







**I Who is the ESL learner?**

# Background

## Who is the ESL learner?

This section of the guide provides teachers with background on recent research as well as resources for further exploration. The video clips in this segment provide an introduction to the students and their experiences. ESL learners are individuals who are learning English as a second, third or fourth language. The terms learner and student are used interchangeably in the literature.

Changing demographics in our schools require educators to develop and implement strategies that meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse ESL students. At the 2003 CERIS conference on 'Immigrants in Toronto Schools', researchers presented findings from a three-year study of immigrant children in the Toronto District School Board (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). Students in the study, requested that teachers be better informed of the immigration and refugee processes (CERIS, 2003). This information would help teachers understand more about students' needs. Through our interviews it became apparent that teachers must also be informed about ESL students' experiences on the first day. In heeding this advice, the next two sections will explain to teachers why it is important to develop awareness of immigrant and refugee experiences and ESL students' first day of school.

### Immigrant and Refugee Experiences

According to the 2002 Immigration and Protection Act, newcomers to Canada can be divided into two categories: refugees and immigrants (Canadian Immigration and Citizenship, 2003). This distinction recognizes that newcomers move to host countries for a variety of reasons. Some newcomers come to enhance their economic situation or education by choice, while others can be political and/or religious refugees (Trueba, Cheng & Ima, 1993).

For most refugees, unlike immigrants, returning to their homelands is rarely a viable option. Refugees may have suffered persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group, and/or due to expression of political opinion (UNHCR, 2000). The tragic and often violent personal histories of refugee children (Kaprielian-Churchill & Churchill, 1994) contrast starkly with the experiences of immigrant children. The refugee process can be a frustrating, demoralizing and intensive experience. It involves hearing dates and regular meetings for families and dependents. Issues that children have to contend with include family separation, economic pressure, lack of adequate housing or health care, social isolation, racism, fear of deportation, detention, and transformation of family (First & Carerra, 1988, cited by Cloud, 1991). These experiences affect students academically, socially and

emotionally. Teachers must be informed of the process in order to be cognizant of the stresses that may be placed on refugee students and their families. Those who are not familiar with the process may place undue stress on a student, penalizing him or her for missing class, being distracted or submitting incomplete work.

The immigrant experience is also challenging and many of the issues overlap with those of the refugee experience. Immigrants cope with a lengthy Canadian application process, separation from family, as well as balancing new employment, housing, and culture. According to Canadian Immigration and Citizenship policy (2003), immigration is open to those who fall under one of the following categories:

**Skilled Workers Sector:** People whose education and work experience will help them find work and make a home for themselves as permanent residents in Canada.

**Business Sector:** People who have business experience, a net worth of CDN \$300,000-\$800,000 and can make an investment of CDN \$400,000. Self-employed individuals must demonstrate their ability to contribute to cultural, athletic or farm life in Canada.

**Family Sponsorship:** This category can include an individual or family who is sponsored by a Canadian citizen and/or family. The immigrants are expected to be supported whether it be financially or emotionally by their sponsor for 3-10 years. This is a dual immigration process meaning that both sides are required to submit applications and sponsorship forms.

**International Adoption:** This category involves a complicated process and consists of an approved Canadian citizen adopting a child (18 years or younger) from overseas. This is a layered process with adoption papers, immigration papers, and approval being required from both countries.

**Provincial Nomination:** This category involves a province selecting skilled individuals to move to a designated region. Conditions apply to application approval and each province has different criteria.

Regardless of reasons for immigration, the process of adjustment is challenging for all. The role of the school system and teachers is very important. Researchers of the Vancouver School Board suggest that a teacher's awareness of culture shock scaffolds students for success (Helmer & Eddy, 1996). As agents of socialization, teachers may be a student's first contact with their new culture (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Many new immigrants and refugees come from linguistic backgrounds which are different from those in Canada. The fact that cross-cultural awareness is important is not new to teachers, but often the knowledge does not translate into practice (Roberts, 1998). Awareness of immigrant and refugee issues can lead to better teaching, communication, and learning for students, teachers and families. Importantly, awareness should inform more equitable teaching practices.

## The First Day of School

Teachers are often unaware of the extent of difficulties that immigrant and refugee children experience in their first weeks at a new school in Canada. One solution is for teachers to relate to ESL students' personal experiences or colleagues' experiences. A starting point is knowledge of what it is like to move to a new country where both the environment and the language are foreign. This knowledge allows teachers to identify with students and parents as well as to support them through this challenging period. In the following excerpt, Elizabeth Coelho describes the culture shock that some newcomers experience upon arrival:

The individual may experience great emotional fluctuation between feelings of curiosity, adventure, and optimism, and feelings of sadness, loss, and despair. Even voluntary immigrants experience feelings of grief in response to the loss of family and the loss of the culture that sustained them and gave them a sense of identity (1998, p.27).

Teachers also need to understand the factors that can contribute to stress and challenges during the early weeks. The students in this video repeatedly expressed concern over their inability to communicate in English. Some students expressed frustration that their teachers and peers lacked understanding about their situation upon their arrival. Other factors that can contribute to elevated levels of stress in newcomer students include: 1) place of birth, 2) reasons for migration, 3) cultural background and traditions, 4) experience with Western education, 5) level of literacy in the first language (L1), 6) previous exposure to regular schooling, 7) the grade level entered and 8) the setting previously lived in urban, rural, or for example, suburban (Edwards, 1998; Genesee, 1999).

It is important that schools be prepared to receive new ESL students in order to diminish the students' level of stress. Advanced preparation ensures a positive school entrance experience for students and their families. There are a number of strategies schools can adopt to make newcomers feel more welcome. A few of these are listed below.

### Welcome Programs

A welcome program is an introduction to the school and Canadian education system. Some welcome programs are run by a reception committee. The programs' aims include introducing students and parents to the school and educational system, directing ESL students and their parents to resources in the school and the community, raising awareness of the various departments or subjects in the school, and creating networks of staff, other parents and/or students.

## Interpreters

Parents and students can be made more comfortable with the use of interpreters. This service immediately sends a message to newcomers that their language is welcome in the school. Sometimes parents will bring their own interpreter, such as a family member, to the school upon registration. Bilingual staff members can also act as interpreters. If no one is available upon registration, a follow-up interview can be arranged with an interpreter from the community or the school board. Students can also act as a support. A student interpreter is beneficial for ESL students when they arrive. Teachers can also help by partnering the new student with a volunteer student who speaks the same first language (Edward, 1998).

## Names

Parents and children from other countries may not share the same last name. It is important for teachers and administration to find out the correct names of both children and parents and also to find out how they would like to be addressed (Edward, 1998).

## The Visual Environment

Many schools in Canada now place welcome signs in multiple languages. However, an environment that truly values diversity will go further than this. Some schools have placed photographs of teachers in the entrance and indicated the languages each teacher speaks. Other schools have made signs in multiple languages that direct students and parents. These signs can often be generated with the help of parents.

## Resources

### Books and Journal Articles

Ashworth, M., & H.P. Wakefield. (1994). *Teaching the world's children: ESL for ages three to seven*. Toronto, ON: Pippin Publishing Company.

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools*. Toronto, ON: Multilingual Matters.

Edwards, V. (1998). *The power of Babel: Teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms*. Stoke-on-Trent, U.K: Trentham Books.

Helmer, S., & Eddy C. (1996). *Look at me when I talk to you: ESL learners in non-ESL classrooms*. Toronto, ON: Pippin Publishing Company.

Kaprielian-Churchill, I., & Churchill, S. (1994). *The pulse of the world: Refugees in our schools*. Toronto, ON: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press.

Lucas, T. (1997). *Into, through and beyond the secondary school: Social transitions for immigrant youths*. CA: CAL Publishing.

Patel, N., Power, T. C., & Bhavangri, N. P. (1996). Socialization values and practices of immigrant parents: Correlates of modernity and acculturation. *Child Development*, 67, 302-313.

Perkins, L. M. (2000). New immigrants and education: Challenges and issues. *Educational Horizons*, 78(2), 67-71.

### **Websites**

Citizenship and Immigration in Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca>

Children's Rights <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/children/child3.html>

Immigration Info and Resources  
<http://www.geocities.com/kathrynewilson/immigrationinfo.html>

United Nations Commission on Human Rights for Refugees. [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)

# I Who is the ESL learner?

## Immigrant and Refugee Experiences

### Video Excerpt:

In these clips students discuss the challenges they had in adjusting to a new life in Canada. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Immigrant and Refugee Experiences*, stop the video the end of the section and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

### Discussion Questions:

- a. What were some of the difficulties that students raised in the video about their experiences of moving to Canada? What are some difficulties that you have noticed amongst your own students in their adjustment to Canadian life?
- b. Keeping in mind that the immigrant experience can differ sharply from the refugee experience, discuss the reasons for migration to Canada?
- c. What are some of the major changes that immigrant and refugee children will experience in their lives upon arrival in Canada?
- d. How might the stresses of an immigrant child differ from that of a refugee?
- e. What experiences might a recent immigrant find strange in a Canadian school? What experiences might a new refugee find strange at school?
- f. What can teachers and/or administration do to reduce the stress of immigrant/refugee students both in school and out of school?
- g. How can teachers/administration increase their knowledge of the issues that students are experiencing?
- h. How can teachers/administrators form coalitions with parents and the community to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee students?



# Individual or Group Activity: Compare and Contrast

**Time:** 30 minutes

## **Materials:**

Appendix A: Immigrant and Refugee Venn Diagram

Appendix B: Immigration/Refugee Factors to Consider (Overhead)

The purpose of this activity is to acquaint teachers with the similarities and differences between the immigrant and refugee experience and how these differences might affect students' performance at school.

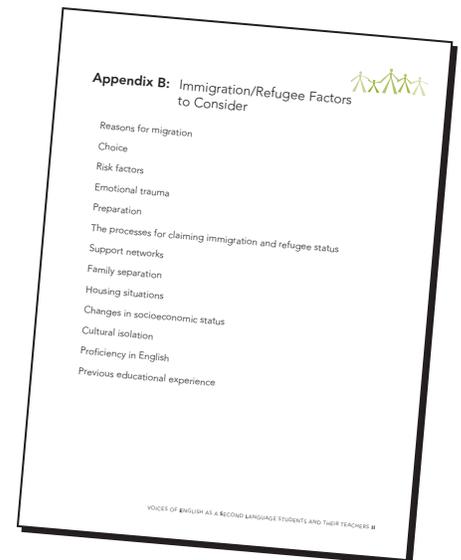


**To complete this activity on your own, read the following:**

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Read the factors and complete the Venn Diagram. Reflect on step #5. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

**The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:**

- 1) Divide the teachers into small groups of three or four and distribute the Venn Diagram (Appendix A) to each teacher.
- 2) Using the Venn Diagram, ask the teachers to compare and contrast the student immigrant and refugee experience.
- 3) Place Appendix B on an overhead projector for referral.
- 4) Randomly assign one or two factors listed in Appendix B for each group to compare (for example choice and reasons for migration).
- 5) After everyone has completed their Venn Diagram, ask the teachers to share their findings with the larger group. Ask the following questions:
  - What factors are different?
  - Which factors overlap with one another?
  - How do each of these factors "impact on the adjustment process, and on students' academic and social integration into the school"(Coelho, 1998, p. 25).
  - How might each factor affect our teaching practice or administrative practice when considering these factors?



## Practicum or In-class Activity: Talking to ESL Students and Parents

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:**

None

Take time to talk with each of your ESL students individually during quiet time, recess, lunch or after school. (Speaking to your students about personal issues during class time might make them feel uncomfortable). Ask a student, parent, or community member to translate if required. Find out from your students how they felt about moving to Canada, how they felt about leaving their country, and the difficulties they are having in adjusting to Canadian life. Ask your students if there is anything you can do to help make their lives easier either in-school or out-of-school.

Try to find out more information about your students' immigrant and/or refugee experience by talking to them and to their parents about some of the issues raised in the previous activity. *Try to do this in an unobtrusive way that does not make the parent or child feel uncomfortable.* From your conversation can you identify parents' concerns? How can you relieve some of these concerns? Based on the information you have gathered, how can you help each student have a better school experience? Consider who can help you in the school and community to improve your ESL students' school experience.



## Personal Reflection Activity: Your Students

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil

In a journal write about some of the experiences of your immigrant and refugee students. Write about how these experiences may be affecting your students' lives at school. Consider what you have done in the past to assist students and what you can do to assist them further.



# The First Day of School

## Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students discuss their experiences on their first day of school in Canada and how their parents felt about the way in which they were received by the school. Teachers discuss the Ambassador Program. We suggest that you watch the section titled *The First Day*, stop the video at the end of the section and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

## Discussion Questions:

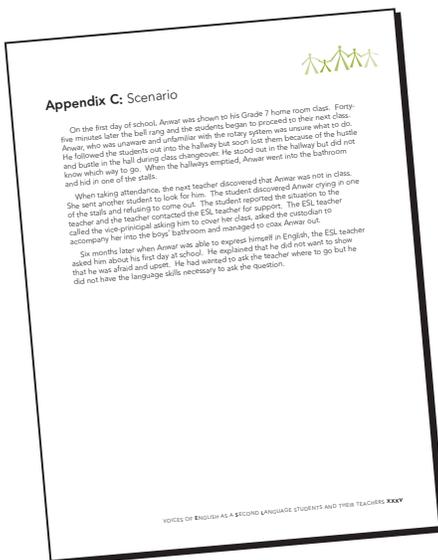
- What were some of the difficulties that students raised in the video about their first day of school?
- What can students, teachers, and administration do to help students?

## Individual or Group Activity: A Scenario of the First Day

**Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials:

Overhead of Appendix C: Prepare Overhead of Scenario  
Chart paper and markers



The purpose of this activity is to have teachers identify factors which impact students on the first day of school.

### To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Read the scenario and answer the questions. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

### The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:

- 1) Have the teachers read the scenario provided. Another option is to have them describe the experiences of an immigrant or refugee student under stress at school.

## SCENARIO

*On the first day of school, Anwar was shown to his Grade 7 home room class. Forty-five minutes later the bell rang and the students began to proceed to their next*

class. Anwar, who was unaware and unfamiliar with the rotary system was unsure what to do. He followed the students out into the hallway but soon lost them because of the hustle and bustle in the hall during class changeover. He stood out in the hallway but did not know which way to go. When the hallways emptied, Anwar went into the bathroom and hid in one of the stalls.

When taking attendance, the next teacher discovered that Anwar was not in class. She sent another student to look for him. The student discovered Anwar crying in one of the stalls and refusing to come out. The student reported the situation to the teacher and the teacher contacted the ESL teacher for support. The ESL teacher called the vice-principal asking him to cover her class, asked the custodian to accompany her into the boys' bathroom and managed to coax Anwar out.

Six months later when Anwar was able to express himself in English, the ESL teacher asked him about his first day at school. He explained that he did not want to show that he was afraid and upset. He had wanted to ask the teacher where to go but he did not have the language skills necessary to ask the question.

- 2) As a group, discuss the emotions that ESL students may experience when they arrive at a new school.
- 3) Advise teachers that many schools are developing reception and orientation programs to ensure that the student and parents experiences are positive on the first day.
- 4) Distribute chart paper and markers to the teachers. If you have a large number of teachers, divide them into groups.
- 5) Use the chart paper and markers to develop practical frameworks for receiving and welcoming new students and their parents.
- 6) Ask the teachers to consider the following questions when developing their frameworks:
  - How can signage around the school be improved to reflect minority languages?
  - Who do parents first contact when arriving at the school? How can the staff be supported and prepared to receive parents and students in a welcoming manner?
  - Consider who would be needed on a welcoming team? E.g. Principal, vice-principal, administrative assistant, teachers, bilingual staff, interpreters. What roles would each play?
  - What would be accomplished in a reception interview? How much time would you need? What information needs to be compiled for reception interviews? Who would be involved in a reception interview?
  - What is the best way to bring and introduce the student to their new class? How could the reception team assist in this matter?

## Practicum or In-class Activity: Reviewing the Reception Plan

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

Paper and pencil

Write down in detail your school's procedures for receiving new ESL students. Review each step of the process and consider how it could be improved to ease the transition for both ESL students and their parents.



Review the plan devised at the in-service session. Consider your next steps. What action are you going to take with regard to the reception and orientation program? Whose support do you need in order for the program to be realized? Consider your action plan.

- How can you build alliances in the school amongst teachers, administration and parents who are committed to realizing that program?
- How can you ensure that the responsibility for program implementation and maintenance are shared?



## Personal Reflection Activity: The Experience of Moving

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil

In a journal, write about a time in your life when you moved to a new country, a new school, or a new neighborhood. What emotions did you experience? What were the positive and negative aspects of the move for both you and your family? How did you deal with the new emotions you were experiencing? In light of your personal experiences, what insight do you have into your ESL students' feelings?



Notes

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal dotted lines.





**II How do ESL students  
shape their identity?**

# Background

## How do ESL learners shape their identity?

This section of the guide provides teachers with background on the research as well as resources for further exploration. An individual's identity is shaped by both internal and external factors. People shape their identity through their experiences. The ESL students interviewed in the video frequently spoke of feelings of isolation, rejection, confusion, shyness and marginalization at school. They described coping with the challenge of merging their home culture identity with their new Canadian identity. For some students, 'being Canadian' meant abandoning their previous culture while others tried to maintain a balance. Some interviewees struggled with the feeling that were required to act differently at home and at school. Some students felt more comfortable at school without the pressure of their parents expecting them to conform to the behavioral norms of their heritage culture. Others felt more comfortable at home where they could speak freely and share jokes in their mother tongue.

### Identity Issues

There is substantive research in the field supporting the benefits of teachers' understanding and maintenance of students' native languages and culture (e.g., Cummins, 1981 and 1996; Thomas & Collier, 1997). A teacher's understanding of identity issues can benefit both ESL students as well as their peers. Teachers may act as resources for coping strategies, attend to the students' needs, act as role-models by bringing the students' home culture into the classroom, or help students bond with their peers. In recent decades multicultural issues have been infused in daily practice, but this is not enough. Although the celebration of diversity and cultures has its place in the curriculum, helping students cope with adjustments between cultures has not been addressed. Teachers need to be aware that ESL students come from a wide range of backgrounds and are simultaneously learning a new language and experiencing shifts in their identity.

A study of high school ESL students in Calgary found that the term 'ESL' embodied a stigma within the larger school. Students were perceived as lazy, unintelligent and awkward (Derwing, Decorby, Ichikawa & Jamieson, 1999). These students can be presented and perceived as inferior members by the dominant culture (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981, cited by Spener, 1988). Educators may consider these students difficult to teach simply because they do not fit neatly into what has been defined as the mainstream (Nieto, 2002). The labeling and sense of inferiority shape how students feel about themselves when in school and in the mainstream. Another study in Toronto showed that ESL students cope with more than simply learning a language. Students' language proficiency also depends on their acceptance into the host culture (Kanno &



Applebaum, 1995). The students who were interviewed expressed similar insights. They recounted the hardships of rejection and their struggles to fit in with their peers. In the middle school video a student explained how his teacher had misinterpreted his actions to be insolent when he did not respond to questions. A misunderstanding of this nature can lead to frustration and contribute to low self-esteem. Research also suggests that adolescents in particular have difficulty in making the transition because they feel distanced from their native culture and their parents. This distance is a challenge because they are more independent than younger children and attempt to cope with the challenges of identity on their own (Walqui, 2000).

## Making Friends

Establishing friendships in both the ESL and mainstream contexts is important to students' overall development. Students in our videos said they worried their peers would reject them. Several ESL students recounted stories of being left out by peers at recess or in group activities because they could not communicate. Teachers can be proactive and help facilitate an environment which allows their ESL students to thrive. This inclusion can be achieved by attending to ESL needs, integrating cooperative activities into lessons and making all students more aware of the importance of being inclusive. An awareness of ESL issues and inclusive teaching practices allows educators to be advocates for the diversity which will make a difference in the lives of their ESL students.

## Resources

### Books and Journal Articles

Appiah, A. (1994). Identity, authenticity, survival: Multicultural societies and social reproduction. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism* (pp. 149-163). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. California: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Derwing, T., Decorby, E., Ichikawa, J., & Jamieson, K., (1999). Some factors that affect the success of ESL high school students. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 55 (4), 532-547.

Kanno, Y. & Applebaum, S. (1995). ESL students speak up: Their stories of how we are doing? *TESL Canada*, 12 (2), 32-49.

Lucas, T. (1997). *Into, through and beyond the secondary school: Social transitions for immigrant youths*. California: CAL Publishing.

## Websites

Queensland Education for lesson plans <http://education.qld.gov.au>

## Videos

*Cooperative Learning Techniques* (1993) - by Mary McMullin, White Plains, NY. Longman.

*Canadian Identity*, (1991) - written and produced by Cathy Miller and Ernest Kreiger, Burnaby, BC. Classroom Video, 1991.

*Many Voices*, (2002) - a TVO Video Series on Racism, Diversity and Social Studies Issues, 2002.





To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Read the poem and complete steps 2 to 5. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:

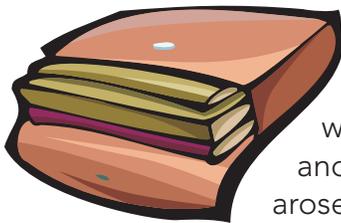
- 1) Hand out the poem "I am a Door" by Nagesh Rao (Appendix D)
- 2) Give the teachers a few minutes to read it. Meanwhile, divide the chart paper into two sections, one labeled "Identity at Home" and the other "Identity at School".
- 3) As a whole group, using the information from the poem and other knowledge, brainstorm on how students negotiate their identity at home and at school.
- 4) Once you have completed this exercise divide teachers into three groups.
- 5) Have each group discuss the effects of this identity conflict on student development. The first group will discuss it in terms of *personal development*, the second will discuss the possible effects on *intellectual development* and the third group will discuss the identity conflict in terms of *social development* (Cummins, 1994).
- 6) Ask one person from each group to report back on their discussion to the whole group.
- 7) Discuss as a group what the pedagogical implications are for teaching ESL students.

## Practicum or In-class Activity: Discussing Identity Issues

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:**

Student journals



Ask students to write a journal comparing their identity at home and school. Tell them that you would like them to share their writing with the class. If students are not comfortable sharing their writing openly, explain that they can hand in their journal anonymously. After collecting samples, compile the major issues that arose in their writing in the form of a list. Discuss the ideas as a group.

Are students surprised by what was written? Do they feel that their experiences are the same or different from other students? Ask students to compile a 'top 10' list of strategies the can assist teachers in helping them through this identity conflict.

Consider how you as a teacher can respond to these identity conflicts that your students are having by making changes to your classroom teaching, your communication with parents and your communication with students.

# Personal Reflection Activity: Looking At Your Own Identity

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**  
Paper and pencil



Divide your page into two sections, and label one side identity at school and the other identity at home. Consider how your own identity differs between home and school. List ways that you negotiate your identity at home and how you negotiate it at school. Keeping in mind your own identity conflict, consider how your ESL students' identity conflict may be exacerbated by cultural, racial and linguistic factors. With this knowledge, how might these factors now influence the way you interact with students and their parents? Do you think you will make any changes to your practice?

# Making Friends

## Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students discuss the difficulties of finding a peer group in which they feel comfortable. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Making Friends*, stop the video at the end of the section and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.



## Discussion Questions:

- What were the issues that students and teachers raised about ESL students making friends?
- What have you noticed amongst your ESL students in the way they interact with other students?
- Consider what it is like to not know a single person at a new school. What would this experience be like?

## Individual or Group Activity: Making Friends in a New School

**Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials:

Chart paper and markers

The purpose of this activity is to have teachers explore how ESL students form their identity.

### To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Complete the brainstorming activities in your journal. We also suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

### To complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:

- 1) Open the workshop with a discussion. Ask teachers who are immigrants (or come from immigrant families) what it is like to move to Canada. Did they or their families have difficulties in making friends in a new school environment?



- 2) Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and brainstorm on strategies that can assist newcomers with integration into their new school environment.
- 3) After the groups have brainstormed for ten minutes, ask each group to share their ideas with the class.
- 4) Create a master list of the generated ideas on chart paper. As a group, discuss each point and the possibility of implementing the ideas in their schools. What networks would need to be made in order for the idea to become a reality?
- 5) Ask one in-service teacher to email the list of strategies to the rest of the class.

## Practicum or In-class Activity: Isolation Issues

**Time:** 60 minutes or more

**Materials:**

Paper



Do your ESL students feel isolated from the rest of the class? Consider Elizabeth Coehlo's suggestion for promoting inclusivity of ESL students in your class.

Elizabeth spoke of a classroom teacher who noticed the ESL students remained separate from the English-speaking students and wanted to create an inclusive classroom. This teacher assigned the class an assignment of creating a book for a neighbouring elementary school. The assignment was to create and read this book to a class within the neighbouring school. Since there were a number of Chinese speaking children in this school, she suggested they would have much better marks if their book was written in both Chinese and English!



Suddenly the alienated students were in high demand and group interaction became frequent - when the students went to this school and heard the ESL students read in their own language with great fluency they gained new respect for them!

Source: ESL Infusion Website  
<http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/assess.asp>

Consider the possibility of creating a similar task for your students to promote inclusivity.

# Personal Reflection Activity: Promoting Friendships

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil



Make a list of your ESL students. Include students that were born in Canada whose mother tongue is not English and students who have been in Canada less than seven years. Carefully consider each student and ask yourself whether the student has friends at school and who his/her friends are. Identify the students that you are most concerned about. Strategize as to how you can promote friendships between ESL students and between ESL students and native speakers.



Notes

Handwriting practice area consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.





**III What are the available  
support networks for  
teachers and parents?**

# Background

## III What are the available support networks for parents and teachers?

This section of the guide provides teachers with background on recent research as well as resources for further exploration. The video clips in this segment provide insight into the silent struggles of students, the 'wish lists' of teachers, and tips on involving parents. The interviewees from our videos suggested three systems of support that schools need to have: support for students, support for teachers, and support for parents.

### Support for Students

In the section titled 'First Day' we provide suggestions on how schools can support students through the maintenance of welcome programs and buddy systems. In the section titled 'Appropriate Teaching Strategies' we provide suggestions for daily practice that can help ESL students in the mainstream classroom. Due to the amount of time students spend in school, teachers are often the first to know if an ESL student is having difficulties. Once aware, the teachers need to enlist help from others in the system to meet the needs of the student. Most ESL students will go through silent struggles, whether it be coping with their new identity, juggling their course work, or breaking socio-cultural barriers. The emotional toll of silent struggles is hidden from others. Educators can look at the level and nature of participation (withdrawal, depression or anti-social behaviour such as aggression) as one sign of these struggles. Another indicator may be the students' relationships with peers. While recognizing that a student's need for support is important, educators can also use proactive measures to scaffold ESL students for success. Teachers can enhance ESL students' motivation to learn and can promote their participation in various aspects of life at school. Effective teaching strategies are provided in this section as well as elsewhere in this guide.

### Support for Teachers

Teachers can not be expected to meet the needs of students without support from their department, the administration, and ESL-related resources. In order to raise awareness within the system, teachers have to communicate the types of support needed and work collectively with administrators to ensure that they are provided. The interviewees in our videos created 'wish lists' of materials/resources that would help them in the classroom. Suggestions included ESL textbooks for mainstream curriculum, library resources, and class assistants. They also suggested changes to policies, such as smaller mainstream classes and longer preparation time during the school day.



Another key element is knowledge-sharing. Becker (2001) asserts, "In order to promote optimal opportunities for ESL students to achieve academic success in elementary and secondary school settings, ESL teachers need to share with grade-level and content colleagues the knowledge, ideas, and experiences that may help them acquire the expertise necessary to be effective teachers of the ESL students in their classes" (p. 184). Lastly, teachers require access to professional development seminars and resources.

## Support for Parents

Over the last two decades research on 'parent involvement' shows that parental participation in school life is integral to the academic success of children. As a direct outcome of this kind of research, the development of resources and programs is steadily progressing. The most recent programs have focused on developing partnerships between educational institutions and communities. The involvement of immigrant and refugee parents is seen as a rich resource from which educators can learn and contribute to change in the community (Auerbach, 2002). Some examples of these kinds of partnerships that Auerbach highlights include:

- involving community participants in the selection of program and curriculum content,
- incorporating culturally familiar content and genres into the curriculum, and
- hiring staff who are tied to the participants' communities and speak the learners' language.

However, supporting and involving immigrant parents remains a challenge for many schools. Schools have found that although immigrant parents attend parent-teacher interviews, the discussion tends to be dominated by the teacher. In addition, immigrant parents usually do not attend school council meetings. One reason for this fact is that meetings are usually conducted in English with no provision for interpreters. Parents exclude themselves due to feelings of discomfort with their limited English language proficiency.

Beyond language, immigrant issues are rarely raised at school council meetings. Opinions on school council are limited to its members. While diverse membership (parents and administrators from all backgrounds) promotes diversity of opinions, councils that are limited to one socio-cultural group tend to be restrictive in their decision making and opinions. These decisions do not reflect the diverse school population or meet the needs of all parents. Heller, Labrie, Roy and Wilson (2001) explain that members of school council are often people who already have some connection to the school system. Thus, the limited representation on school council does not produce alternative perspectives on issues but rather "reproduce[s] the points of view already existing within the system (p. 9)":

This is possible for two main reasons: [1] most applicable information comes from within the school system and its distribution is controlled by

members of the educational institution, and [2] most members of the school council have a social standing within the school system (Heller et al., 1997, p.4 translated from French by L. Gershater)

The result is twofold: firstly, immigrant parents rarely have the opportunity to contribute to the development of school life and school curriculum, and secondly, school staff have a limited understanding of the culture and language of immigrant children and parents within the local context (Jones, 2002).

If schools are to move forward and build bridges between community and school, the first step is for teachers and administrators to reflect on how they view parents. Through this reflection process, teachers and administrators can become aware of the prejudices they hold and of existing efforts to break down the walls that separate parents from the school. We will outline in the section below three ways that parents have been viewed by schools and in academic literature. In articulating these three viewpoints, teachers and administrators can become better aware of how to communicate with parents.

### **The Deficit Hypothesis**

Teachers and administrators often blame immigrant parents for the declining academic achievement of their children. This tendency has been called the '**deficit hypothesis**', a perspective that is alive and well in schools. Teachers and administrators might find themselves criticizing parents for supposedly not having the desired characteristics that the school demands of them. For example, they may be perceived as having poor English skills, mainstream literacy skills, or a lack of time to attend to the academic needs of their children. Illiteracy might also be seen as a plague passed down from generation to generation .

The 'deficit hypothesis' viewpoint blames parents for the declining academic achievement of their children. In other words, a poor student is seen as a result of poor parenting. Parents can be excluded from school because educators view them as unable to contribute effectively. In the case of ESL parents, educators are often frustrated by parents' limited ability to communicate in English and their limited understanding of the Canadian education system. According to George Dei (2000), an expert in anti-racist education, the blaming of parents "diverts our attention away from a critical analysis of institutional structures of schooling (p. 34)", which treats minority parents inequitably. The deficit hypothesis does not allow for critical discussion of power issues, school organization and the manner in which school imposes its culture on family.

Margaret Caspe (2003), a consultant with the Harvard Family Research Project, offers hope for educators: "Existing research suggests that when teachers hold positive beliefs about families and view them as a child's first teacher, they are more likely to invite parents to become active participants in their children's education." (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Eccles & Harold, 1996 in Caspe, 2003).

## Cultural Difference Theory

Other researchers have also distanced themselves from the deficit hypothesis and have deepened their understanding of parent-school relationships. A second approach to viewing this relationship has been called the '**cultural difference theory**'. This theory focuses on the relationship between families and schools, emphasizing "that school success is closely related to the degree to which the culture of the home corresponds with the culture of the school" (Young & Levin 2000). This body of research shows that families bring knowledge and values (also known as 'cultural capital') to the school which are rewarded differently by teachers and administrators (Laureau & Horvat, 1999). Knowledge and values that are closely related to that of the school are more highly rewarded than those that differ from the school. The danger of this viewpoint is that it is possible for it to mirror the 'deficit hypothesis'; blaming working class and minority parents for lacking something rather than critically examining the power relations within the school. Dehli and Januario (1994) emphasize that,

...it is necessary to attend to power relations, so as to understand how some cultural practices become 'capital' while others are relegated to the status of 'deficit' (p. 28).

## Critical Theory

Another viewpoint from which to consider parental involvement is 'critical theory'. This looks at how issues of power and inequality shape school life. Critical theory identifies the political structures in which parents are encouraged to participate and from which parents are marginalized. Research focuses on...

efforts by poor and minority ethnic communities to gain access to education decision-making in urban schools and schools boards. Race, ethnicity and class (and interactions among them) have been key variables in these studies (Delhi of Januario, 1994, p.9).

An educator who is critical might ask: who has the power to make decisions within the school and how are school structures and policies designed to meet the needs of the dominant and reinforce social difference? A 'critical' educator would try to identify the dominant voice in the school and work to foreground the voices of minority parents by forming alliances and working in partnerships with parents and the community, much like the examples mentioned in the introduction of this section.

Critical pedagogy helps to break down barriers to parent involvement. These barriers include: 1) a school's agenda which reflects the needs of diverse population and 2) the denial of the significance of race and language in the discourse and practice of parent involvement in schools (see Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson & Zine, 2000). These barriers are important to note because discussions in schools on parent involvement tend to forego critical analysis. This includes analysis of how educational

institutions themselves perpetuate barriers to involvement and act as gatekeepers, keeping parents out.

Educators need be aware of the various viewpoints -- deficit hypothesis, cultural difference theory and critical theory -- if they are to make changes to the way that they perceive parents and to encourage immigrant parent involvement. Schools need to be aware of the prejudicial views that exist toward immigrant parents and overcome the barriers that inhibit participation in ESL children's schooling. In forming partnerships with immigrant parents, both the school and parents will be able to better serve the educational needs of ESL students.

## Resources

### Books and Journal Articles

Auerbach, E. (Ed.). (2002). *Community partnerships*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

Cline, Z., & Necochea, J. (2001). Basta Ya! Latino parents fighting entrenched racism. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 25(1 & 2).

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools*. Toronto, ON: Multilingual Matters.

Dei, G. J. S. (1997). *Home, family and community-based learning: Lessons for curriculum and pedagogy*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto.

Dei, G. J. S., James, I. M., Karumanchery, L. L., James-Wilson, S., & Zine, J. (2000). *Removing the margins: The challenges and possibilities of inclusive schooling*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Edwards, V. (1998). *The power of Babel: Teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms*. Stoke-on-Trent (U.K.): Trentham Books.

### Websites

The Harvard Family Research Project Graduate School of Education.

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/digest/incorporating.html>

# III What are the available support networks for teachers and parents?

## Support for Parents

### Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students discuss their parents' comfort level in becoming involved in school life. Teachers discuss the strategies they use to make parents feel more comfortable in the school. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Support for Parents*, stop the video at the end of the section and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

### Discussion Questions:

- What were the issues raised in the video about the way parents interact with the school?
- What are the challenges that teachers have in interacting with parents?
- What are the difficulties parents have in negotiating with the school?

### Individual or Group Activity: Parent-Involvement Mini-Lecture and Discussion

Time: 60 minutes



#### Materials:

Overhead of Appendix E: Factors Affecting Parent Involvement

Appendix E cut into sections

Chart paper for the class

Markers for the class

The purpose of this activity is to elicit from the teachers factors that they believe to affect parent involvement in school.

To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Complete step 1 and then compare your findings to those listed in Appendix 3.



1. Prior history of discrimination	2. Belief in authority of the school
3. Parents' lack of confidence	4. Need for cultural sensitivity in planning activities
5. Misperceptions of parental roles	6. Teachers' lack of confidence and negative attitudes
7. Misunderstanding of specific cultural patterns	8. Working parents
9. Social class difference	10. Language barrier
11. Lack of time	12. Cultural differences
13. Student attitude	14. Staff commitment to involvement

To complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:

- 1) Ask teachers to outline which factors affect parent involvement in schools.
- 2) Write their responses on a blank transparency. Compare their responses to the factors listed in Appendix E.
- 3) In a mini-lecture present the ideas on parent involvement which were introduced in the beginning of this section on page 43. Discuss how parents are perceived by the school/teacher. How are parents excluded from their children's schooling?
- 4) Divide the teachers into pairs and assign each pair one factor from the list. See Appendix E for a reproducible list of factors.
- 5) Ask the pairs to discuss how their factor manifests itself in their school and to consider the reasons based on the theories from the mini-lecture. They should write their ideas on a piece of chart paper.
- 6) After roughly 15 minutes, ask them to paste their chart paper on the walls around the room. Ask each pair to report back to the group how their factor manifests itself in their school.
- 7) Next, pass around coloured markers. Ask the teachers to contribute more information to the charts on the walls. Do they have any suggestions on how one can overcome the potential barriers? The teachers will wander from chart to chart until they have had the opportunity to contribute to all of them.
- 8) Have the teachers return to their tables. As a group, discuss the ideas listed.
- 9) Ask one person from the group to collect the chart paper, type up the ideas listed and email them to the participants.



## **Practicum or In-class Activity: Student Perceptions of Parents' Experiences**

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:**

Chart paper and markers



In your class discuss with students about why their parents may not feel comfortable coming to the school. Devise a list of strategies that can be used to reduce these barriers. Ask a colleague who is supportive of the issue to do the same activity in his/her class. Place the issue on the next school meeting's agenda. Together raise the issues discussed in your classes and the strategies that students recommended. Emphasize the need for this issue to be discussed



in an effort to raise the school staff's awareness that ESL issues extend beyond the classroom. What can the school do to reduce barriers to parent involvement? Some ideas include forming a committee to look at parent-school relationships and/or posting ideas to overcome communication barriers between parents and the school in the staff room or in a place where all teachers are sure to see the list.

## Personal Reflection Activity: Parent Interactions

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil

Teachers often have very strong beliefs and opinions about the way they should communicate with parents. Consider the two examples below:

Teacher A is very thorough. She meets with ESL parents at parent-teacher interviews and calls them promptly if there is a problem at school. She is punctual in keeping to her schedule when interviewing parents and uses the time to inform parents' of their child's academic successes and difficulties.



Teacher B meets ESL parents in the first few weeks after their child arrives at the school. He talks at length with them about their home life and the difficulties they have gone through in coming to Canada. Discussion about academics seems to be less of a priority.

Reflect on how you interact with parents. What are your strengths and weaknesses? How could you make parents feel more comfortable?



# Support for Teachers

## Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, teachers discuss their need for support in educating ESL students. We suggest that you watch the section titled Support for Teachers, and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

## Discussion Questions:

- What were the support issues raised by the teachers in these video clips?
- What are the support issues in your school?
- Is there a forum to discuss issues on line?
- Are teachers willing to openly discuss their needs and/or the difficulties that they may be having in teaching ESL students?
- What support is available?
- What support is needed?

## Individual or Group Activity: Resource Personnel List

**Time:** 60 minutes

### Materials:

Photocopies of Appendix F: Support Contact List  
Chart paper and markers



Title	Name	Contact Info.	Type of Support	Availability	Notes
e.g. Interpreter	Joseph Yu	J.Yu@hotmail.com	Mandarin Interpreter	Monday after school	Will translate school newsletters

The purpose of this activity is to create a list of resources and/or resource people to support teachers in better serving the needs of ESL students.

**To complete this activity on your own, read the following:**

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Use information from your school, your school board or the Internet to create a list.

We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

### The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Use information from your school, your school board or the Internet to create a list. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

- 1) As a whole group discuss ways to maximize support for teachers. What are the available resources at school, among students, parents and in the community?
- 2) Consider ways teachers can support each other through study groups, discussion groups, and through action research.
- 3) Distribute a copy of Appendix F to each teacher.
- 4) Compile a list on chart paper of resources and/or resource people that can be accessed to give teachers support in working with ESL students.
- 5) Keep track of the list on chart paper so that the teacher's can copy the information. If the teachers are from the same school, fill in phone numbers and e-mail addresses together. If they are from different schools, leave blank spaces and teachers can fill in the information on their own.
- 6) Next, as a group, look at the 'Practicum or In-class Activity'. Discuss the teachers' concerns in completing the activity. What are teacher's concerns about raising potentially sensitive issues in school meetings or among colleagues? What kind of response can they expect from colleagues and parents?
- 7) Brainstorm ideas on the best way to raise the issue of support among staff and parents.

### **Practicum or In-class Activity: The Role of Parents**

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:**

None



Together with a colleague, plan how to discuss the need for support in teaching ESL students at a school meeting. Outline your concerns and plan what you would like to accomplish in raising the concerns. Raise the issue at a teachers' meeting and at School Council. Openly discuss the need for support and open communication with regard to ESL issues. Elicit feedback from other teachers and parents.

What can be done to support teachers in meeting the needs of ESL students?

Some school councils have worked with teachers to:

- develop family literacy programs
- assist parents in helping their children with homework



- promote communication between parents and the school
- support bilingualism amongst students
- develop curriculum content
- incorporate culturally familiar content and genre
- develop after-school clubs

This information has been adapted from Auerbach, E. (Ed.). (2002). *Community partnerships*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

## Personal Reflection Activity: Support Brainstorm

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil



What support do you need in order to accommodate English language learners? Do you require support in your teaching, in communicating with parents or in other areas? Brainstorm on some ideas about how you can gain support and share your knowledge with others.



Notes

Handwriting practice area consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.





**IV What do teachers need to  
know and do to support  
ESL students?**

# Background

## **IV** **What do teachers need to know and do to support ESL students?**

This section of the guide provides teachers with background on the research as well as resources for further exploration. Across Ontario, school boards (especially in urban centers such as Toronto) have called for teachers and administrators to re-evaluate English as a Second Language (ESL) programming. Several factors have played significant roles in this change. Demographic trends have shown a rise in the number of students requiring ESL support (Toronto District School Board, 2002). Government funds have not been allocated to make needed adjustments to existing programs based on these demographic changes. As a direct consequence of these budgetary restrictions, students from non-English speaking countries who have been Canadian residents for over three years and students born in Canada do not qualify for ESL support (Bullock, 2000). The existing funding formula based on the provincial government's educational policy and the continued growth of the ESL population in Ontario schools provides educators with a formidable challenge. Since it is unlikely that school boards will be in a financial position to expand ESL programs, various strategies need to be considered to remedy the existing limitations of the system in order to adequately meet these students' needs. The most important consideration is that all teachers need to be language teachers.

In addition, educational reforms (such as the Educational Quality Accountability Office Standardized Tests in Ontario) place tremendous pressure on both students and teachers. These reforms require ESL students not only to master the content-area curriculum but also to become highly competent users of their second language. Therefore, teachers need content and pedagogical knowledge to ensure that they are providing appropriate instruction to all students. Teachers also need to have an understanding of students' countries of origin and their previous educational systems. Professional development in this field must include the knowledge of language acquisition, background information and effective strategies to support teachers' overall practice (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

### **Information on Language Learning**

Teachers who do not know the theory behind language learning can 'undermine' a student's confidence (Wong-Fillmore & Snow 2000). There are several factors which need to be considered, including time, materials, methods for learning a language, and the role of the first language.

Research concerning the most effective programs for ESL students highlights the

importance and benefits of native language development. Nieto (2002) maintains that bilingual education is generally more effective than other programs such as ESL on its own, even for English language development. However, research on the role of the first language has been virtually ignored by the ministry and teacher education programs (CERIS, 2003). The connection between first and second languages and cultures has also been ignored (Gonzalez & Hammond, 2003).

The ESL teachers in the videos called for an awareness of the length of time required to acquire a second language. Students generally need at least between 5 and 7 years to become academically proficient in a second language (Cummins, 1981; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Cummins (1979) has used the acronyms BICS and CALP to refer to a distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS are related to ESL learners' conversation and fluency abilities. CALP refers to students' competency in understanding academic language appropriate for their grade. Conversational fluency is often acquired within about two years of initial exposure to the second language whereas at least five years is usually required to catch up to native speakers in the academic dimensions of the second language (Cummins, 1996; Roessingh & Kover, 2002).

A student's first language plays a role in the acquisition of the second language. Allowing students to use their first language in the classroom from time to time serves two purposes. It not only recognizes the value of a student's mother tongue in the dominant culture, it also allows for transfer between concepts. A student who understands that amor and love have the same meaning will learn the word quickly. In contrast, the student who must first decipher the concept of love in English and then learn the word will take longer.

Teachers may also be familiar with the process of transfer which takes place when a person thinks in one language and then translates to the other to express the idea. In the translation process students may be using grammar concepts from their first language. For example, in some other languages a time phrase is added to the sentence to indicate the concept of the past instead of changing the form of the verb. It is important that teachers recognize the fundamental difference between learning BICS and CALP so they may support their students even when they have developed oral fluency in English.

The information in this section is not exhaustive but provides a starting point for further investigation. The activities in this section of the guide provide teachers with an introduction to theories about language learning. The resource list indicates materials that can provide additional information.



## The ESL Students' Background

To support the academic and adjustment needs of the very diverse students in Ontario schools, teachers should consider taking the time to learn about their ESL students' backgrounds including the structures of their family and cultural values. Educators also need preparation to understand cultural practices, belief systems and life experiences that may run counter to mainstream expectations regarding the role of children and parents as well as the structure of the school system (Bhavnagri & Gonzalez-Mena, 1997).

Immigrant families often experience a cultural transition as parents may be faced with new and different attitudes about child rearing and the role of the child. Consequently, inherent in this transition is a process of accepting some new values, and adhering to some long-held ones while modifying others. Images of schooling and education are socially constructed; parents who have grown up in a different context may find their views differ significantly from those of the teachers and administrators (Clabaugh, 2000). The education terminology often used by teachers assumes previous knowledge about school practices which many immigrant parents do not have (Ovado & Collier, 1998). As a result, teachers and administrators can facilitate new Canadian students' and parents' entry into the school culture by learning about their varied backgrounds and cultures. However, Perkins (2000) argues that a general apprehension and appreciation of cultural diversity is not enough. Teachers who do not know a family's experiences prior to their arrival in a new country can not make assumptions about how those experiences affect the child's and parents' reactions to school. By educating themselves, teachers can lessen the 'intimidation factor' (Holman, 1997, p.37) and extend themselves to build warm and non-judgmental relationships with parents. Furthermore, an increasing number of studies suggest that teachers and schools need to build on, rather than diminish, the contributions students bring to school. In other words, they need to understand and incorporate cultural, linguistic and experiential differences as well as differences in social class, into the learning process (Abi-Nader, 1993; Hollins, King & Hayman, 1994). Above all successful teaching means that teachers must change their attitudes towards language minority students, their languages and cultures, and their communities (Cummins, 1996).

In a similar vein, several of the ESL teachers and students in our videos have requested that teachers take the time to learn about the background, culture, personal histories and previous educational systems of ESL students. A student's experiential background can be used as a 'point of departure' for inclusion in the classroom (Walqui, 2000). An understanding of a child's personal history and education provides insights into a child's academic abilities. In order for schools to provide a welcoming and safe environment for these newly arrived children, it is critical that teachers learn about the cultural, linguistic and historical influences that shape ESL learners' behaviors and attitudes towards education.



## Appropriate Teaching Strategies

Currently in Ontario, qualified ESL teachers are unable to provide all the needed programming for ESL learners in their schools. This responsibility is being shared with, or, in some instances, has become the exclusive domain of, mainstream classroom teachers. Upon enrollment new ESL students are either partially or fully integrated into mainstream programs. After a maximum of three years of ESL support, students are usually fully integrated into the mainstream and no longer receive special support as language learners. Consequently teachers — often by necessity- need to augment their existing teaching skills to better serve these children. Currently, a dichotomy often exists between ESL and mainstream teachers' responsibilities. The former usually concentrates on aiding linguistic development and the latter mainly focuses on content instruction. In order to optimize cognitive development ESL teachers should plan for more support in subject matter/disciplinary content learning and mainstream teachers should increase their awareness of ESL students' linguistic needs and support students in developing English language skills.

The following is a summary of some strategies mainstream teachers can incorporate in their lessons.

### Content Based Instruction (CBI)

Teachers sometimes assume that ESL students are incapable of participating in content subjects such as science and social studies because of their limited language abilities. However, if we look towards French immersion in schools this is clearly not the case. Students in these programs continue learning content subjects while learning French, their second language (Genesse, 1995). CBI involves the integration of content and language in teaching. The subject matter in Ontario classrooms would be based on the Ontario curriculum and the language skills would be determined by the Ontario ESL Curriculum as well as by the students' needs (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). In practice this implies that language acquisition can take place in the context of subject matter learning. In content classes, teachers need to focus on language instruction including grammar and vocabulary instruction as discussed below.

### Form-Focused Instruction

Findings based on research support an approach to language teaching which calls for the integration of form-focused instruction in content-based and communicative activities. There are two main conceptual approaches to integrating form in CBI, they are: *focus on form* and *form-focused instruction*. Long (1991) defines focus on form as, "any pedagogical attempt to overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46). Spada (1997), defines form focused instruction as:



Any pedagogical effort used to draw the learner's attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly (this may include focus on form). Form focused instruction may invoke the direct teaching of language but it should occur within meaning based (communicative) approaches to L2 instruction. Focus on language can be provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways. (p. 74)

In short, a focus on linguistic structures can arise incidentally or be a predetermined objective incorporated as part of a meaning focused lesson.

Form focused instruction can be integrated into CBI through cooperative learning strategies. Group work presents students with opportunities to discuss language-related questions as they work toward the completion of their assignment. Collaborative inquiry, using dictogloss and jigsaw activities, can foster a deeper understanding of metalinguistic concepts (Swain, 2001). Moreover, teachers can utilize group discussion activities in their effort to recognize linguistic elements that might need further clarification or consolidation in subsequent lessons. Therefore, research supports the finding, that form-focused instruction in the context of communicative programs can assist in developing academic language proficiency without compromising content learning opportunities (Stern, 1992).

## Vocabulary Learning

In CBI classes ESL student success can be greatly increased through vocabulary instruction. This notion is supported by research which has shown a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and academic achievement (Echevarria, Vogt & Short 2000). In a CBI class there is place for both explicit and implicit vocabulary instruction.

Explicit vocabulary teaching is an opportunity for the teacher to introduce key terms that are critical to the students' understanding of the subject matter and raise their awareness of particular words so they recognize them in their reading of content material. The teacher can introduce or revise words at the start of a lesson, encourage students to find corresponding words in their L1, demonstrate how each word is used and show the words' significance within context (Echevarria et al, 2000). Teachers can also assign students a vocabulary list to be studied at home and elaborate on the list in the classroom (Schmidt, 2000).

In contrast to learning vocabulary explicitly, vocabulary can also be learned implicitly or incidentally. Implicit vocabulary learning allows students to obtain maximum exposure to a language because it is usually acquired through extensive reading (Schmidt, 2000). As Nation (1999) observes, "to be effective, an extensive reading program needs to involve large quantities of reading at an appropriate level". Studies have found that the more students read, the greater their vocabulary size.



## Resources

### Books and Journal Articles

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (1994). Knowledge, power, and identity in teaching English as a second language. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating second language children: the whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp. 33-58). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, E., & Short, D. J. (2000). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP model*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

Genesee, F. (1995). *Integrating language and content: Lessons from immersion*. National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved 13 July, 2003, 2003, from the World Wide Web:

<http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/nrcrds05.html> Helmer, S., & Eddy C., (1996) *Look at me when I talk to you: ESL learners in non ESL classrooms*. Toronto: Pippin Publishing Company.

Nation, I. S. P. (1999). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Wellington: English Language Institute Occasional Publication.

Roessingh, H. & Kover, P. (2002). Working with younger arriving-ESL learners in high school English: Never too late to reclaim potential, *TESL Canada Journal*. 19, 2, Toronto: Ontario Modern Language Teacher's Association, 1-17.

Spada, N. (1997). Form-focused instruction and second language acquisition: A review of classroom and laboratory research. *State of the Art Language Teaching*, 30(2), 1-15.

Thomas, W.P., & Collier, V. P. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority students*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Walqui, A. (2000). *Access and engagement: Program design and instructional approaches for immigrant students in secondary school*. California: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co.



## IV What do teachers need to know and do to support ESL students?

### Information on Language Learning

#### Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students and teachers discuss the differences between academic and social language. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Information on Language Learning*, stop the video at the end of the section and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

#### Discussion Questions:

- How does academic language differ from social language?
- Have teachers noticed that students can be fluent in English yet continue to have academic difficulty? Discuss.
- Are there any ESL students in the school who have been placed in special education?
- What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of having ESL students in special education programs?

#### Individual or Group Activity: Academic and Social Language

**Time:** 60 minutes

#### Materials:



Chart paper and markers

Overhead of Appendix G: Figure 3.2 - Length of time required to achieve age-appropriate levels of conversational and academic language proficiency.

Overhead of Appendix H: Figure 3.1-Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities:

The figures have been used with permission from Dr. Jim Cummins at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Source: Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association, p.62.

The purpose of this activity is to educate teachers in the art of effective communication.



**To complete this activity on your own, read the following:**

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Complete steps 2 and 3 in your journal and follow steps 4 to 6 as directed. You may need to use the Internet to find more information regarding BICS and CALP. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

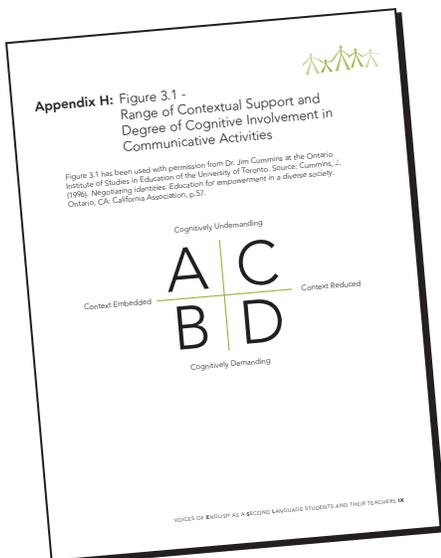
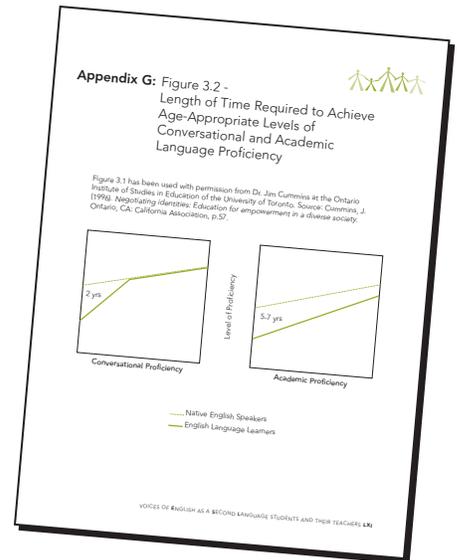
**To complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:**

- 1) Ask the teachers to estimate how long it takes a student who has basic proficiency to become proficient in a language.
- 2) Write down their answers on chart paper.
- 3) On an overhead show the Appendix G figure 3.2 from Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society*. Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education, 62. This graph depicts the length of time required to achieve conversational proficiency and academic proficiency.
- 4) Explain the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) theory (Cummins, 1996) and discuss the funding policies for ESL support. How long do students receive ESL support in your board (for example: TDSB or policy in the province of Ontario)? Compare this to the length of time required to achieve academic proficiency.
- 5) Next, divide the teachers into two groups. Ask the groups to answer one of the following question:

- Group 1- Why are ESL students often placed in special education?
- Group 2- What are the implications of the BICS and CALP theory for mainstream classroom teachers in Ontario?

6) Ask the groups to discuss the question for approximately ten minutes. At the end, ask a volunteer from each group to recap the main points raised. As a large group, discuss the pedagogical implications of the BICS and CALP theory.

7) On an overhead display Appendix H: Figure 3.1. The range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities. Display the graph and explain its meaning.



### Information on Figure 3.1 for the facilitator

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All teachers partaking in CBI instruction should remember that for their students to take maximum advantage of the approach they must design lessons which make language and content accessible and cognitively engaging (Cummins, 1996; Genesee, 1994; Met, 1994). Cummins (1996) relies on two intersecting continuums to further clarify this concept. One continuum has context embedded and context reduced activities at its two extremes and the other locates activities between the cognitively undemanding and cognitively demanding ends. These two continuums intersect to form four quadrants. ESL students depend on comprehensible input, that is input which is cognitively engaging, and context embedded. Cognitively demanding activities are generally challenging and if planned with students' interests in mind can also be highly engaging. "Context embedded tasks use many supports for meaning to help make language, and thus the task understandable" (Met, 1994, p.164). According to Cummins (1996), it is precisely this combination of cognitive challenge and contextual support which provides ideal opportunities for bilingual learners to develop academic language proficiency and reduces potential gaps in content comprehension. "The central point is that language and content will be acquired most successfully when students are challenged cognitively but provided with the contextual and linguistic supports required for successful task completion" (p. 60).

Please see the source or visit <http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/> for more information.

---

- 8) Divide the class into four groups. Each group is assigned one of the four BICS and CALP quadrants. For example, Group 1 is quadrant A-Context Embedded and Cognitively Demanding. Ask the teachers to answer the following questions:
  - How does Cummins define this quadrant?
  - What kinds of classroom/homework tasks fall into this quadrant?
  - What are the disadvantages or advantages of these types of activities for ESL students?
- 9) Ask the smaller groups to share their findings with the larger group.
- 10) After the discussion, take a vote to establish which quadrant is most valuable in promoting academic success amongst ESL students. Compare the results of the vote to Cummins' argument (1996) that most teaching should fall in Quadrant B where lessons would be context embedded and cognitively demanding.



## Practicum or In-class Activity: Reviewing Your Lesson

**Time:** 40 minutes

### Materials:

Appendix H: Figure 3.1 from Jim Cummins (1996)

Figure 3.1 has been used with permission from Dr. Jim Cummins at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Source: Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association, p.62.

Part A: Review the lesson that you have planned for the day. Consider where the activities would be placed on the Cummins (1996) Cognitive and Contextual Demands Chart. How could you improve the lesson so that it can be categorized in Quadrant B?

Part B: Create opportunities for students to use their first language (L1) in class and around school. How is the students' first language used in your school?

## Personal Reflection Activity: Your Teaching

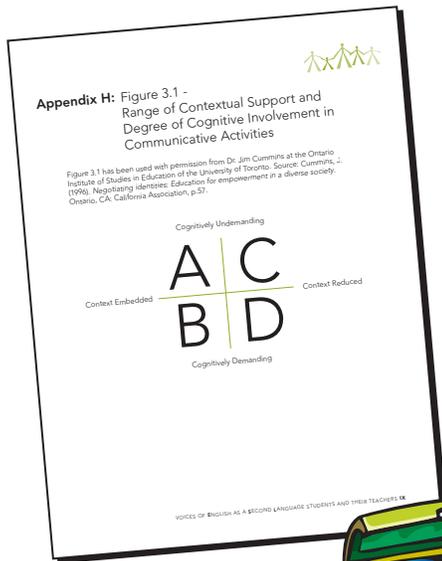
**Time:** 20 minutes

### Materials:

Appendix H: Figure 3.1 from Jim Cummins  
Journal and pencil

Figure 3.1 has been used with permission from Dr. Jim Cummins at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Source: Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association, p.62.

Reflect on the kinds of activities in which you ask your ESL students to take part. Are they cognitively demanding? Are they context embedded? How can you adjust your teaching to fulfill these criteria?



# Information about ESL Students' Background and Culture

## Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students discuss what it is like when people ask questions about where they are from. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Information about ESL Students' Background and Culture*, stop the video at the end of the section and complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

## Discussion Questions:

- What were the main ideas that students discussed in the video?
- How do questions posed to the students about their background promote inclusivity or marginalize the students further?
- How can teachers/administration promote sensitivity to immigration issues amongst students and colleagues?
- How can teachers promote inclusivity amongst students and colleagues?
- What is the importance of teaching students and educators about marginality issues?

## Individual or Group Activity: Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education

Time: 60 minutes



**Appendix I: Anti-Racist Education or Multicultural Education**

Cut out and distribute the following quotes. Ask teachers to decide in pairs if the quote is a multicultural or anti-racist idea. The quotes are excerpts from Dei and Calliste (2000, p.21)

- "promoting cultural diversity as an intrinsic component of the social, political and moral order"
- "It is an ideal of a democratic pluralistic society that recognizes a community advocates empathy for minorities on the basis of a common humanity"
- "shifts talk away from tolerance of diversity to the pointed notion of difference and power"
- "envisions a future assured by goodwill, tolerance and understanding of diversity among all"
- "It sees race and racism as central to how we claim, occupy and defend spaces."
- "The task ... is to identify, challenge and change the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racial and other forms of societal oppressions."

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### Materials:

- Appendix I: Anti-Racist or Multicultural Education
- Appendix J: Answer Sheet
- Overhead projector
- Blank overhead

**Appendix J: Answer Sheet**

The quotes are excerpts from Dei and Calliste Dei, G. J. S., & Calliste, A. (2000). Mapping the knowledge and anti-racism education: A critical reader (Eds.). Pinner: Mimi/Multiculturalism. Anti-Racism

- "promoting cultural diversity as an intrinsic component of the social, political and moral order" M
- "It is an ideal of a democratic pluralistic society that recognizes a community advocates empathy for minorities on the basis of a common humanity" M
- "shifts talk away from tolerance of diversity to the pointed notion of difference and power" AR
- "envisions a future assured by goodwill, tolerance and understanding of diversity among all" M
- "It sees race and racism as central to how we claim, occupy and defend spaces." AR
- "The task ... is to identify, challenge and change the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racial and other forms of societal oppressions." AR
- "people with the notion of basic humanness and diverging intelligences of difference by encouraging shared commonalities" M
- "[This] discourse highlights the persistent inequalities among communities focusing on relations of dominance and subordination" AR
- "the issue is one of a lack of recognition of the positive contributions of minorities which stems from misunderstanding and misrepresentation." M
- "[It] includes the rhetoric, challenge diversity and plurality and promotes an image of multiple beings mutually respectful and appreciative ethno-cultural communities." M
- "sees the issue starkly as entrenched inequalities and power imbalance." AR
- "views the problem as manifested in intolerance and lack of goodwill." M
- "perceives prejudice as a violation of democratic rights" M
- "mechanism of racism through education-sharing and exchange of ideas" M

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The purpose of this activity is for teachers to decide how they wish to teach cultural sensitivity to students.

To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

**The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:**

- 1) Place the word “multicultural education” on the overhead and ask teachers to establish a definition for the term.
- 2) Now place the word “anti-racist education” and ask teachers to establish a definition for the term. Discuss the similarities and differences in the definitions.
- 3) Ask teachers to pair up with the person sitting next to them.
- 4) On the blackboard write the heading “multicultural education” and “anti-racist education”.
- 5) Cut up the statements listed in Appendix I. Hand one statement to each group.
- 6) Ask them to review the statement and decide whether it belongs under multicultural education or anti-racist education headings.
- 7) Ask them explain why they would place it under one category or another.
- 8) Once you have finished the discussion, distribute Appendix J: Answer Sheet.
- 9) Split the teachers into three groups. They are going to have a debate.
  - Group #1 will adopt an anti-racist orientation.
  - Group #2 will adopt a multi-cultural orientation.
  - Group #3 will be the mediators and judges.
- 10) Give the groups 15 minutes to prepare. Groups #1 and #2 must develop arguments to support their positions as either the anti-racist orientation advocates or multicultural orientation advocates. They can use Appendix J for guidance. Group #3 will develop criteria on how they will make the decisions based on the arguments presented by each group. After a 15 minute discussion, begin the debate.
- 11) At the end of the debate, tell the class that in research there are advocates for both sides of the argument. Some argue that terms and concepts are blurred and that both orientations have overlapping ideologies. However, it is important to understand the differences between multiculturalism and anti-racism in order to place ESL pedagogy within a context.
  - Ask each group what they learned from the process.
  - Now that they have heard both sides of the argument, ask teachers if they would implement an anti-racist perspective or a multicultural perspective to foster cultural sensitivity in their students?



## Practicum or In-class Activity: Reviewing Websites

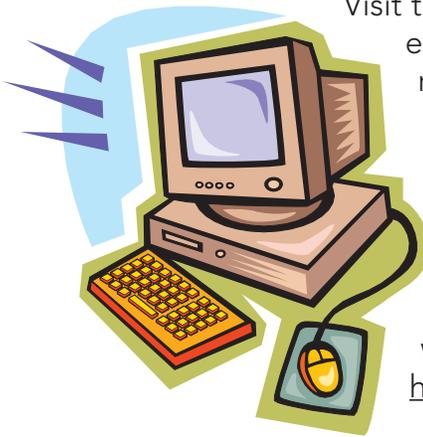
**Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:**

Internet Access

Review some of the websites with an antiracist orientation listed at:  
<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/iderd/orglinks.html>

Review some of the websites with a multicultural orientation listed at:  
[http://www.cln.org/subjects/mc\\_cur.html](http://www.cln.org/subjects/mc_cur.html)



Visit the multicultural websites and anti-racist websites. Critically examine if there are more benefits to adopting one orientation rather than another. Implement some of the ideas or lessons found in these websites in order to raise students' awareness of their own identity. These include activities aimed at raising issues related to ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, education and sexual orientation. Discuss with students how we maintain our identity? What do we do when our identity is challenged? Post your feedback of the websites on the ESL Infusion website under *Resource Reviews* <http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/teachingresourcesrr.asp>

## Personal Reflection Activity: Inclusivity

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil

Record your observations on how mainstream students treat ESL students. Have there been any racial incidents at the school or incidents where students are excluded based on their culture, ethnicity or language? Consider what proactive measures you can take in order to promote inclusivity amongst your students so that ESL students do not feel marginalized. Next, visit the ESL Infusion website at <http://www.eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/scenarios.asp> and post a scenario on some aspect of inclusive pedagogy at your school.



# Appropriate Teaching Strategies - Advice from Teachers

## Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, teachers discuss appropriate strategies for teaching ESL students. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Appropriate Teaching Strategies - Advice from Teachers*, stop the video at the end of the section, and then complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

## Discussion Questions:

- What were the teaching strategies mentioned by the teachers in the video?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of these strategies?
- What strategies have you found to be successful?

## Individual or Group Activity: SIOP Jigsaw Activity

Time: 45 minutes

### Materials:

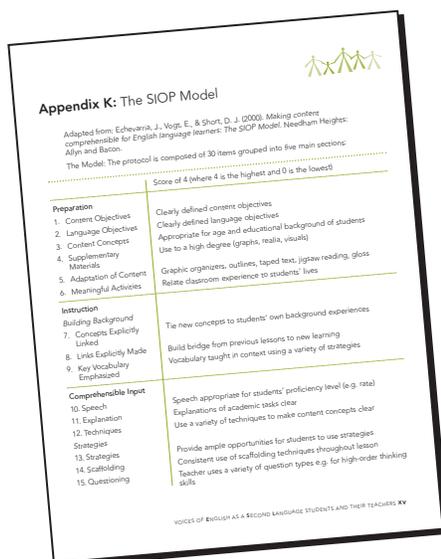
Photocopies of Appendix K: The SIOP Model

Distribute appendix K outlining the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). If possible find the book and distribute the SIOP with each of the evaluation criteria from the above reference. Discuss the protocol and explain how the rating scale works.

The following activity is adapted from Short, D. J., Hudec, J., & Echevarria, J. (2002). *Using the SIOP model: Professional development manual for sheltered instruction*. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.

### To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. Read the materials and modify your daily practice to incorporate the SIOP method. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.



The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:

- 1) In a jigsaw activity assign each teacher a number from 1 to 8.
- 2) Ask teachers to separate into their groups so that all the 1s are together, all the 2s are together etc.
- 3) Assign each group a topic from the SIOP (see Appendix K).

**Copy of Appendix K for the Facilitator**

<b>Group #1</b>	<b>Preparation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Content Objectives</li><li>2. Language Objectives</li><li>3. Content Concepts</li><li>4. Supplementary Materials</li><li>5. Adaptation of Content</li><li>6. Meaningful Activities</li></ol>
<b>Group #2</b>	<b>Instruction</b> <i>Building Background</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Concepts Explicitly Linked</li><li>8. Links Explicitly Made</li><li>9. Key Vocabulary Emphasized</li></ol>
<b>Group#3</b>	<b>Comprehensible Input</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>10. Speech</li><li>11. Explanation</li><li>12. Techniques</li></ol>
<b>Group #4</b>	<b>Strategies</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>13. Strategies</li><li>14. Scaffolding</li><li>15. Questioning</li></ol>
<b>Group #5</b>	<b>Interaction</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>16. Interaction</li><li>17. Grouping Configurations</li><li>18. Wait Time</li><li>19. Clarify Key Concepts in L1</li></ol>
<b>Group #6</b>	<b>Practice/Application</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>20. Hands-On Materials/Manipulatives for Practice</li><li>21. Apply Content and Language Knowledge</li><li>22. Integrate all Language Skills</li></ol>

Group #7	<b>Lesson Delivery</b> 23. Content Objectives 24. Language Objectives 25. Students Engaged 26. Pacing
Group #8	<b>Review/Assessment</b> 27. Review of Key Vocabulary 28. Review of Key Content Concepts 29. Feedback 30. Assessment of Lesson Objectives

- 4) Each expert group will discuss the importance of the items listed in their topic area. For example, group number one, whose topic is preparation, will discuss the items listed in this category. How relevant are they to their teaching context? How critical are the items listed? Would they implement each of the items in every lesson? (Echevarria et al., 2000)
- 5) After a five minute discussion reorganize into home groups (this includes one person from group 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8).
- 6) Each teacher in the group is responsible for teaching the other about strategies that they can use in their classroom when teaching ESL students.
- 7) If possible, photocopy and distribute the SIOP rating scale which is found in Short, D. J., Hudec, J., & Echevarria, J. (2002). *Using the SIOP model: Professional development manual for sheltered instruction*. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.  
  
As a whole group discuss the SIOP. Would they find it useful in their particular context? What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks?
- 8) If accessible, show a portion of the SIOP video which shows classroom footage of teaching according to the SIOP model. Center for Applied Linguistics. (2002). *The SIOP model: Sheltered instruction for academic achievement* [Video]. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.



# Practicum or In-class Activity: Implementing the SIOP Model

**Time:** 120 minutes

**Materials:**

Video camera

Tape

VCR



Videotape your next lesson. If possible, photocopy the section on scoring the SIOP from Short, D. J., Hudec, J., & Echevarria, J. (2002). *Using the SIOP model: Professional development manual for sheltered instruction*. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics. After school, watch the video on your own or with a colleague. Evaluate the lesson according to SIOP rating scale. Consider your strengths and weaknesses in each of the items listed in the SIOP. Make a list of the of the items that need to be improved and select an item to focus on each week in your teaching.



**Appendix K: The SIOP Model**

Adapted from: Echevarria, J., Vogt, E., & Short, D. J. (2000). Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP Model. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

The Model- The protocol is composed of 30 items grouped into five main sections:  
.....  
Score of 4 letters 4 is the highest and 0 is the lowest

<b>Preparation</b>	
1. Content Objectives	Clearly defined content objectives
2. Language Objectives	Clearly defined language objectives
3. Content Concepts	Appropriate for age and educational background of students
4. Supplementary Materials	Use to a high degree (graphs, realia, visuals)
5. Adaptation of Content	Graphic organizers, outlines, taped text, jigsaw reading, gloss
6. Meaningful Activities	Relate classroom experience to students' lives
<b>Instruction</b>	
7. Building Background	Tie new concepts to students' own background experiences
8. Concepts Explicitly Linked	Build bridge from previous lessons to new learning
9. Key Vocabulary Made Emphasized	Vocabulary taught in context using a variety of strategies
<b>Comprehensible Input</b>	
10. Speech	Speech appropriate for students' proficiency level (e.g. rate)
11. Explanation	Explanations of academic tasks clear
12. Techniques	Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear
13. Strategies	Provide ample opportunities for students to use strategies
14. Scaffolding	Consistent use of scaffolding techniques throughout lesson
15. Questioning	Teacher uses a variety of question types e.g. for high-order thinking skills

VOICES OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS BY

# Personal Reflection Activity: Teaching Strategies

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil

Appendix K: The SIOP Model

Consider the points of view of the students in the video regarding the study of content subjects. Are your ESL students engaged when you teach a content lesson? List some way you could increase their participation to make the lesson cognitively challenging but not overwhelming. See Appendix 7 for the ideas listed in the SIOP.



## Appropriate Teaching Strategies - Advice from Students

### Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students discuss how their teachers have helped them to become more successful in their academic studies. They also give advice to teachers on how their teaching strategies can be improved to meet ESL students' needs. We suggest that you watch the section titled *Appropriate Teaching Strategies - Advice from Students*, stop the video at the end of the section, and then complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.



### Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the challenges that teachers have in teaching ESL students in content classes?
- What are the challenges students faced in their subject classes?
- What is content based instruction (CBI)?
- How can CBI assist us with the task of teaching the Ontario Curriculum to ESL students?

### Individual or Group Activity: Content Based Instruction (CBI) Mini-lecture and Jig-Saw

**Time:** 90 minutes or more

#### Materials:

Retrieve and print off the following article from the Internet:

A Genesee, F. (1995). Integrating language and content: Lessons from immersion. National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: <http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/nrcrds05.html>

The purpose of this activity is for teachers to learn how to use and improve CBI.

To complete this activity on your own, read the following:



The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

**The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:**

- 1) If possible, distribute the article for teachers to read a few days before the workshop.
- 2) In a mini-lecture explain the premise behind CBI.

Many students in Ontario have been demitted from ESL programs but continue to struggle to meet the linguistic and academic demands of school (Met, 1994). It takes students between 5-7 years to become academically proficient in a second language. Considering this fact, students' would be missing out many years of school if we waited for them to develop academic language proficiency before teaching then content subjects (Cummins, 1996). The reality is that ESL students come to schools in Ontario with broad background knowledge. It is our role as teachers to build on this knowledge in content classes, to ensure that ESL students do not fall behind in their academic subjects and place their education in jeopardy.

- 3) The following activity is a jigsaw. Make sure that the teachers have a copy of the article which you distributed earlier in the week.
- 4) Divide the teachers into three groups.
- 5) The first group will be reviewing the portion of Genesee's article entitled "Language integration over isolation". The second group will review the portion of Genesee's article entitled "Opportunities to use the target language". The third group will review the portion of Genesee's article entitled "Effective curriculum design".
- 6) Give teachers time (about 20 minutes) to read their portion of the article or if possible ask teachers to read the article before they arrive at the workshop. After 20 minutes divide the larger groups into teams of three. Each team will have one person from the first, second, and third group.
- 7) Each person in the group is the expert on what they read. Ask them to share what they have read with their team.
- 8) Give each group 15 to 20 minutes to discuss the article.
- 9) As a whole group, discuss the main themes from the article and how teachers might adjust their teaching to be effective content teachers and to meet the needs of ESL students.



## Practicum or In-class Activity: Implementing Genesee's Ideas

**Time:** 30 minutes

### **Materials:**

Genesee, F. (1995). Integrating language and content: Lessons from immersion. National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: <http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/nrcrds05.html>

Reflect on the Genesee (1995) article. Decide on how you might begin to implement some of the ideas of the article. Set a goal for yourself that you plan to implement at least one of Genesee's ideas. Try to build on his ideas every week by changing your goals frequently.



## Personal Reflection Activity: Content Classes

**Time:** 30 minutes

### **Materials:**

Journal and pencil

In a journal reflect on how your ESL students are succeeding in your content classes? Consider why they are successful or not? How can you change your teaching to meet their needs and to ensure their academic success in content classes?







**V What do teachers need to know and do to support ESL students?**

# Background

## What type of programs do schools offer ESL students?

### ESL Programs

It is important that all teachers be aware of the type of ESL instruction a student is receiving and how the ESL curriculum relates to the content curriculum (Becker, 2001). Programming dynamics which work against the ESL learner include fragmented school days, departmentalized programs, age-gender inflexibility, and streaming (Walqui, 2000). It is important to share information on what needs are and are not being met in the various programs (Morales-Nadal, 1991). According to the interviewees in the video, the ESL classroom was seen as a safe haven away from the chaos of the mainstream classroom. Schools should critically examine why ESL classrooms are considered safe havens while mainstream classrooms are often not. Through the video we introduce teachers to a number of successful exemplary ESL programs in the Toronto District School Board. We encourage viewers to reflect on the structures and programs in their school to determine which areas could be improved to support ESL students.

### Newcomer Programs

ESL students may be at risk for academic failure and early drop-out because of weaknesses in literacy skills, English language skills or academic skills (Genesee, 1999). Many schools now run newcomer programs that meet the unique needs of a diverse ESL population. The goals of a newcomer program may vary from school to school depending on the needs of the ESL population, the resources available, the educational goals and the staff available (Genesee, 1999). There is no “one-size-fits-all” program. However, in general, the goals of newcomer programs include the following: 1) receive new students in a way that puts the student at ease; 2) help students to develop basic English language skills; 3) help students develop academic skills; and 4) assist students in becoming acculturated to their new environment (Genesee, 1999). Some schools may offer a full-day program for absolute beginners that includes content classes. Others may offer a one or two-hour a day program where students are integrated into the mainstream for the rest of the day. In other schools, an ESL teacher may be assigned to support ESL students in the mainstream class in such a way that they never leave the regular classroom to receive ESL instruction.

### Sheltered Instruction

Sheltered Instruction is a particular model of content based instruction as previously described in the “Teaching Strategies” section of this guide. The main



elements of a sheltered language classroom include the following 1) units designed for ESL learners exclusively, 2) classes taught by an ESL or mainstream teacher, and 3) a content course syllabus with corresponding curricular expectations appropriate to the grade level, 4) language modified to suit the needs of students, and 5) commercial texts and other meaningful resources (e.g., newspapers/magazine articles, videos, Internet resources and books) selected with sensitivity to optimize the proficiency level of students (Britton et al., 1989). Programs such as these have different names in school boards across Canada. In the Toronto District School Board there are several types of sheltered programs including the following: 1) a Literacy Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) program offered in some elementary and middle schools, 2) English Literacy Development (ELD) for high school students, and 3) ESL subject matter course such as ESL History or ESL Science in certain high schools with a large ESL population.

### **Partial Support in Elementary and Middle Schools**

Typically in elementary and middle schools in Ontario, students receive partial support from an ESL teacher on a daily basis. The level of support greatly depends on the ESL staffing allocation at the particular school. In contrast to secondary schools, where the ESL curriculum is policy, the document published by the Ontario Ministry of Education on ESL for elementary schools is a Resource Guide. This means that schools are not legally required to provide ESL support to students from a qualified ESL teacher. ESL support can be delivered by mainstream teachers. Because of the lack of specific requirements for ESL programming in elementary schools, some principals have chosen to use their ESL teacher allocation creatively. In other words, the ESL teacher may be used to reduce class sizes or to avoid a split grade (E. Coelho, personal communication, June, 2003). As a result, mainstream teachers often find themselves without support in providing an ESL program for their students.

### **High School ESL/ELD Courses**

According to the Ontario Curriculum, secondary schools in Ontario are required to provide ESL and English Literacy Development (ELD) courses that range from beginner level to advanced level. Students would typically take one ESL/ELD course, supplemented with sheltered content or mainstream courses depending on their level. They may also receive intensive, partial or tutorial support. There are five levels of ESL courses ranging from a course for total beginners to the fifth level which provides a bridge to regular secondary level English courses. There are four levels of ELD courses for students who have had limited access to schooling in their first language. These courses range from introducing literacy skills to preparing students to continue education in the mainstream or the workplace.

The activities in the guide help teachers explore the programs listed above as well as a range of extracurricular and support programs. The key to successful programming is the involvement of all levels in the school system — administrators, teachers, parents and students.

## Resources

### Books and Journal Articles

Genesee, F., (Ed). (1999). *Program alternatives for linguistically diverse students* [Educational Practice Report No. 1]. Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. Retrieved from the World Wide Web:  
<http://www.cal.org/crede/pubs/edpractice/EPR1.pdf>

Miramontes, O. B., Nadeau, A., & Cummins, N. L. (1997). *Restructuring schools for linguistic diversity: Linking decision making to effective programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.



## V What type of programs do schools offer ESL students?

### ESL as a Safe Haven



#### Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, students discuss how the ESL program has helped them. We suggest that you watch the section titled *ESL as a Safe Haven*, stop the video at the end of the section, and then complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What are the benefits of the ESL classroom for ESL students?
- What are the drawbacks of the ESL classroom for ESL students?

#### Individual or Group Activity: Safe-Haven Brainstorm

**Time:** 30 minutes

#### Materials:

Chart paper and markers

The purpose of this activity is for teachers to explore the benefits of ESL classes.

#### To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.

#### To complete this activity in a workshop, follow these steps:

- 1) Ask teachers to brainstorm ideas of the positive aspects of the ESL class. Have them list their ideas on chart paper.
- 2) Ask workshop teachers to divide into groups of 4 or 5. Assign each group 3 or 4 items on the brainstorm list. Ask them to consider if it is possible for the items listed to become a reality in a mainstream classroom. What support would they need in order for this to become a reality?



- 3) After ten minutes ask each group to share their ideas.
- 4) As a whole group discuss how the ESL haven can become a reality in every classroom.

### **Practicum or In-class Activity: Developing an Empathic Environment**

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

None

Consider how you might transform your classroom for ESL students into a safe haven. What would you need to do in order to accomplish this? Develop strategies together with colleagues. Raise the issue at a school meeting.



### **Personal Reflection Activity: Power Issues**

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

None

Consider what advantages your English speaking students have over your English language learners? Who has more power? Who has greater access to resources? What can you do to foster equity in your programming?



# ESL Programs and the Role of the Teacher

## Video Excerpt:

In these video clips, teachers discuss the programs at their school that support ESL students. We suggest that you watch the section titled *ESL Programs*, stop the video at the end of the section, and then complete the activities below. A screen will indicate when you should stop the tape.

## Discussion Questions:

- a. What kinds of ESL programs are available at your school?
- b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the program?
- c. How is communication regarding the progress of ESL students facilitated at your school?
- d. Is there ongoing communication amongst all responsible teachers regarding the progress of all ESL students?
- e. Is there discussion regarding the progress of students who have been officially demitted from ESL?
- f. What kinds of problems arise from the different ESL programs?
- g. How can the school foster home-school communication?



## Individual or Group Activity: ESL Programs

**Time:** 60- 90 minutes

### Materials:

Overheard projector  
Chart paper and markers

The purpose of this activity is for teachers to explore the variety of ESL programs offered to students.

### To complete this activity on your own, read the following:

The steps you will follow are similar to those outlined for the workshop. Please read through the steps. We suggest reflecting in your journal in place of the group discussion.



**The complete this activity in a workshop, the facilitator follows these steps:**

- 1) Ask teachers to list the possibilities for different ESL program options in the schools. Be creative!
- 2) As a whole group discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- 3) Find out which program options are not available at the teachers' schools.
- 4) Divide the participants into groups and assign each group a program option that is not currently available in their school.
- 5) Explain that their responsibility is to develop a plan to "sell" the program option to the principal or to School Council. They can develop the plan in any format or style. Give each group 20 minutes to work on their plan.
- 6) Ask each group to present their plan to the others. Ask the audience to respond wearing the hat of the principal or parent representatives.

**Practicum or In-class Activity: ESL Programs In Your School**

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

None

Consider the program options in your school. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current program model? How can it be improved? Discuss your ideas with colleagues. Strategize how to present your ideas together at a meeting.



**Personal Reflection Activity: Supporting ESL Students**

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

Journal and pencil

In a journal, list all the ways that ESL students are supported in your school. Consider what can be built on and what is missing.



Notes

Handwriting practice area consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.





# Appendices