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AN EXAMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT FACTORS IN LEARNING SITUATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF ESL BY NON-SPECIALISTS

by

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An Examination of Significant Factors in Learning Situations

in the Delivery of ESL by Non-specialists

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors in learning situations in the successful delivery of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction by non-specialist teachers. This includes "regular" or "mainstream" classroom teachers. Professional and personal characteristics of these teachers were analyzed and compared to research concerning teachers' knowledge and beliefs, and images and conceptions of teaching. Their self-reported instructional practices and resources they employ were also examined. Another goal of the study was to make specific recommendations regarding in-service and resources for non-specialist teachers of ESL.

Five teachers in this study were identified by their school administrators through a reputational approach. The methodology then followed three phases: (1) completion of a questionnaire, (2) participation in a focus-group interview, and (3) completion of a needs survey.

Through an analysis of the data collected, the findings of this study reveal that:

- these teachers have gained their knowledge and developed their beliefs about ESL instruction through a myriad of both personal and professional experiences

- images of teaching from both their personal and professional experience figure prominently in their instruction

- overall, their approaches to instruction reflect the art/craft or eclectic conception of teaching. They tend to assess the needs of their ESL students and choose appropriate instructional strategies and resources as required.

- they believe that personal interaction with students is important for creating successful learning environments, establishing a positive rapport, and trust-building
- they are aware of the cultural backgrounds of their students and endeavour to make them feel comfortable, welcome, and valued in their new educational milieu
- in spite of their lack of training in ESL instruction, they genuinely enjoy their work with ESL students.

Various recommendations are made for in-service and resources for use by non-specialist teachers of ESL. This includes professional development sessions designed for non-specialists as well as the purchase and/or development of materials which are appropriate for the students' areas of interest as well as their ages and reading levels.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, an educator

who truly loved his work.

ERNEST WILLIAM JOYCE

August 9, 1912 - July 12, 1992

It is not what the teacher says that is important,

it is what he inspires his pupils to go ahead and do.

William E. Blatz (1966)

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to the five teachers who participated in this study: Arnold, Deborah, Elizabeth, Maria, and Susan. The teaching profession is fortunate to have them in its midst.

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I am deeply indebted to my family, friends, and colleagues for their continuous encouragement and their good humour over the course of this program. In particular, I would like to express my appreciation to my colleague, Tim Trivett, for his time and technical expertise in formatting this thesis.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

I begin this thesis with an explanation of why the subject of non-specialist teachers has been of on-going interest to me for many years. I have been in the teaching profession for fifteen years and have had the opportunity and good fortune to have worked with some master teachers in many curricular areas. I taught in the French Immersion program, at the Intermediate (Grades 6 and 7) level for nine years. The French Immersion program has existed in Canada only since 1968, and, therefore, is in many ways, still evolving. A small number of universities offer pre-service and in-service teacher development programs in this area. Since the inception of the program, most French Immersion teachers have had to develop, more or less, their own materials and curricula, and, generally, find their own way, without the advantage of specific training in French Immersion methodologies. These factors regarding the French Immersion program have been well-documented in various studies and theses (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1992; Collins, 1989; Day and Shapson, 1983, 1987; DeFrenza, 1990; Safty, 1991).

In spite of the above-mentioned struggles, many French Immersion teachers have managed to find ways to share ideas and create resources which have contributed to the success of this program. Many of these teachers, despite their lack of specific training, appear to experience much success with their students. Their students not only read, write, and speak French very well, but, more importantly, they display a great deal of enthusiasm for learning. These teachers seem to know how to motivate their students and keep them motivated, how to

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choose appropriate and meaningful strategies, and how to accurately assess students' progress, when to intervene as well as how to extend their students' learning.

The question for me in observing these colleagues was *how* they learned how to teach so well and influence their students in such a positive way. Was it simply through hard work and experience or are there personality factors which contribute to their success? Was it something innate?

As I became more deeply involved in my research for this thesis, an important personal revelation concerning successful, non-specialist teachers became apparent to me. My father had taught Industrial Arts for over twenty-two years before he retired in 1977. He achieved tremendous success in his profession. His students produced projects which were frequently highlighted in the local newspapers and which won various awards. My father was well-respected by his colleagues who frequently sought his advice concerning curricular planning, classroom strategies, and ideas for projects.

I attended school with him on occasion and recall that he had a very positive rapport with not only the students who were enrolled in his class, but also with students who were not. He also got along very well with his colleagues. After he retired, he would frequently receive telephone calls from former students. He had obviously made a significant contribution to their lives.

In my view, my father was a successful teacher, but he actually had no specific methodological training in this field, except for his former work as a carpenter and mason. He had only achieved a Grade 8 education and had taught for

twenty-two years on a "Permissive Licence". Again, the question is raised: What made his teaching successful?

In my present work as a Program Consultant for Modern Languages and Multicultural Programs, I frequently have the opportunity to work in ESL-related areas. It has become apparent that in the lower mainland area of British Columbia in particular, the arrival of non or limited English-speaking immigrants has caused the ESL population in schools to swell. Due to various reasons, mostly budgetary, fewer of these students are receiving instruction from ESL specialists. They are arriving in "regular" or "mainstream" classrooms where teachers untrained in specific ESL methodologies are working to teach students with varying levels of English proficiency. In addition, these teachers are working to assist their ESL students to cope with the academic and emotional challenges which accompany this situation.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the development of knowledge and the beliefs of five teachers identified as successful with ESL instruction, to outline their characteristics as well as the teaching methods they employ. I hope that the results may assist school districts in making decisions regarding program development, development and/or acquisition of appropriate resources, professional development programs, and above all, support for teachers who will continue to receive increasing numbers of ESL students in their classrooms.

Background to The Study

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the enrolment of ESL students in Canada. Cummins (1994) points out that "in an increasing number of urban centres in the United States and Canada, ESL children represent the majority

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school population" (p. 33). This national increase is reflected in the ESL enrolment statistics of the Lower Mainland area of British Columbia (see Table 1):

Table 1

Enrolment Statistics of ESL Students - Lower Mainland of British Columbia

	87/88	89/90	91/92	93/94
Vancouver	10,473	13,791	23,813	25,960
Burnaby	939	1,730	2,664	3,599
Richmond	324	1,362	3,406	8,686
Surrey	623	926	3,705	5,775
Provincial totals:	16,584	23,085	41,481	55,864

It is estimated that several hundred new students arrive each month throughout the year.

In Vancouver approximately 51% of students speak a language other than English at home.

(Source: British Columbia Ministry of Education - Social Equity Branch - 1994)

Schools in British Columbia receive funding from the provincial Ministry of Education to provide for the delivery of ESL instruction at the Elementary and Secondary levels. This instruction is often provided by ESL "specialist" teachers who can be either school-based or itinerant. There are various models of delivery in the province. The choice of delivery depends on decisions made at each school district, or even, school level. These include "pull-out" programs, "self-contained

or reception classes", and an "in-class support model" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1993).

Despite the instruction offered by ESL specialists, more and more "regular" or "mainstream" teachers are receiving students in their classes who have varying degrees of proficiency in English. Rigg and Allen (1989), referring to a study conducted by the international organization of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), state that "every classroom teacher at some time during his or her career, will have at least one student who speaks English as a second language" (p. vii).

Although classroom teachers in British Columbia have been teaching students from a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds for some time, this situation has recently become more evident in terms of publicity and numbers of students. This is being impacted by recent decisions about inclusivity and neighbourhood schools. These classroom teachers may also be called ESL teachers, but they are "non-specialists". In other words, they have "no training in how to deal with Limited English Proficient (LEP) students" (Penfield, 1987, p. 21). In regard to ESL students who attend "pull-out" classes, Cummins (1994) states that

> The withdrawal of students from the regular classroom may sometimes be necessary and appropriate in the early stages of learning, but it is not a viable option for the length of time that the student may need support in mastering the academic aspects of English...It is likely that *all* teachers in a school will be required to address the learning needs of second language students... (p. 41).

Genesee (1993) and Handscombe (1989) support the notion that all teachers share responsibility for language development of ESL students. Many researchers agree that the integration of second language learning with instruction in the content areas is both successful and pedagogically sound (Genesee, 1993; Levine,

1990; Met, 1994; Mohan, 1986). As Genesee (1993) puts it, "After all, the ultimate goal of schooling for language minority students is to provide them with an effective and comprehensive general education, not simply to teach them English" (p. 50).

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The central purpose of this study is to isolate for analysis and to examine a number of significant factors which are part of learning situations in the delivery of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction by successful non-specialist teachers. These teachers are sometimes referred to as regular classroom or "mainstream" teachers. The objectives of the study are suggested by the following questions:

1. How have non-specialist teachers of ESL gained their personal practical knowledge and beliefs regarding their instructional approaches in teaching ESL?

2. What role do "images" play in their daily instruction?

3. Does their practice reflect a particular "conception" of teaching?

4. Do they follow a particular methodology or program or are their pedagogical decisions based on their own judgement and assessment of students?

The notions of teacher knowledge and beliefs, and images and conceptions of teaching are interrelated in many ways, however, they are considered separately in this study. In-depth explanations of each notion will be provided in Chapter 2, the Literature Review. An additional goal of this study is to have the five teachers in

this study articulate their professional development needs in the area of ESL instruction and to suggest resources that would be of assistance to them.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 2 of this study, the Literature Review, outlines recent research concerning teacher knowledge and beliefs which contribute to decision-making processes. Specific reference is made to teachers' narratives which evoke images to guide teachers' practices and decision-making. Three conceptions of teaching are outlined: science/research, theory/values and art/craft. The influence of specific instructional methodologies is explored. The chapter concludes with research directly related to non-specialist teachers of ESL.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this study. Participants were identified as successful, non-specialist teachers of ESL by Elementary and Secondary administrators chosen at random. Ten teachers were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their teaching experience with ESL specifically. From the original ten teachers, five were selected to participate in a focus-group interview, and to complete a needs survey concerning in-service and resources. Chapter 3 also outlines the researcher's observations of the focus-group interview process as well as the limitations of this study.

Chapter 4 provides the results of this study by relating the data collected to research in the following areas:

1. Sources of Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs About Teaching ESL
2. Images of Teaching
3. Conceptions of Teaching
4. Practices and Resources

Chapter 5 begins by outlining characteristics of the teacher-participants. This is followed by a return to the original questions of the study, a listing of specific recommendations by the teachers regarding in-service and resources for teaching ESL, and suggestions for further research. The chapter concludes with some observations by the teacher-participants concerning their success in teaching ESL.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This research review provides the context for the central purpose of this thesis, which is to examine a number of significant contributing factors in the delivery of ESL instruction by successful non-specialist teachers. The goal of this study is not to create a comparative study of teacher knowledge and instructional approaches of specialist and non-specialist teachers of ESL, nor is it intended to be a a study of the effectiveness of the approaches of regular classroom teachers who are teaching ESL. The literature the author has chosen to review relates directly to theories of the development of knowledge, what images and methodologies influence their instructional decisions, and if their approaches reflect a particular conception of teaching. An assumption in this study is that these teachers do have a rich personal practical knowledge. One aim of this study is to determine how they have acquired that knowledge.

This chapter is organized to directly link the questions posed in the study to the recent pertinent literature. Those questions are as follows:

1. How have non-specialist teachers of ESL gained their personal practical knowledge and beliefs regarding their instructional approaches in teaching ESL?

2. What role do "images" play in their daily instruction?

3. Does their practice reflect a particular "conception" of teaching?

4. Do they follow a particular methodology or program or are their pedagogical decisions based on their own judgement and assessment of the students?

1. **How have non-specialist teachers of ESL gained their personal practical knowledge, and what beliefs influence their overall instructional approaches in teaching ESL?**

Generally, research shows that teachers' knowledge is developed through a myriad of implicit factors and outside influences. The notions of "practical knowledge" and "personal practical knowledge" have been examined by various researchers. They play a significant role in this present study as the sources of the personal practical knowledge of the teacher-participants is one focus of inquiry.

Elbaz (1981) provides a working conception of teachers' practical knowledge in a case study of a teacher of Secondary English:

> While teachers' knowledge may be largely unarticulated, teachers do have a broad range of knowledge which guides their work; knowledge of subject matter; of classroom organization and instructional techniques; of the structuring of learning experiences and curriculum content; of students' needs, abilities, and interests; of the social framework of the school and its surrounding community; and of their own strengths and shortcomings as teachers (p. 47).

She points out, however, that this does not "constitute an empirical claim about the actual competence of teachers nor is it a judgment about the worth of their knowledge", but it is a "proposal that we begin to look at the work of teaching as the exercise of a particular kind of knowledge" (p. 47). Elbaz states that teachers encounter many problems and challenges in their daily work and that their various sources of knowledge are necessary in order to help them work efficiently.

The notion of practical knowledge is elaborated by Clandinin (1985) in her definition of "personal" practical knowledge:

> Personal practical knowledge is knowledge which is imbued with all experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and

understood in terms of, a person's experiential history, both professional and personal (p. 362).

Liston and Zeichner (1991) contrast what they refer to as a "laudatory" view of teacher knowledge as outlined by various researchers (Elbaz 1981, 1983; Clandinin, 1985; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) and another view termed "dismal". In the "dismal" view (attributed to Lortie's (1975) and Jackson's (1968) studies, teachers are characterized as lacking in "technical expertise and professional knowledge" (p. 62). The dismal view also infers that the culture of teaching is "insular, reliant on whim, and immune to thoughtful reflection" (p. 62). Conversely, the "laudatory" view of teacher knowledge emphasizes that "teachers' practical and personal knowledge is rich, substantial, and reliable" (p. 62). These two clearly dichotomous views are perhaps oversimplified as the development of teacher knowledge is complex and the data from this study may not fit neatly into either one

Various studies have been conducted concerning teachers' beliefs and their influences on instructional approaches and decision-making. As a result of their research, Kindsvatter, Willen and Ishler (1987) established a list of six major influences contributing to the development of language teachers' beliefs systems:

1. Their own experience as language learners.
2. Experience of what works best.
3. Established practice.
4. Personality factors.
5. Educationally based or research-based principles.
6. Principles derived from an approach or method. (in Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p. 30-31)

In her work regarding teacher development programs and teaching as a profession, Pennington (1990) emphasizes the importance of teachers' understanding of their beliefs and attitudes about themselves and their students.

> Exercises to uncover the attitudes that the prospective teacher holds about learning and about learning and about teaching can capitalize on the candidate's prior experience as a student and use this experience as a starting point for examining beliefs about what constitutes ideal classroom conditions (in Richards and Nunan, 1990, p. 135).

She argues that effective teaching is based on two kinds of knowledge, "knowledge of the students and knowledge of oneself" (p. 135). From her study of nine post-secondary ESL teachers, Smith (1991) concludes that

> Planning decisions are primarily guided by teacher beliefs and practical knowledge and informed by a variety of factors, including experiential knowledge of the type of students enrolled in the programme and institutional course objectives (p. 254).

She emphasizes, however, that this does not imply that teachers do not consider theory when planning for instruction.

> What was particularly clear, however, was the significant impact that previous experiences as a teacher (and to a certain extent as a learner), and personally held beliefs about the nature of second language learning and teaching, had on what theoretical ideas these teachers adopted, modified and/or rejected for their planning and teaching decisions (p. 252).

This notion of the importance of past experiences as outlined by Kindsvatter et al. and Pennington is further explored in Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) discussion of "images" of teaching in the next section of this review. The use of teachers' narratives figures prominently in this present study. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) define "narrative" as the "study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future" (p. 24). It is hoped that through the process of

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narratives of experience, the teacher-participants will make explicit their beliefs and understandings about teaching ESL.

Shavelson and Stern's (1981) study of teachers' pedagogical decisions concludes that instructional decisions are formed through knowledge about students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral states. As part of the inquiry into the development of teachers' knowledge, this present study attempts to determine if mainstream teachers endeavour to gain knowledge or awareness of the cultural backgrounds of their ESL students and if this information is integral to their instructional decision-making. It is important to examine this aspect of teacher knowledge to determine how it might help teachers understand the challenges their ESL students face in adapting to a new educational system and a new language.

In his studies of language teacher education, Freeman (1989) states that language teaching is a "decision-making process based on four constituents: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness" (p. 27), of which awareness is the "superordinate constituent" (p. 35). "Awareness is the capacity to recognize and monitor the attention one is giving or has given to something. Thus, one acts on or responds to the aspects of a situation of which one is aware" (p. 33). Freeman illustrates the overriding importance of awareness in second language instruction by citing the narrative of a teacher who was in Japan for the first time, and teaching about culture in a graduate class. The teacher was not aware that sitting on his desk was considered disrespectful and did not learn of this until many years later. Freeman uses this example to point out that awareness

> can operate over long spans of time...and seems to have the effect of isolating and collapsing relevant events so that the learning is as clear and potent as if the incident had just taken place (p. 35).

Freeman asserts that had the teacher been aware that this was a *faux pas*, it would have played a "fundamental role in how the teacher [would have made] use of the other three constituents [knowledge, skills, attitudes] " (p. 35) in his teaching. In other words, he might have decided to use this incident as a springboard for a discussion of cultural norms, for example.

McKeon (1994) points out that in regards to ESL teachers, as well as grade-level, regular classroom teachers, "it makes sense for all teachers to understand the cultural and linguistic processes that influence a child's perspective on school and learning" (p. 16). This is supported by Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez (1994) who emphasize the importance of school administrators and second language teachers learning about the lives of their students outside the school, particularly in ethnic minority communities.

2. What role do "images" play in their daily instruction?

The data in this study are derived mainly from the narratives of the teacher-participants. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) emphasize the importance of teachers' understanding of their life experiences through narratives which evoke certain images. The images are constructed from experiences in their home, family, community, as learners in school and university, through teaching itself, as well as through curriculum knowledge in a particular subject. An "image" is defined as an

> organizing concept in personal practical knowledge in that it embodies a person's experience; finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken (Clandinin, 1986, p. 166).

According to Clandinin, images tend to guide teachers' actions in instruction. In Johnston's (1990) research concerning secondary teachers' reveals that instructional

decisions and curriculum change and the influence of teachers' images, it was determined that "the way the participants view themselves as teachers is fundamental to their m⌐ s towards curriculum change" (p. 470). They provide two examples of teacher images, one of a teacher who views her classroom as a "home" (p. 60), and another whose instruction is influenced by an experience with a particular child whom, upon reflection, she feels she did not treat fairly in a classroom situation. This experience has made her "view[s] her experience as a turning point in her teaching, frequently calling his face to mind when confronted with other children's problems" (p. 62). Johnston (1990) cites other examples of "images" as defined by the teachers in her study. They were images of "meeting the needs of students and...teaching as a person-to-person relationship" (p. 465), and "providing a social refuge for less academic students" (p. 467).

In their discussion of teacher narratives and their influence on teachers' decisions concerning curriculum, Connelly and Clandinin point out that

> Understanding our own narrative is a metaphor for understanding the curriculum for our students and if you understand what makes up the curriculum of the person most important to you, namely, yourself, you will better understand the difficulties, whys, wherefores of the curriculum of your students (1988, p. 31).

In other words, if teachers endeavour to gain an understanding, through their personal narratives of how *they* think and feel, they will more clearly understand the difficulties in determining how their students think and feel (their students' narratives), as teachers are not "privy to (their) students' overall lives, or to their history, or even to their intentional future" (p. 31). Through the practice of developing their own narratives, teachers would gain a respect for the difficulty and complexity of discovering what is unknown about the lives of their students.

As researchers have pointed out, images, as evoked through narrative, play a significant role in teachers' instructional decisions. As the participants in this study are untrained in the area of ESL instruction, one could assume that gaining an understanding of their students' curriculum might present a significant challenge.

3. Does their practice reflect a particular "conception" of teaching?

In an analysis of conceptions of teaching in the field of second language (ESL) instruction, Freeman and Richards (1993) propose that the discussion of teaching needs to "emphasize the thinking and reasoning that organizes external practices" (p. 193), rather than focussing on the behaviour and activity of teaching. They maintain that "teaching cannot be treated as behavior separate from the reasoning on which it is based" (p. 209), particularly in regard to the training of second language teachers. Based largely on the work of Zahorik (1986), Freeman and Richards separate conceptions of teaching into three main categories:

- Science/Research
- Theory (Philosophy)/Values
- Art/Craft

The researchers point out that none of these conceptions is necessarily superior to the others, nor do they develop chronologically. A view of how practice should look as reflected in these conceptions of teaching is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Idealized Views of Teachers' Practices According to each

Conception of Teaching

According to *scientifically based conceptions*, teachers should:
- understand the learning principles derived from a *particular body of research*
- develop criteria for tasks and activities based on these principles/findings
- monitor students' performance on tasks to see that desired outcomes, according to task criteria, are being achieved

According to *theory- or values-based conceptions*, teachers should:
- understand the coherent *theory and principles* on which a particular set of practices is based
- select syllabi, materials, and tasks based on the theory/principles
- monitor one's teaching to see that it conforms to the theory/principles
or
- understand the *values and beliefs* which underlie a particular set of practices
- select those educational means (techniques, procedures) which conform to the values/beliefs
- monitor their implementation to ensure that the values/beliefs are being maintained

According to *art/craft conceptions*, teachers should:
- treat *each teaching situation as unique*
- identify the particular characteristics of each situation
- try out different teaching strategies, procedures, techniques to address those characteristics
- reflect on and assess the efficacy of the strategies for the learners within that teaching situation
- through this iterative process, develop an internally consistent, personal approach to classroom practice which responds to the unique demands of the situation

(Freeman and Richards, 1993)

This framework, as presented by Freeman and Richards, is an appropriate and significant base for one component of this present study, that is, determining if there is a common approach or conception of teaching of non-specialist teachers of ESL that can be identified. Examples from each conception of teaching as they relate to second language instruction are outlined below.

Freeman and Richards cite the Audiolingual Method (ALM), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and learner training as examples of the "science-research" conception. All three "represent applications of research in second

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language learning to the activity of language teaching" (p. 195). Based on studies in behavioral psychology, with the Audiolingual Method, the "target language patterns were presented for memorization through dialogues and drills" (p. 196). TBLT is an approach where specific tasks are believed to

> ...provide opportunities for learning through the negotiation of meaning...to accomplish specific goals and purposes...and research is intended to enable designers to identify the kinds of tasks which can best facilitate acquisition of specific target language structures and functions (p. 176).

Learner training differs in that research involves studying learners' "cognitive styles and learning strategies...in carrying out different types of classroom tasks" (p. 196). Ultimately, then, in this conception, teachers would adjust their teaching to accommodate learners' styles.

The "theory or philosophy-based" conception in second-language teaching is, according to Freeman and Richards, represented by such forms as "Communicative Language Teaching" (CLT) and the "Silent Way".

> [The CLT] seeks to operationalize the theoretical concept of communicative competence throughout second language instruction from program and syllabus design to classroom materials and teaching techniques (p. 201).

The Silent Way differs from the CLT.

> By way of contrast, [the Silent Way] is not built on advances in linguistic theory like CLT, but on a unique view of learning. The classroom procedures in the Silent Way are reasoned from distinct principles based on a theory of how learning takes place (p. 202).

The "values-based conception" is represented, for example, by the following: "team-teaching, humanistic approaches, the learner-centered curriculum movement, and reflective teaching" (p. 204). Zahorik and Brubaker (1972) cite

Combs' (1970) suggestions for developing humanistic education in schools. They include:

1. value personal meaning of students
2. accept students for what they are
3. encourage personal exploration and discovery of personal meaning through individualized, flexible, self-directed learning experiences
4. evaluate and reward students on the basis of the meanings they have rather that on what they know (in Zahorik and Brubaker, p. 12-13)

The humanistic approach is reflected in Nunan's (1988) discussion of "learner-centered curriculum", particularly regarding language programs where he points out that teachers should assist learners with appropriate strategies to help them discover their own most efficient ways of learning.

> They should also help learners to develop skills needed to negotiate the curriculum, to set their own objectives, to adopt realistic goals and time frames, and to develop their skills in self-evaluation (in Freeman and Richards (1993, p. 204-205).

The "art/craft" conception of teaching is viewed as a

> ...unique set of personal skills which teachers apply in different ways according to the demands of specific situations. ...Teachers seek to develop an approach to teaching which is often referred to as eclectic; the aim is to allow teachers to be themselves and to act on their own best understanding of what is happening in the classroom (Freeman and Richards, 1993, p. 206).

Elliot Eisner (1983), in his well-known article, The Art and Craft of Teaching, states "what skilled teaching requires is the ability to recognize dynamic patterns, to grasp their meaning, and the ingenuity to invent ways to respond to them" (p. 9). Jagla's (1994) work regarding the use of imagination and intuition in teaching focussed on eight teachers (elementary, secondary and college levels) who were recognized for excellence through recommendation and through having won various awards. She emphasizes that "there is definitely an art to good teaching" (p. 14) and quotes Rubin's (1985) criteria for artistic teaching:

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(a) the choice of educational aims that have high worth
(b) the use of imaginative and innovative ways to achieve these aims
(c) the pursuit of their achievement with great skill and dexterity
     (Rubin, 1985, in Jagla, 1994, p. 15)

4. Do they follow a particular methodology or program or are their pedagogical decisions based on their own judgement and assessment of the students?

While the first three sections of this literature review deal with the development of knowledge, images, and conceptions of teaching, this section reviews the research concerning specific methodological approaches in language teaching. As the teachers in this present study are identified as successful teachers of ESL students, it is important to ascertain if they utilize similar approaches and strategies in their instruction and if they are particularly influenced by a certain methodology or program.

Most of the pertinent literature in this review refers to second language teaching in general. It is noteworthy, particularly as it relates directly to the focus of this thesis, that only two significant studies are reviewed (Penfield, 1987; Clair, 1995) which directly examine the instructional practices of non-specialist (classroom) teachers of ESL students. There is a paucity of research in this area.

In Johnson's (1992b) study of thirty ESL teachers, the sources of their methodological approaches were examined. The approaches were divided into three categories: skill-based (empiricist) rule-based (rationalist), and function-based (communicative). The skill-based approach emphasizes "mimicry, memorization...repetition of native language patterns and...drill and practice" (p. 86). The rule-based approach asserts that "language learning is an innate ability which combines the intellectual understanding of language as an intricate system

of grammatical structures" (p. 86). The function-based approach "places language learning in a social context of interaction in which the learner must become a participant in real-life contexts" (p. 86). Two important findings from Johnson's research as they relate to this present examination of the approaches of the teachers in this study are stated: First, even though there was some overlap, the majority of the teachers possessed "clearly defined theoretical beliefs which consistently reflect one particular methodological approach" (function-based) (p. 83). Secondly, Johnson speculated that "the sources of ESL theoretical beliefs may stem from the methodological approaches that were prominent when they began teaching ESL" (p. 93).

Libben and Rossman-Benjamin (1992) investigated the teaching styles and factors which influence the choice of methodologies of ESL teachers of adults. The findings reveal that ESL teachers demonstrated

> extremely favourable attitudes toward an eclectic methodological approach to teaching English and therefore very negative attitudes toward the use of any single TESL method. Teachers believe that effective ESL teaching requires a variety of techniques and that no single method or textbook can be relied upon (p. 20).

Richards and Lockhart (1994) state that "the role of the teacher...may also be influenced by the approach (program) or methodology the teacher is following" (p. 101). While some programs and methodologies have gained wide acceptance and are considered effective by many teachers, Lange (1990) believes some "bandwagon methodologies" (p. 253) in second language teaching create cause for concern as many are designed for immediate classroom application without significant background pedagogical study. He points out that the "current attraction to "method" stems from the late 1950's, when foreign language teachers were falsely led to believe that there was a method to remedy the "'language teaching

and learning problems'" (p. 253). Pennycook (1989) doubts, however, that "the claims made in the literature as to the predominance of a certain method at a certain time ever reflected what was actually happening in classrooms" (p. 606). H.H. Stern (1985) states that

> One of the most extraordinary and in some ways totally unexpected phenomena in the recent history of language teaching has been the 'method boom' of the seventies...the prolonged preoccupation with the new methods, useful as it has been to widen our horizon, is becoming increasingly unproductive and misguided (in Pennycook, p. 597).

Few studies are available concerning self-reported practices of mainstream teachers of ESL students. Those which do exist emphasize the need for meaningful in-service for these teachers. Penfield's (1987) research examines various perspectives of regular classroom teachers concerning ESL teachers and students. Her conclusions indicate that there is a definite need for specific in-service to "prepare the regular classroom teacher for dealing more adequately with the educational needs of LEP students" (p. 21). In a research study concerning ESL conducted by the British Columbia Teachers Federation (1994), classroom teachers were asked to comment on their links with the ESL specialists in regard to the integration of ESL students into their class during the year. As with Penfield's research, the results indicated that "the classroom teachers were concerned that they were inadequately trained to deal with the changes that have occurred" (p. 7).

Even though the teachers in Penfield's study felt they were lacking in effective strategies, they reportedly still felt these students largely benefitted from being in a "regular" classroom. Results indicated "a majority of respondents (61%) viewed the regular classroom setting as better suited for LEP students than a segregated setting" (p. 26). The results reflect frustration among regular classroom

teachers in perceiving themselves as being less knowledgeable concerning instructional strategies for coping with the needs of ESL students in their classrooms.

Clair's (1993) study of beliefs, self-reported practices, and, in particular, professional development needs of three mainstream classroom teachers of ESL students suggests that their beliefs regarding ESL students

> may be based on hearsay and misinformation, that they do not vary their planning but frequently vary lesson implementation, and that their choice of instructional practices may be based on naive notions of language proficiency and the demands of the mainstream classroom (p. iii).

Her study also reveals that in their instruction of language-minority children, these "teachers draw on intuitive wisdom" (p. iii) due to inadequate preservice and in-service education. Her suggestions for appropriate professional development centre around opportunities for teachers to participate in research groups. In their investigation concerning curriculum for language-minority children, Wong Fillmore and Meyer (1992) state that

> few teachers are prepared to meet the complex educational needs of these students. They know how teach subject matter at the grade levels at which they work, but few of them have much experience or background in language teaching (p. 627).

In contrast to the studies cited above, Rigg and Allen (1989) point out that despite a lack of formal training for teaching ESL, classroom teachers still manage to deal effectively with ESL students.

> They must rely on their own good sense, their sensitivity to their students - whatever languages they speak - and their ability as professionals to alter the curriculum to suit their students, selecting materials and techniques which best fit (p. vii).

Summary

The review of the relevant literature in this study emphasizes that teacher knowledge regarding instruction is developed as a result of a myriad of factors and influences, both personal and professional, and, as a result, teachers possess a personal practical knowledge that is rich and varied. Images of teaching, which form part of teachers' personal practical knowledge, are called forth through teacher narratives. The instructional approaches of the teachers in this study will be compared to three conceptions of teaching as outlined in this review as will their specific methodological approaches and daily teaching practices. The lack of research concerning the instructional practices of mainstream teachers of ESL students is discouraging. This concern will be further addressed in "Implications for Further Research" section in Chapter 5.

The focus of this study is to examine the development of teacher knowledge and other factors which influence the instructional decisions of regular classroom teachers of ESL. Much of the data will come from the personal narratives of five teachers who have been identified as successful teachers in this role.

Chapter 3
Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology followed in the study. The purpose of this research was to determine factors which contribute to the successful delivery of ESL by non-specialist teachers and to document the practices and resources they employ.

This study was conducted in a major school district in the lower mainland area of British Columbia. Seven schools (Elementary and Secondary) were chosen at random and their administrators were asked, using a "reputational approach" or "technique", to identify successful, non-specialist teachers of ESL. "All variations of this technique consist essentially of asking informants to name and rank the leaders in their community" (Bonjean, Hill and McLemore, 1967, p. 192). The sample was not representative in any way of a particular level (Primary, Intermediate or Secondary). The essential characteristic of the sample was that the participants were well-regarded by their administrators in the non-specialist role. The President of the local teachers association was apprised of the methodology of this study and was in support of the steps involved.

Once teachers were identified by the administrators, I called by telephone sixteen potential participants. It is important to note that all sixteen teachers were delighted to have been identified by their administrator as successful teachers of ESL students. They were told by phone and by a follow-up letter (Appendix A) that they would be asked to complete a Questionnaire (Appendix B) as well as the Informed Consent form, Form #2 (Appendix C). An outline of the Methodology of the study, referred to on the Consent Form as "the document", was also attached.

They were informed that they might or might not be invited to participate in the second phase of the study, the focus group interview.

Of the ten questionnaires returned, five teachers (four women and one man) were selected to participate in the focus-group interview. An overriding factor in the selection of these five participants was Question #3 of the Questionnaire: "Have you taken any formal training in ESL Methodology?". The five teachers selected were the only ones who answered "No" to that question, and therefore, in my terms, represented true non-specialists.

Once a date and a time for the interview were confirmed, they were sent an Interview Schedule (Appendix D) to assist, in a general way, in their preparation for the interview. They were encouraged not to prepare in a formal way, that is, not to feel they needed to have an in-depth response to every question.

The focus-group interview took place at a teacher's resource centre and lasted one hour.

> A focus group, in essence, is a small, temporary community, formed for the purpose of the collaborative enterprise of discovery. The assembly is based on some interest shared by the panel members (Templeton, 1994).

The interview was tape-recorded and is transcribed in the thesis (Appendix E). Participants were given the choice of using their own names or a pseudonym. Before beginning the interview, and in order to encourage a free flow of thoughts, participants agreed as a group not to divulge each other's identities to anyone outside the room or to share the information gained from any person by using the person's name. Two teachers are staff members of the same Secondary school. Although this may prove sometimes problematic in a focus-group interview, it did not appear to prevent each of them from sharing their thoughts in a frank and open way. Otherwise, these participants were meeting each other for the first time.

The interview began with introductory questions, followed by more in-depth questions regarding the philosophy of their teaching as well as the methodologies they employ and why. As the interview progressed, the group began to clearly see that they had very much in common in their approaches to teaching and, in particular, to teaching the ESL students in their classes.

At the conclusion, the participants shared with me that the interview experience for them was enlightening and empowering. They felt that they had learned a great deal about each other and were anxious that this same group reconvene at a future date. They appeared to be pleased that their thoughts and experiences would be studied and might contribute in some way to improving their teaching situations through recommendations for professional development and acquisition of appropriate resources. After the interview had concluded, and as the final phase of the inquiry, participants were asked to complete a Needs Survey (Appendix F) regarding in-service and resources and return it to me a few days later at the resource centre.

Now that this study is concluded, the audio tapes, questionnaires, and needs survey forms are being kept in a locked filing cabinet in my office.

Methodological Procedures

I began this research by formulating some very general questions about the experiences and practices of regular classroom teachers who were instructing ESL students. Those questions revolved around how they developed their knowledge about teaching English as a second language without any specific training in second language methodology. I was also interested in the influences on their teaching from both their personal and professional backgrounds. I was curious as to whether

their approaches as a group could be characterized in a particular way, that is, if they shared a common philosophy of teaching. Finally, I felt it was important to determine what specific strategies or methods and resources they were employing on a daily basis. As I became more deeply involved in reviewing current and pertinent literature for the general questions, I was able to formulate more clearly the four specific questions I wanted to pose in this study. These questions are outlined in both Chapters 1 and 2.

The literature review (Chapter 2) was constructed around the four specific questions mentioned above. The research covers the development of teacher knowledge and beliefs, influences of teachers' images on instructional decisions and practices, conceptions of teaching, and methodological approaches in second language instruction. After the literature review was completed, I began to gather the data which would, I hoped, provide answers to the four questions posed in this inquiry.

During the process of formulating specific questions as outlined above, I thought at one point that my study might take a completely different turn. I came across a book entitled <u>Teachers' Everyday Use of Imagination and Intuition - In Pursuit of the Elusive Image</u> by Virginia M. Jagla (1994). According to Jagla, imagination and intuition influence teaching in a significant way and that those whom she identifies as "good teachers" possess a well-developed imagination and frequently call upon their intuition in their daily practice. After reading this book, I began to wonder if I was posing the correct questions in my study. In other words, did I still want to investigate the classroom practices and development of non-specialist ESL teachers' knowledge? Or, as the participants in the study were to be identified as successful non-specialist teachers, perhaps I was assuming that they needed to rely on intuition in order to successfully teach ESL students, and that this

should be the focus of my inquiry. This caused a dilemma for a period of time. The literature in the area of teachers' imagination and intuition is substantial, therefore, a study could be built around these notions.

After re-thinking the situation, I decided to return to my original inquiry after reflecting on what I wanted to achieve in this study. I wanted to know about the practices of successful non-specialist teachers of ESL and about the resources they were using which were helpful to them, how they actually gained knowledge about teaching ESL students, and finally, to be able to make some recommendations that might be of assistance to school districts for organizing in-service and purchasing resources. I also viewed this study as more urgent in light of the demographic changes taking place in the lower mainland area of British Columbia. I did not feel that focussing on teachers' imagination and intuition would be as helpful. It remains, however, an area of inquiry which I find fascinating.

Once the participants were identified through the "reputational approach", various techniques for the collection of data were employed. The first phase required the completion of a Questionnaire which provided the preliminary data. Secondly, a Focus-Group Interview was conducted which was followed by a third phase, a Needs Survey. Sevigny (1981) refers to this approach as "triangulated inquiry" where "multiple operations [are employed], each of which is important and holistically related to others" (p. 79).

The data were analyzed and then categorized under the development of teacher knowledge and beliefs, images and conceptions of teaching, and practices and resources employed, as outlined in Chapter 4 of this study. This was done through codifying the data from all three sources. The data were separated into the categories of development of teacher knowledge and beliefs, images, conceptions,

and practices and resources by using four different colours of highlighter pens. This process proved of great assistance in composing Chapters 4 and 5 of this study.

It is important to note that the data have been analyzed mostly from a group perspective and many generalizations have been made in the analysis, rather than on the basis of information on each individual. According to Sevigny (1981), "triangulated inquiry offers stronger potential for generalization...through cross-validation strategies..." (p. 73). Polkinghorne (1983) supports this holistic approach to inquiry by stating that the interaction of results stemming from integration of several systems of inquiry "can produce a deeper appreciation and understanding of the topic under consideration" (p. 252).

Reflections on the Focus-Group Interview

It is important to note some observations regarding the focus-group interview portion of this study. This section will outline my comments concerning the organizational process and the conducting of the interview.

Once I had formulated the major focus of inquiry for my study, I determined the types of questions I wanted to pose to the participants. Most of the data for this study was to be obtained through the personal narratives of the teachers through a focus-group interview. Other information would come from other sources listed later. Cohler (1982) refers to personal narratives as "the most internally consistent interpretation of presently understood past, experienced present, and anticipated future" (in Mishler, 1986, p. 68).

As the interview was to take place after school hours and some participants had family commitments to attend to, I limited the interview to an hour. This

meant that a significant amount of information needed to be attained in a relatively short period of time. I did not want to disrupt the natural flow of the conversation by interviewing in what Mishler (1986) refers to as the mainstream tradition where "the idea of discourse is suppressed...This suppression of discourse is accompanied by an equally pervasive disregard of respondents' social and personal contexts of meaning..." (p. viii). The five teachers invited to participate in the interview had received an interview schedule and were, therefore, aware of the types of questions they were going to be asked. Except for Maria and Susan, they did not know each other personally. I felt I was, therefore, required to quickly set a comforting or friendly tone to the interview as they would be discussing some personal and potentially emotional topics. I hoped to successfully do this by:

1. first achieving group consensus that nothing that was said would be revealed outside the room

2. reiterating that they were identified as successful teachers of ESL although they were not specialists by definition

3. pointing out that there was a significant difference in the years and variety of teaching experience represented in the room and that that should not be viewed in a comparative way

4. after posing the initial questions, encouraging them to interact with each other, rather than it being a formal question and answer situation.

This obligated me, in some ways, to play the role of a "coparticipant" (Mishler, 1986) and to be aware of the implications of that role.

> The interviewer's presence as a coparticipant is an unavoidable and essential component of the discourse, and an interviewer's mode of questioning influences a story's production. Differences in whether and how an

interviewer encourages, acknowledges, facilitates, or interrupts a respondent's flow of talk have marked effects on the story that appears (p. 105).

Overall, the participants appeared to quickly achieve a sense of trust and respect for each other. All seemed willing to speak freely about their practice and those with fewer years of teaching did not seem intimidated by their more experienced colleagues. It is also important to note that the participants were given the opportunity to choose pseudonyms. Deborah, Elizabeth, Maria, and Susan are pseudonyms, but, Arnold chose to permit the use of his own name.

There was a clear sense of collective struggle in dealing with teaching ESL for these non-specialist teachers, in particular, a lack of time and resources. Once some instructional challenges were articulated by Susan and Deborah near the beginning, others seemed to be quickly forthcoming concerning their related problems, as well as those of their students. Near the end of the interview, emotion within the group seemed quite apparent. In my view, this was due to two factors: First, the participants felt genuine concern for the social and emotional difficulties encountered by their ESL students and had talked a great deal about those issues. Secondly, the group had "bonded" very quickly, and they realized that it would soon come to an end. They had seemed to reach a philosophical consensus, were pleased to have encountered each other, and were hoping to have the opportunity to meet again.

Limitations of the Study

There are some clear methodological limitations to this study:

1. The participants in this study were identified by their administrators as successful teachers of ESL. No limitations or criteria were developed; a consensus was simply

established regarding their expertise. The possibility exists, therefore, that these teachers have mastered the discourse of successful teachers of ESL with their administrators and quite likely their colleagues, and that they have constructed and have been assigned this identity. In her discussion of how student teachers construct their teaching identities, Britzman (1991) points out that "learning to teach is a social process of negotiation rather that an individual problem of behavior" (p. 8). She states that

> Identity always requires one's consent, gained through social negotiation...identity is contingent in that it is always positioned in relation to history, desires, and circumstances. Identity is constantly affected by the relations between objective and subjective conditions and in dialogue with others (p. 25).

She reminds us that

> Superficial images of the work of teachers became the material for the cultural myths about teaching...Cultural myths offer a set of ideal images, definitions, and justifications that are taken up as measure for thought, affect, and practice (p. 6).

2. The information regarding actual instructional practices was elicited by the researcher from the participant reports, and not through direct classroom observation by the researcher. In other words, the information provided by the teacher-participants is not validated here through observation of their practices.

Summary

In summary, the methods employed were deemed appropriate for what this study seeks to accomplish, that is, to examine the significant factors in learning situations in the delivery of ESL by non-specialists. The following chapter provides an analysis of the data collected as they relate to the relevant literature.

Chapter 4
Results of the Study

This chapter provides the results of the study through data obtained from the the teachers in the questionnaire, the focus-group interview, and the needs survey as outlined in the Methodology. The factors which contribute to the reported success of these teachers and the relation to research in the following areas are outlined in this chapter:

1. Sources of Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs about ESL
2. Images of Teaching
3. Conceptions of Teaching
4. Practices and Resources

It should be noted that pertinent biographical information has been included as necessary in the various sections which follow. A synopsis of the teachers' experience may be found in the information chart in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Information Chart on the Participants in the Study

Name	Years of Exp.	94/95 Assignment	% of ESL Students in Present Assignment
Arnold	7	Grades 5/6	5-10%
Susan	4	Grades 9-12 English including two Transitional classes	20%
Elizabeth	3	Grades 8-10 English	n/a
Maria	20	Grades 9-12 English	14%
Deborah	15	Grades 6/7	15%

Sources of Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs About ESL

The years of experience of the teachers in this study range from three to twenty years and their personal and professional backgrounds are rich and wide-ranging. This section will outline their academic training and other professional and personal experiences, all of which have contributed to their general knowledge and beliefs about instruction as well as their specific knowledge concerning the teaching of ESL.

Arnold has a Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of British Columbia and has been teaching for seven years. This year, he is teaching a Grade 5/6 class. Much of what has become a part of Arnold's "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) comes from working during what he refers to as "the formative years" of his teaching career, with an independent educational consultant in British Columbia named Faye Brownlie.

> I was just very, very, very fortunate...I did a lot of work with Faye Brownlie... a lot of professional development with her and to the point of having some team-teaching with her...she does a lot of work on strategies and her focus is always inclusion.

He states that from this experience, two themes have emerged which guide his thinking and beliefs about teaching: "...to be inclusive, to build self-esteem". He points out that, "I was not a reflective person when I first started teaching...and I don't think I was very sensitive either, as a teacher". He mentions that Brownlie is someone who is "like...a mentor". His work with Brownlie has " just made me all that much more aware of kids as people...so I just keep those words in the back of my head, like a statement of inclusion, "'How do I make those kids feel anyway?'"

Susan holds a degree in English from the University of British Columbia. She presently teaches English to Grades 9 through 12 including two blocks of Transitional English. The Transitional classes are for ESL students. In working with the ESL students in her transitional classes, she points out that, "I am by training an English teacher and I use this background extensively". From her experience in teaching writing to ESL students, she reports she has learned that she must use some very specific strategies, such as having the students complete much of the writing component of the program during class time. She states that, regrettably, if

she sends home a writing assignment, it may not be the student who actually completes the work:

> You can't send them home to write a major assignment because it comes back on fax paper....So this awful part of teaching them is... saying, 'O.K., now, we're going to have to cut it off so that I know it's your work." and I don't like thinking that way, but it's reality.

Susan's knowledge regarding ESL instruction has also come through having had the opportunity to co-author a "language development program" with a colleague at her present school who "came from an ESL background". She admits that in terms of ESL instruction, she "ask[s] everybody for help".

Elizabeth completed her teacher training at the University of British Columbia. She worked part-time in an ESL school before beginning her teaching full-time at a secondary school three years ago where she presently teaches Grades 8 to 10 English. There are no Transitional classes at her school specifically for ESL students. Elizabeth's years of experience are the fewest of all the participants in this study. She recounts that one teacher with whom she was "paired" at the beginning of her career at her present school, "helped [her] immensely". In addition, the ESL specialist in her school "is very helpful when it comes to ideas" about teaching ESL students.

Maria's knowledge has developed through working within a wide range of teaching situations in many school districts, with students of various backgrounds and learning abilities. She has taught twenty years in both Ontario and British Columbia after having completed her teaching training in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She has taught in a psychiatric hospital and a Youth Detention Centre as well as in

"regular" high schools. She is presently teaching English in Grades 9 through 12. Approximately 14 per cent of her students are ESL students.

Maria reports that knowledge gained through working with students with special needs has contributed significantly to her work with ESL students. "I taught EMH students for ten years - [I] have transferred much of my knowledge and techniques to teaching ESL." She has gained additional knowledge concerning ESL instruction through professional development activities. For example, she reports she "like[s] the ideas of Mary Kooy from S.F.U....I use the Writing Log...."

Deborah has a Bachelor's degree in English and points out that she has "been working on [her] Masters at Simon Fraser and [has] done all the course work". Her professional experience in teaching is wide-ranging, not only in the number of grade levels she has taught, but in the variety of teaching situations she has encountered. The latter includes teaching adults, teaching at community college, on a First Nations Reserve and in a Hutterite colony, in a correctional institute, and as a community school coordinator and Head Teacher. In all situations, she has taught ESL students. Her instructional knowledge has developed, therefore, from a myriad of experiences with children with vastly differing backgrounds. She stresses that this year, Grade 6/7 is a grade level change for her and she is still becoming knowledgeable about some of the curricula in British Columbia. "I'm new to this grade level in this province, this is all brand new for me so I'm just keeping one step ahead of them."

She reports that she has gained many of her ideas regarding teaching ESL from "reading professional articles and picking colleagues' brains...I ask everybody

for help. If something's not working, I just keep asking and looking for more help wherever it comes from".

This thesis examines the factors in the learning situations of successful non-specialist teachers of ESL students. The teachers' knowledge of the academic, social and political aspects of the various backgrounds of these students clearly plays an important role in their instructional approaches. Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez (1994) emphasize the importance for "all teachers to understand the cultural and linguistic processes that influence a child's perspective on school and learning" (p. 16). The teachers in this study are cognizant of the many social and emotional difficulties encountered by their ESL students, many of whom have recently arrived in Canada and some of whom are suffering as a result of various traumatic experiences in their countries of origin, as well as the influence these experiences may have on their learning. Susan mentions the "culture shock" experienced by some of her ESL students upon their arrival.

> They don't know simple things. "I haven't been to a movie theatre"...They don't know how to go downtown and they don't know how to ask for that, and they're trying the very best they can to sort of fit in and that's really important in their age group.

The teachers frequently commented on the differences in the previous schooling among many of their ESL students compared to the Canadian educational system. The students' rapidity in adapting to this system was noted as being a challenge at both the elementary and secondary levels. In Deborah's case, her "relaxed style" is problematic for ESL students whom she describes as "down to business". She also noted that many students are accustomed to

> very competitive environments where being on top was the only thing that matters...so cooperative learning strategies are not always really popular with my ESL students.

The two secondary teachers have come to understand some of the very specific challenges they have encountered in teaching ESL students. They frequently mentioned their frustration with the amount of curriculum that needs to be covered in a short period of time and the pressure that is created for their students. "These kids want to write their government exam in two years or less." Along with this comes the stigma of being "too old" for the grade level. "A lot of them are eighteen years old in a Grade 10 class. There's a great deal of pressure to move them through". Maria noted that it would be helpful to work with a timetable similar to an elementary school where teachers have more time to spend with the students in order to prepare them for the government examination and to respond more effectively to their individual needs. She suggests to Arnold that "it's nice that you have that flexibility to be able to work to what the kids need, whereas the stage I'm at...in four months, they're writing the government exam".

Much of the accumulated knowledge of these teachers concerning teaching ESL has been gained through the experience of being thrust into situations where they have had to instruct ESL students and deal with students' social and emotional problems. The knowledge the teachers have gained concerning the social and emotional benefits of working with ESL students has also contributed significantly to their teaching approaches. Susan points out, "the fact that the students will come up to me and ask me a question and it's not necessarily always about school but it's about their personal development".

For the five teachers in this study, the sources of knowledge and beliefs about teaching ESL are the result of a myriad of experiences, both personal and professional. They appear to be open-minded and reflective people, they actively seek new and different teaching approaches and, without exception, seek advice

from colleagues. Although at five, the sample is small and the practices described are based solely on self-reports by the teachers, the data tend to contradict Lortie (1975) and Jackson's (1968) view which states that the teaching culture is ..."insular, reliant on custom and whim, and immune to thoughtful reflection" (in Liston and Zeichner, 1991, p. 62). Elbaz's (1981) conception of "practical knowledge" also contradicts the "dismal" view. She argues that teachers do have a broad range of knowledge which guides their work including instructional techniques, curriculum, student needs and interests, their own strengths and weaknesses as well as a knowledge of the community surrounding the school. There is evidence, as Smith (1993) has pointed out, that their instructional planning is influenced by their

> Beliefs and practical knowledge and informed by a variety of factors, including experiential knowledge of the type of students enrolled in the programme and institutional course objectives (p. 254).

Images of Teaching

Clandinin (1985) defines "personal practical knowledge" as

> Knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person's experiential history, both professional and personal (p. 362).

"Images" form a part of one's personal practical knowledge. Images are evoked through the use of narrative, which was prompted by the focus interview process employed in this study.

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1988), the use of images is important in understanding teachers' "personal curriculum", as it provides a way for teachers to reflect upon their own experiences, and understand how these experiences guide

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instructional decisions. In other words, certain teaching situations have a tendency to "call forth" (p. 80) images which then guide teachers to action taken in the future. Through their narratives, some very poignant images were brought forth by the teachers in this study.

For Susan, the image of her husband as an eleven-year-old, newly-arrived immigrant, is very powerful in her teaching of ESL students.

> I keep him very much in mind when I'm teaching my students and I think to myself, 'O.K., well maybe you're fourteen or fifteen or eighteen, but, you know, we were all eleven once'.

In other words, Susan believes that her students require, in spite of their age and physical maturity, a tremendous amount of sensitivity to their situation. Her husband has told her that had coming to Canada not been "presented to him as a positive thing, he wouldn't have functioned at all". Susan states that she believes it is important to keep in mind that many of these students are in Canada because their "Mom and Dad wanted to get out of Hong Kong before 1997". When planning for instruction of her ESL students, she constantly reminds herself that, "If it were my husband, what would you do, or what would you want someone else to do?" As Susan shares her husband's experience with her students, this image also provides an opportunity to make an important personal connection with them. "I tell them the story of my husband, and they all go, "Wow! Cool!", which is one way I make that connection with them."

Susan has come to view what she calls the "human connection" with her students as very important. She mentions two events that have taken place in her teaching which have created strong images for her.

> I said something to a student the other day; he'd had a cough and I'd asked him if he'd gone to the doctor, this sort of stuff, and his comment to me when I finished the conversation, he said, "Thank you for your concern".

> But it just dawned on me again there that that human connection is so crucial with those students...If they think they're valued, they'll do everything they can to learn almost for *you* than for themselves.

On another occasion, an appreciative student presented her with a Valentine's Day card. "It's like the Valentine that a student that I taught last year gave me saying, "Thank you very much and I'll love you forever", and she meant it."

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) cite a study of a teacher, "Stephanie" whose image of teaching is influenced by, among other things, "her own school experience" (p. 61). Similarly, the "image" which is evoked in Maria's teaching is keeping in mind what it is like to be presented material for the first time from the point of view of the students. "I always try to remember what it's like to be a student sitting in the classroom and trying to meet this material for the first time. Maria reveals that she pleased and encouraged that her students recognize her empathic approach and she quotes a student who told her, "You really seem to know how to get into the head of a teenager. And you know what we need to do and how we need to learn it". She shared her reaction to that statement during the interview, that this was "a really nice compliment because that's exactly what I'm trying to do".

As all teachers were also students at one time, their teaching tends to be influenced by teachers *they* have encountered. Lortie refers to this as the "apprenticeship of observation" (in Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p. 30). Elizabeth's approach to instruction has been affected in two ways by teachers she has had. Her images of some negative experiences in school have helped her determine what she does *not* want to happen in her classes. "As far as the way I teach and what I try *not* to do, I think of teachers I've had and think, Oh, gosh, I hope I never, ever do

that...". Conversely, the image of a teacher she encountered in her own secondary schooling provides positive, powerful aspects of how she likes to run her classes.

> And then there was one teacher I had, a Social Studies teacher, Geography 12 teacher who was...he was amazing and that's one of the reasons I went into teaching...I think about the things he did and how he did them, how he made you feel comfortable, how he got everybody involved, and I try to do that as much as possible.

Arnold's image of one of his ESL students, "Martina", is one that appeared to be very poignant for him as it was recounted in the focus-group interview. During his explanation of of "buddy system" for reading in which his class participates, he spoke of how Martina's self-esteem had been significantly enhanced by her participation.

> Martina, in my class, who, literally, is functioning barely, well, talking about a half-hour ahead, you know, she's teaching a Kindergartner how to say her letters and Martina barely knows her letters, but it's still giving her the sense of accomplishment, and she knows something, and putting her in the teaching position is really giving her the opportunity to fully grasp and understand what she's doing and it's sure a self-esteem builder for her.

A strong image which has made a significant contribution to Deborah's emphasis on the importance of trust-building in the classroom comes from her experiences as a mother. "It wasn't until after I had my own children that I realized how powerful teachers are in the life of a child." What guides her teaching is the hope that she treat "every child in my classroom the way I'd like my own children to be treated". This is the reason she

> ...works hard in building trust with the kids, particularly ESL children, but with all of them because it's only then that they're going to be able to take risks in order become the best that they can be and realize their potential.

The images evoked by these teachers through their personal narratives appear to have a direct and impactful effect on their instructional practices. They also see value in and appear to seek to understand, the "curriculum of their students" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), or how their students think and feel.

Conceptions of Teaching

In regard to the conceptions of teaching outlined by Freeman and Richards (1993), an important finding surfaced in this study. Although some characteristics displayed by these teachers resemble the "science/research" and "values-based" (p. 193) views, their approaches overwhelmingly reflect the "art/craft" (p. 193) or "eclectic" conception of teaching. The idealized view of the three categories may be found in Table 2 on page 17.

One aspect of the "science/research" conception, the attention to students' learning styles, is evident in the narrative of one teacher in this study. Elizabeth, being a visual learner herself, reports that she is very attentive to learning styles (particularly to visual learners) and that it is important to reinforce written material with a visual complement.

> I'm a very visual learner so I found for myself it was a good thing and then when I was actually taking some language courses, I just found that visually, it can be very...you can talk and talk and write and write but if you visually have something up there, it's easier to grasp some ideas.

The approaches of some of the teachers in this study strongly reflect the "values-based" conception in language teaching. Freeman and Richards cite the following as examples of the values-based conception: "team teaching, humanistic approaches, the learner-centered curriculum movement, and reflective teaching" (p. 204). An appreciation for "learner-centeredness" is demonstrated in the instructional approaches of these teachers, as well as an humanistic approach to

teaching as outlined by Combs (1970) in Zahorik and Brubaker (1972). Combs' suggestions for developing humanistic education in schools include valuing and encouraging students' personal meanings, accepting students for what they are, promoting self-directed experiences, and evaluating and rewarding students on the basis of the meanings they have made.

Arnold's approach in particular, clearly reflects "learner-centeredness" in his engagement of students in curricular planning and setting criteria, the choices he weaves into his thematic units, as well as in on-going metacognitive evaluation activities he promotes with his students. He reports that:

> My goal is to work toward students who are very self-directed...so giving them a lot of choice...a lot of cooperative stuff where they're developing the criteria...in a lot of cases, the curriculum for themselves.

He points out that he emphasizes "a lot of conferencing with the kids, whether it's as a group or individually". Arnold has all students working on "individual learning contracts...so everything is independent".

Learner-centeredness is reflected in two examples from Deborah's and Elizabeth's instructional practices. Deborah gives students opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a way which is comfortable to them, although the expectations for learning she has for her ESL students is the same as her other students. She states:

> I expect them to come out with the same learning outcomes, but the way they represent that knowledge is quite often different, and I give them other options and choices...I have all kinds of students representing their knowledge in all kinds of different ways.

She quotes one of her students who commented, "Oh, I guess it's O.K. for me not to hand in as essay on this, when other kids in the class are building projects, or doing

charts or doing artwork...". It takes her ESL students some time to become accustomed to this approach: "...it takes awhile for them to reach that level, depending on what their cultural background is". Elizabeth adjusts the expectations for her ESL students in her courses by providing choices. "In Social Studies and Humanities there are choices and options in essays that we write, in books that we read." This is the case for all students in her class, both ESL and non-ESL.

An example of humanistic education as outlined by Combs (1970) is accepting students for what they are. To Susan, her ESL students are in particular need of being made to feel valued.

> I think that with ESL students, even more than regular students, especially in a high school where they see me once a day and in other cases, it's every other day, it's absolutely crucial that before I can get them to perform in a classroom, that they need to know that they are valued for a person because they're totally lost.

To encourage self-reflection, another aspect of humanistic education under the values-based conception as outlined by Freeman and Richards (1993), Maria has her students employ a Writing Response Log where "...the students are responding on a personal level to whatever it is we're working on...". She considers herself a "guide". Maria prefers "discovery learning". "I present the material and they have to relate to it on a personal level and they have to find what it means to them... I'm a guide to help them with that." Regarding evaluation, Maria states out that there is "very little testing, it's personal responses to what we've been studying...".

According to Freeman and Richards (1993), in the "art/craft" view of teaching, the methods are "not generalizeable" (p. 206). It is also referred to as an "eclectic" approach where "the aim is to allow teachers to be themselves and to act on their own best understanding of what is happening in the classroom" (p. 206).

The teachers in this study draw upon a variety of strategies and methods to respond to the needs of their students. Their approaches are clearly not "generalizeable".

At the elementary level, the approaches that Deborah and Arnold report they use demand a significant repertoire of instructional strategies. Arnold states that he needs to "recreate the wheel every year". He points out, for example, that "this year is the first time I've ever done a mystery unit. So my resources are being totally recreated for this situation". Deborah indicates that she "really like[s] to use themes" and endeavours to integrate the various curricula in using themes in order to provide her ESL students with as much vocabulary development as possible. "You're integrating curriculum in so many different areas; you're pumping vocabulary into them all the time... and then I interdisperse them [themes] with some direct teaching."

The secondary teachers state that they make use of both direct teaching as well as group work. Susan states, "I do a lot of direct teaching because they're very comfortable... as the year goes on, and they get more comfortable with each other...then I begin to put them into small groups, partners...". Maria states that in her class, "There is a lot of direct instruction but not a lot. Elizabeth points out that she likes "to try and use as many techniques as possible, just because there are different types of learners..."

Another characteristic of the "art/craft" conception, according to Freeman and Richards (1993), is that teachers demonstrate that they "reflect on the success and assess the efficacy of the strategies for the learners within that teaching situation" (1993, p. 209). Arnold's on-going assessment and evaluation of his students provide him with the information he requires to "get a really good sense of where my kids are at, and so, often...I'll pull a group of kids aside that I really

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know need to work on this, that, and the other thing". Both Susan and Elizabeth state they feel it is important to accept when a particular strategy is <u>not</u> working. Elizabeth may decide, after planning "for a weekend ...'Oh, I don't like that, that's not going to work, scrap it, do something else..." As Susan points out, being cognizant of

> When you sense it's not working, just dropping everything and changing gears drastically and immediately, even if you don't know what you're going to do in the next five minutes, what you're going now is no good at all so what the heck, out it goes.

Freeman and Richards (1983) cite another characteristic of the art/craft conception as the ability to "develop and internally consistent, personal approach to classroom practice which responds to the unique demands of the situation" (p. 209). A personal approach in the classroom in general, and especially with ESL students, is clearly evident with the teachers in this study. Deborah indicates that she tries very hard "not to put a lot of pressure on my ESL kids because they get so uncomfortable". Elizabeth works to make them "feel comfortable" and Susan emphasizes "trust-building" in the learning environment she creates for her students. Maria's approach is very empathic with her image of what it is like for a student to be learning something for the first time. "I always try to remember what it's like to be a student sitting in the classroom." Arnold's instruction is very personal. He reports that he is "working individually with each kid at least twice a week".

The teachers appear to generally feel a great sense of pride in the progress and accomplishments of their ESL students. Arnold speaks of "the sense of accomplishment" in his ESL student Martina who is "teaching a Kindergartner how to say her letters". Maria, in particular, recounts the times she has celebrated her students' successes with Susan:

Sometimes if you're talking to your colleagues about things that are working right, then you sort of get the feeling that they're looking at you as if well, "Why are you blowing your own horn?", "Why are you bragging?" Whereas, I've run over to Susan, "Look at this! Look at this! Isn't this great?"

The fact that the practices of the teachers in this study clearly reflect an art/craft conception, and in a limited way the science/research and theory/values conceptions, this does not necessarily imply that they rarely consider theory when they are planning their instructional activities. This is also clearly evident in Smith's (1993) study. The knowledge these teachers have gained and the images that are evoked through their narratives contribute to the formulation of a variety of practices from which they draw in their teaching situations. These individuals also display the confidence to choose different strategies, to acknowledge if those choices are not appropriate, and to actively seek alternatives.

Practices and Resources

To elaborate the factors in learning situations in the delivery of ESL by non-specialists, an examination of their self-reported classroom practices and the resources they employ is necessary. Their practices of the teachers in this study are outlined in some detail in this section. A comparison to the literature concerning methodologies, as reviewed in Chapter 2, and their classroom practices is found in the summary.

The strategies the teachers reported they employed for teaching ESL students vary understandably according to the grade levels taught. The practices of the elementary and secondary teachers have been separated in this section for clarity. Generally, the Elementary teachers tend to report the use of theme-based instruction where different curricula are integrated, however, some direct teaching is considered necessary and important. At the secondary level, there is an emphasis

on direct instruction at the beginning of the year with a move quickly toward more partner and group work to encourage social interaction.

Elementary teachers

In Deborah's classes, there is an emphasis on thematic units. She states, "I really like to use themes. But I don't like to use them for great huge long periods of time....Using themes is something that I find pretty successful with most kids and I have a really diverse lot. She uses "lots of cooperative learning and higher-learning thinking skills" strategies in her instruction. She considers her teaching approach as "flexible" and notes that ESL students are

> Focussed academically and so many of my students that come from other countries are really 'down to business' kids and they have trouble dealing with this relaxed style that I have in my classroom sometimes. That's very challenging for them.

Deborah's overall approach in her Grade 6/7 class is, in her words, "relaxed and laid back". She reports that she does not like to put too much pressure on her ESL students as one of her goals is to bring them to the point where they feel they can take risks and allow themselves to make mistakes. She endeavours to

> Do as much trust-building kinds of things with them as quickly as they arrive...And for some of them, it takes a lot longer for them to feel like they can trust you and take a risk. And then I find that until they reach that point, *when* they reach that point, they take off...like fire.

Deborah indicates that she uses "Venn Diagrams or Fishbones" as various graphic organizers to promote higher-level thinking skills as well as Knowledge

Frameworks.[1] "I do them incidentally rather than teaching them to everybody as a direct instructional kind of approach." Deborah modifies her instruction for ESL students only in the way they demonstrate what they have learned. She reports that her students are invited to "represent their knowledge in all kinds of different ways", not necessarily only through written tests. Regarding resources for teaching ESL students, she relies on "work which can be done independently or in small groups, and audio-visual material".

Arnold reports, "I basically take a thematic approach and then just have the kids work within my theme and often choose or select activities". He works to encourage independence with his Grade 5/6 students. He uses more direct teaching at the beginning of the year, however, he gradually moves to have all students working in a learner-centered way. "I probably start the year with a fair amount of teacher-directed stuff." He claims that he does not modify the curricula specifically for the ESL students in his class; everyone is working on individual learning contracts. "I don't feel I modify for ESL students any more than I do for other students in my class..... As an example of the choice Arnold provides his students, they are encouraged to choose the novels they read. "As the novel-study component of that [mystery] unit, we went to the Library. Everyone took out their own novel...everyone was working at a completely different level anyways...."

He believes that he both teaches and promotes self-evaluation and encourages students to articulate what they do or do not understand.

> I think they're pretty aware of what they're capable of doing....I think kids are becoming more and more aware of...that self-check of, "Yeah, I understand

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[1] Knowledge Framework is a term for an integrated model for language and academic skills development, developed by Bernard Mohan, (1986).

what you're doing." or, "No, I really don't have a clue what you're talking about."

In his class, Arnold reports that he works with students individually as much as possible, particularly during the "Writer's Workshop" activity. He feels that his on-going assessment and evaluation during this activity provides him with information as to when direct teaching is required for individuals or groups of students.

> So I'm writing with them...their ideas are coming out. I get a clear picture of their writing ability, their understanding of grammar, vocabulary. So I would get a really good sense of where my kids are at....

He uses a "buddy" system where his students work with other classes in the school to do various activities, such as reading. "We do a lot of buddy reading with other classes in the school...I partner up kids in my room, including my ESL students, with another grade...." He reports that his teaching approach changed and improved "as I got to know students and what I was doing and having a sense of just where I was going or what I wanted from my kids".

Finally, in terms of resources, Arnold states that "resource teachers as well as high-interest/low vocabulary books and novels" are very helpful resources in working with his ESL students. He explains how his instructional approach has evolved since he began teaching and how he utilizes resources:

> I know that when I began, I was a very textbook-oriented teacher and I followed the curriculum very much to the "T" and that kind of thing and...I'll get fired...I probably don't follow the curriculum at all any more. I teach what the kids need, not what the book says I'm supposed to tell them. And so I feel like depending on who the kids are, and what my situation is in the classroom, that'll totally determine what it is I'm doing and covering and so my resources are totally different every time.

Maria and Susan are colleagues at Midvale Secondary. Both teach Grades 9 through 12, and, in addition, Susan teaches two blocks of Transitional English. At the Secondary level, teachers feel they need to cover a great deal of curriculum in a short period of time. Maria reports that she feels a great deal of pressure to cover a heavy curriculum in a short period of time. "...In four months they're writing the government exam...according to those kids, what they need is to pass that exam and I have to give them what they need for that exam." Susan points out that "there's a great deal of pressure on *us*". These teachers report that they attend to the particular linguistic needs of the ESL students in their classes through emphasizing speaking. Maria states that "one of the goals I have at the beginning of the year is speaking....And so I spend a good part of the time, first part of the second term, having class discussions". She uses class discussions for which the students receive grades for participation and views giving marks as a motivator for students to speak.

> Every day, we talk. And they get marks for it. That's the only motivator they have. They can't see that there's any need for speaking English every day, except that they're going to get a mark for it.

Susan reiterates the importance of encouraging ESL students to speak:

> You have to pick up all the strands, particularly the speaking and there's only so much time so...Speaking gets a lot more time than it does in a normal class, normal being a regular 10 class....

Maria insists on English being spoken when students are working in groups or partners, as students tend to cluster in their own cultural group and language groups.

> So, I really work hard on that ability and the comfort with the speaking skills so when we do go into groups or partners, then they are speaking English...So once they develop that ability and that comfort in speaking English in front of the whole group, then speaking with another person is not difficult at all.

At the beginning of the year, Maria assists her ESL students by "translating" (or interpreting in detail) much of what is read for them. "We're doing Macbeth and for the first act, I read it to them and translated...translated as we went along." This requires much effort on her part in order to assist her ESL students to the point where they are able to perform more complicated acts in their second language, that is, to analyze more deeply different genres of writing. She emphasizes how important these analytical skills are for her students in order to prepare for the government examination.

> I would say sixty per cent of my class are going to be graduating in June. They're writing the government exam. And they really feel the pressure. They have to know how to analyze Shakespeare, they have to know how to analyze a piece of fiction, poetry, and so there's a lot of pulling out the deeper meaning which a lot of them have real trouble with.

Maria states that for her, one resource, "a play entitled "New Canadian Kid" [is] very helpful in working with ESL students to encourage oral work, discussion, and trust-building. The students can relate to the character".

> Susan reports that she uses direct teaching at the beginning of the year.

> I find that they just don't have the vocabulary to discuss, if it's a transitional course...a novel...so I find that I give them the direct teaching so that they get that base.

She encourages student participation and speaking through interactive activities. "I begin to put them into small groups, partners, whatever and we go from there." As there are some significant cultural barriers to first overcome, this process is gradual, however, "as the year goes on, and they get a bit more comfortable with each other, because, of course, in a lot of cultures, boys don't work with girls and vice-versa.". She points out that the partner and group work "develops over the course of the year as those students get a lot more comfortable".

Another goal is to have her students get involved in various activities, such as vocabulary games (with, at her students' insistence, material which will appear on the government exam!).

> Trying to get the kids involved in some way, whether it's writing a journal or a response...sometimes it's a game. They're no good to you if they're tuned out, but if it's a game, it's got to be vocabulary that will be on the government exam. I mean, they have to see purpose in this.

For the ESL students in her transitional courses, Susan will "definitely modify the curriculum". For her Grade 10 class, she does "a modified version of Romeo and Juliet, a couple of scenes, lots of video, to get them listening...there's no way they could tackle the whole play so I wouldn't do that with them". For the writing component of her program, "students use a peer-editing process". She reports she tells the students, "We'll discuss it, we'll work on it...and then the two classes will do some peer-editing, and you take it home, and two classes later we'll do another peer-editing."

Susan reports using various types of resources in her instruction. Some resources she has found helpful with her ESL students are "current events (i.e. newspapers, video material (i.e. a short story that has been dramatized), pictures, prints".

Elizabeth teaches English in Grades 8 through 10 and has a significant number of ESL students in her class. There are no Transitional classes in her school. She describes her approach as "relaxed and laid back". She endeavours to provide "a very comfortable environment" for her ESL students, to "make sure I spend time with them to get them up to date". This includes moving from individual work to partner activities, "just with pair work, then into fours".

Elizabeth reports that speaking is emphasized in her classes. Gradually, she engages students in group discussions and presentations. "I have some kids that came in and just would say nothing, really quiet, shy. And now, we'll read what they've written in front of the class and ask questions and really be involved in the class." She reports that there are choices presented to all students in her class regarding reading material as well as options for grades they may want to achieve.

She employs writing logs in her class, sometimes as a reflection tool and other times as a basis for discussion.

> Writing logs, I do the same thing...formal and informal; alot of the time we'll bring up a topic, an issue and I'll have them brainstorm by themselves for a minute, get down a definition, get down a few notes, share with a partner, share with the class, open it up for a discussion

The teachers in this study reported that they emphasize speaking, vocabulary-building, cooperative learning strategies (to promote speaking and social skills), trust-building, and the establishment of comfortable learning environments. Johnson (1992 b), in her study of teachers' beliefs during instruction of non-native speakers of English, calls this the "communicative explanation" which "places language learning in a social context of interaction in which the learner must become a participant in real life contexts..." (p. 86). There is no

evidence, however, that they have been influenced by particular theories of instruction or specific "methodological approaches" (p. 93). The teachers do not seem to have fallen prey to any "bandwagon methodologies" (Lange, 1990) or to have been influenced by the "method boom" (Stern, 1985) of the seventies, although some specific approaches such as the use of themes, cooperative learning, discovery learning, student self-reflection, and student self-evaluation seem to figure prominently in their practice. The teachers do not appear to have been influenced by any particular program that might be available to them, as reported in Richards and Lockhart (1994). They appear to draw from a variety of teaching techniques as well as print and non-print resources.

The reported practices of the teachers in this study reflect Rigg and Allen's (1989) view of how regular classroom teachers manage to effectively teach ESL students. They point out that

> They must rely on their own good sense, their sensitivity to their students...and their ability as professionals to alter the curriculum to suit their students, selecting materials and techniques which best fit (p. vii).

Summary

From the information provided by the teachers in this study through the questionnaire, the focus group interview, and the needs survey, several conclusions can be stated. It is clearly evident that the teachers in this study all take a personal interest in the individual learning of their students. They are sensitive to the social, emotional, and educational adjustments required to ease their students into their new learning environments. The teachers have knowledge of, and utilize, a variety of strategies and continually monitor their approaches to determine if their students are experiencing success. Their instructional decisions are based on knowledge which is derived from professional and personal

experiences and influenced by various images of teaching. This accumulated knowledge, their vast repertoire of strategies, and familiarity with various curricular resources hardly reflect Lortie's (1975) "dismal" view of teacher knowledge which argues that teachers do not collectively hold a body of knowledge.

Overall, their practice is one where cooperation and dialogue (teacher-student and student-student) are fostered and valued. These teachers are willing to seek assistance from colleagues as well as from various teacher resources to increase and enhance their repertoire of instructional strategies. They are dealing with a wide range of language abilities as well as significant cultural differences in their classes. As reflected in the art/craft conception of teaching, they appear to be able to determine what strategies "work", but display the perceptiveness and confidence to know when they need to change or abandon that strategy if it is, in their estimation, not appropriate.

Chapter 5
Conclusions and Recommendations

There are various conclusions and recommendations to this study to be presented in this chapter. The chapter begins by identifying some common characteristics of the participants and stating recommendations they have made regarding professional development and resources for teaching ESL. This is followed by a return to the original questions of the study and an outline of implications for further research. The chapter concludes with some comments concerning the study from both the teacher-participants and the researcher.

Characteristics

There are some common characteristics which can be identified as representative of this sample of reportedly successful, non-specialist teachers of ESL students. These are listed:

1. In accordance with the literature on teacher knowledge generally, these teachers have gained their knowledge and developed their beliefs about instruction of ESL through a myriad of experiences, both personal and professional, not through specific training in ESL methodologies.

2. They do not rely on prescriptive methodologies, but tend to assess the needs of their students and choose appropriate instructional strategies and resources.

3. Personal interaction with their students is important for creating successful learning environments, establishing a positive personal rapport, creating opportunities to build trust with their students, and, encouraging them to take risks.

4. They view their ESL students as individuals who have come from various cultural backgrounds which are important to recognize.

5. They are aware of, and sensitive to, the sometimes traumatic experiences which many of their ESL students have encountered through moving to a new country. The teachers report that they endeavour to make those students feel comfortable, welcome, and, valued in their new educational milieu.

6. These teachers report they value spontaneity in their instruction which requires intuition, risk-taking, a rich repertoire of instructional strategies, and confidence.

7. Getting to know about the lives of their students is of great importance to these teachers. They endeavour to build upon their ESL students' prior knowledge, determine what students' learning styles are, and further, determine how best the students' achievement can be facilitated and assessed.

8. They appear empathic and knowledgeable and to enjoy genuinely their profession.

Return to the Questions

This section provides an opportunity to briefly return to the questions presented at the beginning of this study. Personal observations of the results of the data gathered with reference to the pertinent literature form the responses to the questions outlined below:

1. <u>**How have non-specialist teachers of ESL gained their personal practical knowledge and beliefs regarding their instructional approaches in teaching ESL?**</u>

Professional experience, academic training, and specific information gathered from their colleagues and other sources regarding ESL strategies have contributed to the accumulated knowledge and beliefs which assist them in making decisions regarding their instructional approaches. This is consistent with the findings of Elbaz (1981) and Clandinin (1985) who argue that teachers' personal practical knowledge is rich and is constructed from a variety of personal and professional experiences. The results of this present study also reflect research which conclude that teachers' beliefs play a significant role in their instructional decision-making (Kindsvatter, Willen & Ishler, 1987; Pennington, 1990; Smith,1991).

The non-specialist teachers of ESL in this study are cognizant of the significant differences in the educational system of the countries of their ESL students and they report that they endeavour to facilitate the transition of these students to their new milieu. The importance of teachers' awareness of the cultural and educational backgrounds of their students is supported in studies by McKeon (1994) and Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez (1994) . They indicate that being aware of the "cultural and linguistic processes that influence a child's perspective on schooling" (McKeon, 1994) as well as knowledge about the "lives of their students outside the school" (Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez, 1994) are integral to planning for instruction.

2. <u>**What role do "images" play in their daily instruction?**</u>

Clandinin (1986) defines an "image" as an organizing concept in teachers' personal practical knowledge which is triggered by experiences in the past, and in turn, influences teachers' actions in instruction. Through the use of narrative, the

five teachers in this study articulated strong images which influence their teaching of ESL students. These ranged from personal experiences in their own schooling to recent classroom events.

Arnold's image is of his student Martina whose self-esteem has been enhanced through her participation in the class's reading "buddy system". Seeking to develop self-esteem in his students has become a major goal for Arnold. Deborah's image as a mother influences her instruction as she hopes to treat every student as she'd like her own children to be treated. Susan's instruction is strongly influenced by the image of her husband's experiences as an eleven-year-old, newly-arrived immigrant. Elizabeth's images of teaching are derived from her experiences as a student in a class with a teacher who, in her view, was examplary. The image which guides Maria's teaching is recalling what it is like to be sitting as a student in class and being taught material for the first time.

3. Does their practice reflect a particular "conception" of teaching?

Overall, their practices strongly reflect an "art/craft" or eclectic conception of teaching, to some extent a "theory/values" conception, and in a very limited way, a "science/research" conception. The framework of conceptions of teaching is presented by Freeman and Richards (1993). The teachers' instruction reflect an art/craft view as a variety of techniques are employed such as the use of themes (which includes curricular integration), direct instruction and cooperative learning. Anther aspect of the art/craft conception is ...[reflecting] on and [assessing] the efficacy of the strategies for the learners..." (Freeman and Richards, 1993, p. 209). The teachers in this present study report that they reflect on their practice and seek alternative strategies if the ones they are using do not seem appropriate.

Their use of learner-centeredness approaches including self-reflective and literature-response activities are examples of the theory-values conception. The "learner-training" aspect of the science/research conception is evident in Elizabeth's attention to and accommodation of, students' varying learning styles, particularly visual learners, in her instruction.

4. Do they follow a particular methodology or program or are their pedagogical decisions based on their own judgement and assessment of students?

Generally, the teachers in this study do not follow a particular methodology or program. Nor have they been influenced by the "method boom" (Stern, 1985) or by any particular TESL method as outlined by Libben and Rossman-Benjamin (1992). A synopsis of their techniques follows.

Both the elementary and secondary teachers use a variety of techniques and resources. The instructional strategies include theme-based instruction, discovery learning, direct teaching, response journals, graphic organizers to promote higher order thinking, the Knowledge Framework, Writers' Worskhop, and cooperative learning. Speaking is emphasized, particularly at the secondary level. These teachers tend to utilize a communicative approach to language instruction as defined by Johnson (1992b) which "places language learning in a social context of interaction" (p. 86).

The emphasis in their classrooms, therefore, is on encouraging social interaction, fostering cooperation, and promoting reflective and self-evaluative skills. Secondary teachers report feeling pressure to cover a great deal of curriculum in a short period of time with secondary ESL students in order to adequately prepare them for the provincial examination.

The teachers tend to rely on their own judgement, observation skills, and on-going assessment in choosing instructional activities. Appropriate classroom resources for instruction of ESL are scarce.

Recommendations

There is a need for further research regarding non-specialist, classroom teachers who are teaching ESL. This is discussed in the section below entitled "Implications for Further Research". There is a more urgent need, however, to seek ways in which school districts might be able to support these teachers through in-service opportunities and the development and/or purchase of appropriate resources for teaching ESL. One objective of this study was to have the teacher-participants articulate a number of professional development needs and resources which would be helpful to them in their daily work with ESL students.

It is hoped that school districts might find these recommendations useful. The recommendations are divided into elementary and secondary sections.

Elementary

In regards to in-service, the two elementary teachers emphasized the need to learn more about curriculum adaptation for ESL students as well as how to set modified learning objectives for them. They also indicate that more time to collaborate and share useful strategies for working with ESL students would be helpful. Both were interested in becoming more aware of what resources are available for teaching ESL.

The secondary teachers indicated overwhelmingly that classroom resources is a major area of need in teaching ESL students. This includes novels and short stories which are appropriate to the reading level, but more importantly, to students' areas of interest. It was also strongly indicated that time is needed to research appropriate materials.

Two of the three teachers emphasized the need for more instructional time to be allocated in the school timetable for ESL Transitional classes. Various individual recommendations for in-service were made. These included sessions on awareness for parents and ESL students to understand the Canadian education system, as well as "practice-oriented" sessions with specific ideas and techniques for developing speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills with ESL students, preferably presented by teachers of Transitional courses.

Additional individual suggestions were made. There is a desire for the development of "culture-free" testing at the secondary level as the tests currently used only indicate that the ESL students are experiencing difficulty with English, something of which the teachers state they are already aware. Another involves the expectations or the amount of curriculum that needs to be covered. One secondary teacher indicated that this needs to be adjusted at the secondary level for regular classes which have a significant number of ESL students registered.

Implications for Further Research

As the population of ESL students continues to increase and more of these students are moving into "mainstream" or "regular" classrooms, more research concerning non-specialist teachers of ESL is necessary. In-depth study and

classroom observation of non-specialist teachers of ESL would be useful in confirming or refuting the stated perceptions in this study of how non-specialists achieve success with ESL students. This could be viewed as academic success or success in developing a positive and productive learning environment for students with limited proficiency in English. This research could ultimately assist in seeking appropriate strategies and classroom resources, and to hone teachers' skills and their ability to cope with these instructional challenges.

Specific suggestions for research are outlined below:

1. Observation for consistency of practice of identified successful non-specialist or "mainstream" teachers of ESL and a randomly-chosen group to verify characteristics of "successful" ESL non-specialist teachers and provide crucial information regarding professional development needs.

2. Further inquiry should include specific case studies or observation of, and interviews with, successful non-specialist elementary and secondary teachers of ESL.

3. Strategies (such as using authentic resources: newspapers, magazines, posters, for example) need to be identified that are proven to assist ESL students not only in acquiring English language skills, but in employing those skills in meaningful ways in other subject areas and in situations both inside and outside school.

4. ESL students could be the focus of observation and interviews to examine their insights on what helps them in their English language development. This could include inquiry regarding their views of teaching strategies and resources, their

perceptions of their own progress in English, and their integration into a new country and a new school, and the related social and emotional experiences.

5. Other related areas worthy of consideration might include the development of resource units for mainstream teachers of ESL and the determination of their success through interviewing teachers and students or by using various forms of testing (examples: standardized tests; documentation of extraneous factors which assist or are a detriment to, students' English language development in using these units).

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the factors in learning situations in the delivery of ESL by identified successful non-specialists. I have studied the reports of five teacher in terms of the source and the routes to their acquisition of knowledge, the beliefs they hold, the images which guide their teaching, where their practices are situated in terms of conceptions of teaching, and what specific strategies and resources they employ.

I deemed it appropriate, during the course of the focus-group interview, to ask the teachers how they felt about their success in teaching ESL, given they had been identified as "successful" by their administrators. Most responded that they felt they were doing their best. Arnold stated:

> I think that in the overall scheme of things, I'm doing O.K....if I really had to take an honest look, I'd probably say I'm doing O.K. and I know that I've, you know, done some really good things for some kids and there's some kids I haven't reached very well.

Maria noted that,

> After teaching twenty years, and as I said, a gamit from the psychiatric patients to the juvenile delinquents, that I've come to an understanding

within myself that I can't be all things to all people. And that there are some kids that I'm not going to reach. But hopefully, there's somebody out there who will.

Elizabeth also reflects on her success by echoing Maria's and Arnold's thoughts that, "you reach some people, you don't reach others". Deborah shared that, in all her years of teaching, there are some students she probably could have done a better job with, and there are those who will remember her fondly.

> Well, I look back on my early days of teaching and I think that there are probably kids who love me forever and will always talk about me as their favourite teacher, but there are probably a few kids in there who I didn't treat very well.

Susan indicated some of her frustrations with a perceived lack of support for programing and timetabling for ESL instruction.

> I could do a lot better if I had a smaller class, if I had more money for books of the appropriate level, if I had more time to go looking for these books. If I had...administrators that come into my class regularly and see exactly what it is we're dealing with and why the students want to write the exam in four months and how sometimes that's trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so please don't cut the ESL time in half for them and take away the support block because they really need it.

It is important to also point out that these teachers spend much of their time in isolation from colleagues, not unlike the majority of the teaching profession and the history and nature of teaching and schools. They reported that even opportunities to work with the ESL specialist in their schools are limited mainly by time constraints. Clearly, however, the teachers in this study actively seek help from others and endeavour to collaborate with others as much as possible. From this researcher's perspective, it was refreshing to observe that they display a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm for their profession.

They enjoyed the opportunity to get together to share their experiences in working with ESL students. They wanted to state emphatically that opportunities to do this are extremely important and would assist in contributing in a very positive way to the amelioration of the ESL instruction by classroom teachers. Maria observed, "It was [an] informative experience to hear my colleagues speak about their situations and their perceptions", and Susan commented that "The focus interview was refreshing - such positive people who are trying all the time! Makes me feel less isolated and encouraged!".

Clair (1993) has suggested that teacher study groups might be an alternative solution to "one-shot professional development workshops that may or may not address issues pertinent to mainstream teachers" (p. 192). This proposal underlines the importance of not only ensuring that the in-service be of real and appropriate value to mainstream teachers of ESL, but it emphasizes that they need to have time and opportunities to discuss their practice. This is reflected in Deborah's comments during the focus-group interview.

> I hope that I keep connecting with really wonderful other educators and, I
> guess one of the things that I would like to make a statement about, if
> anybody is out there listening, is that we don't have enough time to talk
> with other teachers about our teaching practice. And this kind of thing here
> today...it's wonderful to hear what other people are doing because
> sometimes you really feel like you're out in the hinterland there, and that
> nobody else is thinking about kids in the way that you are.

Whether the study group approach is considered or the various suggestions offered by the teachers in this study, it is imperative that school districts, particularly where the population of ESL students is rapidly increasing, begin to seriously invest in on-going, meaningful support for mainstream teachers who are teaching ESL. This is not a case of a small group of teachers seeking assistance for a small group of students. As the TESOL study in Rigg and Allen (1989) reveals,

"every classroom teacher at some time during his or her career, will have at least one student who speaks English as a second language" (p. vii).

To conclude, I have come to understand to some extent through this study, what 'drives' teachers who find themselves in instructional situations which are unfamiliar to them. I have gained some insight into what they do to survive in those situations. I believe I have a clearer understanding of what other non-specialist teachers have perhaps done, and must continue to do, in order to be successful because, in retrospect, the characteristics of the teachers in this study clarify the processes that my colleagues in the French Immersion program and my father must have gone through to achieve what they did with their students. Fundamentally, I think my curiosity about non-specialists stems originally from finding myself in that position from time to time. I can empathize with the terror of being faced with teaching something you really know nothing about!

In teaching, one is always faced with new students and new challenges, even if you teach the same grade level or cover the same material for many years. But finding yourself in completely unfamiliar territory with expectations from students, administrators, and parents can be a harrowing experience. Indeed, in that situation, special qualities are required to be successful.

In the following quote, Maxine Greene (1981) sums up what she views as characteristics of good teachers. This description is most applicable to the teachers who participated in this study.

> They need to be the kinds of teachers equipped to make practical judgments on the grounds of what they have learned in the realms of theory, what they have discovered from empirical research, what they understand about

children and youth, and what they understand about themselves. They need to be the kinds of teachers who can make their own thinking visible to the young, to manifest the ways in which the modes of procedure in each domain are put to work, to submit their own judgments to the critical scrutiny of those they teach, to open perspectives, to open worlds (Greene, 1978 in Jagla, 1994, p. 24).

Appendix A – Participants' Letter

Teacher
Address

RE: **An Examination of Significant Factors in Learning Situations in the Delivery of E.S.L. by Non-Specialists**

Dear   ,

    Many thanks for agreeing to participate in the above-named study. I am enclosing the following documentation:

1. Consent Form (blue)
2. Questionnaire
3. Research Methodology and Procedures (This is referred to on the
    Consent Form as the "document".)

    Please complete the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge. Feel free to phone me at () if you require clarification. I will need to receive the completed Questionnaire before Tuesday, February 28, 1995. I would be pleased to come and pick it up at your school, or you can drop it off at () at any time if that is convenient. The blue Consent Form should be included with the Questionnaire.

    As you are aware, the information in the Questionnaire will be used to determine if you will be required to attend the Focus-Group Interview with approximately four other teachers. The interview will take approximately one hour. If you do take part in the interview, I will send you an Interview Schedule a few days ahead of time to give you a clear idea of what will be discussed.

    The interview will be held on either Monday, March 6 or Tuesday, March 7, 1995 at 3:45 p.m. at (). I will let you know the exact date as soon as possible.

    I very much appreciate your willingness to participate in this study.

Yours truly,

Dorothy Joyce

An Examination of Significant Factors in Learning Situations in the Delivery of ESL by Non-Specialists

Methodology

This study will be conducted in a major school district in the lower mainland area of British Columbia. In January, 1995, participants (successful non-specialist teachers of ESL) in Stage 1 will be identified by using a "reputational approach" (Bonjean, Hill, McLemore, 1967, p. 192). Elementary and secondary administrators as well as district-level personnel will be asked to identify classroom teachers who, in their view, are successful teachers of ESL. The President of the local teachers' association has been apprised and is in support of, the approach to be used in this study.

Permission for teachers to participate in the study will be sought by requesting that participants complete Form #2 (attached) which outlines the procedures involved. These will include completing a short questionnaire and possibly participating in an interview. A questionnaire (Appendix B) will the be distributed to those teachers. In Stage 2 of the study (February, 1995), I will conduct a "focus-group interview" (Templeton, 1994, p. 4) with up to five participants, using an Interview Schedule (Appendix D) as a basis for discussion. This study is limited as the sample (participants in Stage 2) will not be representative in any way of a particular level (elementary or secondary). Since the sample is not representative and further since the study is ethnographic in nature, the essential characteristic of

the sample is that participants be well-regarded by their administrators in the ESL non-specialist role.

The interview will be recorded on audio tape only (not video tape) to ensure the anonymity of the participants. It will be transcribed in the thesis. All subjects will be assigned fictitious names to be used in all reports of the data. At the conclusion of the study, audio tapes and questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Dorothy Joyce's office.

The data collected will compare the participants' development of knowledge and their beliefs about teaching ESL to established theories of this nature outlined in the literature review. The results of these comparisons will have implications for school districts as recommendations will subsequently be made regarding:

- program development in ESL

- staff development for non-specialist ESL teachers (and perhaps ESL specialists)

- development and/or purchase of instructional resources to assist ESL teachers in the regular classroom and in "content areas"

Appendix B – Questionnaire

An Examination of Significant Factors in Learning Situations in the Delivery of
E.S.L. by Non-Specialists

1.Which grade level(s) do you presently teach?   _____

2. What percentage of ESL students are enrolled   _____
in your classes/courses?

3. Have you taken any formal training in
ESL Methodology?   _____
If so, please describe the training.

_____

4. What ESL in-service opportunities are made available to you (at the school or
district level)?

_____

5. Is the above in-service adequate and appropriate to your needs?

_____

6. What other steps have you taken personally to acquire information on teaching
ESL students?

_____

7. Do you keep current with recent literature that deals with teaching ESL (in the
"regular" classroom or generally)? Please describe briefly.

_____

8. Do you belong to a professional ESL organization (provincial/national/
international)? If so, please name the organization(s).

_____

9. In what year did you complete your teacher training? _____

10. For how many years have you been teaching ESL
students in your classes? _____

11. Do you speak more than one language? If so, please name them.

_____

12. Have you ever taught a second language such as French, Spanish, etc.? If so, at what level and for approximately how many years?

_____

YOUR   NAME:_____

SCHOOL:_____

The information you are providing in this questionnaire will be held <u>confidential</u> by me. If selected for the Focus Group Interview, you will be known by <u>only</u> those who will be participating (up to four other teachers and myself). The confidentiality of the group will be assured by mutual agreement before the beginning of the interview. Please indicate below the <u>pseudonym</u> (first name only) by which you would like to be referred both during the actual interview and in the written form which will appear verbatim in the thesis.

NAME:_____

Many thanks!

Appendix C – Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN:
AN EXAMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT FACTORS IN LEARNING SITUATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF ESL BY NON-SPECIALISTS

The university and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures involved. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures of this research project and that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Having been asked by _____*Dorothy Joyce and Dr. Kelleen Toohey*_____ of the
_____*Faculty of Education*_____Dept./School/Faculty of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project experiment, I have read the procedures specified in the document.

I understand the procedures to be used in this experiment.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this experiment at any time.

I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the experiment with the chief researcher named above or with ____*Dr. Robin Barrow*_____
Chair/Director/<u>Dean</u> of _____*Faculty of Education*_____ Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6. Telephone: 291-3395

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, by contacting:
Dorothy Joyce -
I have been informed that the research material <u>will</u>/will not be held confidential by the principal investigator.

I agree to participate by :

responding to a questionnaire and possibly participating in a focus-group interview, as well as completing a needs survey as described in the document referred to above, during the period: *February and March, 1995.* at:
NAME: (please print): _____
ADDRESS: _____
SIGNATURE: _____WITNESS:_____
DATE:_____

ONCE SIGNED, A COPY OF THIS
CONSENT FORM AND A SUBJECT
FEEDBACK FORM SHOULD BE
PROVIDED TO YOU.

Appendix D – Interview Schedule

<u>Instruction</u>

1. What general instructional strategies do you employ (Cooperative Learning, Curricular Integration, etc.)?

2. Do you modify the curriculum to meet the needs of your ESL students? If so, what you consider when making those modifications?

3. Do you adapt your teaching strategies for the ESL students? If so, what do you consider when making these adaptations?

4. Do you promote language development for ESL students through instruction in "content areas" such as Mathematics, Science, etc.?

5. In your opinion, which subjects are easiest to teach to ESL students? The most difficult?

6. Do you have a tendency to teach ESL students using methodology from a specific set of resources/materials or do you adapt a variety of resources/materials according to your own instructional approach?

7. What types of materials are best-suited to the ESL students in your class (specific programs, print and non-print material, etc.)?

<u>ESL Students</u>

1. In your opinion, is a regular classroom setting better suited to an ESL student than a "pull-out" program? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

2. Do you have an opportunity to work with an ESL specialist in your school on a fairly regular basis? If so, what type of planning/discussion takes place?

3. How do you feel the ESL specialist can be of most assistance to you?

<u>Personal Information</u>

1. Do you consider yourself to be a "successful" teacher of ESL? If so, please describe your success. If not, please elaborate.

2. Do you feel your overall approach to instruction (not necessarily related to ESL) has changed since you began teaching? If so, in what way(s)?

3. Can you describe the influences (persons, methodologies, etc.) in your approach to teaching in general and teaching ESL students specifically?

Appendix E – Focus-Group Interview

Interviewer - The title of my research as you know is "An Examination of the Factors in the Delivery of ESL by Non-Specialists" and you are aware that you have been identified as effective teachers of ESL by your administrators, although you are not ESL specialists by definition. The intent of this focus-group interview is to gather more in-depth information about you and your teaching. So, I'd like to begin, and I've brought this little card here just to remind you - you can take turns - but, I'd like to ask you briefly to tell us about yourself, your teaching experience. I want you to point out maybe the years of teaching experience (that varies in the group, and there shouldn't be any comparison), where you grew up and studied, a bit about your teaching experience and how long you've been teaching ESL students in your classes or your courses. Maybe, just briefly, maybe about a minute each. Is there anyone who would like to begin?

Susan - I grew up on North Vancouver. I went to school in North Vancouver. I did my Bachelor's in English Honours at U.B.C. Then I worked in business for a couple of years downtown and then I did my P.D.P. at Simon Fraser and I've been teaching for about four and a half years and I've had, been doing ESL courses since the beginning, since I started.

Interviewer - Who would like to go next?

Maria - I grew up in Winnipeg and I got my Bachelor's degree at the University of Manitoba and then moved to Ontario and started teaching in Kingston, Ontario in a psychiatric hospital and then we moved out here and I taught at the Youth Detention Centre and then went into a regular high school from there. And I

taught EMH students for eight years and after that I went to Midvale and I've been teaching English classes for the last five years so in total I have, I think it's twenty years, the last time I checked it was twenty years.

Interviewer - ...and EMH means...

Maria - Educationally Mentally Handicapped; I don't think that's the term they're using now, it was certainly used when I was teaching there.

Interviewer - O.K., Thanks.

Elizabeth - I'll go. I grew up in Vancouver. Studied at U.B.C. Did the teacher course out at U.B.C., the twelve-month teacher course. I've been teaching in Centretown (district) for three years. This is my third year of teaching and as far as ESL students...I've had ESL students in my classes since my first year of teaching. I did some part-time work in an ESL school but it was very low-key, very part-time, part-time work.

Interviewer - O.K., Thank you.

Deborah - Sure, I'll go next. But you might run out of tape. I grew up in the north end of Winnipeg and I did my first year of teacher training at the University of Manitoba. We moved then to Alberta. I taught Kindergarten in Calgary and then took some time off to be a full-time Mum. Then I went back to the University of Lethbridge and finished my Bachelor's degree with a Major in English, taught Grade 5/6 where we lived in Alberta and then moved back to Manitoba at which time I taught at an Indian Reserve school, which was K to 7. I was

teacher/principal. Then in a Grade 2/3 dual- track French Immersion school. Then K to 10 Hutterite colony teacher/principal, one-room school. And then we moved here. And...I also taught for Lethbridge Community College, Adult Basic Education, and taught in Lethbridge Correctional Institute for a short time, just a part-time job while I was going to university and then we moved here and I got on as a Community School Coordinator, did that for four years, then a Grade 2/3 at Highridge School and Grade 4/5 at Hillview and, here we go, 6/7, Head Teacher, at Canning. So, I've really done alot. And ESL students have always been in my classes...starting in 1969 when I had one ESL student in my class to when I taught at the Hutterite colony when all of my students were ESL, so certainly I have a high level of ESL students in my class.

Arnold - I grew up in Burnaby, born and bred, and I did my...I did a Bachelor of Education at U.B.C. and have been teaching since 1988, so seven years...and I've taught here in Centretown that whole time so it's...I've had a healthy population of ESL students in every class every year so...

Interviewer - O. K....does anyone want to add anything that they might have forgotten to say at the beginning? Maria?

Maria - I don't think I said how long I had ESL students in my class. I think the five years I've had at Midvale I've had ESL students every year or a class of transitional and one year at Delhaven I had a transitional class...that would be six years... and I also...while I was at Midvale I also got my fifth year at S.F.U.

Interviewer - Susan, did you mention the ESL kids in your class?

Susan - I thought so but I'll say it again just in case. I have...since I began I started...I did a night school course when I just first got my degree and it was actually students that couldn't quite cut the English 11 even so that turned out being a transitional course and when I started at Midvale the following September they gave me the first transitional courses at Midvale and it's grown from there so I've always had at least one and often more than one transitional course and I've worked with their alternate program.

Interviewer - But I think you mentioned that in the questionnaire, as well.

Susan - Yes.

Deborah - I forgot to mention that I have been working on my Masters at Simon Fraser and I've done all the course work.

Interviewer - Great. Can you just talk... I asked you to think about just your general instructional practices, that is, not necessarily to do with, you know, thinking about the ESL kids in your class, but, what kind of general practices do you use when you plan for your teaching. Some people use cooperative learning as a base. Some people use themes as a base. Can you just speak briefly about your general instructional practices? Anyone?

Deborah - I'll start. I think...I really like to use themes. But I don't like to use them for great huge long periods of time. And then I interdisperse them with some direct teaching, some very old-fashioned, traditional stuff. And I do certainly inject lots of cooperative learning and higher-level thinking skills. I would say my approach is flexible and needs to be where I am right now.

Interviewer - O.K. Someone else? Maria?

Maria - I use...I love discovery learning, where I present the students with material and they have to find...they have to relate to it on a personal level and they have to find what it means to them. There is some direct instruction but not a lot. I really prefer to have the students figure it out for themselves and I'm a guide to help them with that. They either do that individually or in partners or in groups. And then evaluation is very little testing, it's personal responses to what we've been studying...so that's the techniques that I like to use.

Interviewer - Later on, I'm going to ask you about the evolution of your instructional practices as well, so, we'll just keep that in mind. Anyone else want to speak of...about their practices?

Elizabeth - I'll go next. Because I've only been teaching for three years, I'm still in the playing process of doing lots of different things. I find, similar to Deborah, that I'm quite relaxed and laid back in the way that I do things. I like to try and use as many techniques as possible, just because there are different types of learners, individual, group, visual...it just really varies on what we're doing and trying to bring in different ways of learning something, and just trying to incorporate lots of different methods, approaches.

Interviewer - Arnold or Susan?

Susan - With the transitional, and that's what I'm sort of keeping in mind when I'm doing this conversation...with the transitional students I find two things: I find

that at the beginning of the year, I start off doing a lot of direct teaching because they're very comfortable and they also, because of the way the course is set up, there can be a real range of ability and background and I find that they just don't have the vocabulary to discuss, if it's a transitional 10 course, a novel... so I find that I give them the direct teaching so that they get that base. As the year goes on, and they get a bit more comfortable with each other, because, of course, in a lot of the cultures, boys don't work with girls and vice-versa so as they start to slowly get more comfortable with that, then I begin to put them into small groups, partners, whatever and we go from there. So I find the actual approach develops over the course of the year as those students get a lot more comfortable. The other thing I find too, is just for sheer curriculum that I have to give students in a transitional 10 course, it's...a lot of it is sort of...you know...here it is...here it is...run with it, go with it, but then doubling back, too, because the emphasis...you have to pick up all the strands, particularly the Speaking and there's only so much time so...I find it's...probably, the point I'm trying to make is that Speaking gets a lot more time than it does in a normal class, normal being a regular 10 class where there aren't a lot of ESL students because they *do* a lot of the speaking...I mean, it's trying to get them to be quiet that's sometimes more of a challenge...but not these kids.

Arnold - ...a little bit of everything. I think it's a little different being an Elementary teacher, I have my one class all day long so I do do a variety of stuff. I would say that my basic approach is probably student-directed in that my focus with my class is...I probably start the year with a fair amount of teacher-directed stuff and my goal is to work toward students who are very self-directed...so giving them a lot of choice... a lot of cooperative stuff, a lot of stuff where they're developing the criteria... in a lot of cases, the curriculum for themselves. I basically take a thematic approach and

then just have the kids work within my theme and often choose or select activities and things that they...

Interviewer - You have a Grade...

Arnold - ...5/6

Interviewer - ...and Deborah, you have a 6/7...

Deborah - Yes.

Interviewer - I really do want to move into a discussion...you've established sort of what your general approaches are. Now, can you tell me about your approach with ESL kids? Do you consciously, for instance, modify the curriculum or adapt some strategies for those kids? What do you do to accommodate those kids in your class?

Susan - I definitely modify the curriculum. Again, I'm taking a Transitional 10 course. Now, some of the students in that course may have gone through our ESL program, some of them may have had English in their native country to a level where they're...they might just swim, so they'll throw them into the transitional class because they're trying to advance them as quickly as possible so there's a great deal of pressure on *us* because these kids want to write their government exam in two years or less, because a lot of them are eighteen years old in a Grade 10 class. There's a great deal of pressure to move them through. So, I find that I will often take, say a Grade 8 or 9 level novel, or one that we might teach to a Modified 10 student, and use that as a base novel for a novel unit. I find that they have to have some Shakespeare in Transitional 10 or they're lost in 11, so I will do a modified

version of Romeo and Juliet, a couple of scenes, lots of video, things to get them listening...there's no way they can tackle the whole play so I wouldn't do that with them. The other thing I find and, we're limited for time on this, and I think Maria would agree with me, is that you can't send them home to write a major assignment because it comes back on fax paper. Somebody else has done it, because, of course, they just want to get through. So in order to deal with that, we've had to come up with strategies where, 'this is your writing, you do the work'. So if we're working on an essay, instead of saying "Well, we'll discuss it, we'll work on it, this is the style, and then the two classes will do some peer-editing, and you take it home, and two classes later we'll do another peer-editing", they have to write the whole thing in class and hand in everything at the end of the day, and it takes a lot of time but it's the only way we can guarantee that it is *their* writing. So this awful part of teaching them is at the same time saying, 'O.K., now, we're going to have to cut it off so that I know it's your work" and I don't like thinking that way, but it's reality.

Interviewer - For a majority?

Susan - I'd say that if...every so often I will let them take an assignment home, like a ten-mark paragraph or something, simply because I want them to have more writing experience, but I will mark it out of a lower base, and I guess it depends on the class. The highest I've had is fifty, sixty per cent have come back looking remarkably better than anything they've ever done for me in class...which is quite a high percentage.

Interviewer - Anything else? We're talking about how you modify or adapt your strategies or your curriculum to incorporate your ESL kids.

Deborah - I try really hard not to put a lot of pressure on my ESL kids because they get so uncomfortable...so many of them. And I do as much trust-building kinds of things with them as I possibly can to fit in as quickly as they arrive. And for some of them, it takes a lot longer for them to feel like they can trust you and take a risk And then I find that until they reach that point...*when* they reach that point, they take off...like fire, but until they reach that point, I really modify everything. I expect less, I give them more help, I make sure they get more support from the ESL teacher. We have a strong pull-out program which, you know, that's the way it operates at our school.

Interviewer - Does that complement what you're doing?

Deborah - It doesn't interfere, so, sometimes it does complement what we're doing in class, other times, I would say not necessarily, but it doesn't interfere, because our ESL teacher's really more a nurturing kind of person and she sees the need to build trust in so many of the students as well. But, how do I modify? Is that a part of this?

Interviewer - What do you think about, I guess, is what I'm getting at. What so you think about when you're doing your planning, or, yes, to modify your curriculum, or you've mentioned just now that your level of expectation is different.

Deborah - Yes. Well, I expect them to come out with the same learning outcomes, but the way they represent that knowledge is quite often different, and I give them other options and other choices. Now, sometimes they don't feel as comfortable with that as I would like them to feel, but I have all kinds of students representing

their knowledge in all kinds of different ways. So once they see that 'Oh, I guess it's O.K. for me not to hand in an essay on this, when other kids in the class are building projects, or doing charts or doing artwork that supports this, then they feel better about it. But it takes awhile for them to reach that level, depending on what their cultural background is. And I don't reach all of them. I wish I did, but I don't.

Elizabeth - As far as, well, we don't have transitional classes at Porter so that makes it a little difficult sometimes because you can have many different levels of students coming in and often, students come in just to audit, purely and simply, just to audit because their level of English is barely at a level where they really understand what's going on. What I try to do when I get ESL students that come in is the same...try to make a very comfortable environment, make sure that I spend time with them on the side to get them up to date with what we're doing, to make sure they understand that...to relieve some of the pressure that...*bam*...they're not going to have to go into this and produce, produce, produce as much as everyone else. In Social Studies, in Humanities, as far as modification...there are choices and options in essays that we write, in books that we read, levels, and sometimes they're given, you know, 'If you want to get an A, these are the books', and that's just not only ESL, that's depending on the level of the students in the class for various reasons. But again, you mostly try to make them feel comfortable, and as has been mentioned before, once the level of comfort is there, verbally...and, again, I do a lot of verbal work when I give instructions, when I put things on the overhead, I've always got it written as well as, you know, speaking to what we're doing. When they start to feel more comfortable, they really do fly, with the verbal, starting you know, just with pair work, then into fours, and it's amazing. I have some kids that came in and just would say nothing, really quiet, shy. And now, we'll read what they've written in front of the class and ask questions and really be

involved in the class and it's...although the level of English might not be there and people are on the edge of their seats waiting to hear what's coming out, but it's wonderful because they do feel comfortable and, hopefully the comfort level is there, that they feel allright to participate.

Interviewer - So that's a goal that you have...

Elizabeth - Yes.

Maria - I will speak next. One of the goals that I have at the beginning of the year, as Susan mentioned, is Speaking. They will read, they will write, but they will not speak. And so I spend a good part of the time, first part of the second term, having class discussions. Every day, we talk. And they get marks for it. That's the only motivator they have. They can't see that there's any need for speaking English every day, except that they're going to get mark for it. And so we have discussions and we have a broad range of topics, they bring the topics to be discussed and by the time we're finished talking for about four months, then they know each other well enough that they feel comfortable about saying anything, and then they will volunteer when we're talking about the curriculum work itself. So, I really work hard on that ability and the comfort with the Speaking skills so when we do go into groups and partners, then they are speaking English because otherwise I found what was happening was that they would pick a partner who was of the same cultural group, and speak the native language and I was having to go around saying, 'This is an English class. Please speak English'. So, once they develop that ability and that comfort in speaking English in front of the whole group, then speaking with another person is not difficult at all. So that's one thing that I do. In terms of modification, for example, the Shakespeare....I have a Transitional English

11 class. I would say sixty percent of my class are going to be graduating in June. They're writing the government exam. And they really feel the pressure. They have to know how to analyze Shakespeare, they have to know how to analyze a piece of fiction, poetry, and so there's a lot of pulling out the deeper meaning which a lot of them have real trouble with.

Interviewer - It's a difficult concept even in your own language...

Maria - That's right.

Interviewer - ...in some respects, let alone having to express yourself in a second language.

Maria - So I...we're doing MacBeth and for the first act, basically, I read it to them and translated, translated as we went along. And then the second act, they had to read certain scenes and they had to tell me what was going on and now they're getting to the deeper analysis where they're in groups and the groups are coming together to find out what's happening and what is the motivation, conflict, and suspense, etc. So, they find that difficult, they really do, but I do a lot more of the translating than I do for a regular English class.

Interviewer - Arnold?

Arnold - I find the word 'modification' always a difficult one for me because I don't feel I modify for ESL students any more than I do for other students in my class and that's probably because most of my kids are on individual learning contracts. So everything is independent as it is. I guess, so I'm modifying for everyone. If I had to

look at specifically the ESL kids I guess, for example, right now we're doing a unit on mysteries. As the novel-study component of that, we went to the Library. Everyone took out their own novel, so everyone was working at a completely different level anyways, so my ESL students just took, you know, the "Nate the Great" so a couple of kids were working out of "Nate the Great" novels. But it's their level. It's where they're at. So, I guess I am modifying but I don't...I guess I don't feel like I single them out in the way that I modify.

Interviewer -What...I understand. What percentage, say, of ESL kids do you have?

Arnold - I have thirty. I have two students whose English is Level 1, Level 2. They barely speak any English whatsoever. And I have three other students who are considered Level 3 or 4 where they function in the classroom, however, their...they don't...their grammar is not correct, their English is not correct...many of...their vocabulary is very low for someone their age.

Interviewer - One thing I wanted to say at this point was, now that you have sort of an idea where you all are and what you're doing, please feel free to ask questions of each other as well. It shouldn't be that...necessarily that I pose a question and everybody answers the same question. Feel free to interact. That's certainly up to you.

Susan - Then I just want to add one thing to what...both Deborah and Elizabeth said this...and I think that it's absolutely...I think it's key in teaching any student...different teachers teach in different ways, but with ESL students I think it's crucial and that is that whole idea of trust-building. And I think with ESL students, even more so than regular students, especially in a high school where they see you,

they see me once a day and in other cases, it's every other day, it's absolutely crucial that before I feel I can get them to perform in a classroom, that they know that they are valued for a person because they're totally lost. I mean culture shock, for all of them is a definite thing they're dealing with on top of every other adolescent problem that the students who've grown up here have. They don't know, some of them, you know, they don't know simple things. 'I haven't been to a movie theatre'. They haven't been...they don't know how to go downtown and they don't know how to ask for that, and they're trying the very best they can to sort of fit in and that's really important in their age group, particularly. And I think that... I mean... I said something to a student the other day, he had a cough and I'd asked him if he'd gone to the doctor, this sort of stuff. And his comment to me when I finished the conversation, he said, "Thank you for your concern". But it just dawned on me again there that that human connection is so crucial with those students, more so than what we modify, I think. If they think they're valued, they'll do everything they can to learn almost for *you* rather than for themselves.

Interviewer - And that's similar to what we saying earlier. You know, you've all mentioned different things and obviously you're working at different levels and so on, but I'm wondering if, in your experience, if you are influenced in any way by a particular, by particular resources, if you are finding some things that are very, very useful or if there is a particular methodology that you've learned that's been helpful. One question I asked on the questionnaire was if you had ever taught a second language other than English. Some of you have and some of you have not. Is there anything you go in with that you know works? You know that it's successful for you. Any kind of...sometimes it even comes out of a specific resource that we use, you know, that has a certain way of approaching, I don't know, language development, or use of themes, or whatever. Can anyone comment on

that? Anything that's sort of overriding, that you depend on or that has influenced you in any way? Or do you end up taking an understanding or your own sort of innate methodology and using alot of various materials to fit into that? What's your view?

Arnold - I feel like I recreate the wheel every year. That's how I feel. I have not found anything that is particularly useful or helpful, specifically as a resource to me. I guess certain...I think part of that comes from too, and I'm going to skip ahead a little bit in that I know that one of your questions is going to be is how our teaching has changed over the years and I know that when I began, I was a very textbook-oriented teacher and I followed the curriculum very much to the "T" and that kind of thing and...I'll get fired...I probably don't follow curriculum at all anymore. I teach what the kids need, not what the book says I'm supposed to tell them. And, so I feel like depending on who the kids are, and what my situation is in the classroom, that'll totally determine what it is I'm doing and covering and so my resources are totally different every time because, for example, this is the first time I've ever done a mystery unit. So, my resources are being totally recreated for this situation.

Interviewer - I'm going to put you on the spot, Arnold. You mentioned you teach 'what kids need'. How do you know what they need?

Arnold - I think a lot of it is professional judgement. A lot of that is also the on-going assessment and evaluation we're doing throughout all your time working with the kids. I interact with my kids an awful lot. So, for example, in Writer's Workshop, I'm working individually with each kid, at least twice a week, so I'm writing with them, they're writing with me, we're writing together, their ideas are

coming out. I get a really clear picture of the level of their English. I get a picture of the level of their writing ability, their understanding of grammar, vocabulary. So, I would get a really good sense of where my kids are at, and so often a lesson will be...I'll pull a group of kids aside that I really know need to work on this, that, and the other thing and do some direct instruction with a small group, rather than the whole class. So I think knowing what my kids need is...professional judgement, along with just my interactions with the kids so much... it's sort of that really informal assessment and evaluation.

Interviewer - Thank you. I just wanted to clarify that point. Anyone else like to comment on if...what you use, if you have a specific methodology or if you take your own and adapt resources that you can find?

Maria - Oh, no. I like the ideas of Mary Kooy from S.F.U. I use the Writing Response Log. I use the Writing (inaudible) where the students are responding on a personal level to whatever it is we're working on, whether it's a scene in Shakespeare or whether it's a short story or part of a novel or a play and then we use that as a jumping off point for discussion and for the rest of the work we're going to do whether it's a writing assignment, etc., so I use that a lot. I was going to say that it's nice that you (Arnold) have that flexibility to be able to work to what the kids need, whereas, the stage I'm at, as I said, in four months they're writing the government exam...according to those kids, what they need is to pass that exam and I have to give them what they need for that exam...

Susan - ... and alot of them are very academic-focussed kids, too, and there's nothing..."Here's the magic pill, take it!"

Deborah - I find that mine...Using themes is something that I find pretty successful with most kids and I have a really diverse lot, but because you're integrating curriculum in so many different areas, you're pumping vocabulary into them all the time. That seems to be really beneficial to the ESL kids I work with. Other than that...I'm new to this grade level in this province so, this is all brand new curricula for me so I'm just keeping one step ahead of them. And sometimes it's hard to tell where you're going because you've never been there before and, so, I'm just sort of mucking along with them, to be really honest, in lots of ways, but they seem to be doing O.K. and they're very forgiving...what you (Susan) said about them being focussed academically and so many of my students that come from other countries are really 'down to business' kids and they have trouble dealing with this relaxed style that I have in my classroom sometimes. That's very challenging for some of them. After awhile they get accustomed to it but...

Susan - Do you find they have difficulties...in groups...if it requires a lot of social interaction...and that's probably the number one challenge for them, whereas with our native students here, it's...the number one challenge would be writing or reading or something...

Deborah - Well, the whole notion of cooperation is difficult for so many of them.

Susan - Yes.

Deborah - They're from very competitive environments where being on top was the only thing that matters. So cooperative learning strategies are not always really popular with my ESL students....Oh, you asked about resources before...our English as a Second Language Intermediate person, specialist in the school, is really big on

Knowledge Frameworks, learning frameworks, and I do some of those but I do them incidentally rather than teaching them to everybody as a direct instructional kind of approach where you're doing Venn Diagrams or Fishbones or whatever it is that is common to that particular bunch of knowledge that you're doing. But she finds that that's *very* effective with ESL kids. So if I'm struggling with getting a concept across in Social Studies, for example, and I'll say, "You know, we've got the vocabulary and we seem to have gone through this but this person just isn't understanding the relationship between these, what do you suggest?" Then she'll quite often take a small group of them, and not just ESL kids but other kids as well, and do some of the Knowledge Frameworks and they seem quite successful, so I may find out more about that in the near future... but I ask everybody for help. If something's not working with this student, I just keep asking and looking for more help wherever it comes from and I try whatever different strategies I can come up with...

Interviewer - ...whatever is successful...

Deborah - Yes...because they're all different.

Interviewer - Anyone else like to respond to this point?

Elizabeth - Just to go along with that...again, I'm third year so I'm still grasping all these different things and...two of the courses I'm teaching this year I haven't taught before so, I'm about a week ahead, sometimes half an hour ahead of what I'm teaching, and...but I try to include as many visuals as I can...I found for myself...I mean, I'm a very visual learner so I found for myself it was a good thing and then when I was actually taking some language courses, I just found that

visually, it can be very...you can talk and talk and write and write but if you visually have something up there, it's easier to grasp some ideas...as well as other students find that a good way to grasp information...writing logs, I do the same thing, formal and informal, a lot of time, we'll bring up a topic, an issue and I'll have them brainstorm by themselves for a minute, get down a definition, get down a few notes, share with a partner, share with the class, open it up to a discussion, so start individually, and as they're doing that, focus on the students that do need a little help as far as explaining what it is I'm looking for, focussing in, then go talk to the ESL students or the students that are just a little bit...or the modified students, depending on who it is or, any of them, really, and just starting it small and building to a group discussion...

Interviewer - Well, just to reassure you, we've all done the "half-hour ahead" business...mine was topographic maps, but that's another story. Did you have a chance to respond to that, Susan, just in terms of resources and methodologies and so on?

Susan - The same, I mean a little bit of what everybody's saying here, that...ask everybody for help...I have one woman on staff who's an angel and she actually teaches ESL and together we sort of...she came from an ESL background and I came from an English background and together we sort of developed a language development program at school...the whole idea of visuals...I mean, when you sense it's not working, just dropping everything and changing gears drastically and immediately, even if you don't know what you're going to do in the next five minutes, what you're doing now is no good at all, so what the heck, out it goes. Trying to get the kids involved in some way, whether it's a writing journal or a response...sometimes it's a game. They're no good to you if they're

tuned out, but if it is a game, it's got to be on vocabulary that will be on the government exam, I mean, they have to see purpose to this. But, yes, a real mix of what's all been said.

Interviewer - That is in some ways the crux of what I'm trying to find out...it involves taking different approaches to this, but I'd like to know, and that's why I asked you that clarifying question, now, how do you know, given that you are not a defined ESL specialist, and I suppose this is not unlike anything else that one would teach, but how do you know what it is that they need and how do you know when to intervene and to get there? From what I'm hearing, a lot of you do consult with colleagues. But is there anything else that just seems to be innate with you?

Susan - I ask them. I have asked students. I have said to them...I just came back from leave so I wasn't too sure exactly where they were at and I will say to them, "You all look sort of...hello! dazed. Do you know what a topic sentence is?" And...O.K., fine you're bored, on to the next one. And it doesn't hurt to ask them, "*Do* you understand this?"

Maria - "Are you having trouble?"

Arnold - A lot of self-evaluation...

Susan - ...and they will tell you, very quickly.

Arnold - I think a lot of conferencing with the kids, whether it's as a group or individually, I think they're pretty aware of what they're capable of doing, and, you know, I think there's been a shift in education towards a lot more self-evaluation

and people being a lot more open, and communicative about where it is you're at, I think kids are becoming more and more aware of really, you know, that self-check of, "Yeah, I understand what you're doing." or, "No, I really don't have a clue what you're talking about".

Interviewer - ...and you have to foster the environment to make them feel comfortable.

Arnold - Exactly. Exactly. Could I just take a second...I just thought of two things...resource people, for me, is probably one resource I do rely on, and rely on all the time. And the other thing that I realized, and it just clued with me that I use a lot, and I just didn't think of it till now, is buddying, and I don't mean just within my class. I have a lot...we do a lot of buddy reading with other classes in the school. And I partner up kids in my room, including my ESL students, with another grade and what we do is I just take the really low from their class and buddy them with my ESL students so that my students are still doing the teaching, my ESL students, regardless, even...I shouldn't name names, but, Martina, in my class, who, literally, is functioning barely, well talking about a half-hour ahead, you know, she's teaching a Kindergartner how to say her letters and Martina just barely knows her letters, but it's still giving her the sense of accomplishment, and she knows something, and putting her in the teaching position is really giving her the opportunity to fully grasp and understand what she's doing and it's sure a self-esteem builder for her. So that is one thing I do some of the time.

Interviewer - Anyone else like to add anything? It might come up later, but you know, some of you have also mentioned...We talked about some different methodologies and some resources and what not and, yes, I did want to ask you

about the evolution of your teaching and so on. But before we get to that, I'd like for you to tell me, if you know, of anything has influenced you, sort of in a major way, if you've had, do you think about your classroom experiences, for instance, being in a class where you teach, do you, is there somebody who's had that major influence on you that you think of, that kind of thing. Does that come up with any of you?

Elizabeth - Definitely.

Interviewer - I see some people nodding...

Elizabeth - As far as the way I teach and what I try *not* to do, I think of teachers I've had and think, Oh, gosh, I hope I never, ever do that, and I really make a point and try not to do it. And then there was one teacher I had, a Social Studies teacher, Geography 12 teacher who was, just, I mean, he was amazing and that's one of the reasons I went into teaching, I thought, "Hey, this is great. This guy's amazing. And, so I think about things he did and how he did them, how he made you feel comfortable, how he got everybody involved, and I try to do that as much as possible. And I also look at other people when I came into Porter, I looked at other teachers that were there and I was really fortunate to be paired up with one teacher and she was wonderful, and that helped me immensely, looking at the way she did things.

Susan - Mine was...go ahead.

Maria - I always try to remember what it's like to be a student sitting in the classroom and trying to meet this material for the first time. I've taught it twenty

years. I know I know this inside-out but I have to remember that those kids sitting in front of me have not heard it before and I always try to remember that, and to teach it as if I was teaching it for the first time so that it's new for them and as if it's new for me. And I've had students say to me, "You seem to know how to get into the head of a teenager. And you know what we need to know and how we need to learn it.", which I thought was a really nice compliment, because that's exactly what I'm trying to do.

Interviewer - And that's empowering for you, too.

Susan - I'm married to a man who came here to Canada when he was eleven, as an ESL person, and I tell my students this all the time. I tell them the story of my husband, and they all go, "Wow! Cool!", which is one way to make that connection with them. And I have talked to my husband about what it was like when he was eleven years old and he came to this country and he didn't know any English and he was glad to be in this country. So, some of our students feel sort of that they didn't want to leave but Mom and Dad wanted to get out of Hong Kong before 1997 or whatever. He wasn't in that position. It was presented to him as a positive thing to come to Canada. But I said to him, "How would you function?", knowing the kind of man he is, "How would you function in the kind of ESL set-up we now have?", and he says he wouldn't have functioned at all, and I, knowing the kind of person he is, I agree that he would have been lost, I think. He's very sensitive and he needs that...he wouldn't have talked. He wouldn't have. So I keep him very much in mind when I'm teaching my students and I think to myself, 'O.K., well maybe you're fourteen or fifteen or eighteen, but, you know, we were all eleven once, and, when I'm teaching, I constantly remind myself, 'O.K., if it were my husband, what would you do, or what would you want someone else to do?' And

that's, I think, the number one influence, I mean, colleagues have been wonderful and, working with Maria and other people in my department's been fabulous, but it always comes back to, 'If this were my eleven-year-old, what would I want?' and then that's what I try to give them.

Arnold - We'll go around the table. It goes back for me... a lot to do with how I've changed from my approach to teaching. And I think, what keeps coming up for me is reflection. I think teachers, good teachers, have to be reflective practitioners and we do a lot of thinking, whether it's about our 'husband', or about 'Am I really getting into the kids heads?', or whatever it is or who we are modelling ourselves after, we're reflective and we keep thinking about things and, for me, I was not a reflective person when I first started teaching. It was, 'this' was how you did it. I sort of thought I knew how to do things and I just had to do them and I followed the book. And I don't think I was very sensitive either, as a teacher. And I think that as I got to know students and kids and what I was doing and having a sense of just where I was going or what I wanted from my kids, as I...the two things that came up for me were inclusion and esteem. And I find the whole conversation kind of weird for me, because I *never* think of my ESL students any differently than I think of the rest of my students and so, I'm just talking about my kids, and my kids, I focus on inclusion. I focus on things that are building their self-esteem. So I was just very, very, very fortunate that in the formative years of my teaching career, I did a lot of work with Faye Brownlie, and I don't know if anybody is familiar with her, but she does a lot of work on strategies and, her focus is always inclusion and for me, I feel like she's a mentor. She's my...If I could be a master teacher, I would emulate myself after her. And I was just very fortunate to have a lot of work time with her, a lot of professional development with her and to the point of having some team-teaching with her. And that gave me some

opportunities to really see a lot of personal stuff, just a way to interact with kids, to be inclusive, to build self-esteem, rather than being critical of them, to support them and push them and so I think that's just made me all that much more aware of kids as individuals or people, people as individuals, and work towards that, so, and I just keep those words in the back of my head, like a statement of inclusion, 'How do I make all those kids feel that way?'

Deborah - Well, I look back on my early days of teaching and I think that there are probably kids who love me forever and will always talk about me as their favourite teacher but there are probably a few kids in there who I didn't treat very well. And it wasn't until after I had my own children that I realized how powerful teachers are in the life of a child, how we have the ability to make or break the little individuals as people. And I, as Arnold does...hopefully treat every child in my classroom the way I'd like my own children to be treated. And esteem is right up there, and that's what I said in the first part, why I work so hard in building trust with the kids, particularly ESL children, but with all of them because it's only then that they're going to be able to take the risks they need in order to become the best that they can be and realize their potential. So, that's what I think of. But I've worked with some magnificent teachers over the years. Just truly...one of them is going to retire this year and my heart is breaking. But I hope that I keep connecting with really wonderful other educators and, I guess one of the things that I would like to make a statement about, if anybody is out there listening, is that we don't have enough time to talk with other teachers about our teaching practice. And this kind of thing here today...it's wonderful to hear what other people are doing because sometimes you really feel like you're out in the hinterland, there and that nobody else is thinking about kids in the way that you are.

Interviewer - Good point. It is nice to have that conversation. Even a contrived one like this, but yet it's so helpful sometimes, and it really empowers you.

Deborah - It does empower you and it makes you feel like there's a breath of fresh air, other than the window being open.

Interviewer - That's right. Is it too cold?

Deborah - No!

Maria - And sometimes if you're talking to your colleagues about things that are working right, then you sort of get the feeling that they're looking at you as if well, "Why are you blowing your own horn?", "Why are you bragging?" Whereas...I've run over to Susan, "Look at this! Look at this! Isn't this great?"

Susan - She has a lot of my kids from last year and there's nothing more wonderful than when I was back in February to see...Maria dug up a couple of things that they'd written...dug up, she was marking them, but she said,..."and listen to this...", and she read out some stuff and there was Ivan who, bless his heart, was having one heck of a time last year, and you know, I could understand everything he'd written on that piece of paper. But you tend to get, but there is a negative, I don't know...we all think we should be better or harder on ourselves or something, but it's so nice to get with people that are positive...some things are working.

Interviewer - Well, I think you might be able to make a difference in this. Hopefully something will come out of this study that will, in fact, maybe permit that kind of thing to happen more often, as I'm hoping, but it is one of the goals.

You know, it's interesting, we are getting to the end and it's my intention to finish on time, but it's interesting that this whole notion of feeling good about your own teaching has come up because I *did* want to put you on the spot and ask you...obviously you've been identified by your administrator as an effective or successful teacher of ESL students. But I want to know how *you* feel. This is where the guard comes up. Does anybody, and I don't necessarily need a response from everyone. But does anyone want to just say something about how you're feeling about your teaching of these kids? And if you're doing a good job? And maybe what's helped you make that a successful job......I *knew* there'd be silence at this point!

Arnold - O.K., no, I'll talk. I think...yeah, I was thinking...this is a process...like I'm thinking out loud, so I'll...

Interviewer - The only thing I was going to say is that I will ask you at the end if there's anything else you would have liked to have said, you can send that to me after, so, go ahead...

Arnold - This is my first thought. I think some days, I feel like, 'Wow, I really did something.' and some days I feel like, 'Holy cow, I didn't know how to deal with that.' And I think in the overall scheme of things, I'm doing O.K. I liked your idea of the magic pill and I'd sure get one if...

Susan - I'll send you the recipe when I find it.

Arnold - ...because I really that that's...I think that we, again, are hard on ourselves and I think that we put a lot of pressure on ourselves, a lot of expectations on

ourselves to be doing the miracle cure and...I can sit down and it depends on the group of people I'm with, and my frame of mind, and I can feel really good about what I'm doing what I've done or I can sit down and feel really bad about what I'm doing and what I've done. And I think that if I had to take a really honest look, I'd just probably say I'm doing O.K. and I know that I've, you know, done some really good things for some kids and there's some kids I haven't reached very well and that comes from a lot of places. That comes from a personal interaction, maybe we just don't like, sometimes we do, sometimes we don't, plus it comes from times when just not knowing what to do, really not having a clue.

Maria - Well, I think after teaching twenty years, and as I said, a gamit from the psychiatric patients to the juvenile delinquents, that I've come to an understanding within myself that I can't be all things to all people. And that there are some kids that I'm not going to reach. But hopefully there's somebody out there who will. Maybe the teacher they have next year will. Or they had a teacher last year who did and I don't come up to his or her expectations for this year, but I'll do the best I can with that kid while I've got him or her. And I don't feel badly about that. I'll do the best that I can knowing that, yes, I...maybe I won't be able to reach you.

Elizabeth - I was just thinking...I don't think I've quite reached that spot yet because my husband is always saying to me, "My God, you know, you do all this planning and you're constantly changing and doing and you've got twenty different resources and you're reading twenty different things and...is this ever going to stop?", and I talk to him and I say, "You know, well, I want to make this really interesting"...I planned for a week and, Oh, I don't like that, that's just not going to work, scrap it, do something else and...you know...right now...I'm... the same sort of thing, you know, you reach some people, you don't reach others...some of the

reasons you don't reach others are...you know, you just don't click or you don't know how to approach it, but I don't know...I'm still in the frantic mode.

Maria - ...and that doesn't stop either.

Elizabeth - I know that, I heard...

Susan - I like to remind myself daily, hourly, that I'm doing the best I can with what I've got and that means keeping all things into perspective. If I get so stressed out that I'm sick for three weeks, I'm not doing anybody a favour...the students, myself, my family, my colleagues. Could I do better? Yeah, I could do a lot better if I had a smaller class, if I had more money for more books of the appropriate level, if I had more time to go looking at these books. If I had...administrators that come into my class regularly and see exactly what it is we're dealing with and why the students want to write the exam in four months and how sometimes that's trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so please don't cut the ESL time in half for them and take away the support block because they really need it. But the flip side of that is, the "Ivans" of this world where I see Maria's writing and *it's* coming along, the fact that the students will come up to me and ask me a question and it's not necessarily always about school but it's about their personal development. It's like the Valentine that a student that I taught last year gave me saying, 'Thank you very much and I'll love you forever.', and she meant it. So it's the flip. You're not going to be all things to all people but in the amount of time and resources that you have, you try and be as much as you can to as many of them as you can. And again, you accept that or you'll go mental.

Interviewer - Well, maybe that's an excellent note to finish on.

Deborah - I think I'm going to cry!

Interviewer - Could I just end by...I just need this information...I need to know if you have an opportunity, though, in your schools, to work at all with the ESL specialist or specialists. Do you have that opportunity at all? Do you find much time for collaboration?

Elizabeth - No, not at all. We have one ESL teacher in our school so that makes it difficult on her. She has a block that she sometimes wanders around to different classes and will pop her head in and see if she can help, but, I mean, that's not terribly frequent and as far as time to get together and plan things, time just is not there.

Interviewer - Maria, the same with you?

Maria - The same.

Interviewer - Susan?

Susan - When I was doing the language development I used...the other teacher and I used to sort of plan every two weeks to get together for one of our preps...she was a part-time teacher so she was basically volunteering that time to work with me on my prep, and I very much appreciated it and we could not keep it up all year, but that's the only time I've ever really had formal collaboration. The rest of it's literally in the hallway. You know, "I'll throw a note into your letter tray.", "Yeah, O.K., thanks."

Interviewer - Arnold, do you have an opportunity to work with a specialist?

Arnold - Yes, I do. I'm very fortunate that the school I'm at right now, the administrator is very, very supportive of collaboration and fosters that and, fortunately, that was my first year at this new school and it's also the ESL teacher's first year at this new school so we really haven't figured out our role in the school and her role in the school and how this really works, so there's an opportunity, it just hasn't fallen in synch, and to be really honest, she's the resource teacher, she's not an ESL teacher, so, again, I don't single out my ESL students when we plan or we're working together or collaborating on a unit or something, it's on *the unit*, or whatever, it's not on the ESL students.

Interviewer - And Deborah, do you interact with the ESL specialist?

Deborah - A fair bit. It's hard to find the time. I'm the Head Teacher so my early mornings are really hectic for me, and that's the time our ESL teacher is available, so it's tough. And after school, she needs to catch the bus and I'm there till late so...but we most often, rather than doing collaborative planning, talk about individual students. 'I'm really worried about so and so, or attendance hasn't been good, or this fellow is, you know, he's just not coming along as quickly with this and what can we do together to try and make this work for him or her?' So, it's more in that mode than it is in actual, doing a unit plan or a lesson plan. Don't forget this is also my first year in that school...you don't bulldoze your way into people's classrooms, you know, you have to sit back and take a look before you...but, interestingly enough after the last team meeting workshop that they had here at (teacher resource centre), both the ESL teacher and the Learning Assistance

teacher approached me to work on some collaboration through the series of workshops that they're doing here at (teacher resource centre). So, they obviously see me as somebody that's approachable and somebody that they would like to work with so that's positive. I feel good about that.

Interviewer - I think we can probably end this now. I very much appreciate your time and your willingness to be so forthcoming about your experiences, methods and feelings in working with ESL students. Thank you.

Appendix F – Needs Survey

RESOURCES AND IN-SERVICE

FOR NON-SPECIALIST TEACHERS OF ESL

Please indicate the grade level(s) you teach: _____

1. What types of materials are most helpful to you in teaching ESL students? (Examples: specific published programs, types of literature, other print material, non-print (audio/visual) material, etc.)

_____

_____

2. Do you collaborate with an ESL specialist at your school?
         YES   []   NO   []

   a) If so, do you *find* the time to collaborate or is time built into your timetable for this collaboration?

   _____

   _____

   b) In what ways does the ESL specialist assist you?

   _____

   _____

3. What types of resources need to be developed or purchased (at the school or district level) to assist you in the instruction of ESL students?

_____

_____

4. What type of in-service opportunities would be of assistance to you? (Please be as specific as possible.)

_____

_____

5. Please indicate any other areas of need.

_____

_____

6. Other comments?

_____

_____

Appendix G – Ethics Committee Approval Letter

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

VICE PRESIDENT. RESEARCH

BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA V5A 1S6
Telephone: (604) 291-4152
FAX: (604) 291-4860

January 10, 1995

Ms. Dorothy Joyce
Graduate Student
Education

Dear Ms. Joyce:

Re: An Examination of Significant Factors in Learning Situations
in the Delivery of E.S.L. by Non-Specialists

I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the University Research Ethics Review
Committee that the above referenced Request for Ethical Approval of Research has
been approved contingent upon this office receiving a letter of approval from each
school in the ████████ School District involved in your research study. Once copies
of these letters have been received by this office, you may proceed with your
research study.

This approval is in effect for a period of twenty-four months from the above date.
Any changes in the procedures affecting interaction with human subjects should be
reported to the University Research Ethics Review Committee. Significant changes
will require the submission of a revised Request for Ethical Approval of Research.
This approval is in effect only while you are a registered SFU student.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Sincerely,

Bruce P. Clayman, Chair
University Research Ethics Review
Committee

/hme

c: K. Toohey, Supervisor
P. Winne

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Appendix H – Administrators' Letter of Approval

RE: AN EXAMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT

FACTORS IN LEARNING SITUATIONS IN

THE DELIVERY OF E.S.L. BY NON-SPECIALISTS

Research in the Master of Arts (Education) Program

Simon Fraser University

I hereby declare support for the above-named research being undertaken in this school by Dorothy Joyce of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. I agree in principle with this study and agree that it is a worthwhile area of research.

I agree to divulge the names of teachers to participate in the above-named study, as outlined in the Methodology.

_____
Administrator's signature

_____
Administrator's name (please print)

_____
School

_____
Date

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