000).

Update:

There is support in the literature for teaching English in both English and native languages. For example, existing evidence points to bilingual strategies that teach reading in the native language and English at different times of the day (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). In their study on teachers' perspectives, Lee & Oxelson (2006) found that the nature of teacher training and personal experiences with languages other than English significantly affect teacher attitudes toward heritage language maintenance and bilingualism. Teachers who did not receive training as language educators expressed negative or indifferent attitudes toward heritage language maintenance and did not see a role for themselves and schools in heritage language maintenance efforts. The study highlighted the need for all educators to better understand the critical role and functions of heritage languages in personal, academic, and social trajectories of linguistic minority students.

In their study of junior and senior high Francophone[10] students living in Saskatchewan, Gaudet & Clement (2005) found that the maintenance of contact and support was beneficial for in-group cultural maintenance, intra-group harmony via the social support network, and personal adjustment. Greater involvement with the Francophone group directly related to a greater Francophone identity and a lesser Anglophone identity. Francophone involvement also related to higher levels of Francophone support, which was positively associated with a greater Francophone identity and subsequently to greater self-esteem. More confidence speaking English was also associated with an elevated sense of self-esteem. These results imply that community-based resources help language learners maintain identity and well-being.

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[10] In Canada, the term francophone typically refers to "a French-speaking person. Statistics Canada uses the term francophone to mean someone whose mother tongue is French and who still speaks French" (Canada Online, 2009).

Karanja (2007) looks at support for ESL students who attend high schools in small Canadian cities where they may receive limited services and support by school personnel. Improved support requires adequate and stable funding to increase ESL support time, hire teachers' aides, and reduce the number of students per teacher. Supportive school administrators and collaboration among ESL and mainstream teachers, parents, and society can foster acceptance of diversity. Strategies to initiate and foster interaction among ESL students include implementing a buddy system for psychological and social comfort, peer tutoring/counseling, participation in extracurricular activities, and creating a positive classroom and school atmosphere for ESL students.

In the view of educators who work with ESL students (in Idaho, USA), Batt (2008) suggests that the following are valuable goals:

1. Hiring increased numbers of qualified teachers with language-teaching skills
2. Retaining qualified ESL teachers
3. Hiring interpreters and clerical assistants for ESL teachers
4. Dialogue between professionals in schools and teacher education programs to develop appropriate pre-service teacher programs and at least one course across all content areas about ESL
5. Including diversity coursework in all teacher preparation programs
6. Requiring pre-service teachers to study a new language to build empathy for ESL students, and familiarity with new language acquisition
7. Providing PD to teachers to shore up the deficiency in ESL expertise (priorities included ESL methods, sheltered instruction, and L1 and L2 literacy methods)
8. Including the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol developed by Echevarria, Vogt & Short (2004) in an undergrad course
9. Creating an ESL consulting position

Collaboration

Rather than using a single model for all students, it is a common recommendation in the literature that teachers adjust curriculum instruction to meet the needs of individual students (e.g., McLaughlin & McCleod, 1996). In order to accomplish this, a collaborative team approach among mainstream teachers of ESL students, ESL teachers, and the guidance department is recommended (Roessingh & Kover, 2002; O' Byrne, 2001). Use of parent and community resources to provide L1 support is also recommended (Coltrane, 2003). (This collaborative process is identified as an important component of school leadership in many jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta Learning, 1996, 2002; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2004; ESL Task Force, 2000).

Update:

Similar concepts are discussed under the *Program Delivery Models* and *Teaching Methods* sections presented earlier.

Reception

A well-planned orientation of ESL students and their parents or guardians is viewed as a very important step in creating a positive learning environment (Alberta Learning, 1996). It is recommended that members of the community, multicultural and home liaison workers, bilingual students, teachers, and members of the Parent's Advisory Council be involved in welcoming the new ESL families (Alberta Learning, 1996). Former language-minority students indicate that a welcoming environment is critical to the success of language-minority students (Thompson, 2000).
Update:

See the discussion on *Newcomer Programs* presented earlier for further details in this area.

Diversity Sensitivity

Researchers have identified a school culture that is supportive of diversity as an important characteristic of schools with effective ESL or bilingual programs (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996). Aspects of diversity sensitivity include fostering a respectful environment, valuing native languages and cultures, and challenging prejudice and discrimination (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Boothe, 2000; Villarreal, 1999). Promoting an environment that values diversity, bridges culture, and works to eliminate discrimination and racism is identified as an important element of school leadership (e.g., Alberta Learning, 1996; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999, 2004).

Update:

In their Spanish/English two-way immersion program[11] involving Latino and Anglo students in the USA, Bearse & de Jong (2008) found that both Latino and Anglo students had positive experiences with the program, and that they developed friendships within and across ethnic/racial groups. Students valued the opportunity to develop bilingual skills and both Latino and Anglo students agreed that bilingualism is important for the economic benefits of a well-paying job after college. However, on the value of Spanish the views of the two groups differed. Anglo students associated learning Spanish with college entry or job opportunity, whereas Latino students emphasized the importance of Spanish to their cultural identity (staying true to their roots and family).

As mentioned in *Teaching Methods*, one activity identified in the literature had students use multimedia technology to share stories about their own culture and experiences (Peng, Fitzgerald & Park, 2006). The multimedia stories the children shared allowed them to honor their own culture and become educated about others'.

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[11] A two-way immersion program is a bilingual program that integrates English speakers and native speakers of a minority language, uses both languages for instruction, and aims for high levels of bilingualism and bi-literacy, grade-level achievement and development of positive cross-cultural attitudes (Bearse & de Jong, 2008).

Professional Development

Researchers have identified professional development opportunities for teachers as necessary to meet the demands of working with ESL students (e.g., August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; MacKay, 2002). These opportunities should encourage reflection on attitudes about language and culture, and explicit instruction on how teachers can address the needs of language minority students (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996).

A recent review indicated that a characteristic of almost all effective ESL programs was the provision of extensive professional development and follow-up assistance to teachers (Fashola et al., 1997). It has also been found that the more pre-service and in-service sessions teachers are exposed to in foreign language courses, courses in multicultural education, ESL training, and work with culturally diverse ESL students, the more positive teachers are about working with ESL students (Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Update:

Recent literature in this area focuses on the following areas: importance of professional development, opportunities for professional development, factors supporting successful professional development, teacher education/professional development, and policy.

Importance of Professional Development

Research continues to identify the importance of professional development for ESL. In their study of a large white, upper middle class high school in an Alaska suburb, Coulter & Smith (2006) confirmed the findings of earlier studies (e.g., Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Olsen, 1994; 1996; 1997) which found that teachers with little or no background in teaching academic content to ELLs were assigned large numbers of ELLs, ELLs were offered sparse coverage of academic courses, even those ELLs with conversational proficiency in English were socially isolated from English speakers, programs for ELLs were not considered part of the school community, there was little or no site leadership for ELL, and there were no additional support mechanisms for ELLs and their parents. Coulter & Smith called for a restructuring of high schools that reflected eight recommendations made by Lucas et al. as early as 1990: 1) respect for students' languages and cultures, 2) teachers' high expectations of students, 3) language minorities as a leadership priority, 4) staff development, 5) language-minority specific courses, 6) counseling, 7) parent involvement, and 8) committed staff.

Lucas (2000) identified similar priorities for principals and administrators to facilitate success for ELLs:

1. Encourage and support teachers and others to learn about students and their communities
2. Cultivate relationships with students and families
3. Provide information about the school system
4. Build collaborative relationships with other agencies that serve students
5. Support professional development to build knowledge of teachers of ELL
6. Facilitate and participate in collaboration to bring about educational change

More recent research (e.g., Mantero & McVicker, 2006) highlights that college coursework and teachers' professional development experiences influence teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards second language learners. For example, Mantero et al. found that teachers with six to 10 years of teaching experience had a more positive perception of ELL students than other teachers. In addition, the more undergraduate hours of teacher preparation in ELL, the more positive teacher perceptions of ELL students. For mainstream teachers, the more graduate credit hours taken in courses dealing with language minority students, the more positive their perception of ELL students. Finally, the more staff development for both mainstream and ELL teachers, the more positive the attitudes (this effect was greatest for ELL teachers).

Teacher leaders for ESL have been identified as those who (Salazar, 2008):

1. Implement curriculum, instruction and assessment practices that foster equity, access and social justice
2. Engage in praxis or critical reflection and action in order to nurture critical consciousness for teachers, students, and parents
3. Identify and navigate challenges incorporating humanizing practices into curriculum, instruction, and assessment
4. Challenge the role of institutions and educators in maintaining an equitable system
5. Act on the knowledge of how to impact education policy at all levels
6. Advocate for transformational and revolutionary approaches to improve the education of culturally and linguistically diverse learners

Other reasons to advocate for teacher professional development are:

➢ For teachers to recognize prejudice among students in ESL classrooms (Stuart, 2005)
➢ To identify and link quality instructional strategies to student achievement[12]
➢ To ensure that ESL policies are implemented at the classroom level by teachers (de Jong, March 2008)
➢ To educate teachers and their students on world cultures to promote genuine linguistic/cultural awareness and international understanding (Nault, 2006) (study results indicated that teachers, regardless of experience, needed strong efficacy beliefs and organizational support to make the best use of the knowledge and skills they acquire from professional development)
➢ To help teachers develop skills of collaboration and negotiation to facilitate cross-disciplinary conversations between ESL teachers and mainstream teachers (Arkoudis, 2006)

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[12] Baker, Gersten, Haager, Dingle, and Goldenberg (2005) examined the validation of a classroom observation measure (English Language Learner Classroom Observation Instrument; Baker, Gersten, Goldenberg, Graves & Haager, 1999) for use with English Language Learners to generate overall ratings of instructional quality. The study focused on examining criterion-related validity; that is, how well the measure of observed reading instruction predicted reading growth for ELLs. Study participants included 14 first-grade teachers in four California schools. The researchers found that there may be four to six factors that are related to accelerated reading growth. Assessing teachers' instruction by these factors would help to identify what teacher training and/or teacher professional development is required.

Professional Development Opportunities

An example of a professional development opportunity which is explored in the literature is the ProfessorsPlus distance education program (BEEDE-Bilingual/ESL Endorsement Through Distance Education program) offered through Brigham Young University for teachers of ESL learners. Components of the program model sociocultural pedagogy in attempting to prepare teachers to work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners in their regular classrooms (Teemant, Smith, Pinnegar & Egan, 2005). The program includes six college-level courses and a practicum. The design goals for the program include providing active, technology-supported distance learning experiences, nurturing reflective teachers, and immersing participants in exemplary pedagogy, content, technology, and assessment. One component of the course involves teachers keeping portfolios of authentic examples of teacher and student work.

Factors Supporting Successful Professional Development

One study looked at the impact of professional development programs for elementary ESL teachers on their classroom practice and on the way that teacher efficacy and organizational support at the school level relate to this process by interacting with years of teaching experience (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007). Results revealed that teacher efficacy and organizational support significantly predict the level of professional development impact without interacting with years of teaching experience.

Teacher Education/Professional Development

Much literature underscores the importance of identifying and modifying pre-service teachers' beliefs about minority children as part of teacher preparation programs. In his study of pre-service teachers, Griego (2002) identified common misperceptions related to the time it takes ESL students to learn a second language and the level of proficiency they need in English in order to succeed academically. Marx (2000) found that Hispanic pre-service teachers had higher expectations of their Hispanic tutees than white tutees. Further, Hispanic pre-service teachers had a better understanding of their tutees' academic, social and language circumstances, and a better understanding of the differences between second language skill and intellectual ability (as compared to white pre-service teachers). Relatedly, Youngs and Youngs (2001) identified predictors of mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ELL students: general educational experiences, ELL training, personal experience with foreign cultures, ELL student contact, and demographic characteristics. Female teachers were more likely to have positive attitudes towards ELL students if they had a college course in a foreign language, a college course in multicultural education, staff development training in ELL, or the experience of living outside the USA.

de Jong & Harper (2005) identified that more than good teaching practices are required to effectively teach ESL students. Teachers need to acquire specific knowledge and skills related to language and culture (process, medium and goals); the process of second language acquisition and acculturation; an understanding of how bilingual processes are manifested in ELL's oral and literacy development and how they can build on students' L1 responses; and an understanding of how expectations and opportunities for learning are mediated through culturally-based assumptions regarding classroom expectations and literacy that may not be shared by all students.

Harper, de Jong & Platt (2008) emphasize the importance of differentiated instruction for ESLs. Their recommendation for local policies and assessment requirements largely relate to teacher education and preparation. According to the authors, requirements need to be:

1. Grounded in research on bilingualism and second language acquisition
2. Explicitly recognize ESL and bilingual education as legitimate content areas that carry requirements for professional teacher preparation
3. Implement the requirements for highly qualified teachers sensibly and flexibly
4. Acknowledge the professional expertise of teachers

In their Ontario-based study, Varghese & Jenkins (2005) identify supports for teacher professional development:

➢ Identify key stakeholders and meet with them frequently
➢ Convince school boards of the longer-term benefit to language minority students
➢ An advocate with the power to make change or a teacher/tutor with persuasive but non-threatening interaction skills can be a powerful catalyst for change
➢ Engage teachers in an action research project to retain their interest once trained
➢ Design and implement a plan to begin the conversation about inclusion of second-language acquisition in teacher preparation programs
➢ Enable future ESL teachers to be change agents or leaders (to be action researchers)

In his study of a school-based professional development initiative in an English-medium school in Asia, which focused on developing collaborative relationships between ESL and content/classroom teachers in a large culturally and linguistically diverse elementary school, Davison (2006) indicates that collaborating teachers may benefit from more action-oriented teacher research with built-in opportunities for critical reflection and discussion of different views and perceptions of the nature of learning and teaching. The author supports the notion of increased discourse-based studies of collaborative classrooms and of team planning conversations.

In her study on humanizing practices in ESL, Salazar (2008) suggests that ongoing professional development is needed on:

1. Integrating heritage language into the classroom in strategic ways to further English language development
2. Supporting heritage language development in official and unofficial school spaces
3. Communicating that heritage languages have tremendous value in social and academic contexts
4. Infusing heritage cultures into the curriculum beyond surface features
5. Strengthening students' ethnic and linguistic identification to support bilingualism, biculturalism, multilingualism, and multiculturalism
6. Creating permeable curricula that incorporate contributions of students, their families and communities
7. Building trusting and caring relationships with students and parents
8. Fostering inclusive attitudes of familial contributions
9. Reflecting the inclusion of students' heritage languages and cultures in the material culture of ESL classrooms, mainstream classrooms and the entire school

Policy

Policy makers and administrators are challenged with ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity to develop the knowledge base to teach a culturally and linguistically diverse student population (Cummins, 2001). To encourage policy development around multiliteracies, Cummins (2006) suggests that the following questions be addressed at multiple levels:

1. What image of the student is constructed by the language or literacy policy of the school?
2. Do our language and literacy practices construct an image of the student as intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented?
3. Does our pedagogy acknowledge and build on the cultural and linguistic capital (prior knowledge) of students and communities?
4. What messages are we sending, intentionally or inadvertently, to students and communities about the value of their home language and culture?
5. To what extent are we enabling all students to engage cognitively and invest their identities in learning?
6. How can we harness technology to amplify student voice and promote sustained literacy engagement?

Also related to broad policy development, Van Ngo (2007) identifies a common vision and six pillars of effective ESL education.

Vision for ESL students:

➤ Acquisition of academic language proficiency
➤ Equitable educational outcomes
➤ Increased sense of empowerment and belonging
➤ Full realization of potential
➤ Overall positive integration and contribution to Canadian society

The six pillars of effective ESL education include:

1. Comprehensive programming
2. Responsive funding allocation
3. Cultural competence
4. Networking, collaboration and coordination
5. Capacity-building and advocacy
6. Effective leadership

Summary

School leadership promoting and facilitating ESL family involvement in school activities, supporting cultural diversity, promoting interaction and involvement with community- based services, ensuring an environment for first language support, developing an orientation process for ESL newcomer students and their families, and providing access to range of ESL supports are recognized as best practices to ensure a positive and supportive environment for ESL students. In addition, it is recognized that staff require professional

development, follow-up assistance, and collaborative work opportunities to deliver effective ESL programming.

Update:

The recent literature provides a number of recommendations and promising practices in areas such as family and community involvement, providing support to ESL students, and teacher professional development. In terms of teacher professional development, research makes a case for properly training teachers for ESL education by noting the extent to which teachers are biased by their own preferences and reference points when forming beliefs about minority children.

DIAGNOSIS AND ASSESSMENT

Importance of Assessment

English language proficiency at entry into the school system is viewed as an important benchmark for educational planning and the development of an English Language Program (ELP) at the school level (Cummins & Watt, 1997). While it is recognized that no assessment process is perfect, it is also recognized that it is extremely important that common assessments be used within a school or jurisdiction so that assessors can be trained to conduct assessments in a consistent manner (Cummins & Watt, 1997). It is further recognized that assessments of ESL students should include standardized reporting methods (Cummins & Watt, 1997).

There is general agreement that assessment should include both content knowledge and language proficiency (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996, Cummins & Watt , 1997; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998). Various authors recommend that proficiency levels should include assessment of vocabulary recall, conversational output, oral reading and written language ability (e.g., Cummins and Watt, 1997; Edmonton Catholic Schools, 2003; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999, Calgary Board of Education, 2004; Edmonton Catholic Schools, 2003; Calgary Board of Education, 2004). In addition, it has been suggested that efforts be made to assess students in their dominant language, usually their first language (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Hargett, 1998; Villarreal, 1999, McCollum, 1999).

Update:

Ragan & Lesaux (2006) emphasize that without a long-term system to monitor the academic achievement of English Language Learner (ELL) students, there is no effective way to determine the success of ELL programs and whether ELL students will thrive in mainstream classrooms. In their examination of entry and exit criteria used to make placement decisions for ELL students, in 10 states and 10 districts in the USA, the authors found that a variety of entry and exit criteria were used and that they were overly broad, focusing primarily on language proficiency. There was minimal emphasis on academic achievement or concern about the relationship between oral language proficiency and academic achievement. Only 4 of 10 states included measures of ELLs' academic achievement before making decisions about placement. Only California required the academic achievement of ELLs to be compared to that of native English speakers on standardized tests in every subject area.

ELL classrooms tended to focus on teaching English language first before academic content and the authors felt that this has negative ramifications for ELL students' entry into mainstream classrooms. For example, at the primary level, measures of phonological processing ability were more strongly related to word reading development than measures of oral language proficiency such as vocabulary and grammatical sensitivity. As well, measures of oral language proficiency have low sensitivity to identifying ELLs who have reading disabilities. The authors concluded that entrance and exit criteria for ELL programs should include multiple sources of information, including performance on English language proficiency and academic achievement tests and teacher ratings. The authors recommend longitudinal studies that track academic achievement of language minority learners and establish which measures are most predictive of later success in mainstream classes.

Purpose of Assessment

Researchers recommend that the purpose of the assessment should be identified and that the appropriate assessment be selected based on that purpose (Hargett, 1998; Madden & Taylor, 2001). For example, if the school needs to know if a student can participate in the oral language of a mainstream classroom, the assessment task should simulate the oral language used in that context. If the school needs to know if a student's academic skills are at or near grade level in the student's first language then an assessment in L1 using grade level standards is required (Hargett, 1998). Teachers should also communicate the purpose of assessment to students (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996).

Update:

Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins & Scarcella (2007) suggest that in order to identify English Language Learners who require additional instructional support, and to monitor their reading progress over time, formative assessments using English language measures of phonological processing, letter knowledge, and word and text reading should be used. In their analysis of long-term trend data among Hispanics and Whites in the USA (using National Assessment of Educational Progress data), the authors identified improvements in achievement gaps between Hispanics and Whites in reading for nine and 17 year olds, but not for 13 year olds.

Training in Assessment[13]

Research suggests that teachers tend to over-estimate English language competence of ESL students, particularly those who have acquired basic conversational skills (Harold, 1993). Because scoring on many language proficiency tests rely on the examiner's personal judgment in scoring, it is important that the scoring protocols and procedures are followed as rigorously as possible so to minimize bias (Hargett, 1998).

Teachers require instruction and resources to improve their assessment skills which should include an understanding of the purpose of proficiency assessments (August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996), an understanding of the implications of assessment results (Hargett, 1998) and accurate assessment (Boothe, 2000). It has also been recommended that whenever

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[13] For information on assessment resources in Alberta, see Alberta Education (c2008).

possible, teachers should include ESL specialists in the assessment process (Boothe, 2000; Hargett, 1998).

Update:

Cohen's (2006) review of the literature on test-taking strategies as a way of understanding test validity revealed growing consensus on the importance of meta-cognitive strategies in test taking as well as the need for more fine-tuning as to their nature. A more clear distinction is needed between strategies for language versus strategies for responding to the test question since the former is focused on making sense out of language material and the latter is focused on getting the right answer. Verbal reports are also emerging as a tool in understanding what tests actually measure. Also emerging is that more proficient language learners are better able to utilize test-taking strategies to their advantage than are less proficient students. Cohen recommends that test constructors need to know what strategies students are using to respond to the question to assess the extent to which the test is measuring what it was intended to assess. Cohen recommends including a process-oriented study of respondents' test taking strategies when attempting to validate new tests—whether they are local, in-house measures or standardized tests such as the TOEFL.

Some research touches on the weaknesses of state-wide standardized testing. Jia, Eslami & Burlbaw (2006) studied perceptions of 13 teachers from a total of 9 elementary and middle schools in Texas. Teachers viewed state-mandated standardized testing negatively or of little value of ELLs. The authors suggest that state-wide standardized testing has overshadowed and distorted ESL teachers' use of classroom-based reading assessment in that teachers continue to teach to the test. This research revealed the need to provide classroom teachers with more support to develop their own quality assessment tools and practices without being influenced by other internal and external factors. The authors note that teachers' assessment work is complicated by the number of ESL students and the wide range of reading ability amongst students. Other factors include state-wide mandated tests, district/school decisions about assessment, time, quality of assessment materials, and parent involvement.

Llosa (2007) contends that it is possible for teachers to develop highly accurate assessments if the teacher-developed and the standardized tests are aligned to the same standards and mastery of those standards. Further, the author suggests that teachers can be good judges of students' overall ability for summative assessment, but they have less ability to consistently interpret and assess students' mastery of individual standards for formative purposes. Llosa's findings indicate opportunities for teacher professional development. Relatedly, Liu & Anderson (2008) have identified test design considerations for English language proficiency assessments using a modified Delphi approach with a panel of 33 experts. The authors have prepared a list of top 10 considerations for test designers.

As an alternative approach to assessment and teaching in general, Lee (2007) advocates for Assessment for Learning (AfL) which is a relatively new concept in ESL/EFL writing. AfL teachers need to integrate teaching, learning and assessment rather than focusing on assessment, per se. Lee also suggests that assessment should be an ongoing process and that teachers need to work collaboratively to review their writing instruction practices and plan a comprehensive program that takes into account interrelationships between teaching,

learning and assessment. AfL is often used interchangeably with formative assessment.
Principles that underlie effective AfL practices include:

1. Sharing learning goals with students
2. Helping students understand the standards they are working towards
3. Involving students in assessment
4. Teaching providing feedback that is helpful to students
5. Creating a classroom culture where mistakes are a natural part of learning and where everyone can improve

Multiple and Authentic Assessments

It is commonly recommended that assessments should make use of multiple measures in multiple contexts (Alcala, 2000; August & Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Hargett, 1998; Korkatsch-Grosko, 1998). Wintergerst (2003) and her colleagues suggest that multiple methods of language assessment are required given individual and cultural variations in learning style preferences. The systematic collection of student work measured against predetermined scoring criteria as is done with assessment portfolios (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996) has been described as a best practice when it comes to ongoing assessment of ESL students (Gomez, 2000). As part of the multiple assessment strategy, authentic assessments are highly recommended in the literature (Hakuta, 2001; Mantero, 2002; O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). These assessments require students to demonstrate skills and competencies that realistically represent problems and situations likely to be encountered in daily life (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996).

Update:

Researchers continue to explore and support the value of these assessments of English Language Learners. For example, Miller-Whitehead (2005) suggests using a "student gain score, growth score, or value-added score" (a method to measure how much knowledge students have gained) to compare the growth of ESL students to students whose L1 is English. In Tennessee, students' value-added scores were computed from their yearly scores on the California Test of Basic Skills (or its newer version the TerraNova), a norm-referenced test. Miller-Whitehead suggests that TOEFL, or a norm-referenced test like it, could also be used to measure growth in ESL students. In addition, Milnes & Cheng (2008) examined how teachers of mainstream classes assess the written work of ESL students in a private Ontario high school. Teachers used different strategies in assessing the written work of ESL versus non-ESL students using achievement and non-achievement factors. Findings suggest a need for professional development of mainstream teachers in assessment of ESL students' written work.

Alternative Assessments

Many educators recognize that alternative assessments, such as those that can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the classroom, are an important means of understanding an ESL student's academic and linguistic development (Hamayan, 1995; Tannenbaum, 1996). The main goal is to gather evidence on how students are completing school-based tasks (Huerta-Macais, 1995). Suggestions for alternative assessment include

teachers incorporating continuous observation and collection of work samples (Alcala, 2000; Tannenbaum, 1996), and the use of nonverbal assessment strategies (Tannenbaum, 1996).

Update:

Recent research continues to present alternative assessment strategies. Little (2005) advocates for use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in a learner-centered approach to language teaching and assessment. The ELP includes a:

1. Language passport which summarizes the owner's linguistic identity by recording L2 learned, formal language qualifications achieved, significant experiences of L2 use, and the learner's assessment of his/her current proficiency in L2
2. Language biography which sets language learning targets, monitors progress, plots the development of language learning skills and record and reflect on especially important language learning and cultural experiences
3. Dossier of selected work that in the owner's judgment best represents his/her L2 capacities and achievements

This strategy brings the assessment process closer to teaching and learning. Students also gain self-assessment skills.

Other research looks at the specific materials which may be well suited to teaching and assessment. Aitken (2006) has prepared an annotated list of materials to help teachers assess and teach ELLs through using children's literature and American History (1492-1900).

Changing the particular focus of assessment is also discussed in the literature. Canagarajah (2006) argues that using British/American English in international proficiency tests is less important than using instruments that feature assessment of social negotiation skills and that demonstrate pragmatic competence. Tests are needed that are interactive, collaborative and performative. Discrete item tests, particularly on grammar and vocabulary provide limited utility in contexts of assessing English as an international language.

Sensitive Assessment Measures

Researchers recommend selecting proficiency assessment instruments that are sufficiently sensitive to measure student progress rather than placing them in broad classification categories (August 2004; Hargett, 1998). Hargett (1998) provides a review of several of the more commonly -used assessment instruments and methods available and discusses the strengths and limitations of the various tests and approaches. Some of these instruments include Language Assessment Scales, Oral (LAS-O); Language Assessment Scales, Reading and Writing; Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey; IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Tests (IPT); and Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) Test.

Update:

Recent research takes issue with specific assessment techniques and their ability to measure ELL students' true abilities. Authors have looked at testing for reading comprehension, standardized testing, and selection into special education.

Reading Comprehension

August, Francis, Hsu, & Snow (2006) piloted a new measure of reading comprehension (DARC-Diagnostic Assessment of Reading Comprehension) that is designed to measure reading comprehension processes while minimizing decoding demands, and has the potential to reflect the central comprehension of second language learners more effectively than other measures. The DARC is feasible with use by kindergartens and yes-no answers reflect children's comprehension processing (text memory, text inferencing, background knowledge, and knowledge integration). The test also has potential to identify sources of comprehension difficulties for English only students who score poorly on more general measures. Further testing of the DARC among Grade 2 Spanish-speaking ELLs by Francis et al (2006) indicated that the DARC is less strongly related to word-level skills and more strongly related to measures of narrative language production and memory.
Research has also looked at how responses to items on reading proficiency tests may differ between students of different ethnicities, linguistic groups, or genders despite being seen as having equal ability. In one study, a researcher tested hypotheses about whether different items would elicit systematically different responses across groups (Abbott, 2007). The results provide evidence that test item design (e.g., top-down and bottom-up strategy items) can draw different responses from test takers based on sociocultural norms. The research implies that there should be a focus on balancing top-down and bottom-up strategy items so that a particular test does not favor one type of respondent over the other.

Standardized Testing

Related to the discussion of standardized testing in *Training in Assessment* above, Mahon (2006) found that the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) did not accurately measure academic performance of ELLs to the same degree as for English only or fluent English students. The author suggests using a measure of English proficiency as an indicator of testing readiness in English. Using this scenario, a student would take the CSAP only after reaching a certain cut-off score on the English proficiency measure. This would serve as an alternative to the 3-year time limit for deciding to test ELL students. Other options would include native language assessment, portfolio of academic progress or language-simplified tests in English.

Other research finds that accommodations may be helpful in standardized testing. Young, Cho, Ling, Cline, Steinberg & Stone (2008) examined construct validity of several standards-based assessments in math and science to 5th and 8th graders. All assessments were found to be essentially unidimensional for both native English speakers and ESL students. The use of glossaries and word lists as a testing accommodation was more effective in supporting 8th graders than 5th graders. Linguistically appropriate accommodations can be beneficial without changing the construct being measured.

Research has also looked at differences in how ESL students' writing is adjudicated (as compared to native English speakers) on standardized tests in Canada (Huang, 2008). Findings show that there are differences in rating variability and reliability between ESL and native English speakers: for example, the variance of ESL students' scores was larger. The results call into question the fairness of assessment techniques as applied to ESL students' writing.

Diagnosis of Learning Disabilities and Selection into Special Education

MacSwan & Rolstad (2006) argue that English language learner (ELL) language assessment policy and poor language tests partly account for ELLs' disproportionate representation in special education. Students with limited proficiency in their native language (L1) and English (L2) showed the highest rates of identification in special education categories. Two common tests used to identify oral proficiency (for Spanish) in L1 include the Language Assessment Scales–Oral (LAS-O) Espanol and the Idea Proficiency Test I-Oral (IPT) Spanish. The authors recommend changes in language testing policies and practices for ELLs, and abandoning routine assessment of oral native language ability of minority students. If a learning disability is suspected, the diagnosis should be carried out in an ELL's native language. They urge interviewing the parents of the child and analyzing actual speech samples in an interview format recorded for careful study by a linguistically trained and experienced practitioner.

Other research notes the relationship between ESL learners and students classified as having learning disabilities and adds that and most Latino students are classified as needing special education because of reading challenges (Al Otaiba, Petscher, Pappamihiel, Williams, Dyrlund & Connor, 2009). Given these trends, researchers looked at second and third grade Latino students and their oral reading fluency trajectories over time. Findings showed that oral reading fluency can help to distinguish between students with learning difficulties and those without, and may help to identify those students who may need added supports. However, because oral reading fluency may not show consistent patterns over time, the research recommends that a body of data for each student is studied prior to making recommendations regarding eligibility.

Also on the topic of diagnosis of reading disabilities, Lipka, Siegel & Vukovic (2005) conducted a review of research in Canada and found that three reading processes (phonological processing, syntactic awareness, and working memory) are different in ESL students with reading disabilities and average readers in first and second language groups. If this is the case, then the authors suggest that diagnosis of reading difficulties can be done in the same way for ESLs and native English-speaking students. Nevertheless, the authors suggest that assessment of ESLs should be done in both languages whenever feasible.

Summary

Many of the recommendations related to assessment of ESL students revolve around three main themes, choosing an appropriate assessment, using a wide variety of assessment techniques, and ensuring consistency in using the assessment selected. When it comes to choosing appropriate assessments best practice recommendations include ensuring assessments of vocabulary recall, conversational output, oral reading, and written language ability. Assessments should represent problems likely encountered in real world settings observational should be ongoing. Finally, it is recognized that many assessments rely on subjective interpretation and as a result training in confident application of assessments is required.

Update:

Recent research reflects the large amount of attention which has been focused on evaluating assessment methods, noting their weaknesses and proposing improvements. This concentration underscores the importance of assessment for a variety of outcomes, such as identifying students who might need additional support, and properly gauging student progress.

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