I want to be regular!

(Ir)regularities, (In)equalities, and (In)equities in Manitoba's EAL Programs

by

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Abstract

This research examined the extent to which Manitoba's kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12)

education system caters to and validates the needs of its multilingual learners. Examining the

experiences of nine multilingual newcomer learners who have earned EAL credits in Manitoba, I

analyzed the implementation of the EAL credit at the high school level. I questioned how the

EAL credit potentially influences the learning environment for newcomers. Terms such as

"equity" and "equality" are deconstructed under a social justice framework. Grounded within a

social reconstructivist stance, I collected and interpreted data using a life history approach. Data

were derived from transcripts from nine semi-structured interviews with former Manitoba high

school students who participated in EAL programs. Their experiences informed my critical

analysis of the dissonance between participants' transcript responses, Manitoba's *EAL

Framework Documents* (2011), and equitable practice in Manitoba. Findings suggest that

although participants felt that their experiences within EAL programs were invaluable, in order

to create an equitable learning environment, they urge clearer communication between schools

and newcomer families.

Table of Contents

Page

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

Writing can feel like a lonely pursuit. Even though I have certainly felt my share of isolation throughout this process, it was the people who share my life that kept me going.

Thank you to the nine incredibly inspiring young adults who willingly, openly, candidly shared their life stories with me. I hope I have honoured your voices. I hope this does you justice.

I am in awe of my three committee members, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Nathalie Piquemal, three beautifully strong women who prove every day that one can do it all. I have truly valued their willingness to share their expertise with me. A Dr. Piquemal, merci d'avoir pris le temps en dehors pour vos nombreux responsabilités. Vous étiez toujours disponible, même quand vous n'étiez pas dans le pays! Merci! To Dr. Schmidt, with whom I completed most of my grad studies, I thank you for constantly encouraging me to empower my voice. Too often, in too many spaces, women are silenced. You have encouraged me to speak with conviction, not only to be heard but more importantly, to be listened to. You lead by example. Thank you! Finally, to my advisor, Dr. Kouritzin, thank you for welcoming me into your home, into your life. Your warmth and compassion are wholeheartedly embracing. Your skilled prose is poetic. You are truly inspiring.

When I was seven years old, my father showed me a loonie (1 Canadian dollar). He asked me then if I wanted that loonie right then or if I wanted to save it for university. Of course I then had to ask what university was. It was then I learned. It was then that I started to save. Thank you to my grandfather Bert who gave me my first loonies and to my dad who taught me to invest in my future.

My best friend, Sherry (Webb) Jones, has been with me since we were eight years old. She is my voice of reason, of stability. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and critical eye to this work.

Above all else, this work is for my mom Lisbeth Olsen. My lifeline. Forever by my side; forever my support. You have given up too much for me. This completed work is simply not enough to thank you.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Parts of Me

The Memory

I believe that truth is never fixed and bias is always present. For this reason, it is

important for the reader to first know me, the researcher. My truth and my bias are a part of me

and therefore a part of my research.

Part of me is the bilingual. I was born to the language of my mother's tongue, which I no

longer speak. In my first few years, my mom spoke and wrote to me in Danish. I recall a

moment, long ago. I had just come back from Denmark, where I had spent an undetermined

amount of time, and was descending the airport's escalator, holding my mom's hand. I

remember seeing my dad, recognizing him. But when he spoke, I did not understand him! This

moment is now permanently etched in my memory. Vividly, I remember the sense of panic and

confusion. I am not equating my mere moment to that of the experiences my students face when

they arrive in Canada, but I will say that the permanence of that memory has, in some

indescribable way, informed who I am today.

The Student

Years passed and I started school. My parents thought that since I was starting in French

immersion, it would simply be too much to preserve my language of birth. They considered

Danish to be irrelevant in this North American context. My mom stopped reading to me. My

mom stopped writing to me. So I lost it. All. I do not blame her. In fact, I think her loss was

greater than mine. This notion had not even come to me until I recently read my advisor, Dr.

Sandra Kouritzin's telling accounts of her own experience communicating with her own children

when they were young. In "A mother's tongue," Kouritzin (2000) shares her struggles

attempting to speak only in Japanese, a language she was only beginning to learn, with her

children. Yet, throughout this period in her life, she wrote a diary in English in order to find an

outlet, a way to express her feelings during this frustrating time. My own mother did the same.

During her first years in Canada, when I was still an infant, she kept a diary in Danish, written to

me, sharing her feelings and frustrations during that time of her life. Yet at some point, she

stopped writing in that diary. She stopped writing to me in Danish. In doing so, she lost the

ability to speak to her child in the language that had defined her and provided her with a freedom

of expression that she did not yet have in English.

I am now the product of Manitoba's French immersion system. For thirteen years, I

studied, immersed in French language and culture. Even though I no longer use French on a

daily basis, I find myself from time to time connecting back to teachings I experienced in French.

I make connections to vocabulary I am unfamiliar with by looking for cross-lingual transfers.

Most definitely, I have made spelling mistakes in English because I was using the French form!

More recently, in my work as an EAL teacher, I have been able to converse with parents and

students in French. I know that I am not as proficient in French as they are, but they have

appreciated my attempts and I have been able to make stronger connections because I have tried.

They see me as a learner of language as well.

Perhaps it is these feelings of both language loss and gain that have driven me to spend

over a decade as an English as an Additional Language (hereafter EAL) teacher within

Manitoba's schools. I do not begin to equate my middle class, Canadian upbringing with that of

my high school students who have left their lands of birth and have had change forced upon

them. But I am, and have always been, a language learner. Whereas I have been privileged to

know nos Langues Officielles, I must consider those who have not been granted such privilege.

The Teacher

I have always wanted to be a teacher. At five years old, my favourite game was "playing

school." Yet I do not think my drive to become a teacher is because I believe I have any kind of

pertinent wisdom I need to impart to my students. More accurately, perhaps, I point to my need

to forever be a learner. Most certainly, in my fourteen years of teaching, I have learned more

from my students than they have from me. Yet even as I label myself a learner, I know I exude

far more power as a white, middle class, native-English speaking teacher. For seven years, I was

part of my school's EAL program implementation team in which we developed intake

assessment protocols, course objectives, and content. My colleagues and I operated as a separate

department within the school. We created what is known as a sheltered program for newcomer

teenagers between the ages of 14 and 21. I sincerely believe that our intentions were genuine.

Case (2011) points to the shelter system's beneficial findings: "separate classes for ELLs might

also result in situations where students feel more comfortable to speak and participate, thus

enhancing language acquisition opportunities and a sense of belonging" (p.205). I believed my

program's most important intention was to calm students' worries and ease them into their new

school system. I believed that our shelter provided students with reprieve within the confines of

their classrooms. Yet other researchers have forewarned of the by-product of sheltered

instruction: isolation (Case, 2011; Dabach, 2014; Garver & Noguera, 2015). What I may have

been ignorant of before, I admit now. The entire school was—and remains—completely divided,

so much so that during assemblies, one can literally draw a line on the gym floor: all of the

newcomers on one side and all Canadian-born on the other. For seven years, I thought not much

of my system. I was happy to stay within the shelter I had a hand in orchestrating. Then, one day, without warning, my own shelter was smashed.

The Advocate

It was the beginning of the semester. A few students who had already completed our EAL program and who had moved on to take mainstream English high school classes, came, in tears, to a colleague of mine. Their English teacher had called on them and informed them that their marks in their previous classes were not high enough. For even though they had passed, they had received less than 70%. They were therefore not permitted to take that particular English course, which was a mandatory requirement for university entry. In total, there were 10 students who had been denied entry into that English course. Once this information came to me, I was mad! Without giving myself time to really calmed down, approached administration demanding that each one of these students be called individually, issued apologies, and welcomed—without question—back to class.

Eventually, these students were readmitted, without apology. Two of these ten decided not to return to the school. I do not know what happened to them. I do not know if they ever returned to upgrade their requirements for university entry. We—the school—lost them.

The following year, I was told that I would be transferred to another school. That school had requested a teacher who could provide "some kind of" EAL support. The powers-that-be decided that teacher would be me.

The Drifter

Castaway and dismayed, I felt stranded in this new building called school. The "support" I was meant to provide, the administrators had no idea. The students I was meant to help, the guidance counsellors knew of none. I was to have no classroom, no office, no space to hang my

. . . winter jacket!   Yet even with nothing, even as a castaway, I realized that I suddenly

possessed an enormous amount of responsibility. The weight of it all was suffocating.

Teachers were asking me to pull their students out of the mainstream class to work one-

on-one. They were requesting adapted materials for their students. Administrators were coming

to me asking me to explain the EAL credit system we have in Manitoba. Counselors were asking

me to decide whether or not to admit newcomers into the school. Parents were calling me asking

me to explain the education system. It was a constant stream of questioning and pulling from all

directions.

Not knowing what else to do, I began to pull-out students who had been recommended to

me. As Bell and Baecher (2012) define it, a pull-out model means, "The ESL teacher provides

instruction to small groups of students in another location" (2012, p.488). Bell and Baecher, in

their study, found that 64% of their ESL teacher participants preferred the pull-out instructional

method (2012). One common reason was because they felt a greater sense of autonomy—or

power—over the students once they had been pulled out. One teacher claimed, "I prefer pull-out

because I have more control that way" (2012, p.501). I am not one of those teachers. I hated

dragging kids out of their classrooms, ripping them away from their friends. Isolating.

Excluding. That is what I felt I was doing to these kids. In the halls, I would see students I was

meant to work with. They would see me and turn the other way. I was like the plague. I longed

for the warmth of my former shelter.

I no longer knew my own stance. Yet even more disconcerting than not knowing myself,

was the sense that I no longer understood the system I had always, my entire school life, had

wholeheartedly embraced. I had lost faith. On no solid ground, I began to question everything I

had known and every professional decision I had ever made. Humbling, these last few years

have been. I have had to be reflexive in the choices I make. Above all, I must constantly ask

myself: how do I best serve the needs of my students? I have realized that the best people to

answer this question would be students themselves.

First I must look at the educational systems at work for newcomer high school students,

specifically in Manitoba.

The Teaching of Newcomer Youth . . . It's not ESL?

I will now discuss the teaching of English to newcomer youth in Canada. I will analyze

Manitoba's English language programs and I will question how these programs affect newcomer

high school students.

Unlike the newcomer adult education programs, which are governed by the Canadian

Federal Government, education for youth falls under provincial and territorial government

jurisdictions. This means that each province and territory is free to decide and implement its

own curriculum structure and high school graduation requirements. This jurisdictional control

extends to programming for newcomer youth as well. Provincial and territorial governments

decide how they wish to support newcomer youth within their individual education systems.

Canadian Settlement and Newcomer Youth

Since each province offers its own form of support for newcomer youth, one might

suppose that newcomer parents could review the education systems within each province and

make informed decisions as to where, within Canada, they would like to settle. However, those

who declare refugee status do not choose their settlement. This is left up to the Canadian Federal

Government. The Resettlement Assistance Program, enacted under the IRCC, exists within 36

communities across the country. For instance, in 2016, in order to support the incoming 25,000

Syrian refugees, the Federal Government designated them to these specific communities (*Map of*

destination communities section). Even after these initial intake phases, the Federal Government

reported the following: "Then they will be settled into permanent accommodation either in those

cities [with providers], or in surrounding communities where they will have access to settlement

service providers" (*Map of destination communities* section, cic.gc.ca). Despite this passive

voice, this phrase is certainly a directive. Newcomers are told where to settle. In turn, they are

assigned to a specific, provincial education system. Therefore, decisions regarding their

children's education are left out of these families' hands.

From coast-to-coast-to-coast, this provincial/ federal divide has, in some instances,

created confusion and miscommunication amongst stakeholders in the field of teaching EAL. I

will examine how this divide affects the field of EAL education, from the terminology educators

use to the ways in which we assess English language acquisition. We are divided not only

federally and provincially but also from within individual provinces' divisional education

systems, for each school division is responsible for creating programming and therefore chooses

to support its newcomer youth how it sees fit. It is not always easy for EAL professionals to find

common ground. I will now go on to explore in more detail Manitoba's newcomer youth

educational program initiatives, as this is the context in which I serve.

<div align="center">**Manitoban Context**</div>

Manitoba High School Requirements

In Manitoba, high school begins in grade 9, when the student is 14 years old. Starting in

grade 9, students are to complete course work that will go towards obtaining a Manitoba high

school diploma. Each course is allotted a point, called a credit. Over the course of their high

school careers, students must earn 30 credits in order to graduate. The passing grade for each

course credit is 50%. If a student does not receive the passing grade, he or she must repeat only

the course, not the grade.

Certain course credits are mandatory and others are optional. For example, every student

must complete English, Math, and Physical Education at every grade level, from grades 9 to 12.

Students must also complete a number of electives. These range in a vast array of subject areas,

from the sciences to the arts. Regardless of students' course selections, the total of their

completed courses must equal 30 credits (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017). They may

earn more credits but not less. Students may stay in high school until they are 21 years old.

After that, they must find alternative Adult Education programs to complete their high school

requirements.

Finally, within their course selections, students must also consider courses that are pre-

requisites for post-secondary institutions. For instance, any student who plans to attend

university, must complete two English credits at the grade 12 level. The student must also write

an English provincial exam, which is conducted twice a year.

Manitoba High School Requirements for EAL students

Defining the E credit. English language learners often do not follow the same

graduation paths as their native-English speaking peers. While they are still required to complete

30 credits, they may also be told (by EAL teachers, counsellors, even administrators) to take

courses that are specifically designed to support their language acquisition. These courses are

called E(AL) credits.

Manitoba developed this E credit system in 1995 with the intention of supporting its high

school EAL learners. Its support document *Towards Inclusion* (1995) was meant to rationalize

the E credit and to explain supportive programming options that were available for newcomer

high school students who require English language support: "This handbook provides

information about implementing inclusive educational opportunities for Senior Years English as

a Second Language (ESL) students" (p.1). With this "inclusive" stance at the forefront, the

document explains the E credit's purpose: "The E course designation is not intended to isolate or

exclude ESL students from the benefits of an education" (p.1). This suggests that the E course

offers a way to support EAL learners.

Within this document, the E credit was defined as follows: "The E course designation

signifies that a course has been adapted specifically to facilitate an ESL student's acquisition of

English and to assist the student in making the transition into regular Senior Years

programming" (1995, p.2). The E designation means that any high school accredited course can

be altered to pay specific focus to the language needs of an EAL learner. The "E" would be the

signifier on report card documentation and course code selection that the student is receiving

English language support. For instance, a grade 10 Geography course, which is normally coded

as GEOR2F would then be changed to GEOR2E, which would indicate that the student should

be receiving adaptations for English language support.

Diana Turner, Manitoba's EAL consultant, explained the intent behind the E credit in an

interview: "The "E" credit is designed to allow students access to subject area courses, but they

still need a place to get some solid, systematic instruction of the language" (Winnipeg School

Division, 2014, p.2). It is the awareness of the language embedded within all subject disciplines

that the E credit brings to the educators' and assessors' attention. Furthermore, the E credit

allows students to continue to pursue various other subject area courses while they learn English.

Defining the E Credit: Concerns. First, we must carefully consider the term

"inclusive" and how it had been used in the *Towards Inclusion* (1995) document. Theoharis and

O'Toole (2011) have noted that the term "inclusion" is used most commonly within the field of

special education. However, they encourage researchers and practitioners in the field of English

language acquisition to clarify the distinctions between its application within these two fields:

"We need to be clear that the needs of E[A]L students are distinct from those of students with

disabilities and that language diversity is not being constructed as a deficit or disability" (p.649).

They view "inclusion" as a social justice. *Towards Inclusion* (1995) seemed to outwardly carry

this same sentiment.

Given this spirit of inclusivity, I look back to a phrase within the initial definition of the E

credit: "to assist the student in making the transition into regular Senior Years programming"

(1995, p.2).   One term within this phrase must be questioned: What is a "regular" program?

With the term comes the implication of an *ir*regular, an othering. Furthermore, those who follow

the path of the "E" must ultimately *change* their ways, as the term "transition" suggests, if they

ever want to get out and become "regular" students. Thus, with the onset of the "E," a two-tiered

system derived. As I continue with this research, I will apply the term "tiered" when I examine

the E credit as an alternative educational pathway towards high school graduation offered to

English language learners.

The Renewal Report

In December 2003, Manitoba Education published the *Report on the English as a Second*

Language Program Review: The Renewal of Kindergarten to Senior 4 ESL Programming in

Manitoba (hereafter *Renewal Report*). This report was a program review of the supports in place

for newcomers as well as ESL programs that had been running within Manitoba. Its purpose was

to validate support for Manitoba's newcomer youth within the school system: "Manitoba

Education, Citizenship and Youth recognizes that an investment in English as a Second

Language (ESL) learners and programming is an investment in the future" (2003, p.1). This

report foresaw the need to create a coherent, long-term support plan for newcomer youth. This

not only meant the support for individual youth but also for the programs that would serve them.

Surveys were sent to superintendents/ directors, school principals. Following the

surveys, a series of 16 consultation sessions were conducted throughout the course of six months.

200 participants contributed to these sessions over the course of these months, from teachers,

principals, educational assistants and students. *The Renewal Report* (2003) was a summary of

these findings followed by a series of recommendations.

Within this program review, the following was learned: "While there are some successful

models and programs in the province, as a whole, ESL programming tends to be developed and

implemented on an ad hoc basis" (2003, p.4). The *Renewal Report* (2003) found that

inconsistencies continued to plague ESL programming and a number of recommendations were

brought forth. I will now go on to discuss some of these recommendations as well as what has

been done since these recommendations were first proposed within the *Renewal Report* (2003).

Renewal Report Recommendation: Terminology Change: You mean it's not ESL?

One recommendation from Manitoba's *Renewal Report (2003)* was that Manitoba adopt

the term EAL (English as an Additional Language) for its more inclusive construct. The term

ESL (English as a Second Language) was solidified within the field of study when TESL Canada

was first established in 1978 (Ashworth, 1988, p.158). It suggests, "there may be a need for a

more accurate and inclusive term, such as English as an Additional Language (EAL), as is the

case in British Columbia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and increasingly in international

settings" (p.5).[1] In 1995, Manitoba's curriculum document *Towards Inclusion* first began to

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[1] Sources from this statement are not mentioned, but during the time of this research, I have found that
British Columbia currently applies the term ELL (English Language Learner), which distinguishes these students

problematize the term ESL.   Later, the *Framework Document* (2011) solidified its stance on the

term EAL. Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth posted document explaining the name

change: "The additive approach acknowledges and builds upon the strengths and contributions of

Manitoba's intercultural, multilingual student population" (*terminology* section). The change

from "Second" to "Additional" language was an attempt from Manitoba Education to recognize

its multilingual speakers. English need not come second, or ahead of other languages but rather

in addition to these other languages the person may speak.

Manitoba Education further defines these learners: "EAL refers to students whose first or

primary language(s) is other than English and who require specialized programming and/or

additional services to develop English language proficiency and to realize their potential within

Manitoba's school system" (*terminology* section). Despite the "additive" name change, there is

still cause for concern when one attempts to "define" a people. The dangers of marginalization

have the potential to occur when practitioners apply the term. Too often it is said that a student

requires "EAL support," or we make mention of an "EAL classroom." Students and their

families may view these as derogatory references, as deficit definitions, and react negatively

towards these seemingly well-intended supports (Roessingh, 2006; Gunderson, 2008; Guo &

Mohan, 2008). Manitoba's preferred term EAL still serves to categorize, and, in turn, isolate and

exclude. Linguistic feuds rage on, but we must wonder if any term is sufficient. All tend to

clump, lump, and limit "others" into a single categorical language. Gunderson (2008) points to

this effect: "The label ESL—or English-language learner (ELL) or whatever acronym is used—is

problematic because it masks significant underlying differences that have serious consequences"

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from a second applied term ESD (English as a Second Dialect) to refer to Canadian-born—including Indigenous
populations—who "speak a dialect of English that differs significantly from Standard English used in school and in
broader Canadian society" (k-12 funding—ELL section, 2011). Both ELL and ESD students fall under the same
funding supports in B.C.

(p.186). None of these terms acknowledges learners' underlying complexities. Newcomers'

countries of origin, their education levels within their first language, their years of education,

their languages used within their homes, these are all sources of information that need

acknowledgement and that are distinctly individual.

Needless to say, debate over terminology in the field of language acquisition remains yet

another sticking point (Watt and Roessingh, 1996; MacPherson, Turner, Khan, Hingley,

Tigchelaar, & Lafond, 2004; Cummins, Giampapa, Cohen, Bismilla, & Leoni. 2006; Gunderson,

2008; Lu, 2012). Adding to the terminology turmoil is the larger Canadian context. Federally,

Canada still applies the term ESL. This would be in reference to any federally funded adult

programming. Yet individual provinces continue to refer to their language learners how they see

fit. Unfortunately, I do not have suggestions for an easy answer to this semantic dilemma. I must

admit that I have wholeheartedly embraced Manitoba's preferred term, even defining myself as

an "EAL" teacher. I do not know how to talk about supports, programs, and systems without the

use of some kind of categorical marker. For this reason, for the remainder of this document, I

will, albeit reservedly, abide by my provincial government's stance and apply the term EAL.

Yet I must remember that language is never fixed. If Manitoba or even the whole of Canada

eventually decides to change its terminology, I too will change with the terms.

Renewal Report Recommendation: Teacher Training

With the terminology solidified (for now), I currently call myself an EAL teacher. Yet

what does that title truly mean? Is it recognized by my administrators? Is it required for the job

that I hold as I work with newcomers? In order to address these questions, I must first address

EAL teacher education programs within Manitoba.

Interestingly, the *Renewal Report* (2003) found that very few schools employed EAL specialists. Most reported that it was either the classroom teacher or the resource teacher who was supporting newcomer youth. Participants called for "mandatory ESL training for all pre-service teachers, and the creation of provincial ESL specialist teacher qualifications" (p.8). However, this recommendation was not included within the recommendation section of the *Renewal Report* (2003). There were recommendations suggesting the need to increase professional development for teachers, but not to the extent that there be a call for "ESL specialist teacher qualifications". Yet this report had been written over a decade ago. Perhaps participants' calls for qualified specialists have now been considered. Has anything changed?

In short, the answer is no. In Manitoba, all teachers in the k-12 system are required to attain two post-secondary undergraduate degrees: a Bachelor Degree in either Arts or Science as well as a Bachelor of Education. Manitoba has three tertiary institutions that offer Bachelor of Education degrees: The University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, and the University of Brandon. Education students must select majors, or teachables, as well as their areas of concentration (early years, middle years, or senior years).

Currently none of these tertiary institutions offers either a major or a minor teachable specializing in Teaching English as an Additional Language (TEAL) in K-12 schools. The University of Manitoba offers elective courses that specifically focus on EAL learners, but they are optional with the exception of the 3 credit hour course that is mandatory for teacher candidates in Early Years Education programs. Brandon University (2015-2016) offers one elective course for early and middle years and one elective course for senior years. The University of Winnipeg (2016) offers one elective course that focuses on "inclusive" education, yet this elective does not focus on EAL learners specifically.

At the graduate level, The University of Brandon and the University of Manitoba both offer opportunities. The University of Brandon offers a Master Degree in Education yet does not offer a specialization in Second Language Education. At the University of Manitoba, students may choose to enter into either a Master of Education or a Ph.D. program that specializes in Second Language Education. However, graduate degrees are strictly optional for educators already working within the K-12 educational systems. For instance, an educator may either pursue or be assigned a position as an EAL teacher within any Manitoba school without the requirements of a graduate degree or any specialized preparation in the field of Second Language Education. Therefore, this graduate degree becomes more of a pursuit of interest rather than a job requirement.

Mary Ashworth, renowned advocate for newcomer youth and for the necessity of teacher training, professor emeritas at the University of British Columbia, was the first to create and offer a course for education students that specifically focused on the needs of newcomers. The course "Education 478, Teaching English as a Second Language" began in the winter of 1970 and has remained a permanent fixture in British Columbia's education program ever since (Ashworth, 1998, p.60). Ashworth (1988) stated: "The provision of good quality ESL teaching in Canada's public schools depends in large part on two factors: (1) that good quality ESL teacher training programs are offered by teacher training institutions, sufficient to meet the demand for specialists and (2) that school boards staff their ESL programs with well trained ESL teachers" (p.145). There is an interdependency between the EAL teacher and "good quality" EAL teacher training. We cannot have one without the other. We need post-secondary institutions to validate EAL training and we need school boards to honour these EAL teachers' credentials. Now, nearly 30 years after Ashworth had issued these recommendations, I must

question why Manitoba's *Renewal Report* (2003) overlooked the call for EAL teacher specialists

and why Manitoba's tertiary institutions still do not consider Ashworth's sanctions.

Renewal Report Recommendation: Make a Manitoba EAL Curriculum

Despite the fact that EAL teacher specialists were neither recommended nor required, the

Renewal Report (2003) did recommend the creation of an EAL curriculum. Yet this would not

be the first time this issue had arisen. Researchers Kouritzin and Mathews (2002) had argued for

the need to legitimize a curriculum in Manitoba's K-12 system since 2002. They argued: "Lack

of a curriculum and lack of recognition can devalue the subject, the teachers who teach it, and

the students who study it" (*K-12 ESL curriculum/ policy* section). A curriculum lends credibility

to all involved. Other researchers have also continued to stress the need for curriculum reform

(MacPherson et. al, 2004; Garza and Crawford, 2005; Guo and Mohan, 2008; Cummins and

Persad, 2014).

The *Renewal Report's* (2003) recommendation for a "companion" curriculum document

would serve a few functions. One function was the following: "The companion document would

serve as a guide for adapting and differentiating instruction for ESL learners as they move

through various stages for their ESL development, and for developing specialized ESL

programming and courses" (p.11). The intention of this guide was to help teachers identify not

only the stages of students' language development but also provide adaptive instructional

strategies for teachers working with EAL learners. This guide would have another function as

well: "To support the implementation of ESL or "E" designated courses" (p.11). This was the

only time in which E courses had been mentioned within the document. However, one

recommendation did address the need for creating specific EAL courses for newcomer and

international students (2003, p.11). How these courses would be implemented, was not

mentioned.

Despite the push for a curriculum "companion", it was not until 2011 that Manitoba

Education launched the *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English*

as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming

(2011) (hereafter *EAL Framework Documents*). This document has been written in two parts:

Section 1 as the "overview" and *Section 2: Connecting Theory and Practice Theoretical*

Approaches and Research Informing the Development of the EAL Curriculum (2011). As of

today, these documents still remain in their infancies, stuck in their draft forms.

Those of us who work in the area of EAL teaching and research are perhaps content

that—finally—Manitoba has come out with an EAL curriculum framework document, even as a

mere draft. This has been a long time coming. Even though many of us may be excited by the

potential for tangibility that a curriculum implies, this does not mean that we should not critically

question the implicit messages within these EAL documents. Before I align myself in support of

these documents, I need to ensure that they serve my students. I must admit, I have some

concerns.

Renewal Report Recommendation: Effective Programming

Yet another recommendation from the *Renewal Report* (2003) was the following: "more

accessible, consistent, and effective programming" (p. 7). Although the E credit still went

unmentioned within this section of the report, it did address that overall, there had been a "lack

of formalized programming," (p.7) for EAL students within schools. There was a need for more

supports in place within schools. Specifically, it stressed the importance of "whole school"

initiatives (p.7) like peer support groups. Yet whole school initiatives would require

administrators and school leaders to take active roles in initiating opportunities for widespread

initiatives. They would involve teachers and support staff who would be able to spearhead and

maintain the long-term sustainability of these groups.

As I look towards what has been done since this report, I read Stewart's (2011) findings

that continued to find that the stability of any given EAL school program was left largely to

administrators who have the authority to implement policies as they see fit: "Historically, the

EAL programs have been informal, inconsistent, and unsustainable after a major change in

leadership" (p.90). A "major change" means a change in a school's administration. The school

administrator is the visionary. If her or his vision does not foresee the need for ESL support,

then it disappears. This finding was based on an interview with a government consultant, who

pointed out that, in large part, these high school ESL programs are left up to "the whims of the

principals . . . And then there's the change in the school administrator. The person doesn't come

in with that knowledge, or believes there's a different set of priorities. So everything that was

build up over time can be totally destroyed" (p.89-90). Stewart (2011) addresses the same effect

if an EAL teacher were to leave her or his program: "In addition, when the staffing changes,

there is no retention of knowledge and, in many cases, teachers need to reinvent the programs"

(p.92). Therefore, without administrative support, without a consistent space for qualified EAL

teachers, Stewart points out that EAL programs within Manitoba schools are not solid fixtures,

but rather they remain unstable terrain.

The Ambiguous E

Despite the recommendations brought forth in the *Renewal Report* (2003) 15 years ago,

the E credit remains a rather ambiguous concept, even to those who teach and research within the

language education field. I will discuss how this E designation has confused assessment criteria,

within both the adult and the K-12 system as well as its limitations for students if they choose to

pursue education after high school. Here I speak very much from an educator's perspective. I

address many of the confusions I face amongst colleagues within the k-12 Manitoba Education

system.

EAL vs ESL assessment. One major ambiguity ensues when I compare how Manitoba

Education assesses its newcomer youth as opposed to its adults. Within the adult system, there is

no designated E credit. Adults complete English language proficiency programs, run under

federal jurisdiction, as previously mentioned, that use the *CLB*. Once adults complete these

programs, they may choose to complete their high school accreditation. They may then move on

to post-secondary institutions.

The *CLB* had already been created and implemented nation-wide since 1996, yet

Manitoba Education's *EAL Framework Documents* (2011) stepped away from the *CLB* and

assess a different way. Students from kindergarten to grade 12 (hereafter K-12) are assessed

under what Manitoba Education calls the k-12 EAL "stages" of language development (2011).

You may recall that I had mentioned that the *CLB* had already systematized adult learners'

English language proficiencies in the form of 3 stages; however, Manitoba's "stages" are not the

same and do not align with the leveled *CLB*. How one avoids this confusion is beyond me!

Within the k-12 Manitoba system, there are up to 5 stages of language acquisition. Once

students are assessed at approximately a stage 3, they have gained enough overall proficiency to

be within the "regular" program and therefore require minimal additional support. Until that

stage, individual schools should be providing some kind of language support. Whether this is a

pullout format, team-teaching with an EAL teacher to support, or a whole segregated EAL class,

this set-up is left to the school to decide. According to the *EAL Framework Documents* (2011),

it is not until stage 5 that students would have enough language proficiency to move on to a post-

secondary institution.

     Perhaps this stages assessment guideline is a step the right direction. It allows EAL

assessors to track students' progress over time and hopefully plan for supports that they may

need. However, in terms of professionalism, communication, and continuity, it confuses the

field. For this means that EAL assessors are assessing differently from ESL assessors. Common

grounds remain ambiguous. In Manitoba, students may remain in high school until the age of

21^2. This is especially troublesome when we look to students who are about to transition out of

high school and into adult programs. After high school, they must move on to adult education

programs. This should be a time when EAL teachers and assessors within the high school

system can collaborate with ESL program coordinators, but communication breaks down

because we are not using the same languages to assess.

     The EAL Framework Documents (2011) provide an explanation for why Manitoba

Department of Education decided to diverge from the *CLB:*

> Thus, at the core of the Manitoba k-12 EAL/LAL Framework is an EAL language
>
> acquisition continuum comprising set of Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years
>
> stages that reflect the increasing breadth and complexity of language needs as youth
>
> people grow. The number of stages in each age group increases to allow for the greater
>
> amount of language learning required (p.54).

Manitoba Education has attempted to account for age in the role of language acquisition. For

instance, a 5-year-old is not expected to reach the same level of English language proficiency as

an 18-year-old. These stages are meant to "reflect the increasing breadth and complexity of

---

[2] EAL students may stay in high school, under the E credit system, for a maximum of four years. This means that they could stay in high school after the age of 21, but all of their credits need to be E designated. It is also often up to the discretion of administration to allow these learners to stay longer.

language needs as young people grow" (*EAL Framework Documents*, p.54). Therefore, by

acknowledging the "complexity of language," a student at the early years (grades 1-4) would be

assessed only up to a stage 3. Middle years students (grades 5-8) would be assessed up to stage 4

and senior years students (grades 9-12) would be assessed up to stage 5.

Despite Manitoba Education's attempt to account for age discrepancies within language

development, the decision to create its own assessment "stages" has merely served to leave the

field divided between those ESL teachers who teach and assess adults under the *CLB* and those

EAL teachers who teach and assess children and youth under the Manitoba stages. In turn, this

leaves professionals within the field scrambling to make sense of one another.

EAL assessment vs reading levels. The incongruity of assessment measures continues

as I look at the elementary teachers' assessment responsibilities. These teachers are constantly

required to assess their students' reading levels throughout their schooling from grades 1 to 6.

These results are carried over into students' high schools and recommendations for student

supports follow suit. Even within the high school setting, one common question I receive from

teachers is, "what grade level is this student reading at?" This has become a complex question to

answer, for neither the ESL *CLB* stages nor the EAL Manitoba stages equate a grade level. So

when I refer to either a stage 1-5 or a benchmark 1-12, I am not referring to any kind of graded

reading level. These EAL assessments are entities unto themselves. Even common assessment

tools that elementary school teachers here in Manitoba use to assess reading grade level are

considered invalid for EAL learners.

One common assessment tool, for example, is *Fountas and Pinnell* (2008). One school

division within Manitoba mandates that classroom teachers assess students' reading levels in

grades 1 to 6 using the assessment tool *Fountas and Pinnell* (*WSD Correlation Chart*, 2016).

However, within the document it states the following: "If you are using this assessment with a student who is an English language learner, you will need to be sure that the student speaks English well enough to understand the directions and introduction, enter into a conversation with you, process the print, and understand the text" (guide 2, p.24). Students in EAL stages 1 and 2 are therefore exempt from the *Fountas and Pinnell* reading assessment, yet this means that the classroom teacher does not have a comparable assessment document. With the classroom teacher, the EAL teacher, and the ESL teacher all working under diverging assessment tools, policies, and even terminologies, the potential for miscommunication is endless. This constant misalignment not only undermines our credibility as professionals but also leaves the learner adrift with no solid course of action.

EAL Continuum vs Outcomes Based Assessment. Another problematic point is the way in which the Manitoba stages disconnect from the "regular" Manitoba k-12 curriculum. The *EAL Framework Documents* (2011) are meant to address a continuum of language learning. The EAL stages are not to be referred to as outcomes but rather as "learning goals" (p.55). These are explained as follows: "The learning goals become reference points for describing a student's current language proficiency in a particular area and for determining the next target for instruction" (p.55). The teaching of language, whether it be first or thousandth language acquisition, never really ends, because language is never fixed.

However, Manitoba's curriculum is designed as an "outcomes-based" education system (p.55). Though the difference in terminology may seem inconsequential, the difference in meaning is great. In an outcomes-based system, curricula are driven by outcomes, end points, and finales. Under an outcomes-based system, there is an underlying, punitive consequence if a student cannot meet the outcomes of any given course. The "outcome" could mean a lower

grade, or, in high school, a risk of failing the course. However, this notion of failure does not

seem fair to apply in the case of a learner who is acquiring the language. Therefore, a "learning

goal" seems much more purposeful, equitable, and achievable. Yet within the stages, there is no

apparent consequence to a "learning goal" not being achieved. Although this semantic change

may feel more inclusive and equitable, it helps neither the assessor nor the teacher when she or

he must report on students' progresses within the confines of an outcome-based system. In these

E designated courses, we are still required to assign a numeric mark, a percentage that in some

way is indicative of students' learning outcomes. We are obliged to indicate that a student either

passed or failed. In turn, these obligations also force us to consider language acquisition in terms

of pass or fail. It puts the EAL teacher in an incredibly uncomfortable position, and it could

ultimately make the student feel like a failure.

   EAL Assessment and E credits. The disconnect between the outcomes-based and the

goal oriented approach is further problematized when I look at Manitoba's high school credit

system. As I previously mentioned, any high school accredited course can be changed to add the

E credit and thus adapts to language learners' needs. However these accredited courses do not

align with the stages. This means that a student could be in a grade 12 E accredited course and

yet still be at a stage 1 in language development. Technically, if the student passes the course,

she or he would therefore be able to graduate. Yet with a stage 1 level of proficiency, would the

student be ready to move out of high school? As previously mentioned, it is not until stage 3

where a student would be independent enough, and not until stage 5 that a student could

potentially move on to a post-secondary institution. It would seem that this antiquated system

leaves the student with false hope and an unrealistic understanding of his or her own skill sets.

What this system says is you can graduate high school, but that high school diploma will not get

you very far. It would seem that in order to address the incongruity, we must find a way to align

the credit system to the stages of language proficiency. This would allow for clearer assessment

criteria. Even if this were to be considered, however, I still see more issues.

Limitations to the E

Along with all of the assessment ambiguities, the E credit must be further examined for

its limitations. Within these high school systems, students "earn credit," in order to achieve

educational gains. Throughout their high school careers, students collect credits like currency,

trying to attain, at minimum, the 30 credits in order to graduate. If something is not for credit, it

is deemed worthless. Students in Manitoba do earn credit for their successful completion of the E

credit courses. However, if a student has been granted an EAL grade 11 level course (3E) credit,

for example, and she or he then chooses to take a "regular" credit grade 11 English (30S) course,

and passes that course, the student then will lose the 3E credit. That E credit is removed from a

transcript as though that time spent never existed, thus devaluing the original credit.

Further problematizing the E credit, I point to its most critical limitation: "The E course

designation, while capable of meeting graduation requirements, may not meet various

postsecondary entrance requirements. Schools must help students ensure that they meet the

entrance requirements of the postsecondary education, training, or work situations they intend to

pursue" (*Towards Inclusion,* 1995, p.10). This means that students who take E designated

courses at the grade 12 level will be able to graduate high school but will not be able to go on to

any post-secondary institution. Diana Turner (2014) not only acknowledges this but also alludes

to a perplexing assumption: "And [these students] may have some grade "E" designations on

their grade 12 subjects, but I would hope by that point that it would be very few, and it would

have to be done with them understanding that they will need to upgrade, and continue, before

they can get in to postsecondary" (Winnipeg School Division, 2014, p.3). The assumption here

is that "very few" students would be receiving E credits in their grade 12 year, yet Manitoba

Education does not track how many students continue to receive these credits into their grade 12

year. Furthermore, Turner merely "hopes" that this system is explained to these students and

their families yet there is no clear mechanism for explaining the system. Complicating the issue

further, once students turn 18 (which is often in their grade 12 year), the students themselves

must grant permission to the school to contact family members. This leaves the students'

families completely oblivious to the educational choices these students and their teachers are

making. The E credit, in its inception, started as an attempt to include, yet we see it is riddled

with restrictions. With these limitations in place, the E credit, by the very nature of its own

specification, has the potential to gravely isolate and exclude.

Since the E credit is limiting, one must ask why use it at all. Classroom teachers can

merely adapt their instruction in order to accommodate their learners' needs. This may work to

an extent. However, when we look at Manitoba's mandated grade 12 provincial exam, one

which all students within "regular" programs must take in order to graduate, the rules and

regulations are harsh and heavy-handed: "The supervisor will not be allowed to provide

clarification, interpretation, rephrasing, or translation" (*Policies and Procedures for Provincial

Tests,* 2015, p.7). ZERO adaptations (aside from "additional time") leaves the teacher ZERO

negotiating ground. This policy must beg the question: how can a teacher provide equitable,

inclusive programming, when driving institutional, assimilative forces keep manipulating the

moves?

EAL credits and curriculum framework documents both attempt to address the needs of

Manitoba's EAL learners, yet do they either help or hinder their progress? Ambiguities remain.

Both assessment criteria and implementation practices impose limitations to learners' future

educational opportunities. Perhaps this system is the best we can do within the confines of the

educational institutions in which we serve. Yet I wonder . . . Is the most equitable practice we

can provide? Is the E credit truly the most equitable answer?

Equality ≠ Equity

In this next section, I consider the issue of equity as my conceptual framework. I must

first examine the term "equity" itself and its widespread use. I then address how it has been used

in the context of education, followed by its context here in Manitoba. I then draw back to my

initial question here to consider how equitable the practice of EAL education has been for

Manitoba's newcomer high school students. Finally, I will conclude by explaining the purpose

and plan for my research.

Equity Defined

First and foremost, the term "equity" must be defined, as it has been compared, in

contrast to "equality". In 2012, an image began to circulate and trend virally. It was a

metaphorical split image cartoon clipart sketch of three people, of three different heights staring

out at a baseball field from behind a fence. The one image representing "equality" shows that,

given the same, or equal amount of resources, (in the case of this image, boxes to stand on) the

shorter two people struggle or even find it impossible to see over the fence. Whereas, if one

were to redistribute the resources, make them more equitable and allot the shortest person with

more resources (give the shorter person a couple of boxes to stand on), one would assure that

fairness has been upheld in any given situation.
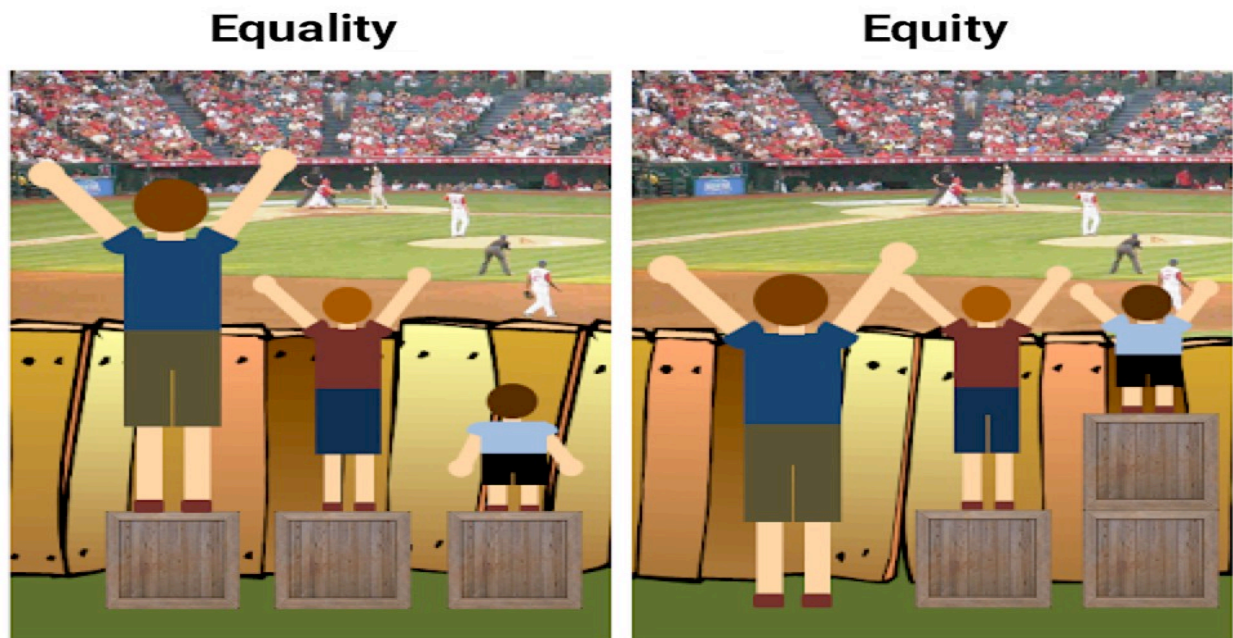
Figure 1: Equality vs Equity. Used with permission. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@CRA1G/the-evolution-of-an-accidental-meme-ddc4e139e0e4

Business professor Craig Froehle (2016) explains the intent behind the image he designed. The idea came about after the 2012 U.S. election as Froehle had a political discussion with a person who had a more conservative viewpoint: "'Equal *opportunity*" alone wasn't a satisfactory goal and that we should somehow take into consideration equality of *outcomes* (i.e., fairness or equity)" (*The Evolution of the Accidental Meme,* 2016). For Froehle, it is not enough to grant people opportunities to seek their potential. We must look to results, to outcomes that reflect a sense of fairness for all. Froehle's original image rekindled conversations as it went viral. It has now been used, adapted, revised, and reinterpreted by a plethora of stakeholders, including The United Way and even The United Nations (*The Evolution of the Accidental Meme,* 2016). This image has been applied across disciplines from politics, to law to health care, to education. In a plethora of fields it has been used as an argument for equitable funding

distributions, budgetary and resource needs, hiring practices and policies. It is with this image in

mind, that I turn to education.

Equity in Education

In the context of education, researcher Klees (2014) states, "Equity is the most significant

problem educators face" (p.321). The term has been applied abundantly and countlessly. It

clings to a vast array of educational supports, from educational leadership methods, funding

recommendations, assessment protocols, and further to the fight for social justice, focusing on

inclusive education, feminist and gender-alliance movements, and critical race theories.   On a

global scale, Klees (2014) claims: "Hardly anyone disagrees that the world should be more

equitable, but how we define equity and the path towards achieving equity is contentious terrain"

(p.322). Admitting to inequities is one thing. It can be and has been done to death. Endless

policies, protocols, procedures. Words on the page. For we can only be an equitable society if

we all agree to become one! Only when this commitment is solidified, then can we begin to

actually bring policies to action.

Klees analyzes the latest uses of equitable inactivity, and most specifically within the

context of the United Nations' UNICEF branch. He cites one example of equitable inactivity,

for since the 1960's, and as recently as 2015, the United Nations has held countless meetings and

brought forth commissions with the promise of Universal Primary Education, to no avail. Klees

(2014) even cites the utter failure of Human Rights educational initiatives, noting that in 2010,

the United Nations rebranded their Human Rights Education initiatives to an "equity refocus"

(p.322). Yet Klees also attributes the United Nations' inactivity to its lack of power. In

actuality, it is the World Bank and neoliberal agendas that hinder movement. The World Bank

has already made the move to skirt away from the term equity as it launches its 2020 *Learning*

For All mandate (p.324). The refocused mandate will be on outcomes based assessments that

place value on results over learners' learning processes. Neoliberal, capitalist claims on

education can be dangerously mismanaged when societies search for equity. Klees (2014) offers

the potential for an alternative paradigm, one in which the World Bank neither controls the

resources nor the research attributed to these resources: "Instead, the Bank, if it continues to

exist (which it might not in a more sensible world), would facilitate a participative approach

among stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, to developing and managing education and

developing policies" (p.331). It is this "participative approach" that I seek as I evaluate

Manitoba's EAL programs.

The *Action Plan* for Equity in Manitoba Education

In Manitoba, the term equity was brought to the forefront in the document *Belonging,*

Learning, and Growing: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity (2006)

(hereafter *Action Plan*). This document derived from a series of year-long consultation sessions

with various stakeholders in the field of education in Manitoba. These consultations revealed a

series of findings, and from these, divulged an "Action Plan".   The purpose of the *Action Plan*

(2006) was stated: "The Action Plan is an important aspect of a broader commitment to

enhancing diversity and equity" (p.4). Here we must consider how the term "equity" is defined

within this document:

> Equity—is a concept that flows directly from our concern for equality and social justice
>
> in a democratic society. Educational equity refers most broadly to a condition of fairness
>
> with respect to educational opportunities, access, and outcomes for all people.
>
> Departmental initiatives towards equity are intended to remove barriers to equality by

identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices. (Manitoba Education

and Training, 2006, p.12)

At the forefront is fairness. This definition acknowledges that discrimination is a resounding

barrier that impedes a person's ability to succeed. Equitable initiatives are to provide access to

opportunities for all.

The *Action Plan* addresses Racism

The *Action Plan* (2006) uncovered one prevailing finding: discrimination continued to

hinder students' successes in Manitoba schools: "Participants clearly expressed the fact that

"everyday" racism, and individual and systemic forms of racism continue to limit many students'

opportunities for success. It is impossible for students to feel that they belong and experience a

welcoming learning environment when racism is a daily experience" (2006, p.1). The *Action*

Plan (2006) maintained that success as an impossibility if prevailing racist practices stand in the

students' way.   In order it address these inequities within the system, the *Action Plan* (2006)

called for 19 actions, which are divided into 5 categories:

Building Capacity to Respond to the Needs of Diverse Learners;

Engaging Parents, Students, and Educators;

Resources for Building Inclusive Schools and Classrooms;

Policy Renewal and New Guidelines;

Enhancing Teacher Diversity. (2006, p.2)

These actions were writ over a decade ago. Have they been enacted or do they remain sluggishly

inactive?

The (in)active *Action Plan* in Education Hiring Practices

As previously mentioned, one category in the *Action Plan* (2006) was "Enhancing

Teacher Diversity" (p.2). However, Schmidt (2010; 2016) takes issue with the lack of teacher

diversity in educational hiring practices in Manitoba. Schmidt has critically examined issues of

equity in relation to internationally educated teachers and school divisions' hiring practices

(Schmidt and Block, 2010; Schmidt 2010; 2016). Schmidt and Block (2010) examined the

hiring policies of six Winnipeg school divisions. Within these policy documents, they searched

for explicit terms and statements that addressed equity issues. They sought the terms "'equity",

"equal opportunity", "diversity", and "affirmative action" (2010, p.6). Their findings pointed out

that equity was explicitly mentioned in only half of the divisions' policy documents: "Of the six

Winnipeg school divisions, only three have policies pertaining to employment equity while the

remaining three do not reference employment equity at all" (p.6). Even within these three

divisions that had included these terms, clarity in terminology usage was lacking. The term

equity lacked certainty in one policy document as it had been used interchangeably with "equal

opportunity", which led to an ambiguous understanding of terms. Schmidt and Block (2010)

found that only one division had thoroughly defined "affirmative action" (2010, p.7). However,

they still found this definition to be limiting, for only gender equity had been prioritized within

the definition: "The remainder of the policy echoes the definition's exclusive focus on gender

equality; no reference is made to other types of diversity (e.g., ethnic, religious, cultural, etc.)"

(2010, p.8).

Schmidt (2010; 2016) delved more deeply into the systemic discrimination of teacher

hiring practices in Manitoba in an ethnographic study. Schmidt (2010) conducted individual

interviews and focus groups with 43 participants, ranging from immigrant teachers attempting to

upgrade their credentials in a local university, to unemployed immigrant teachers with and

without credentials, to school division hiring personnel. These participants recounted an

overabundance of negative experiences: "Discrimination included prejudicial treatment on the

basis of dress, accent, perceived foreignness, immigration status, and age; and occurred in a

variety of contexts including schools where immigrant teachers had been employed, schools

where immigrant teachers were doing practicum placements, and Faculty of Education courses"

(p.241-243). On every level, from the educational institutions in which these participants were

attempting to upgrade their credentials, to the teachers and administrators within schools where

these participants worked to the hiring practices and employment opportunities these participants

sought, a system of discrimination prevailed. With this level of discrimination so widespread,

we must consider that it is not only internationally educated teachers who feel the injustice.

Although Schmidt (2010) does not focus this research on the equitable practice of

newcomer youth, she does warn of a perplexing concern: "The concern that anti-immigrant

sentiments demonstrated by some mainstream Canadian teachers toward their internationally

educated peers may translate into racist treatment of K–12 students supports the case for linking

the agenda to support immigrant learners in schools with the agenda to diversify the teaching

force . . ." (p.246). If adult newcomers are experiencing this level of discrimination in the

education system from teacher candidates who will become their colleagues, we must wonder

what students are experiencing in schools and classrooms. We must assume there is a link

before we can ensure that there is none. This is the link that I would like to explore.

The (in)active Action Plan for Refugee Youth

The *Action Plan* (2006) also focused on the equitable practices for EAL learners within

Manitoba's K-12 system. For the most part, consultation findings simply highlighted the

recommendations that had been in the *Renewal Report* (2003), which I have previously

discussed. Support for changing the term from ESL to EAL, support for EAL curriculum

documents, for teacher training, all of these were once again mentioned (2006, p.18-19).

One recommendation from The *Action Plan* (2006) focused specifically on refugee

youth: "The need to enhance support and develop specialized interventions for children and

youth from refugee backgrounds with ESL needs and interrupted schools" (p.19). Here came the

acknowledgement that children and youth from refugee backgrounds were deserving of

additional supports. Let us consider how this has been addressed since this plan has been in

place.

Researcher Jan Stewart (2007; 2011) has focused on refugee youth living in Manitoba.

The purpose of her dissertation (2007) was to "identify the educational needs and challenges that

war-affected youth encounter while attending school in Manitoba" (p.18). She critically

examines how Manitoba's education system has supported—or has lagged behind in

supporting—its refugee youth. In her dissertation, Stewart (2007) used a qualitative case study

approach with interviews and focus groups with 51 people, 13 of whom were high school

students who had fled war-torn countries and were now in one particular school in Winnipeg.

Others were various stakeholders (ESL teachers, psychologists, social workers, community

liaison workers, parents, counsellors, and school administrators).

Stewart (2007) concluded with a call for the development of instructional interventions as

well as clearly defined educational policy that will support the needs of these youth. Stewart

(2007; 2011) posits that it is the face-to-face connection, the interactive element that influences

the refugee youth's development. As Stewart (2007; 2011) continues to call for more

interventions and policy changes, then we see that the recommendations from the *Action Plan*

(2006) have not come to fruition.

Her book *Supporting Refugee Youth* (2011) goes on to provide strategies for classroom

teachers and school counsellors that could help cater to refugee youths' socio-emotional and

psychological needs. While I do not dismiss the importance of these strategies, I question

whether these are enough. Catering to learners' socio-emotional needs is critical but so too is the

educational framework in which we base our teaching. If we consider that some of these

students are coming with interrupted schooling, then their fundamental academic skills must be

supported as well. Stewart (2011) does not offer strategies to support these learners' academic

needs. Many of these students fall within the E credit system, and since this system is riddled

with the limitations that I have discussed, we must begin to look closely at the academic

structures we teach within in order to help these youth achieve their academic goals.

Since Stewart, other Manitoba researchers have highlighted the need to support

newcomers from refugee backgrounds. As lead project writer, Tavares (2013) composed a

comprehensive support document for Manitoba educators. *Life after war: Education as a*

healing process for refugee and war-affected children defines the term refugee in accordance

with Canadian government laws and regulations. The collection provides suggestions for

additional resources from websites, to books, to support program models along with annotated

bibliographies for additional resource materials. It discusses elements of trauma that refugees

face and provides suggestions for classroom practices that could support these youth.

Furthering support for refugee youth, in 2015, the department of Manitoba Education and

Advanced Learning published the document *Building Hope: Refugee Learner Narratives*. This

is a compilation of individual stories from Manitoban youth who had come from war-torn and

refugee backgrounds. The purpose of this document, as lead writer Tavares (2015) wrote, is to

"provide invaluable insights as to the variety of needs and experiences of learners from such

backgrounds in Manitoba's schools" (p.6). Divided by country, each section highlights

individuals' experiences starting from these countries, their immigration process, and finally

their settlement within Canada. The document also provides invaluable resources beautiful

photos from countries, area maps, websites linking to further information along with video

information.

It is important to note that since the *Action Plan* (2006), great work has been done in

Manitoba to provide more information to educators regarding the needs of newcomer youth. Yet

despite the plethora of information these documents provide, they still do not address the

programming component of the E credit at the high school level here in Manitoba. I examine the

complexities surrounding the types of programs in place for these newcomer youth.

The (in)active *Action Plan* on the E credit

I must therefore consider what was addressed with either the *Action Plan* (2006) or by

Stewart (2011) or Tavares (2013). As I have mentioned, the E credit had been in place since

1995 (*Towards Inclusion*), yet neither the *Action Plan* (2006) nor Stewart (2011) nor Tavares

(2013) address the need for further study regarding its implementation. Considering that

motivation for its creation stemmed from an inclusive framework, that fact that this element of

the Action had been overlooked remains perturbing. In fact, no one has yet to critically examine

Manitoba's implementation of the E credit in terms of equity.

The *Action Plan* (2006) did acknowledge one dire need: "the need for more research and

a longitudinal study of ESL learners in the province to develop a better understanding of how

well programs are serving them" (p.19). Even though the E credit is not mentioned, there is still

a call to conduct more research, a call to clarify program needs, and a call to serve our newcomer

youth. It is in this area that I wish to add my support.

Purpose

I am a social reconstructivist. I believe that the education system can and *should* take an

active role in supporting its youth. It need not be a passive tool for socialization. Education can

be a catalyst for social change—if we let it. From this reconstructivist stance, I see that equitable

practice requires change. Change first begins with asking the right questions. Therefore, I must

ask:

1. What were the experiences of some multilingual newcomer learners who have been

    through Manitoba's education E credit system?

2. From EAL learners' perspectives, how is Manitoba's k-12 education system catering to

    and validating the needs of its multilingual learners?

3. How has the implementation of the E credit at the high school level shaped the learning

    environment for newcomers?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

(In)equity (In)action

One reason for tiered EAL high school systems, as researchers have discovered, is the
exorbitantly high dropout or disappearance rates from newcomers, and especially from those
from refugee backgrounds (Watt and Roessingh, 1996; Gunderson, 2007). I will first discuss
findings from these rates. I will then discuss some of the supplemental courses that have been
developed in provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia whose intentions have been to
increase EAL learners' proficiencies and decrease disappearance rates. These intentions,
however, have led researchers to question these provinces' equitable intentions. I will then
discuss a single finding from Manitoba that examined disappearance rates of newcomer refugee
youth. Finally, once again, I come to question whether or not these equitable practices really do
serve students.

Fall-outs, Drop-Outs, Push-outs

Researchers have pointed to one possible reason for these tiered EAL systems: to
alleviate high dropout rates amongst newcomers. Although Manitoba has yet to provide
provincial data that shows dropout rates amongst its newcomer high school populations,
researchers within the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario have found links
between newcomer youth and high dropout rates. I will examine their findings with the hopes of
reinforcing the necessity for similar work to take place within the Manitoba context. I will also
analyze key terminology these researchers have come to establish, for in order to address
inequities, they must first be named.

Groundbreaking was the work of researchers Watt and Roessingh (1996). From 1988 to 1993, they conducted a longitudinal study of newcomers in the Calgary school system. Tracking 388 newcomer students from grade 9, Watt and Roessingh (1996) reported a dropout rate of more than 74%! They noted that learners' English language proficiencies became a key factor in their progress. Most disconcerting were those learners at beginner levels, whose dropout rates were 95%! Of these 95%, 50% of these learners dropped out within their first year of school in Calgary. Intermediate level learners dropped out at a rate of 70% and advanced level learners still dropped out 50% of the time. With these results, they then conducted a qualitative study, interviewing 40 participants. Of those students who had not completed high school, they then categorized students according to 3 terms: "fall outs, dropouts, and pushouts" (p.128).

"Fall outs" were those who had left the education system before any reporting had been issued. These participants tended to be those with low English proficiency, as previously mentioned, as well as low literacy in their first languages. These participants were often reported as feeling a sense of shame or regret from leaving school. Watt and Roessingh (1996) state, "These students tended to blame themselves for their present-day situation and few could imagine a means of further adjusting for successful inclusion or integration into Canadian life" (p.128). These participants professed their struggles in finding and keeping employment and felt themselves to be illiterate in English, which was also hindering their success in Canadian society.

"Dropouts" were those who received some level of success but found work to be a stronger motivation. They were reported as feeling "frustrated" (p.128) by their circumstances. One participant proclaimed, "I felt bored, depressed, sick of going through high school" (p.128). This particular student did not see the value in the system. She or he felt time was better spent working.

"Pushouts" were those who succeeded within the system but were forced out. Overall,

this group felt "angry/ resentful" (p.128), for many had achieved great success in their previous

educational institutions in the countries they were from, but Calgary's education system barred

their way. It is unclear why these students were pushed out. Two were quoted as mentioning

that they were deemed "overage" even though one had questioned that since this participant had

only been 19, and she or he had been told that 20 years was the cutoff for high school (p.129).

From this latter group, Watt and Roessingh (1996) reported a strong sense of injustice these

students felt towards the education system: "For those students, there was no mistaking the sense

of betrayal and anger at the system that had terminated their high school attendance and

education" (p.128).

Clearly some aspect of the education system was not working for these students. If we

choose to honour an education system that believes in both equality and equity, we must

therefore beg the question where these students' feelings of anger and betrayal stemmed from.

Any system that essentially loses 3/4 of a demographic population must be obliged to dig deeper

and find out why.

Disappearances

Adding more questions to this field in Gunderson's (2007) research with the Vancouver

School District and British Columbia Ministry of Education. He too has presented troubling

findings. Rather than applying the term "dropout," Gunderson (2007) has called upon the use of

the term "disappearance." This terminology forces us to beg the question: where did these

students go? It discloses a sense of urgency. Kids are missing and must be found! Gunderson's

longitudinal study was conducted from the mid-1990's to the school year of 2009-2010. He

initially placed students into two age-based groupings. The primary group was from 6-9 years

old, and the intermediate group was from grade 4-on.

Gunderson then began tracking 1,307 students from primary group. Of these students,

Gunderson was only able to obtain 95 students' grade scores up until grade 12. The rest have

disappeared. From the intermediate grouping (2007), Gunderson began with 5,000 randomly

selected participants. Of those, 60% had disappeared by the time they should have graduated

from high school. Of those who remained, 54% had left the district. Quite telling of the problem

is his shrinking sample size.

Intersectionality and Disappearances

Gunderson's studies (2007) have been noteworthy as well for his consideration of

intersectionality, for he has also tracked and compared participants' gender, ethnolinguistic, and

socioeconomic differences. He claims that we cannot overlook students' underlying differences:

"The basic difficulty is that educators and policymakers in various jurisdictions must understand

the underlying complexities of their school populations and account for the wide variance in

views, cultural attitudes, expectations, skills, and needs of each subgroup, no matter how small,

in their educational programs and policies" (p.248). Lumping and clumping *all* newcomers into

a single category does not allow us to delve deeply enough into issues of equity. We must look to

the intersects.

From his initial, large scale study of 24,890 students, Gunderson (2007) tracked a sub-set

of randomly selected 5,000 secondary school students from their entry into Canada in grade 8

and followed those who remained through to grade 12. However, sample size diminished once

again. Of this initial group of 5,000, only 2,213 continued within the district. Of those students

that remained in high school all the way to grade 12, he found, once again, more disappearances,

as many did not write examinations in all of their examinable subjects. Only 45.4% of these

students wrote their grade 12 English exam; 31.6% wrote Math; 25.35% wrote Science; and

23.3% wrote Social Studies.

Of those who remained, he compared their grade point averages to those who were

Canadian-born in the core examinable courses of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Gunderson (2007) found that while Canadian-born students' GPA's dipped slightly in grade 11,

they rebounded in grade 12 and averaged at about a C grade. In comparison to the newcomer

group, these participants not only experienced a GPA dip in grade 11 but also continued to

decline in grade 12. Yet dividing and comparing Canadian-born to newcomers was not telling in

and of itself. Gunderson (2007) began to examine where these newcomers were coming from

and what kinds of lives they were living.

Socioeconomic status. Gunderson (2007) analyzes these findings further as he examines

the newcomer groupings based on their socioeconomic status (SES). Using this classification, he

notes: "What is interesting is that socioeconomic status alone was not associated with school

success" (p.176).

Rather, he compares SES to students' ethnic backgrounds, countries of origin, and first

languages to make sense of this discrepancy. For instance, he found that of the newcomers who

spoke Mandarin and were of higher SES, they outperformed all other students of high SES.

They even outperformed Canadian-born students in Math. However, their English and Social

Studies GPA's still declined below the Canadian average by the 12th grade.

Still within the high SES group, Gunderson attributed children's success more so to the

"way in which [parents] use their economic advantages to provide support for their children"

(p.177). Some students of higher SES received additional tutoring support. Gunderson (2007)

attributes these additional resources to these students' successes. As part of this study,

Gunderson also conducted qualitative interviews with a sample size of 407 participants. The

students who reported receiving additional tutoring felt that it had helped them to find success.

Refugees. Gunderson (2007) pressed his study further as he classified refugees as a

separate sub-set. He points to the complications surrounding this classification, since refugees

come from vastly different circumstances, untold traumas, various financial situations, and

different educational backgrounds. Yet one glaring finding remained consistent: refugees

experienced the highest disappearance rates (although a percentage was not given). As he

examined this further in his qualitative interviews, he found that, "Overall, students from refugee

backgrounds were unhappy, even those who were relieved to be away from the life-threatening

war-torn conditions in their home countries" (p.199). Yet the sources of their unhappiness were

difficult to sort out. Gunderson (2007) was not able to pinpoint causal relationships between

their disappearances or unsuccessful experiences in school to the concerns they brought forth

such as fitting in, learning a new language in a new environment and the impact of earlier

traumas.

Gunderson summarizes his findings: "It seems clear from the results of this study that

although some students survive and graduate from high school, many do not" (2012, p. 152).

Gunderson (2008) believes that newcomer teens have been grossly overlooked: "I am convinced

that in these times secondary ESL students are in trouble. North American school systems are in

trouble, and the related research base is also in trouble" (p.184). Despite North America's

growing cities and changing demographics, educational systems remain stagnant and newcomers

are lost. Schools point out low literacy levels, low standard test scores, rising dropout rates and

consistently, "blame the victims rather than the systems that fail them" (Gunderson, 2008, p.

185). Furthermore, Gunderson critiques institutions that restrict research and do not legitimize

qualitative studies that validate student voice. He implores us all to concede: "ESL[sic] students

are in jeopardy" (2008, p. 187). Bluntly, he professes: "It seems to me that the lack of success in

the teaching and learning of ESL students is a national disgrace and a colossal failure. Why has

no progress been made?" (p.187). Here Gunderson not only refers to the high disappearance rates

amongst these newcomer youth but also to the lack of research in the study of EAL education.

In turn, the educational system as a whole cannot move forward, or "progress," in finding the

appropriate supports for newcomer youth.

Disappearances in Manitoba

Gunderson's (2008) concern is most especially important for the province of Manitoba

where research involving demographics, dropouts, and disappearance rates of our EAL

adolescents has been limited. The last published document was that of MacKay and Tavares in

2005 where they focused specifically on the needs of adolescent refugees who required

additional language support. During the 2003-2004 school year, they conducted a survey with a

total of 307 people who worked with and for newcomer youth in Manitoba.

Interestingly, MacKay and Tavares' (2005) findings led to a great variance in their results

on the issue of identification of EAL learners (p.13). They reasoned that this was due to the lack

of information school divisions even had regarding the entry of their newcomer populations.

Some divisions, and only 24.5% of schools had reported having reception centres with thorough

screening processes whereas other school divisions, and a total of 75.5% of their schools, only

had "informal" protocols in place for receiving newcomer youth (2005, p.14). This would

therefore mean that even the results of this survey could be skewed because it is unclear as to

how many newcomers actually entered into some of these school systems. If we are unsure of

how many truly enter, then it becomes even more difficult to determine how many exit.

        Despite this variance in identification, MacKay and Tavares (2005) did conclude with the

following finding: "The survey suggests that in Manitoba there may be fewer students than in

other provinces who "fall out", "drop out", or are "pushed out" in the senior years" (p.39),

though they admitted a decline in rates of school participation from grade 10 compared to grade

12.

        Yet during the 2003-2004 school year, newcomer youth were graduating. Survey results

indicated that approximately 60% of the schools surveyed thought that their newcomer students

in grade 12 would graduate that year (MacKay and Tavares, 2005, p.39). 25% of these schools

expected their students to graduate with E credit designations (MacKay and Tavares, 2005,

p.39). Once again MacKay and Tavares (2005) speculate that one reason for this success was

due to the E credit implementation, yet it still does not beg the question what happened to the

other 40%? Furthermore, even with access to the E credit designation, why was there a decline

between grades 10 and 12? These questions MacKay and Tavares had to leave unanswered.

        Twelve years after MacKay and Tavares (2005) finding, we continue to have no idea who

and at what rate students have "disappeared."

(In)Equity in EAL classes

        In this section I discuss how some high school EAL programs have been questioned for

their equitable intentions. Ontario's high stakes testing, for instance, still inhibits EAL learners'

successes. British Columbia's EAL high school tiered system has come under scrutiny from

both newcomer parents and students. Manitoba's system too has started to come into question

for the divisive nature of EAL programs that pit teachers against students. Finally, the issue of

discrimination will come to the forefront as I examine some researchers' findings that have

uncovered discriminatory practices against newcomer high school students.

EAL in Ontario

In an attempt to offer equitable opportunities for EAL high school students, Ontario's

education system moves EAL learners through a tiered system similar to Manitoba's. Ontario

high school newcomers move through English proficiency levels from EAL 1 to 4. They could

then either take a 4E course that will allow them to graduate, or they could move on to the 4U, a

university entrance required course (Ontario Curriculum, 2007).

Since its implementation in 2000, ALL students must pass the Ontario Secondary School

Literacy Test (OSSLT), which is typically administered at the tenth grade (Kim & Jang, 2009).

The purpose of this standards test is as follows: "determine whether a student has the literacy

(reading and writing) skills required to meet the standard for understanding reading selections

and communicating in a variety of writing forms expected by The Ontario Curriculum across all

subjects up to the end of Grade 9" (Han and Cheng EQAO, 2007a, p. 80). EAL students may

delay this invigilation, yet they must complete it at some point before they graduate.

Despite the Ontario Education system's best intentions to prepare high school EAL

learners, researchers Han and Cheng (2011) critically examine the use of a high stakes test that

acts as a gatekeeper to EAL learners' success. In their three-year qualitative study, Han and

Cheng (2011) tracked the progress of eight high school EAL learners. All of these students had

arrived in Ontario in their high school years and had been assessed, then placed in the ESL

leveled classes. They interviewed these students 2-4 times over the course of each year and

examined their linguistics, cognitive, and socio-emotional well-being. They found that, of the

eight, only two passed, and only marginally (percentages were not discussed). Overall, these

learners were left feeling defeated: "to those who deferred or failed the test, the OSSLT was a

barrier that blocked their access to further course selection and to graduation. What is more, the

high rate of failure only made their schooling even more challenging and frustrating" (Han &

Cheng, 2011, p.93). To date, the OSSLT continues to act as a blockade for Ontario's EAL

learners.

EAL in British Columbia

British Columbia has also created a tiered high school system specifically for EAL

learners. In order to receive a "Dogwood" diploma students must write provincial exams in grade

10 literacy and Math as well as grade 12 Language Arts (*Changes to Graduation Years*

Requirements 2016-2017 section). In British Columbia, although English language learners

receive additional funding and support, they do not receive credits towards graduation for their

completed language courses (Guo & Mohan, 2008).

In recent years, B.C.'s system has been scrutinized by both researchers and the media. In

2013, the CBC reported that students in language classes had started an online petition against

this tiered system. In the report, one student explained: "I guess what we're trying to address

here is the issue of equality . . . acknowledge the work that students put into learning a language"

(Gariepy, 2013, p.4). Since students did not receive credit for the mandated English language

learning courses, they felt that their work was not validated.

Parents' views

Gariepy's article has not been the solely reported an issue within B.C.'s EAL high school

credit system. Guo and Mohan (2008) analyzed three years' worth of data from the aftermath of

a Vancouver high school's Parent Night-gone-awry. A purposeful sampling of a particular

school was selected because it had a large student population (1700), over 62% of its student

population spoke a language other than English within the home, and it had a specifically

designed high school EAL program that ranged in population from 200 in 1997, to 160 in 1998,

to 120 in 1999. This program offered many subject-based ESL courses such as ESL Social

Studies and ESL Science. At issue, however, was that these were non-credit courses. For more

than ten years, this school had organized a Parent Night to explain the system. As Guo and

Mohan (2008) saw it: "These nights allowed teachers to inform parents about the philosophy of

the ESL program and convince parents their ESL program was the for students" (p.22). Right

away, the term "convince" jumps out at me. This implies that this was not a system that was

simply accepted without question or critique. In fact, it implies resistance. The teacher in me

sees a Parent Night as a great opportunity to link the home to the school, to connect with parents

and properly explain the educational system. Seemingly well organized was this event. As Guo

and Mohan (2008) describe, both mainstream and EAL program teachers as well as former

students presented during this parent night. Yet this begs the question: why was there need for

"convincing?"

Within the conducted research, Guo and Mohan (2008) interviewed, observed, and

conducted focus groups with nine EAL teachers and six bilingual assistants. Yet no matter how

diligent the planning, how rational the rationale, these teachers met with confrontation during

these Parent Nights. As Guo and Mohan (2008) observed three annual Parent Nights they found

that parents' intentions were solely focused on their own children. Often the question came up:

"Can you give me information about my child?" (p.28). This was the parents' intent for coming

to a Parent Night. The ESL program's philosophy or educational system requirements were of

secondary importance. Another grave concern for parents was their complaint that they did not

support a high school system that did not grant credit for attained tasks. They wanted their

children out of the ESL programs as soon as possible, for another common question came about:

"When will my child exit the ESL programme?" (2008, p.29). Therefore, the parents' (rightful)

concerns that focused solely on their own children along with their push to get their children out

of ESL in order for them to earn credit within the regular program context inevitably continued

to derail the teachers' well-intentioned Parent Nights. Guo and Mohan (2008) stress the

dilemma: "The tragedy of an inequitable education system for high school ESL students with

minimal English is that it places these two goals at odds with each other, and it therefore places

ESL teachers and parents at odds with each other" (p.30). A Parent Night should be a time of

connection, of community building as it fosters strength and support for a child. Yet there is

something so dreadfully wrong with a system when something so well-intentioned is so deeply

misconstrued that is pits teachers against parents.

　　　　Further problematizing the issue of the parent/ teacher disconnect is research by

Gunderson (2001). He proposes that parental dissatisfaction stems from the differing cultural

beliefs people hold regarding educational methods. Gunderson (2001) analyzed findings from

parents of EAL children in an elementary school where, over the course of four years, the EAL

population grew to be 52% of the student population.   96% of this demographic was from either

Hong Kong or Taiwan. Gunderson (2001) reported that by 1993, there was an alarming

dissatisfaction among parents within this particular school. They did not like the ways in which

their children were being educated. They wanted more assignments that required rote

memorization, homework, and workbooks (2001, p.250). Parents wrote letters to local

newspapers and to the Ministry of Education.   Teachers returned to workbooks and focused on

test-based outcomes for their students. Gunderson (2001) created a chart that compares these

teachers' western beliefs about teaching and learning compared to these parents who held more

of an eastern philosophy. There are 18 points of comparison. Many address beliefs about the

bearer of knowledge: is it the teacher or the student? This is a philosophical sticking point

between western and eastern beliefs. A more western-philosophy believes that learning should

be learner-centered driven by exploring, questioning, and critiquing. Yet, an eastern philosophy

believes that, "the teacher is the source of knowledge and should not be questioned" (2001,

p.252). Memorizing, teacher-directed problem-solving, correcting. These are attributes of sound

learning. Gunderson (2001), in creating this dichotomous, perhaps oversimplified, list, does

point out individual discrepancies regarding educational views. As educators of EAL students,

we must be conscious of the philosophical values we hold about education and about how these

values stem from our cultural beliefs. Gunderson (2001) warns: "It is not enough simply to

dismiss divergent views as wrong" (p.264). Although we may not come to understand and agree

upon these diverging beliefs, we must at least come to respect each other for our beliefs. Anger

and hostility only breed contempt and failure. If parent and teacher cannot come to a place of

mutual respect, then it is ultimately the child who remains divided.

The dichotomous relationship of parent and teacher is even more disconcerting as I

examine the field of EAL education as a whole. Guo and Mohan (2008) foresee a greater issue

at stake: "Worse still, negative feedback by parents about ESL programme can be, and has been,

misused by educational policymakers to reduce rather than increase educational support for these

ESL students" (p.30). If the voice of the parent—the tax payer—builds strength and vehemently

opposes ESL programming within schools, a ripple effect could ensue. Everyone from school

principals, to superintendents, school boards, and even up to politicians themselves, could cite

these complaints as reasons for cutting funding to EAL programs, restricting hiring of EAL

teachers, eliminating EAL teacher training programs at tertiary levels, and in turn stalling the

researching and legitimizing of second language acquisition. Even now, as I examine these

programs and question their practices, I realize that if all of these supports were to be taken

away, there would be no equity. Regardless, equitable practices must still be questioned in order

to continue to hold them accountable to the people in which these practices are meant to serve.

Students' views

Of course, parents' insights are important as we examine equitable programs for their

children. Yet, as we focus on adolescents, merging unto adulthood, so too must we acknowledge

the insights from these youth. In his qualitative study, Gunderson (2007) specifically addressed

EAL students and asked them about their EAL classes in a Vancouver district. He wanted to

know if these students believed EAL classes had helped them. Based on participants' interview

responses, Gunderson could not clearly take a stance: "It is best, therefore, to consider these

findings as fuzzy" (p.193). Some mentioned that academic rigor of the EAL class was too easy

and therefore did not help them. One student made a seemingly contradictory statement: "No,

they don't really help you with English but in other courses they make them simpler, easier to

understand" (2007, p.192). The student here is referring to subject specific content. This would

be vocabulary pertaining to the understanding of concepts. Yet the student does not see the

connection between the help his or her EAL class provides and his or her understanding of

concept material. Still others viewed EAL classes as "roadblocks to students' success and

interfered with the learning of examinable courses" (2007, p.193). They came to see that their

"examinable courses" were of utmost import and implied a standard that they were meant to

attain. If the EAL class did not help them achieve success in these exams, then it was in the way

of their progress.   Still others stated that these classes affected their self-esteem. They made

them feel inferior: "like those who are crippled or blind" (2007, p.191). Further telling was that

"nearly 100%" of the participants stated that EAL classes provided little chance for them to

speak and interact in English to native English speakers (2007, p.194). They saw this as

problematic and impeding their progress.

However, others mentioned that the classes helped them to transition and make sense of

the new education system. Some participants cited true fear when they went into regular classes

for the first time: "The first day I went to regular class I cried all afternoon and I went back to

my ESL teacher. I think ESL helped you in a way to adjust" (p.192). These students felt a level

of trust towards their EAL teachers that the regular classes could not provide.

Students' views in Manitoba

In Manitoba, Stewart (2011) addresses refugee youths' educational needs. She points to

a divisive sticking point between these youth and their teachers. As reported, these youth aspired

for great educational success that would lead them to employment and financial freedom.

However, many of these youth have come into the education system with little or no schooling.

Their years of struggle have left them with gaps in their educational levels. For these reasons,

EAL programs and courses had been created; yet some students did not understand why they

required these alternative courses: "These students' understanding of the level of academic

literacy necessary to complete the courses is incongruent with what the staff members think

students need to realistically pass the course" (Stewart, 2011, p.84).

The "Welcoming" EAL Programs

While Gunderson (2007) stands "fuzzy" in his findings on EAL programs, and while

Stewart addresses the disconnect between teacher and student, I turn to the advice of Mary

Ashworth, an ESL teacher, researcher, and advocate, who dedicated her profession to the

improvement of ESL education. When she spoke of students transitioning into regular programs,

she made this point: "The times at which a student is ready to transfer from the ESL to a regular

program depends on a number of factors, not the least of which is the attitude of the teachers in

whose classrooms she may be placed. If teachers are not prepared to welcome and work with the

ESL student, the transition may be a disaster" (1992, p.55). Sadly, we continue to live in a world

where prejudice exists and people are made to feel unwelcomed. As EAL teachers within any

given schools, we may very well be our students' only advocates and allies. We must ensure that

they are treated fairly and with respect. I know that it too is our job to educate colleagues as to

what that means, but in the meantime, we must consider the child's needs. If we cannot foresee

a positive transition, we must do more to ensure that the child is welcome. If that means keeping

them with us a little longer, then so be it.

Discrimination

I would be remiss if I do not discuss the matter of discrimination against newcomer youth

within their schools.   Many researchers have scrutinized discriminatory practices both within

schools and policies (Stewart, 2011; Oxman-Martinez, Rummens, Moreau, Choi, Beiser,

Ogilvie, & Armstrong, 2012; Garver and Noguera, 2015). Many of these studies have focused

on programming available to newcomers and how this programming left them isolated. Oxman-

Martinez et. al (2012) take a particular focus on discriminatory practices against newcomer

youth. They conducted their survey across six Canadian cities with 1,053 visible minority

newcomer youth between the ages of 11 and 13. Addressing these youths' feelings of perceived

discrimination and social exclusion by both their peers and teachers, they found that between

25%-37% reported incidents of perceived discrimination within the last month. Although there

was great variance within their study, it is important to note the breadth and depth of their

attempts to consider intersectionalities between ethnic groups, gender, and youths' socio-

economic status.

This issue of discrimination moves beyond race and leads directly to newcomers in

Garver and Noguera's (2015) findings from a school climate survey. Their work was conducted

after a particular high school in the United States had experienced a grave incident where

American born students had targeted and violently attacked Asian students who had been in the

United States less than one year. Several students were hospitalized.   They found that 60% of

the school's immigrant population felt safe, as opposed to 75% of the American-born population.

From anecdotal accounts, they found that deeply held stereotypical views of newcomers. Garver

and Noguera (2015) reported that part of the problem stemmed from the school's sheltered,

segregated structure. Within the schools, newcomers were isolated to a particular floor and into

the "ESOL Academy" (p.324). Sounding prestigious in title, some American-born students

reported feeling that the ESOL Academy was privileged and they were, in fact reduced to second

class.

In her Winnipeg study, Stewart (2011) also addresses the issue of racism and

discrimination. The sentiment amongst her participants was that racism is "highly existing" in

schools across the division, as one divisional consultant claimed (p.61). In fact, 10 out of 13

student participants interviewed stated that they had experienced racism. Moreover, a teacher

participant within the study referred to the segregated way his students sit within the classroom.

He noted a "white section, an Aboriginal section, and a section where immigrants sit" (p.60).

Stewart argues that what transpires within a school context mirrors what is happening within the

extended community and larger society (p.60). In turn, I see this as implying that it is not

enough to address discriminatory acts at the level of the individual or even school setting.

Rather, we can conduct research that listens to the opinions of the people we serve, that lends

itself to a greater understanding of inequities, and that looks beyond and addresses these

inequities within a larger, societal context.

Inequities & Language Hierarchies

The disappearances of newcomer youth, the ways in which EAL programs are structured,

the opinions of parents and students, these are all cause for concern. However, more deeply

rooted is the underlying belief a society holds about the value of language. Equitable practice

comes into question as I examine the way in which schools and school systems hierarchize

languages.

First I look to Manitoba's Multiculturalism Act, legislation in place since 1992. I will see

how multiculturalism and multilingualism has been endorsed through this legislation. I will then

look at the term "multiculturalism" more closely. I will consider how some researchers have

critiqued multicultural educational strategies as being hegemonic, especially as I examine

language policies that perpetuate a linguistic hierarchy within educational systems.

Manitoba Multiculturalism Act

How does Manitoba's education system demonstrate that we value a multilingual

society? What methods of language learning does it endorse? How do these views either

support or conflict with prevailing research? These issues I consider here that lead me to my

research questions in which I ask how Manitoba's k-12 education system caters to and validates

the needs of its multilingual learners.

Officially, Canada has two languages: English and French. The Canadian Charter of

Rights and Freedoms (1982) along with its own Multiculturalism Act (1989) has cemented this.

Manitoba's Multiculturalism Act (1992) also acknowledges the rights of its multicultural,

multilingual populations. The Act (1992) directly points to language diversity as a priority:

"WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognizes the importance of encouraging

the use of languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage of Manitoba"

(http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/m223e.php section). This Act seems much more

reflective of Manitoba's demographics. By stressing the importance of "encouraging the use of"

many languageS, the Manitoba Multiculturalism Act (1992) takes an equitable stance in catering

to diverse needs. Not only does the Act acknowledge our diverse language backgrounds but

there is also a designated position, the Secretariat, responsible for fostering multilingual

development. The mandate of the Secretariat is to, "recognize the benefits of a multilingual,

multicultural society; encourage the use of languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage

of Manitoba**"** (http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/m223e.php). The Act has prevailed for

over 25 years, but has Manitoba abided by its own mandates? Have Manitoba's school system

policies honoured the Act?

Multicultural and Linguistic Hegemony defined

The term multiculturalism as applied in the context of education is highly contested as of

late (Jay, 2003; MacPherson et. al, 2004; Garza & Crawford, 2005; Ngo, 2012; Guo, 2013).

"Multiculturalism" sounds pluralistic, inclusive, anti-oppressive, yet this remains problematic.

Jay (2003) deconstructs the term as he examines the pervading racial prejudices that continue to

divide educational institutions in the United States: "Multicultural education gets appropriated as

a 'hegemonic device' that secures a continued position of power and leadership for the dominant

groups in society" (p.3). He argues that until educators critically deconstruct the hidden

curricula that permeate with discriminatory, exclusive practice, the term "multiculturalism" is, in

reality, hegemonic.

Along with Jay's critique on the racial hegemony within multiculturalism, Garza and

Crawford (2005) propose the existence of a prevailing linguistic hegemony:

> The result of dissonance between a school's desire to promote an inclusive and
>
> welcoming learning environment for their culturally and linguistically diverse students
>
> and the pervasive, yet persuasive, assimilation agenda that underlies instructional
>
> practices and programs designed to educate them. (p.601)

This definition of linguistic hegemony calls equity into question. It notes that despite schools'

attempts to be supportive of students' multilingual backgrounds, the educational practices still

promote inequity.

Examples of Linguistic Hegemony

Linguistic hegemony has been explored in educational settings. Garza and Crawford

(2005), in their ethnographic case study within a United States elementary school, found that

language learners' educational successes were predominantly assimilationist in nature, despite

the schools' growing multilingual student population and school objectives that endorsed

multiculturalism. The message within the hidden curriculum was still largely hegemonic as

English was still prioritized over the use of other languages. For instance, Garza and Crawford

(2005) found that within a whole group setting, students were to speak English only. It was only

when students were pulled out of their classes with an EAL teacher that they were permitted to

use their first languages.

The prevalence of language hegemonies has been documented in other research as well.

Researchers Daniel and Pacheco (2016) found that students sense the dichotomy between home

and school, and in turn, assign value to language in this way. These researchers interviewed four

multilingual teenagers who attended English-dominant schools where English was the only

language of instruction. When these teens were first asked if they found a use for their

multilingual skills they all said that these skills were either unsuccessful or "undervalued" in

their schools (p.656). These students were led to believe that there was no use for any other

language but English.

An Example of Linguistic Hegemony in Manitoba

Within Manitoba, researchers Piquemal and Bathelemy (2009) have also explored

the notion of linguistic hegemony. They argue that despite the fact that Canada is officially

bilingual, within Manitoba, francophone newcomers are part of the linguistic minority and thus

find themselves at socio-cultural and economic disadvantages. In their qualitative, ethnographic

study, they interviewed seven francophone speaking newcomers who had immigrated to

Manitoba with their families. Aside from one participant who had previously lived in an English

speaking environment prior to their immigration to Canada, all participants conveyed feelings of

surprise and even deception, for they had presumed that their French would allow them to settle

more easily: "Ils se plaignent en effet de la prééminence et de l'omniprésence de l'anglais. Ils

pensent que parler l'anglais est d'abord une question de survie" (Piquemal & Bolivar, 2009,

p.254). These participants felt that English was everywhere. Knowing English, both the

language and the cultural norms, was a matter of survival. Along with the culture shock was the

complaint that participants had not been granted any supports in transitioning and adjusting to

their new socio-cultural environments. Even within their places of worship, spaces that were

once safe-havens and cultural foundations, participants found that English presided and they did

not feel the same connections to their religious institutions that they once had.

Participants recounted their struggles to find employment. All six participants found themselves

in unstable working environments, often working seven days a week to make ends meet in

addition to time spent in their English classes they took. These participants believed that without

these English classes, they would not be able to enter professional workforces. This is why

Piquemal and Bolivar (2009) argue: "Les immigrés francophones deviennent doublement

minoritaires, le statut du français compromettant aussi leur intégration sur le marché du travail"

(p.255). Marginalized were these francophone newcomers. They must work, yet in order to find

employment that is economically stable, they must learn English. In this limiting situation,

participants were doubly disadvantaged.

Within their homes, participants also felt a sense of fragmentation. Dissonance between

participants' children's home and school lives called these children to question their identity: "au

niveau de l'être, par contre, les enfants des immigrants vivent une certaine dualité qui génère des

formes de dissonance. Il est évident qu'ils s'identifient à deux mondes" (Piquemal & Bolivar,

2009, p.260). These researchers noted the "two worlds" participants' children lived in. They

wanted to feel accepted by peers and school personnel, but they also wanted to please and

respect their parents and their cultural upbringing. Their lives became fragmented.

Post secondary education continued to be a problem for both the adult participants of this

study and their children who sought post secondary. There is only one French university in

Manitoba, Universitaire de Saint-Boniface, and its programs are limited. Therefore, many post

secondary ventures must be pursued in English.

Linguistic Hegemony and Economic Opportunity

While Piquemal and Bolivar (2009) noted the lack of employment opportunities facing

francophone newcomers within their study due to these newcomers' inabilities to access the

dominant language and cultural norms, Kouritzin (2012) calls into question the economic link

between English and math and science related disciplines, or STEMM (science, technology,

engineering, mathematics, medicine). Kouritzin (2012) critically deconstructs the implications

of the linguistic hierarchy.

Initially, Kouritzin, Piquemal, and Renaud (2009) conducted a large scale quantitative

study within three countries: Canada, Japan, and France. From the Canadian component of their

study, they found that 84-90% of Canadian participants felt that studying a foreign language was

not as important as studying STEMM. Kouritzin (2012) explored this aspect further in semi-

structured interviews with 125 participants. She asked these participants why they thought

additional language study was undervalued in comparison to STEMM. These participants, all

from the Canadian prairie provinces, were school administrators, language teachers, students

who were studying foreign languages, students who were not studying languages, as well as

randomly selected people. Kouritzin (2012) cited "at least 90%" (p.468) of participants who

believed in the economic gains associated with knowing English as opposed to other languages

and believed that STEMM-related courses led to more educational opportunities, which, in tern,

to more employment opportunities. One participant, who was an administrator, stated, "it just

seems that the hard sciences are where the promotions are at, and where attaining a better

lifestyle come from . . . It seems like the hard sciences are just tied in more with getting ahead. . .

Language study is probably not promoted as a way to get ahead, as much as being in the

workforce" (2012, p.471). The "hard sciences" offer a means to an end. They offer goals,

opportunities, money, success.

Participants also perpetuated the belief in English as the universal language: "For these

interviewees, the connection between English and scientific/ mathematical/ technological

progress has become a foundational assumption" (p.477). English has spread beyond the force

of a dominating language. It has gone far beyond in dominating culture. Rather, it is deeply

rooted within the way one thinks, within the way one questions, within the way one explores

scientific pursuits. This begs me to question if the multilingual participants within my study also

feel that English universally encompasses all of their educational opportunity and all financial

gains.

Linguistic Hegemony in Manitoba High School Diploma Accreditation

In Manitoba, one need not look further than its high school diploma options to recognize

the hegemony. Manitoba offers diplomas in either a Senior Years English, Français, French

Immersion, or Technology Education Programs (*Graduation Requirements from Manitoba High

School Diplomas* section). Here we see that only our country's official languages are prioritized,

while all others are non-existent. Even the Technology Education option is telling of a neoliberal

societal push to mainstream technical trades with the intent to produce employables. This too

supports Kouritzin's study (2012) that STEMM presides over a person's multilingual

capabilities. Manitoba's Multiculturalism Act (1992) was written with the intent to endorse the

equitable treatment of other languages. Yet this intention becomes questionable in the context of

Manitoba's high school diploma requirements.

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Inequities in Monolingualism

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Despite the Manitoba government's attempt to acknowledge diversity in Manitoba with

the Manitoba's Multiculturalism Act (1992), language hierarchies and thus inequities continue to

prevail within Manitoba schools. This may be due to the prevailing myth that languages must be

taught in isolation, monolingually. I will now examine when this myth came about in language

teaching, and how it has shaped the structure of many Canadian language programs, specifically

in the context of French immersion. I then discuss prevailing researchers' disputes of the

monolingual principles that have been endorsed.

The Monolingual Principle

The view that languages should be taught in isolation has not always been the way in which language teaching has been conducted. In his historical account of English Language teaching, Howatt (1984; 2004) examines the paradigm shifts that have pervaded English language teaching methods. Dating as far back as the nineteenth century, Howatt (1984; 2004) cites examples of translation and direct methods of instruction, whereby both teacher and student would utilize all languages within their repertoires to make sense of meaning.

Howatt cites the early 1960's as a great shift in thought and the beginning of pushing forward English-only agendas. Howatt (1984; 2004) points to results from a British Council Conference that highlighted English as the future medium of instruction. Howatt claims that by 1961, the use of translation and direct methods of instruction were discouraged and a "Monolingual Principle" was endorsed (p.312). This is the belief that languages should be taught in isolation and that all learning should occur in the target language.

Later, researcher Phillipson (1992) countered prevailing sentiment in what he called the five fallacies of language learning: "That English should be taught in a monolingual classroom; the ideal teacher should be a native speaker; the earlier English is taught the better; The more English used in the classroom during lessons, the better; If other languages are used, English standards will drop" (p.185). Phillipson disputed these fallacies, claiming them to be impractical, unrealistic expectations placed on multilingual learners. Yet even today, these fallacies prevail as norms in educational institutional structures. I will now provide one example that prevails here in Canada: French Immersion.

The Monolingual Principle in Canadian French Immersion Schools

The Canadian k-12 education systems have a long-standing history with the Monolingual

Principle.   This has been most evident with the advent of French immersion systems, which

have been going strong across Canada since the 1960's (Cummins, 2014). These are programs

in which students are to be "immersed" within the French language and culture.   The teacher

must instruct in French—and only in French—for the entire day, with the exception of the

English class, which is typically taught for one hour a day. Another form of popular language

instruction is the dual track, or as some divisions simply say "bilingual programming"

(https://www.winnipegsd.ca/Education%20Services/Curriculum/language-program-schools/Pages/Default.aspx#HeritageAncestral). This is when a select group of subjects are

taught in one language and other subjects are taught in the other. For example, the Winnipeg

School Division, the largest division in Manitoba, segregates courses as follows: "Students in

bilingual programming receive all the same curriculum as English only schools, with the added

benefit of learning Language Arts, Social Studies and other subjects in the second language.

English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science are taught in English" (WSD *Bilingual

Programs* section). For the most part, these courses are designed and taught with the intent of a

total separation of languages. There would therefore be little to no room for interdisciplinary

teaching and learning. This separation, within these systems, perpetuates the Monolingual myth.

According to Cummins (2014), "the principle of linguistic separation and a total ban on

any kind of translation across languages remains largely unchallenged within French immersion

theory and practice" (p.3). The two solitudes notion remains the prevailing theory within these

French immersion programs, despite the lack of evidence that rationalizes the necessity for the

separation.

The Monolingual Hindrance

Cummins (2007) has staunchly refuted the Monolingual Principle. He refers to this as "the two solitudes assumption" (p.223). According to Cummins (2007), languages are not stored separately within the brain. Rather, they work interdependently as *one language repertoire*. What does this mean for researchers, educators, and policy makers who work with and for multilingual learners? It means that when we restrict the use of *any* language, we hinder learning.

In fact, Cummins has disputed Canadian's French immersion programs. He sees these program structures as hindrances rather than opportunities. He points to various "inabilities" these students in French immersion would sustain:

(a) The inability to draw students' attention to the many cognate relationships between French and English. (b) inability to enable students to create and web-publish dual language books that might showcase students' emerging bilingual skills, (c) inability to pursue partner class projects with French L1 students who are learning English in which the Internet is used to connect learners of each language. (2014, p.3)

Finding "relationships" between languages is at the core of the language repertoire principle. If we are denying our brains the opportunities to cross-reference and link ideas, concepts, beliefs, we are denying learning. The other two "inabilities" point to our changing technological times. We are not utilizing the tools at our disposal to help us appreciate languages and connect with others.

Turn Mono to Many!

I will now discuss how some influential researchers have explored ways in which

educators may work towards both validating and providing academic support for their

multilingual learners.

Common Underlying Proficiency. If we are to consider language as being grounded in

one repertoire, how then do we support multilingual learners as they *language* within their

repertoires? Since first publishing in the late 1970's, and his proposed notions of Common

Underlying Proficiency, Cummins has been at the forefront of multilingual literacy advocacy.

Although most of Cummins' research has been done with early and middle years students (2006;

2007; 2011; 2012; 2015), he has addressed complexities involved in language development as

students move through school. His groundbreaking theory that language has two distinct

functions, that of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and of cognitive academic

language proficiency (CALP) revolutionized the world of EAL instruction. It is now commonly

believed that it takes 1-3 years to become proficient in BICS whereas CALP can take

substantially longer, anywhere from 5 to 7 years or longer if students have experienced

interrupted schooling. With these separate functions in mind, teachers and policy makers, can

consider and apply curricular objectives that cater to these principles.

Translanguaging. Cummins is not alone in his critique of the two solitudes assumption.

Push-back became more vehement in the 1980's (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981; Anzaldúa, 1987;

Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012). Multilingual researchers, writers, poets took to the cause and

prolifically wrote of their own experiences as multilinguals. The term "translanguaging" came to

the forefront. Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) attribute the term's propagation with Welsh writer

Cen Williams. He defined it as "the planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching

and learning inside the same lesson" (p.643). Williams wrote this at a time in Wales when the

loss of the language Welsh was at great risk. The English language was viewed with more

"prestige" (2012, p.642). Williams' writing encouraged educators to see the benefits of

bilingualism. Whether or not the term "translanguaging" has been used explicitly, other writers

have acknowledged and recognized these multilingual methods.

On the other side of the globe, Cuban native Garcia (2009) attributes her understanding

of the concept by way of the works of Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Alvarez (2001). They

had referred to dual language use as "hybrid language use, [which is] a systematic strategic,

affiliative, and sense-making process . . ." (2001, p.128). Here, Gutierrez and colleagues view

dual language use as a very "systematic," conscious use. It is a deliberate form of expression. A

valued form of communication.

In recent years, Garcia (2009) has been a staunch supporter of translanguaging. She sees

the term as a form of action, as a verb: "The act performed by bilinguals of *accessing* different

linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to

maximize communicative potential" (2009, p.140) The term is not meant to be viewed as theory

alone. It is an action. Garcia (2009) advocates for a translanguage awareness whereby speakers

transcend language restraints and utilize all of their linguistic resources as powerful

communication tools. We must listen to multilingual learners speak. They use hybridized

language all of the time. "Spanglish," "Taglish," these are all forms of expression. If we hinder

expression, all we hear is silence.

Garcia (2009) has argued vehemently against this divisive concept of language

development. She criticizes western education systems for their attempts to "sell" bilingualism,

which really only serves to perpetuate a double monolingualism: "As agents of state, schools

insist on monolingual practices, silencing the ways in which bilingual children 'language', and

thus limiting their educational and life opportunities" (2009, p. 141). According to Garcia,

schools and their systems are the perpetrators holding students back from achieving their full

potential.

      Codemeshing. While translanguaging focuses on speaking, codemeshing focuses on

writing. Once again, language is politicized as we see the use of dual language in texts.

Codemeshing was also popularized in the 1980's with the works of Chicana Gloria Anzaldúa

(1981, 1987). Alzaldua first gained notoriety for the book *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981),

which was a compilation of writings by women of colour, edited by herself along with Cherrie

Moraga. In it, she addresses that the ways in which we, the dominant class, view and speak of

race, feminism, and language are all ways in which we perpetuate oppression. In her work

"Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers," Alzaldua (1981) writes of the

struggle of writing in the context of an oppressive state, where she has been bound by writing

principles created by the dominant class: that of the white-woman-English-speaker. In her

struggle to find her voice, Alzaldua writes of the role school plays in perpetuating oppression: "It

is not easy writing this letter. It began as a poem, a long poem. I tried to turn it into an essay but

the result was wooden, cold. I have not yet unlearned the esoteric bullshit and pseudo-

intellectualizing that school brainwashed into my writing" (1981, p.163). Here she confesses her

struggle to find her form. In order to do so, she needs to "unlearn" the structures and

conventions she had learned in school. Alzaldua continues to tell of her educational upbringing:

      I, for one, became adept at, and majored in English to spite, to show up, the arrogant

      racist teachers who thought all Chicano children were dumb and dirty. And Spanish was

      not taught in grade school. And Spanish was not required in High School. And though

now I write my poems in Spanish as well and English I feel the rip-off of my native

tongue. (1981, p.164).

Anzaldúa used English as a combative tool, a way to one-up her oppressor. Yet the conjunctive

"And" leads the reader to remember: Spanish was always there, on the tip of her tongue.

Regardless of the restraints her educational institutions placed upon it. However, despite her

armoured English and her continued use of Spanish, Alzaldua still feels hindered, or rather

"ripp[ed]-off" by the way in which her own tongue has confined her. She searches for validation

for her voice.

Anzaldúa's revolutionary work *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, first

published in 1987, is a tribute to the multilingual. Immediately, right from the very title,

languages confront the reader. Right away I am bound to see the border as divided into English

and "La Frontera," as she has been forced to live it. This is how Anzaldúa constantly speaks to

the reader, the-white-English-speaking-woman-who calls herself a feminist (me!). Throughout

the book, she uses her Spanish to express, then interprets for (me!). Yet her own actions

condemn her:

> Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as
>
> legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex and all the other languages I speak, I cannot
>
> accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingual and to switch codes
>
> without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I
>
> would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate, the English
>
> speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate.
>
> (1987, p.81).

This is what happens when we deny the multilingual. Anzaldúa is imprisoned by the confines of

societal norms. Her languages are viewed as illegitimate, and therefore she is "illegitimate".

Her acts of translating are acts of betrayal. But in her attempt to be heard by the dominant

English speaking society, Anzaldúa must sacrifice herself.

Codemeshing as a teaching practice. Twenty-four years after Anzaldúa's sacrificial

plea to be—herself, Canagarajah (2011) acknowledges a place for the multilingual within the

classroom. Although he concurs that translanguaging is a natural phenomenon, he debates

researchers who do not utilize it as a teachable practice. Canagarajah (2011) examines the use of

hybridized written texts, which he calls "codemeshing" (p.403). Canagarajah argues for the

educational benefits of codemeshing and challenges educators to use codemeshing as an

instructional strategy, whereby educators can analyze when and why students utilize their

multilingual skill sets. The act of writing provides opportunity for conscious choice. It is a

rhetoric in its own right. All within a single text, the multilingual write could hold the power to

decide which language to use, when these would be useful, and what messages they send when

they make these decisions. All of these decisions can be both empowering and liberating for the

multilingual, and great teachable moments for the both the student and teacher (with their

defined roles yet to be determined!).

Canagarajah (2011) conducts a case study as he analyzes the essay writing style of a

Saudi Arabian undergraduate student. He notes that this student develops a deeper sense of

audience as she negotiates when and how to apply her language choices. These choices she

makes also lead her to develop her own voice as a writer. Canagarajah notes that she is,

"motivated by a strong sense of self, investment, and voice" (p.406). Codemeshing allows this

writer to "experiment boldly with language" (p.406) in ways in which she had perhaps never

been able to do before.

Most importantly, the act of codemeshing, without offering translation, can become a

method to combat the oppressive state. In this case, Canagarajah points out the power within this

writer: "She is pressuring readers to work harder for meaning. Readers, especially native

English speakers, may feel compelled to lay their biases aside, relax their judgmentalism, and

adopt a more egalitarian multilingual orientation to the reader/ writer relationship" (p.409). By

codemeshing, this writer has opened up space for dialogue, for communication, which is not

unilateral and one-sided but rather open to possibility and exchange. There is a shift in power

here . . . if only the reader were to accept . . .

The teacher, whether or not she or he speaks and writes the student's language, has an

important role here, according to Canagarajah. Not only can we move to legitimize the writer's

style but we can also help our students find their voices.

Trouble with codemeshing. Some research in the area of translanguaging has been

troubled by ambiguous findings. While some researchers within case study and ethnographic

settings have attempted to prove the worthwhile ways in which multilinguals translanguage, they

have been stumped by some multilingual learners who do not exhibit these skills at all. Velasco

and Garcia (2014), for instance, examined writing samples from 24 bilingual students from

kindergarten to grade 4. They were only able to analyze written signs of translanguaging and

multilingual use in eight of these 24 samples.

Some multilingual learners may even prefer a monolingual classroom setting. Gunderson

(2007), in his qualitative study with high school EAL learners, found that there was a backlash

against the use of the learners' first languages. When participants were asked if they would

prefer bilingual programs, "90% responded that bilingual classes would not help them and that

they wished to learn academic material in English because their grade 12 examinations were in

English" (p.194). It would seem that these participants did not see the value of their first

language because that was not the language in which they were being assessed. The inherent

message was if they wanted to succeed in school, they needed to know English.

Furthermore, when these participants were asked if they thought that knowing how to

read in their first language helped them to connect to their knowledge of English, 60% believed

that it did help to some extent, but they were not always clear how much. Some had never even

thought of that before. These learners found it very hard to articulate how the languag*ing* of their

language*s* helped them. This seems to be a real conundrum for those researchers who have so

vehemently endorsed multilingualism in schools.

Some researchers have posited a reason why some results have favoured monolingual

use: learned behaviour (Velasco & Garcia, 2014; Daniel & Pacheco, 2016). Velasco and Garcia

(2014) reason that this may be due to the segregated, monolingual, ways in which languages are

taught. Daniel and Pacheco (2016) also question whether or not students are indeed

translanguaging yet simply unaware or not acknowledging it. For example, adolescents within

Velasco and Garcia's (2014) study may not have explicitly acknowledged the use of their first

language, but it was revealed that they did utilize all of the language resources at their disposal in

order to understand their schoolwork (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016). Without teacher support—or

acknowledgement—these students were note-taking, reading independently, and clarifying

content in languages other than English. In spaces where they felt it safe to translanguage, such

as in after-school programs, students also used bilingual dictionaries, held discussions about

various texts and spoke freely tapping into multiple languages Daniel and Pacheco (2016) argue

that teachers must begin to value these students' skills, and view their multilingualism as assets,

tools for learning.

Still Monolingual in Manitoba

As I look at Manitoba's *EAL Framework Document Section 1* (2011) however, a

monolingual stance still permeates. The rationale for this document states as its first line:

"Learning and communicating in Canadian society requires competence in either English or

French" (p.1-5). The command comes forth. Mastery of Canada's official languages is a

requirement not a choice. Unfathomable is the belief that someone could survive in Canada

without one of its dominant languages. *Section 1* (2011) continues on to maintain the hierarchy:

"EAL learners also need to understand and express their understanding using English in all

subject areas, so it is important that assessments of progress in subject areas take into account

students' development as learners of English" (p.1-8). Here it is referring to the continued

assessments that are required to gauge students' English language proficiency throughout their

schooling. However, it stresses that newcomers "need to understand and express" in English

within all disciplines, as though this "need" is a lifeline, a survival method. Plus, it places

strenuous demands on students to acquire both receptive (understanding through listening/

reading) and productive (expressing through writing and speech) skills that they are expected to

master to a certain unattainable-native speaker standard.

Action in Equity

Equitable practice can be put to action, but we must be the ones to act. Those of us

working with and for newcomer youth must recognize that we are in positions of power. We

have the power to advocate, to create lessons that validate, and to empower our students to speak

for themselves—in any language. I now examine how some researchers have explored how to put equity into action.

The Power in Advocacy

There are two opposing views educational leaders have towards language: "that language is a problem or that language is a right" (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011, p.650). In order to foster equitable classroom spaces, we need to begin to view *any* language as a right. Dubetz and de Jong (2011), proponents of bilingual education, urge educators to take on an active role in advocating for their multilingual students. They refer to two types of advocacy: within-the-classroom and beyond-the-classroom. Within-the-classroom, they argue, teachers can make curricular choices that engage and foster equal opportunities for all students (Dubetz and de Jong, 2011). Beyond-the-classroom advocacy is when the teacher steps outside of the classroom and engages with colleagues and educational leaders in order to advocate for change in both practices and policies that perpetuate inequity (Dubetz and de Jong, 2011; Haneda and Alexander, 2015).

I will first examine strategies that classroom teachers and researchers have been analyzing that have endorsed advocacy within-the-classroom. This will bring me to end where I will begin. Moving beyond-the-classroom, I venture into my own research.

The Teacher as Advocate within-the-classroom:

The teacher's role is critical, according to Cummins (2011). He claims that teachers, while they may be restrained in some ways by the systems they serve, still possess "degrees of freedom" (2011). It is in the classroom, every day, that teachers can exercise agency. We decide how we choose to deliver the curriculum. Therefore, Cummins claims, we are never powerless.

Activate prior knowledge. It is the teacher who holds the power to validate a

multilingual classroom setting. Within the classroom, we can positively endorse learners'

potential if we begin to view students' first languages "as a cognitive and academic resource

rather than as irrelevant to learning" (Cummins, et. al, 2012, p.23). Cummins' Interdependence

Hypothesis endorses the use of learners' first languages within their classrooms as a means of

supporting their learning. He claims that the learners' first languages do not impede academic

development but rather, when fostered, support it. Others have also urged teachers to help their

students activate their prior knowledge in whichever language suits them best (Coelho, 2004;

Canagarajah, 2011; Daniel and Pacheco, 2016). Coelho (2004) encourages teachers to create

opportunities for their students to use their first languages when they brainstorm ideas, discuss in

small groups, write notes, even when they write first drafts. As an activating strategy, Daniel

and Pacheco (2016) suggest that teachers can ask their students how they use their first

languages. They could then collect this data and post it in classrooms as both reminders to

themselves and validations for their students' learning.

Acknowledge identity. Yet the activation of prior knowledge—in any language—is

merely a first step. Cummins and Early (2011) propose a "Literacy Engagement Framework"

(Cummins et. al, 2012, p.28). Access, activate, acknowledge. Identity is at the core of this

framework. Cummins et al. (2012) surmise that educators must offer learners "access" to a

plethora of texts, in any language. This access will allow them to "activate" their prior

knowledge, stimulate engagement, increase literacy, and, in turn, "acknowledge" identity. In the

edited book *Identity Texts*, Cummins and Early (2011) offer examples from 18 case studies in

which classroom teachers have allowed their students to create their own narratives, using

whatever languages were at their disposal. They highlighted classroom projects where students

create bilingual identity texts. These projects fostered an environment where individual

expression was honoured and celebrated. This is the act of teaching through a "multilingual

lens" (Cummins and Persad, 2014). This is an act of equity.

Create peer interpreter programs. Along with the creation of identity texts, classroom

teachers hold the power to foster a linguistically diverse environment. We must allow

opportunities for translation within the classrooms, which will allow students, in turn, to

participate more fully in class activities (Cummins, Coelho, 2004; Garcia, 2009; Borrero, 2011;

Canagarajah, 2011). Borrero (2011) takes the dual language classroom a step further as he

studies the effects of a Young Interpreters Program with Spanish speaking youth in California.

The program ran twice a week. One day was taught in Spanish and the other in in English.

Students received instruction on how to effectively interpret, how to deal with sensitive issues as

they arise during difficult conversations. Lessons were theme-based as students prepared for

doctors' appointments and parent-teacher interviews. Learners were also asked to reflect upon

their personal experiences as interpreters, as bilinguals. Borrero gathered results quantitatively,

as he compared pre-test, as well as pre-program implementation, and post-standards tests results

between those within the Interpreters group and those within a comparison group. He found that

the Interpreters improved their English paraphrasing skills by a far greater percentage than the

comparison group. In fact, after the posttest, standards, Interpreters scored, on average 73%

whereas the comparison group scored even lower than their pre-test results (13%). This study's

results, for all of those quantitative researchers out there, cannot be dismissed. The multilingual

should no longer be denied.

Create a safe classroom space. Beyond supporting learners' cognitive needs within our

classrooms, Rossiter and Rossiter (2009) stress the importance of valuing a learner's needs as

defined by Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Physiological, safety, belonging, esteem: these are critical as we all strive for healthy life balances. Rossiter and Rossiter point directly to the health and wealth of newcomers and settlement programs, specifically for youth. In their 2015 study, Rossiter et. all. applied Maslow's theory as they interviewed 14 immigrant youths' positive and negative settlement experiences. They stressed that youths' potentials are strengthened when two specific needs are fulfilled: "need for belonging (love of family, friends) and need for esteem (respect, appreciation)" (Rossiter et. all. 2015, p.751). They posit that the extent to which these learners' needs are met will directly impact their acculturation within their new setting.

Time for Advocacy Beyond-the-classroom

As teachers, we have opportunities within our classrooms to foster equitable learning environments. Cummins (2016) believes educators, researchers, and policy makers must broaden our educational objectives to include learning paths that stem from students' cultural backgrounds as well. Cummins (2016) endorses an *intercultural education* approach: "Intercultural education starts by connecting the curriculum to the lives of students and their communities" (p.6). As we develop educational goals that reflect students' home lives, by extension we are fostering a teaching through a multicultural lens. Cummins (2016) sees great potential if we turn our gazes this way: ". . . it will promote academic achievement and equality of educational opportunity for students from marginalized communities who frequently experience much less success in school than students from dominant societal groups" (p.3).

I have supported Cummins and others' claims that classroom teachers have the capacity to do more to support their multilingual learners, and I have admitted, even here, that I am in a position of power. I know that I must do something to redistribute the power I hold. Cummins

and Early (2011) discuss the pedagogy of constructivism. This is where both teachers and

students collaborate and build upon constructing knowledge together. This co-construction,

Cummins and Early (2011) explain, can then lead into transformative approaches, where teacher

and student begin to critically analyze literacy. They may question and critique relations of

power that exist within their systems. This is where I begin my work. Cummins (2011) has said

himself: "Unfortunately, this body of evidence is routinely ignored by policy-makers, with the

result that issues related to teacher and student identities rarely find expression in school

improvement plans or top-down mandates" (p.154). It is my view that, as educators, as

researchers, we must now move dialogue beyond the realm of the teacher-within-her-classroom.

Proposing and endorsing teaching strategies are simply not enough. It is not far-reaching. We

must move into the realm of policy. For prevailing policies will stay the same if we do not

merely construct but rather reconstruct.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Theoretical Framework

Social Reconstructivism

My own educational philosophy has been deeply influenced by educational theorists that

have come before me. I have been inspired by American George Counts, who in his 1932 work

American Education: Its Men [sic], Ideas, and Institutions stemmed away from progressive

movements and became the founder of social reconstructivism. Counts wrote in the time of the

Great Depression, where people across North America and Europe experienced great financial

losses and had to start all over again after the stock market crash of 1929. It was a time of

upheaval; a time to question the institutions that founded the crumbling society. One such

institution was Education. Although Counts began as a progressivist, he eventually strayed away

from this movement: "The weakness of Progressive Education thus lies in the fact that it had

elaborated no theory of social welfare, unless it be that of anarchy or extreme individualism"

(1969, p.7). He felt it too "agnostic," without taking firm stance, and progressivists were really

"romantic sentimentalists" (1969, p.8), too whimsical to be taken seriously. In its overemotional

state, progressivism lacks the tangibility to be productive. He saw a clearer vision for progress:

> If Progressive Education is to be genuinely progressive, it must emancipate itself from
>
> the influence of this class, face squarely and courageously every social issue, come to
>
> grips with life in all of its stark reality, establish an organic relation with the community,
>
> develop a realistic and comprehensive theory of welfare, fashion a compelling and
>
> challenging vision of human destiny, and become less frightened than it is today of the

bogies of *imposition* and *indoctrination*. In a word, Progressive Education cannot place

its trust in a child-centered school. (p.10)

Progressives choose to deny that school systems indoctrinate. However, those of us who work

within the field of education must acknowledge the inherent messages we send. Whether it is in

the explicit curriculum that we teach or within the underlay of the hidden curriculum, messages

are clear. Social reconstructivists fight for equality by de deconstructing these messages and

fight to ensure equality from within them. Counts has therefore pushed us to question the

flippant use the term "child-centered"(1932, p.10). When a child fails a class, we are not serving

his or her "best interests." When a prejudicial slur is uttered without reprimand, we are not

putting that victimized child's needs first. What we do, however, is perpetuate the status-quo.

Counts and other social reconstructivists call upon us to critically examine and to question the

status-quo.

I have also been deeply influenced by another social reconstructivist, Paulo Freire. He

called upon an educational revolution within Brazil as he witnessed pandemic illiteracy rates

within his home country in the 1960's. Pointing a finger at the failing education system, he

stressed that students were kept compliant by the oppressive state. This was to the point where

"individuals cannot be truly human" (2000, p.72). Freire saw the oppressed, the students, "as

object, as "things," have no purpose except those their oppressors prescribe for them" (2000,

p.60). He called for a halt of the systemic view of students as mere "depositories and the teacher

is the depositor . . . students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking

concept of education" (1970, p.72). He saw the dichotomy between teacher and student as being

too great. Not only was up to the oppressor to give up this power but it was also up to the

oppressed to accept it. Although Freire's time has passed, his legacy, his words, live on and even today reign true.

In my current role as my school's sole EAL teacher, EAL team leader, and community school liaison, I cannot deny the power I hold. Every day I make decisions that affect others. I decide whether or not to accept a student into the school. I decide the level of EAL the student requires. I tell teachers how to program for newcomers. I explain the Canadian and Manitoban education system to parents. I explain the EAL system to my administrator. I am sick of my own voice! It is too powerful. Too singular. I must find ways to redistribute and share this power with others. This is why I have sought students who were formerly in EAL programs in Manitoba for their inputs, their wisdom. I have listened and learned from their experiences. In this little way, I hope to redistribute the power I hold not only as a classroom teacher but also as a white, middle class, Caucasian, native-English speaker.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Once again holding my reconstructivist stance, I have chosen to analyze the data from the transcripts of my collective case studies by utilizing a combination of critical discourse analysis, critical race theory, and critical multicultural education. As both an EAL teacher and researcher, I need to take a critical stance and question educational systems that perpetuate dominance. Researcher Van Dijk (1993) defines dominance: "The exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality" (p. 249-250). Within this study, I must address issues of dominance that surfaced amongst participants within Manitoba's education system. At times, these issues of dominance were addressed outright by participants, but there were also more subtle inherent messages behind their meanings that needed to be scrutinized. Issues

surrounding participants' access to interpreters as they settled in their new school environments,

the messages implied surrounding language use within their schools, and the ways in which

information about the education system was shared with them all became critical discourse.

Critical Race Theory and Critical Multicultural Education

Researchers Kubota and Lin (2006) have pointed out that the field of Teaching English to

Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is unique to that of other education disciplines; power

struggles permeate the very essence of English language teaching. Therefore, researchers within

this field cannot ignore the role race plays within participants' lives: "racism as a discourse

permeates every corner of society and shapes social relations, practices, and institutional

structures. This is what is often called institutional or structural racism" (p.479). Specifically

within this study, I would do these participants no service if I ignored these their accounts of

experiences coping with discrimination. I must address the social inequalities these newcomers

faced and critically question the role the educational institution plays in perpetuating racism.

As an EAL teacher, I cannot ignore the pedagogy of critical multicultural education; in a

multicultural, multilingual setting, it encompasses every aspect of teaching and learning. Kubota

and Lin (2006) defined critical multicultural education as follows:

> [It] questions normative knowledge of the White dominant society often constructed in a
>
> liberal approach to multiculturalism . . . It encourages students and teachers to confront
>
> racism and other kinds of social injustice not only individually but also collectively. It is
>
> therefore a form of antiracist education. (2006, p.485)

What teachers are teaching, what students are learning, these messages must all be analyzed from

a critical, multicultural perspective. As participants within this study recounted their experiences

of the teachers they worked with, of the courses they studied, of the ways in which they coped in

their new environment, it became apparent that a singular "white dominant society" continued to

preside and dictate these participants' learning experiences.

Method

Since my personal beliefs stem from my social reconstructivist stance, I have chosen not

to conduct a quantitative study because I believe quantitative works reduce opinions and insights

to mere numbers.   For the purpose of my research, I prefer to use a qualitative approach, for I

believe that in qualitative studies the voice can be heard.

Many researchers have contributed to a body of evidence that has shared voices from

administrators and ESL teachers who have shared points of view on EAL program models

(Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011; Bell & Baecher, 2012; Hanna, 2013), yet, in Manitoba, there had

been no research examining former EAL students' perspectives on EAL programming and more

directly, the E credit. Until today.

Participant Interviews

This inquiry was conducted with nine participants through individual semi-structured

interviews. These individual interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. Participants then

received transcripts of their interviews. They were given one week to review their comments

and change any statements they wished. Transcripts were then returned to me for analysis.

All of the participants in my study had taken, at some point in their high school

experiences, E credit courses. These interviews have helped me to uncover how these

participants were impacted by the E credit system and what they perceived to be the benefits and

challenges of E credit programming.

Although I was guided by my interview questions, these were open-ended, for I hoped to

allow participants to share what was most relevant to them. I did not want them to feel

restrained by my questions.

I prefer the one-on-one interview method because I seek the individual's insights. I did

not want one opinion swayed by another. As Fontana and Frey (2005) state, "interviewing is one

of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings"

(p.697-698). This form of research has allowed me to listen. This is why in the first section of

my discussion, I have done my best to provide a moment to share each participant's individual

story. I have recounted the experiences of each of the nine participants from when they first

learned that they were leaving their home countries to their first schooling experiences in

Manitoba to their current lives as they live them.

Life Histories

While conducting qualitative research, the notion of "variables," becomes tangential.

Variables are defined, rigid, causal. They are too narrow in scope when one contemplates the

ambiguities of life experiences. Rather, the Life History approach delves into the messiness and

makes sense of it. Researcher Cruikshank (1992) had applied the Life History approach to her

own research as she shared her experiences with three Yukon native elders, all women.

Cruikshank (1992) defined Life History as the, "collaborative product of an encounter between

two people, often from different cultural backgrounds, and incorporates the consciousness of an

investigator as well as that of the subject" (p.x). I have never known what it is like to be

uprooted from home, to live in a state of chaos, or danger, of war, yet my act of listening allowed

the participants in my study to tell of their experiences; my act of retelling now is a way to help

continue their stories in order to allow others to listen.

Researcher Kouritzin (1997) also applied a Life History approach to her study on first language loss of minority children. According to Kouritzin, Life History deviates slightly away from case study: "It is not the events themselves that are of greatest importance, but the subjects' understandings of the events, and their later impact on, or resolution in, the subjects' lives" (p.40). As I have sought participants who are now adults, no longer children within the school system, their recollections of their own life events have been skewed by time. Time as a factor has allowed them to discriminate between the relevant and irrelevant markers in their lives. Time leaves only what resonates, and that resonation was what was left for me to hear.

The Collective

Yet individual stories are simply not enough when one seeks to reconstruct at a societal level. From the individual voices, from the resonated life histories, a collective voice emerged. Throughout the interviews, similar experiences, shared responses were heard. Creswell (2007) explains that interviews are for "gathering data that will lead to textural description and structural description of experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants" (p.61). These documented interviews serve as a form of data that were deconstructed to see where communalities lie. Common trends surfaced, and I began to see that the life histories, the individual stories, became stronger as a collective.

Study Logistics

Inspired by . . .

As the principal investigator, I was the only one to conduct this qualitative, collective case study. I was inspired by Roessingh's (2006) prior work from Calgary, Alberta. She conducted a case study and interviewed 10 students who had graduated from a high school ESL program. Roessingh (2006) found value in going directly to participants who had been most

impacted by the system. She sought to uncover the disconnect between learning expectations,

ESL programming, and newcomers' perceptions of the programs they were ascribed. She

wanted to hear and share participants' insights and opinions, for a program is only worthwhile if

its participants find it so.

Through these case studies, Roessingh (2006) found that trust in the program, and more

specifically trust in the teacher, was the most critical element that determined the EAL program's

success. Roessingh (2006) former student's stated: "Trust is directly related to outcome"

(p.585). This participant was pointing to the value of relationships. Connections between

teacher and student, amongst peers within a class, amongst the microcosm of the school culture.

Trust in another is an invaluable resource. Now, as a researcher, I cannot make this causal claim

that trust in another equate success, however telling this student's comment may seem. As you

will see, I too found an element of trust that was a critical component, but it did not solely lie

with the teacher.

Participant Selection

My decision to select participants who had already been through the system and

completed EAL programming derives from Roessingh's (2006) case study rationale:

> With the passage of time, these students have matured; they have also experienced
>
> educational success in contexts where the academic bar is set very high, and these two
>
> factors may, in combination, permit a more reasonable and reasoned assessment of and
>
> reflection on 'the journey' and the programmatic supports that were available along the
>
> way. (p.573)

All of my participants were adults, between the ages of 23 and 28. Former students' maturity

over time allows them to critically reflect and even perhaps share their insights more honestly.

My study has differed from Roessingh's (2006), for her participant selection may have

been too selective. While having only interviewed former students who had moved on to post-

secondary, Roessingh has ambiguously claimed that only those that move on to post-secondary

understand what is needed for them to achieve success. This is an implied meaning that success

can only be gained in an academic setting. However, I suggest that these former students need

not have continued into post-secondary in order to have their voices validated. It is their insights

that are needed not their academic accolades. Therefore, I had no restrictions placed on this

study as to participants' current pursuits.

Interview Process

   I applied a snowball sampling as I sent an initial email to my former students who are now

my social media contacts. I find snowball sampling most effective for this study because it

allowed me to quickly reach the people I was searching for. Many people, even within our own

education system, do not know about the E credit. These former students would immediately

understand the demographic that I sought. Furthermore, due to concerns I had previously

mentioned regarding dropout and disappearance rates, the Manitoba government does not keep

statistics on how many students have taken and/ or graduated from E credit courses. Therefore,

educational institutions cannot access the people I needed to find. I had to go directly to sources

that I know. My contacts were then able to pass along my information to anyone else they knew

within their communities who would be interested in taking part.

Participant Sample Size

   Certainly, with a sample size of only nine participants, my study is limited in terms of

scope and causality. I do, however, still see a transferability emerging. As I applied a cross-case

triangulation of data, I was able to analyze participant responses. Based on the consistency of

my questions to each participant, I did find relatable themes amongst participants. I compared

similarities and differences in participant responses and common recommendations continued to

emerge.

Considerations

As I began my journey of seeking participants, I did find myself encountering some

unforeseen events. Although I do not believe they hinder the legitimacy of this study, they are

noteworthy as they address the plaguing issue of dropouts and disappearances that previous

researchers have attempted to uncover amongst newcomer youth (Watt & Roessingh, 1996;

Mackay & Tavares, 2005; Gunderson, 2008).

"Found" Participants

As previously discussed, I searched for participants using a snowball sampling approach.

Of the nine participants, I had directly contacted five of them. This was simply due to a matter

of convenience. Although I have not been in regular contact with these people, I did have their

contact information. Four of these five people have remained connected with Winnipeg schools.

They have either worked or volunteered as interpreters within schools or are pursuing a career in

Education and remain interested in this area of study. The remaining four people heard of my

study through friends and contacted me directly.

Participants as High School Graduates

All nine of my participants successfully graduated high school in Manitoba. Two of the

nine, Kasim and Ali, initially graduated with E credit designation. Kasim continued within the

high school to upgrade. Ali pursued adult education. Certainly I am happy for all of these

participants' well-deserved success, I was unable to "find" participants in similar cases as in

Watt and Roessingh's (1996) study. None of these participants were fall-outs, drop-outs, or

push-outs. None had disappeared, as was the case in Gunderson's longitudinal study (2007).

One participant, Sarah, could not even fathom the thought of dropping out. She had never

attended school until she had arrived in Winnipeg at the age of 14, and when asked, she

completely dismissed the notion of dropping out: "Never in my mind would I drop out of

school! I'm like, Too hard? Drop out? That's not what you do! It goes against all the fiber in

my body!"

Lost Participants

Since all of these participants were "found," I do continue to ask the question, where are

those who have been lost? How many fall out, drop out, are pushed out, or disappear? What do

these people think of Manitoba's K-12 education and its supports available to newcomers?

These questions remain unanswered within the scope of this study.

There were also potential participants who contacted me and were unable to participate in

this study. One criteria for this study was that I did not seek ethics approval from school

divisions. This was a purposeful decision because I wanted this study to remain separate from

divisional influences. I wanted my participants to feel as though they could freely express their

opinions without sensing any obligations to school divisions. This intention became a limitation

in one particular case. The potential participant wanted to share her experience in EAL

programs and she had hoped that the school where she is currently upgrading would be willing to

continue child care support while she participated in the interview. However, the school denied

her request because I had not sought divisional approval to use the space. This then leads me to

question whether or not there were others who were in similar situations as this mother. All of

these participants took time out of their busy lives to meet with me. Not all can afford such time.

For those with family obligations, work or school pursuits, the participation in a study such as

this is not a priority, nor should it be. However, these voices may very well be those who most

need to be heard.

Therefore neither Manitoba Education, nor previous Manitoba studies, nor I have been

able to find information regarding disappearance rates amongst Manitoba's newcomers.

However, this matter should continue to be of pressing concern to anyone who works within the

field of Education here in Manitoba. From my findings, both Yakub and Ali provided advice on

how to discourage newcomers from dropping out. Yakub was acutely aware of the issue as he

knew people who had quit school and stated that school was "a different experience for them"

(Yakub, 2017). He pointed out that his single story was simply not enough to get a full picture.

Many stories, many factors need to be considered.

Chapter 4

Findings

I will begin with their stories. These life history interviews are brief, focused biographies.

The nine participants shared with me their families' reasons for immigrating, their first

experiences in Winnipeg, and their experiences in Winnipeg's EAL education systems,

specifically within the EAL programs. What follows is a summarized account of their

experiences, their resonances. Out of respect for each participant, I have highlighted each of

their stories within a separate section. In this way, I may honour the single story. I have tried, as

much as possible, to honour their voices and use quotations from our conversations that will

highlight their conviction in their voices and their eagerness to share.

Guided by consistent, open-ended questions, participants shared only what was most

comfortable to them. After each interview, participants received transcripts of our conversations

for member-checking. Table 1 is an overview of where participants were born, where they lived

prior to immigrating to Canada, and how long they were in EAL programs here in Manitoba.

	Where were you born?	Where did you live before coming to Winnipeg?	Did you have any prior schooling before coming to Winnipeg?	How old were you when you started school in Winnipeg?	How long were you in an EAL sheltered program?
#1 Anne Kristine	Philippines	Philippines	Yes	15	2 years
#2 Kasim	Iraq	Dubai	Yes	17	4 years
#3 Lily	Vietnam	Vietnam	Yes	14	3 years
#4 Ali	Iraq	Syria, Lebanon, Georgia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey	Yes	18	4 years
#5 Gucci	Philippines	Philippines	Yes	18	1 semester
#6 Sarah	Rwanda	Kenya	No	14	2 ½ years
#7 Than	Burma	Thailand	Yes	11	5 years
#8 Nica	Philippines	Philippines	Yes	16	1 year
#8 Yakub	Sudan	Sudan	Yes	16	2 years

Table 1: Participants' place of birth and countries they lived in before immigrating to Canada.

Anne Kristine

Anne Kristine called the Philippines her home for the first fifteen years of her life. From

nursery, she attended school. Her elementary years were spent in a private school, but she and

her siblings transferred to a public school during their high school years. This was a financial

decision, for with three children, her parents simply could not afford private school tuition.

The decision to immigrate to Canada came from a family member's recommendation:

"My uncle encouraged us to go here because he told us that we would have a better opportunity

here. And there's a chance for us to have a brighter future. We thought ok, we'll go as long as

we're a whole family coming here, we thought ok" (Anne Kristine, 2017). The idea of a brighter

future enticed the family. Yet their commitment to stay together motivated them to leave

together. The dedication to family is what propelled them here.

Anne Kristine and her family arrived in Winnipeg, Canada the third week of June. Since

the school year was about to end, she did not enroll that school year. She spent the summer with

her family going to different Winnipeg sites. Anne Kristine recalled the loneliness and longing

during those summer months: "It was tough because emotionally I was still coping. I'm really

close to my friends in the Philippines. It was really tough. To the point where I felt like I was

depressed and had anxiety. I don't know. I was depressed. Yeah" (Anne Kristine, 2017).

When she enrolled in her high school, Anne Kristine completed an intake assessment in

both English and Math. She was placed in age equivalent classes, grade 10. Yet she was placed

in E course designations for English, Social Studies, and Science. She was placed within the

mainstream credit system for Math.

Anne Kristine recalled feeling overwhelmed those first few days. She longed to make

friends yet found native English speakers intimidating: "I felt overwhelmed because I felt

intimidated talking to English native speakers. Sometimes they talk really fast and I couldn't

comprehend. I couldn't understand. In my ears, in my brain it was like an alien language!"

She recalled hearing of the high school credit system during the orientation. A peer

group entitled "EAL Ambassadors" did mention it, but Anne Kristine professed her confusion: "I

couldn't understand it very well. They explained it to us but I wasn't paying attention." She

remembered appreciating that orientation day but admitted that it was also overwhelming: "I

imagine all of the pamphlets that they gave us. It was a lot."

Despite these stressors, Anne Kristine sought strategies to build connections with peers:

"I tried to smile often. Because I wanted to make friends. I wanted to be perceived as a friendly

person so they could come to me." With all of these emotions she felt, from anxiety to

depression to feelings that overwhelmed her, it took such strength to put on a smile. But this is a

testament to Anne Kristine's character. When times are tough, she puts on a smile to tackle

whatever problems she faces.

Anne Kristine's EAL classes gave her some level of comfort as well: "The students, they

were also newcomers. I wasn't the only one who couldn't speak English fluently, so I felt a little

bit comfortable as well because I knew I wasn't the only one who was struggling." Those

feelings of loneliness dissipated when Anne Kristine recognized others who were struggling in

similar ways.

Aside from her Math classes, Anne Kristine remained in her EAL classes for two years,

grades 10 and 11. She felt comforted that she was not the only one within these classes who was

struggling with her English. She thought that these classes were challenging enough. She

appreciated the teachers as well: "And the teacher were really positive. Like they asked how

they could help. They gave visual aides. They tried to implement a positive environment, which

was good because it made me feel safe to take risks and to make mistakes. So I liked it. I felt

comfortable and confident" (Anne Kristine, 2017). These EAL classes built Anne Kristine's

confidence: "The EAL classes really prepared me for the real world" (Anne Kristine, 2017).

Ultimately, Anne Kristine attributes friends and teachers for getting her through the

initial adjustment period: "I would say making friends really helped me the most because you

have someone to talk to, to ask questions. And the teacher are really reliable and

accommodating. Kind of like the support system. They help you emotionally, mentally."

By grade 12, Anne Kristine had transitioned into the mainstream program for all of her

subjects. She recalled her necessity to graduate: "My family was expecting me to graduate as

well. It's a Filipino family. I'm the eldest of three. And they were expecting me to graduate.

Pressure! But I had already set my mind. I wanted to graduate. I wanted university." Certainly,

Anne Kristine felt the familial obligation but she too had the desire, had the need to achieve her

goals. And high school graduation was the first step.

Anne Kristine is now a hard-working university student in her last year of Education.

She also has two part-time jobs. When I exclaimed that she was busy, she adamantly stated: "I

want it! I want it!" Trying hard to fulfill that dream of the "brighter future," Anne Kristine is on

the cusp of achieving her goals.

Kasim

Born in Iraq, Kasim had a big family: three sisters and two brothers. Tragically all but one fled

in search for safety. In Iraq, his family was targeted because they had some semblance of a

stable income. One of his sisters was kidnapped for ransom. Threatened and scared, his family

paid the ransom but his sister never returned: "Until now, we don't know if she's alive or dead."

Kasim had a baby brother at the time. These kidnappers threatened to take his brother as well.

Finally, Kasim's dad stated: "This is not our future here" (Kasim, 2017). So they left.

Living in Dubai for almost five years, Kasim went to school and studied Athletic

Therapy. However, the family struggled because the cost of living was so expensive.

Furthermore, in United Arab Emirates, one cannot become a permanent resident if one is not

born there, so the family had no other alternative but to leave again.

At 17 years old, Kasim arrived in Winnipeg. Even though coming to Canada was not

Kasim's choice, he described his first reactions to being here:

> To be honest, in Canada, we expected we only gonna find white people. But
>
> when we come, Wooo! I loved it! Because, you know, I always wanted to go to
>
> different countries. Then I realize wait, there's Somali [here]. So many from
>
> Asia, so many from Europe. My best friend, he's Columbian. I thought I don't
>
> need to go to countries! To be honest, I love it. (Kasim, 2017)

Kasim observed and embraced Canada's multicultural landscape right away, and he fully

appreciated it.

Kasim recalled his mid-winter arrival in Winnipeg: "It was cold! I brought my warmest

jacket ever [with me]. It was so expensive! It froze on me! I'm serious! The zipper it broke on

me because I was shaking" (Kasim, 2017)! Kasim laughed at the memory.

Despite the winter arrival, Kasim did not start school until spring. Speaking and writing

only in Arabic, Kasim's intake assessment indicated that he would start in the literacy level in all

of his classes. He described his first few weeks of school: "First time I was nervous. Be like

almost two weeks I don't know what to say. Just I see [the teacher] teaching us. And board,

touch screen. I never see a touch board, and I thought, oh that's cool! Some friends, I make

friends at that time. Immigrants and refugee in that class, and they give us snack. That was the

favourite part" (Kasim, 2017). Kasim's fascination with new technologies, classmates, and food

kept him quiet but observant.

Kasim spent four years in the EAL high school program. He does not recall anyone ever

explaining either the school system or the credit system to him. He learned "step-by-step"

(Kasim, 2017), on his own.

Kasim ended up graduating twice—and receiving two diplomas as a result!   The first

time he graduated with E credit designations, and the second time, at the age of 22, he graduated

with the upgraded courses.

Kasim described some of the jokes he faced, from teachers no less, when he returned to

upgrade: "You know I have some teachers. They used it as a joke. Like as a bully, 'Oh you're

so old!" And I just ignore. Inside. Go. Out (pointed from one ear to the other)" (Kasim, 2017).

It was Kasim's strength that motivated him to finish school. He ignored the rudeness of others

and focused on his goals.

When asked why he felt it important to upgrade, Kasim stated simply, "I wanted to keep

it to show it to my kids. Hey, you see. You should work hard" (Kasim, 2017). The self-

motivation, the desire for a future with a family, with children who will respect his work ethic.

These are the reasons why Kasim pursued the upgraded education.

It seems that Kasim did not receive much encouragement from the school: "Who asked

me to upgrade? I think it's self-taught. Students, teachers. Sometimes they think I'm annoying

because I ask so many questions, but I don't care. It's ok. I just need more questions" (Kasim,

2017). Unable to recall someone who had mentored him, Kasim described his desire to learn and

ability to ignore anyone who stood in his way.

Currently, Kasim is extremely busy. He and his girlfriend are trying to save up to move in together. He is working full time as a line-cook in a local restaurant and saving money to both move out and support his girlfriend as she attends post-secondary. He also hopes to study at Red River College and become a Health Care Aide. Pursuing his goals is not easy though: "Basically right now I need to work really hard to just pay for the house rent, insurance, car insurance. So it's tough. It's really tough" (Kasim, 2017). Although his financial struggles are real, Kasim remains optimistic.

His biggest accomplishment to date, he has said is that he just received his Canadian Citizenship: "I'm like eh! I'm a Canadian! You can do so many experiences with it" (Kasim, 2017). Kasim felt that more opportunities were available to him now that he was a citizen. In Iraq, in Dubai, Kasim and his family were in limbo, unstable. Even though Kasim is still settling in, making plans, pursuing dreams, now, at the very least, Kasim has a home.

Lily

Lily was born in Vietnam and lived there until she was fourteen years old. She attended school in Vietnam and had completed grade 8 before immigrating here.

Lily's father's employment situation was not optimal. Her mother had a cousin living in Winnipeg and so it was agreed that they would sponsor Lily and her family to come to Winnipeg. Lily arrived in Winnipeg at the end of October and distinctly remembered starting school four days after she had arrived.

It was a great adjustment for Lily to transition to an English-speaking school environment. She had studied English in Vietnam, but the approach in Canada was different: "When we came here, the accent was different. I mean I could write pretty well. I just didn't understand. My listening skills were really low, so I couldn't even say hi or respond to simple

questions. Stuff I had already learned in my country" (Lily, 2017). Even though Lily was familiar with written English grammatical structures, she was not used to communicating in English. For this reason, when she did the oral speaking intake assessment at her new school, she simply responded, "no" (Lily, 2017) to every question. She was then placed in the literacy level class, 1G.

During that first year in school, Lily took whatever classes were assigned to her. These were the literacy level classes within a sheltered English language program.

Lily recalled the EAL program she was in: "I would say that they were pretty fun and easy. We did a lot of hands-on, a lot of reading and fun stuff, so it wasn't stressful at all" (Lily, 2017). She also enjoyed the field trips that allowed her to see the city and surroundings.

In grade 10, Lily transitioned out of EAL classes for Math and Science but remained in EAL for English and Geography. Lily appreciated this form of transition, because within the "regular" program, Lily did experience some anxiety: "It's hard to be in the regular program and I feel kinda self-conscious. I cannot speak well, but having that EAL environment and know I can just be myself and say whatever and won't be judged at all. That's nice" (Lily, 2017). Lily felt a sense of security within these EAL classes. Aside from feelings of anxiety, Lily could not recall negative experiences with either staff or students.

Lily expressed her gratitude for the few Vietnamese students who helped her. "If it weren't for them," she explained, "there would be a big problem communicating with the teacher" (Lily, 2017). In fact, it was these peers that first explained the credit system to Lily. Lily did not recall ever having the E credit system explained to her. Furthermore, it was not until these peers explained it to her that she realized that she could select some of her courses.

Lily remained in EAL English classes and completed 4E English. Rather than graduating then, Lily continued her studies in English by taking grade 11S then grade 12S. No one had advised her to do this and she still had no idea of the limitations of the E credit.

Lily eventually graduated with all upgraded courses. When asked how important it was for her to graduate, she stated: "Very important. In my family, we always have a goal. You gotta go to college or university. Of course, you gotta graduate high school with good marks, so you can get into the [post-secondary] school of your choice" (Lily, 2017). Therefore, graduating high school was a necessary stepping stone for Lily to go on to post-secondary, which was always the priority in her family.

Lily completed her first degree, a Bachelor of Science and did not know where that would lead her. She began volunteering in both her former high school and in local adult EAL classes. She felt a sense of purpose within this field: "I felt good helping people learn. I also had a sense that this is something I can do. It's really rewarding for me to do" (Lily, 2017). It was with this sense of purpose that Lily applied to a faculty of Education and is now completing her final year of her Education degree. Even though she is pursuing the Sciences as teachables, she has considered EAL teaching as a possibility in her future.

Ali

Ali's journey to Canada was tumultuous. Born in Iraq, he lived all over the Middle East. Ali and his family lived in Syria, Lebanon, Georgia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. He began school in Iraq and finished high school in Syria. However, life was unstable due to war. The family had relatives who had lived in Winnipeg for the past 30 years. Eventually he and his family were approved to immigrate to Canada.

At 17, Ali arrived in Winnipeg. Of course, it was the middle of winter: "It was freezing cold. I mean I've seen snow but I've never seen that kind of winter. It was just brutal" (Ali, 2017)! Trying to figure out how to settle that first winter, Ali described those first couple of months as "surprising" (Ali, 2017).

Aside from the winter, another surprise Ali faced was trying to register for school. Issues with documentation held back registrations for him and his siblings. They had to wait a year before everything had been settled and they were allowed to register. Ali was 18 by then. He had an older sister who was 19 and two younger siblings who were 11 and 10 before they were all able to start school.

Ali admitted that he was both surprised and disappointed when he learned that he would have to go back to high school: "I thought I would just continue to go to college or university. But my papers were not accepted, so I had to go back and upgrade. Basically I had to retake what I already took" (Ali, 2017).

After his initial intake assessment, Ali was placed in some grade 11 and some grade 12 E designated courses. For English, he was placed in a literacy level class.

The hardest part for him those first few months was the language barrier: "You can't ask, you can't answer. You can't go here and there. You can't really read what the sign says, so it's basically like, 'what do I do?' It was a little bit crazy" (Ali, 2017). Ali often questioned, "'Why am I here'" (Ali, 2017)? The self-doubt tormented him.

Ali eased in with the help from a couple of peers who spoke Arabic. They helped him and his sister that first little while. He also received support from an Educational Assistant who was Arabic speaking. She helped Ali and his sister register for school and she helped them in their English class. Ali felt "lucky" to have had her there (Ali, 2017). Ali explained that he also

put a lot of pressure on himself to push himself to speak English: "It was really bothering me that

I couldn't speak" (Ali, 2017).

Ali remained in the EAL program for one-and-a-half years, unbeknownst to him. It was

not until he failed his literacy class one semester that he went to a guidance counsellor who

explained to him the credit system and the limitations to E credits. Ali did end up graduating

after that year-and-a-half, but with E designations.

Ali continued his high school education at an Adult Education centre. He graduated a

second time from there and went on to college. Starting in Aircraft Engineering then changing

his mind to Criminal Justice, Ali spent a year in college. Unwilling to take out a student loan,

Ali took a pause from his academic pursuits and completed his qualifications for a class 1

driver's license. Testing for this classification was strenuous and expensive. There are several

testing steps: the knowledge test, air brake knowledge test, pre-trip test, road test, air brake road

test, backing test. For Ali, he passed all of these tests on the first try, which is not always the

case. He credited this to his previous experience. In other countries where he had lived, he had

driven semi-trucks and motor coaches. Yet regulations here required him to pass all of the tests

and pay $1100.00 for the accreditation. He is now a semi-truck transport driver.

Ali continues his days working full-time, saving money to go back to school, saving

money to buy a house. As he put it, "Being in adult life sucks, but you have to do it" (Ali, 2017).

The road has not been easy for Ali, but his drive pushes him forward, every day.

Gucci

One month before her 18th birthday, Gucci and her family moved from the Philippines to

Winnipeg. She left her friends from college behind and learned that she would be heading back

to high school.

It was upon a relative's recommendation that the family moved. This relative was

already living in Winnipeg and sponsored Gucci's family to come. It was "for the kids," as her

mother put it (Gucci, 2017).

Gucci arrived in June and spent the summer visiting family in other Canadian cities. Yet

her connection to her life back home remained strong as she recalled staying up until 5 a.m. to

speak with friends back in the Philippines.

In September, Gucci registered for high school: "It was a huge thing for me, going back

to high school. Just because most of my batch mates in the Philippines are already graduating,

working jobs, and here I am going back to school for grade 12" (Gucci, 2017). She was upset,

"for sure" (Gucci, 2017). Yet she did come to see it as an opportunity as well: "I am in a

different culture and it will be nice to know what's in the country that we don't have" (Gucci,

2017). Gucci wanted to learn. And she knew that going back to high school would be the only

way for her to pursue her future goals. So she went back.

Gucci did not remember taking an intake assessment, but she did remember arriving for

the orientation day. Although she felt overwhelmed, she was comforted by the other newcomers,

the diversity among her peers, the peer support leaders who were also Filipino and who

encouraged her to ask questions and reach out to make friends.

The credit system was explained to her and she liked that she had some choice in the

course selection, unlike the Philippines where she had no choice in subjects. The E credit was

explained, and at first she was frustrated that she had to take those courses: "At first I wondered,

'why do I have to take E?' even though I took these courses in the Philippines. Those kinds of

petty questions that you're asking yourself. 'Why this, why that?' But then, at the end of the

day, you're gonna figure out, 'oh I really need to take this'" (Gucci, 2017). Gucci came to terms

with her situation. She eventually came to understand and wanted to upgrade her skills. It was

just the initial adjustment that was tough.

Gucci took E designated courses for both Math and English that first semester. She

appreciated these EAL classes. Both teachers and classmates were friendly. She felt at ease

asking anyone for help. She noted a big difference between her EAL classes and her classes she

had the following semester in the mainstream. In the mainstream, that friendliness dissipated: "I

felt sometimes like some people don't talk to you just because you're a newcomer. And that

makes me sad. I'm happy with my friends in EAL because I don't have to pretend I'm

something that I'm not" (Gucci, 2017). She described her mainstream classes as quiet and

"uncomfortable" (Gucci, 2017). Yet she prevailed.

Gucci completed her upgraded studies and graduated at the end of that year. Although

happy to have graduated, she did recount the stress of that year: "At that time, I'm 18 and I'm

too much pressure, from being a teenager, from going to college in the Philippines, then going

back to high school, so my mom understands that I'm still thinking what I want to take for the

moment" (Gucci, 2017). All that change in one year plagued Gucci. She did not know what she

wanted to do after graduation, so she took a year off.

When she was ready, she went to college to become an Addiction and Community

Service worker. Now she has three jobs as a support worker.

Gucci's time in high school was tough. She described the return to high school as

"shattering," but she has also reconciled: "There are better opportunities here" (Gucci, 2017).

Gucci has attempted to make the most of these opportunities.

Sarah

Sarah lived the first 10 months of her life in Rwanda. From there, she and her family

moved and lived in the Congo for her next 12 years. Finally, they moved to Kenya and were

there two years before a case worker from the United Nations assigned her and her family to a

resettlement country—Canada. "God!" She exclaimed, "That was the happiest day of my life"

(Sarah, 2017)!

Sarah and her family arrived in Winnipeg in April, a few months before her 14th birthday.

The family spent the first couple of months at Welcome Place, the Immigration Centre, settling

and finding a more permanent residence.

Sarah had never attended school before arriving in Winnipeg. However, she knew of the

concept of school and was eager to embrace it: "I wanted to go to school. I really did. And I

tried my very best to learn as much as I could. So I knew you were supposed to go to school and

learn and become a doctor or a lawyer and anything less is terrible! It's this or death" (Sarah,

2017)! Sarah had never spent a day of her life in a classroom, but she had learned that school

would lead her to one of two professions that would be her salvation.

Her first school experience was a little unconventional. She had arrived at an awkward

age for the system. It was June by the time they had settled, so she could not yet register in a

public school. She was not old enough to attend adult English classes with her mom and her

older sister. So she attended day care with her little brother: "And there were so many little kids,

I didn't know what! I was at an awkward stage. . . . so I just went to day care and fell asleep all

day" (Sarah, 2017)!

Sarah's summer naps finally ended and she registered into a school. Based on her age,

she was placed in a grade 9 class. She was given a language test, which included various

subject-specific questions from Math and Science as well. Sarah giggled at the recollection: "I
don't think I got anything right" (Sarah, 2017)! For Sarah could not read. She circled and drew
pictures on her test. Once her assessors realized this testing was fruitless, they transferred Sarah
to an off-campus literacy program. There she remained for the year in a class of 30 students and
a single teacher.

Sarah had fond memories of the class. The class would cook and in the afternoons they
would watch Disney movies. When asked if she felt that the teaching methods were a little too
childish, she responded:

> I would probably be the wrong person to answer that question right, because most other
>
> children would have had a chance to go to school in a different language, so they might
>
> have felt it was childish. I didn't have that at all! So anything to do with anything I was
>
> pretty much at day care stage. So playing bingo and watching movies while I eat
>
> popcorn was fun! It wasn't childish, it was fun! (Sarah, 2017)

Sarah appreciated that first year of fun. Yet school was about to get harder. After the year, she
was transferred to high school, and that is where the challenges ensued: "I think for me the first
experience of feeling awkward and feeling like, 'I know nothing' was when I moved to high
school." The self-doubt plagued her. Sarah's doubts began with registration: "When I actually
enrolled, I picked all regular classes, and the first time that I entered real school I was like, 'I
don't know anything and I can't ask for help because I don't know how to do it" (Sarah, 2017)!

Without asking for help, Sarah had registered for school, had picked classes, had gotten a
timetable. She does not recall anyone ever explaining the school system to her: "I feel like it was
never really explained to me. I learned as I gained experience. I don't think I was ever sat down
and somebody told me when the bell rings, you go to your next class. Class is right here. I had

my timetable, but I didn't know how to read it" (Sarah, 2017)!   Unlike other participants, Sarah

did not recall peers who had given her a tour of the school or a counsellor who had explained to

her the timetable, or an interpreter who could have helped her with the application form. She did

it all. Alone.

Sarah recalled her first class: grade 10 Pre-Calculus. As she put it, "There was a pop

quiz, and I got zero! . . . A big fat zero" (Sarah, 2017)!   Sarah expressed her shame when the

teacher had instructed peers to mark each other's quizzes and she did not want to pass her quiz to

the classmate. She also recalled her embarrassment when the teacher announced to the class:

"'Anybody who did not get at least 3 out of 5, you're not supposed to be in my class. Cuz this is

really simple'" (Sarah, 2017). The teacher then approached Sarah specifically: "She said, 'You

shouldn't be in my class. You need to go to the office and have them put you in EAL. You

don't belong in my class'" (Sarah, 2017).   The teacher wrote a note for Sarah to give to a

guidance counsellor and Sarah was escorted out of the room. And that was Sarah's first memory

of high school.

The next day Sarah met her EAL Math teacher, whom Sarah holds to high esteem even

today. Sarah stated that in one semester, this teacher helped her "catch-up." Sarah continued to

study numeracy Math and at the same time the EAL Math teacher tutored her in grade 9 pre-

calculus. Sarah claimed that this teacher "worked her magic" (Sarah, 2017), but she also

described the work she put in. Taking double the tests, going to the library every single day,

reading Math textbooks that were way too advanced for her. One of Sarah's biggest strengths is

her ability to memorize. Sarah did not always understand what she was memorizing, but it still

helped tremendously in the beginning: "I could memorize how you do really hard Math and

that's how I did it" (Sarah, 2017). Whether it was "magic," memory, hard work, or sheer will,

Sarah remained in EAL Math only for that first semester. She moved on to the mainstream Math

and Sciences during the remainder of her high school years. Sarah did, however, stay in EAL

English classes for a year and a half more.

Although pursuing Math and Sciences was Sarah's priorities, she did find those high

school EAL English classes helpful: "The way they were designed was that they were not too

childish that you feel like you're one years old, but at the same time it's basic enough for you to

understand why the rules in writing or speaking are the way they are. And I think it's definitely

classes that all newcomers should take to get greater understanding." Yet Sarah had always had

plans to get out of EAL. And so she did. After completing all of her E credit English classes, all

the way up to 4E, Sarah started again, in grade 10 mainstream English. She then went on to

grade 11 and finally grade 12 Comprehensive.

When Sarah had started to list all of the classes she took within her three years of high

school, I got confused. Something did not seem to add up. I could not understand how she had

taken so many classes. Then she told me that she never took a lunch period. Her school did not

have a common lunch period, so classes were available throughout the day. It was up to the

guidance counsellor to assign a lunch period to the student. Sarah had refused to let her

counsellor give her that break.

Within the span of four years, Sarah became literate and graduated from high school with

honours. When asked how important it was for her to graduate, Sarah explained: "That it wasn't

just to graduate. That was unacceptable. It was graduate as an honour roll student." Sarah had

high expectations of herself. When she considered what helped her most in achieving her high

school goals, Sarah attributed several factors:

God is definitely number one. That's not going to move. I think it would be God and

then my love for learning. I mean I missed out on school for 14 years. I wanted to catch

up with everything I missed. So I was determined not to fail anything. And then having

a supportive support system, you know like the EAL teachers, my EAL Math teacher,

and my mom. She never had to tell me to do my homework, but still, she would tell me

she's proud of me every time she saw my report card. So it was good. (Sarah, 2017)

Sarah's incredible faith, not only in her God but also in herself, propelled her forward. Her

support system believed in her and encouraged her to take pride in her accomplishments. It was

a combination of all of these variables—and I might also suggest her own little bit of brilliance—

that led Sarah to university, on her way to Medical school. Or so she thought.

Tackling course loads with the same ferocity that she had in high school, Sarah registered

for her first year of university with five courses and four labs. Finally, Sarah reached her limit,

and thought, "'I'm dying'" (Sarah, 2017).   She had to pull back, one course away from a three-

year Biochemistry degree.

Even though Sarah's dream of being a doctor was put on hold, her love for learning

persisted and she found an interest in her conflict resolution studies. She also found love! Sarah

got married and now has a toddler at home. She now works as a family coach for a newcomer

organization, but she is not done with school. In January Sarah will return to her second year of

a Nursing program. And she has not given up on her dream of becoming a doctor. She will see

where her faith, her love for learning and her love for living take her.

Than

Than was born in Burma but did not live there long, for there was a civil war and his

family quickly fled after his birth. They escaped to a refugee camp in Thailand, where Than

spent the next 10 years of his life.

It was Than's mother who decided that they needed to move:

Back there sometimes it's not safe. It's still a refugee camp, c'mon! My mom always

talked about how she wanted us to get a better education. She's strict about that! So if

we get a better education, we have a better life, I guess. That's what her expectation and

her mind was thinking, and so it was decided by my mom, and I think she made the really

good choice. For sure. (Than, 2017)

The instability of the refugee camp, the hope of better education and a brighter future drew

Than's family out of Thailand and into Winnipeg.

They arrived in Winnipeg near the end of November. Than was 9, almost 10 years old.

He recalled his first memory of snow: "It was chilly, cold! We see a bit of snow. I taste it. It

doesn't taste good" (Than, 2017)! Despite the shock of the cold, Than said that he did

eventually adapt, "slowly" (Than, 2017)!

The family stayed in Welcome Place, the Immigrant Centre for a couple of months, then

were moved to a place in Transcona. Unfortunately, the counsellor who spoke Karen, their first

language, was unable to find a school for Than and his older sister: "The Karen counsellor tried

to get us into school. Right. But then they didn't want us because we had no English at all, right.

And then they didn't have any special programs or anything, over there. So we couldn't attend

school for basically a full year" (Than, 2017). The struggle to find schooling forced the family

to move again, to a house in downtown Winnipeg.

Two months before school ended, Than was placed in a grade 5 class and his sister was

placed in grade 6. Right away, Than realized a distinct difference between this school and his

school in Thailand. Back there, he had been in grade 3. Elementary schools were not organized

based on students' ages but rather on competencies. If a student fails a single subject, they are

required to repeat the entire grade. Since he did not see this preference for age-based schooling,

Than would have preferred to stay in the same class as his sister during those initial days: "It

would be nice. I think we would be able to help each other out, what we're supposed to be

doing, even though we don't understand anything" (Than, 2017)! Neither one of them spoke any

English. No one in their classes spoke Karen, so they were alone.

Than's recollection of that first day of school remains with him: "At a desk. Head down.

That was it. Just had my head down the whole day" (Than, 2017).

When Than was in grade 6, he, along with students from other classes, were pulled out of

class occasionally to work with an EAL teacher. He explained how he felt much more

comfortable there and would have rather stayed there than go back to class, "not knowing what is

going on" (Than, 2017). Albeit reluctantly, Than was always returned back to his grade 6 class.

It was not until he transferred to another school for grade 7, junior high that Than was

placed in a sheltered EAL program. He explained how he felt so much better in that

environment: "Oh my goodness. In every way! You know like being surrounded by other

people from other country. Them having broken English, just like me. It was like, thank

goodness! They're not trying to be all high up, you know?" (Than, 2017)? Than remained in

EAL classes throughout junior high. Than eventually moved to the high school. Unbeknownst

to him, his junior high EAL teacher had advised that he take mainstream courses. Than realized

this, he did not like it, and went to a guidance counselor to change every subject back to EAL:

"First of all, the transition to high school wasn't good at all. I didn't know anybody much, and so I change to EAL. But EAL was good though. I didn't want to get out of it" (Than, 2017)! Whether or not that memory of the kid with his head on his desk all day still plagued him, Than knew what he needed for himself to feel comfortable and secure. So he remained in EAL.

Than does not recall either the credit system or the EAL credit being explained to him. Two years into the high school EAL program, Than still did not know that the E credit was limiting his options. It was not until he was in 4E English that he realized that he would need to to move into the mainstream grade 12 in order for him to pursue his university aspirations. He then took the grade 12 Comprehensive English course and passed but wanted to improve his mark, so he took the grade 12 Literature course as well. He also upgraded his Math and took Pre-cal. Than graduated high school with all mainstream credits and went on to university.

The transition to university was tough for Than. He did not know which courses to take and sought advice from the university's career counselor. He realized that, for years, even while still in high school, Than had offered his bilingual skills to his former teachers who had asked him to interpret for families. He had even begun to work as an interpreter for a Winnipeg school division. Still having that connection to schools, Than decided upon pursuing Education. Currently, Than continues to study and to work as a interpreter for schools as well as a tutor for a newcomer organization. No longer that scared child hiding with his head on his desk, Than will soon hold his head high, in front of his class.

Nica

Nica was born and raised in the Philippines. She was 16 and in her last year of high school. She was making plans to move out the following year, live with her cousin, and attend a college near her cousin's house. Her father had just given her permission to do so.

Then one day she was told that the whole family was getting medical examinations. She asked why and found out that they were moving to Winnipeg. She remembered being very surprised and confused. Why Canada? Her father had been living and working abroad for years, in Singapore, and he wanted to live with his family. Nica then asked why they could not simply move to Singapore. Yet her father no longer wanted to work there. Nica realized that the immigration process had already started. She stopped questioning and started packing.

Nica and her family arrived in Winnipeg in December, in the middle of a blizzard. She had remembered being so excited to see snow that she and her sister ran out of the airport. They were immediately accosted by the blizzard and ran back into the airport.

Since it was close to winter break, Nica did not start high school until the second semester, in February. She took and intake assessment test and was placed into grade 10 E designated courses.

In her first class, Nica felt self-conscious. She recalled that she did not actually have her first conversation with someone until third period, which was in Filipino. She spoke with a few Filipino classmates and they discussed where they were from. She also found a former classmate of hers from grades 1 to 4 in the Philippines and who was now attending her same high school in Winnipeg (and the "small world" saying reigns true)! So finding friends encompassed Nica's first day. By the end of that day, she knew she would be okay.

Midway through that semester, her English teacher came to her and suggested that she move on to grade 11E. Even though this meant that she would have to change her schedule, Nica was glad: "Honestly, the grade 10, I got bored" (Nica, 2017).

Nica confessed that she had also felt that her other subjects also could have been more challenging, but she did not want another change in her timetable, so she did not say anything.

As that semester was ending, that same teacher came to Nica to discuss options for the following

year. It was then that she learned of the limitations of the E credit and she decided to move to

the mainstream program.

Even though Nica only spent one semester in an EAL sheltered environment, and even

though courses could have been more challenging, she valued her time in the shelter. When

asked about a favourite memory, she exclaimed, "I have lots! Because compared to regular

classes, I think EAL helped me a lot. Lots of activities. Lots of things to do compared to regular

classes" (Nica, 2017).   From the EAL classes, she recalled activities such as group projects,

online blogs, jokes! Nica appreciated the adjustment period, and the laughs.

When asked what helped her the most through high school, Nica named her friends,

teachers, and school activities. Nica became a member of the school's chess club, newspaper

team, graphic design group, and she became a newcomer peer support leader. Nica also

remembered that she had to stop comparing herself to her friends in the Philippines, where they

were, what they were doing, as they were already studying in their respective universities. It was

a life she would have had had she still been in the Philippines. Yet Nica had to look ahead. She

threw herself into her newfound hobbies, friends, and environment.

Finally, high school graduation came: "It was a great achievement for me. Because I had

three and a half years of high school in the Philippines and then two and a half years here. So it

was a great achievement for me. I finally graduated high school" (Nica, 2017)! It was a long

time coming and Nica was very ready to move on.

The transition to university was tough, Nica admitted. However, she remained positive

and kept in mind skills her had learned from her first few months of school in Winnipeg. She

would remind herself: "When time pass by I'll meet new friends, I'll reach out, and it's only my

first year, so eventually I will be able to get used to how school works. Yeah, I could do it

because I survived high school! I survived when I came here" (Nica, 2017)!

Nica is now in her fifth year of university, pursuing a double major in Asian Studies and

Linguistics. She is busy teaching Sunday school, tutoring, and participating in a Japanese

language exchange program in her university. Nica is excited about graduating from university.

She hopes to test out her Japanese skills while traveling. Furthermore, she has not yet entirely

abandoned those long-lost plans she had with her cousin when she was just a teen. Nica thinks

she may just finally meet up with her again, one day.

Yakub

Yakub was born and raised in what is now North Sudan's capital, Khartoum. According

to him, those sixteen years were typical "city living: It was pretty good" (Yakub, 2017). He and

his siblings attended private school. Yakub admitted that he was not part of the decision-making

process to come to Canada. He was aware of it though because he was entrusted with the role of

running down to the P.O. box twice a week to find out if there was any mail for the family: "We

waited for that a long time. That's the only thing I knew. I didn't know where we were going. I

didn't even know what we applied for. All I knew is we were trying to get out of Sudan. I liked

that" (Yakub, 2017). Yakub was running back and forth to that mailbox for at least a year before

everything had been settled the family was ready to move.

The family arrived in Winnipeg in October. A family friend had sponsored them and

they had their own apartment in downtown Winnipeg as soon as they arrived. People had

warned them of the area, and Yakub remembered that he really wanted to explore, but he was not

allowed to get out much.

He started school three weeks after he had arrived. He took an intake assessment test and

was placed in some grade 10 E designated courses along with grade 9 E designated Math, even

though his age suggested a grade 11 placement.   He admitted to accepting the grade 9

placement, because he had struggled with Math in his previous school as well.

Yakub remained in EAL courses such as English and Social Sciences for two years. He

transitioned into the mainstream program for Math and Science after one year. Yakub

appreciated his time in EAL, for these classes helped him to transition. His best memories were

the field trips. Yakub attributed his successes to his friends for helping him through high school:

"Connecting with people, so friends I would say, that are going through the same changes I went

through" (Yakub, 2017).

Unlike other participants, it was not the language barrier that plagued Yakub the most. It

was the cultural differences in the teaching methodologies that confused him. Yakub professed

to struggling the most with time management. Completing assignments on time—or at all.

Setting aside time to study and leaving room for pastimes like soccer, which had always been a

big part of his life. These were the elements Yakub struggled with in high school. He learned

the hard truths: "You do the work, you get the marks. You don't do the work, you don't get the

marks or marks get deducted. So yeah, time management" (Yakub, 2017). Back in Sudan,

incentives to complete work had come from an entirely different form of motivation: "There if

you don't do your work, you might get a beating, and so there's that fear, that incentive. More

than incentive. You don't wanna get hurt! So when you come into this environment, that's

missing. So it's more like a confusion. Your goals gotta change. Everything's gotta change"

(Yakub, 2017). The way Yakub had been used to learning had totally changed. He now needed

to develop a more intrinsic form of motivation in order to find success in school. This was an

entirely new approach to learning for him, and it took time for him to fully understand this shift

in consciousness he had to make.

By grade 12, he was taking all mainstream credits. It was not until he was already at this

point and making plans for university that a counselor had explained the limitations of the E

credit to him. By that time, he was already out of the E credit system, so he did not have to

worry.

Graduating high school was important to Yakub but admitted that it was more important

for his parents. In fact, he did not attend his convocation, because he had gone to Toronto to try

out for a soccer team. His parents, though, held to the belief that graduation would lead Yakub to

success: "For my parents, I graduated and am making something better for myself" (Yakub,

2017).

After high school, Yakub first went into the Data Base and Software Development

program in college. He then went to university and took prerequisites for the faculty of

Engineering. Still not yet committed to these programs, Yakub applied into the Aircraft

Maintenance Orientation Program (AMMOP). He is now completing the one-year certification

program. From there, he will decide if he wishes to pursue this field in college. Even though it

would seem that Yakub has not yet settled, he sees all of these experiences as valuable learning:

"I told myself I have to get in[to a program], see how it is for myself and decide. I knew, well

some would call it a waste of money, but I wanted to be in there and see how it is for myself

rather than not doing it at all. And I found out some of it wasn't for me, and I just changed. I

believe you never stop learning" (Yakub, 2017). Yakub continues to learn about himself, his

own capabilities, his own interests. He is exploring his opportunities and making the most out of

his adventures.

The Collective Experience

These nine individuals were kind enough to share with me a little of their lives. Their experiences in the countries where they are from, their reasons for immigrating, their first moments in Winnipeg within the city's schools, and specifically within EAL programs, these moments were all uniquely their own. These findings have allowed me to address my first research question as these participants allowed me to explore with them their experiences within Manitoba's E credit system. Some, like Gucci, stayed a short time receiving EAL programming, but remembered their time in EAL classes longingly. Even one participant, Than, did not want to leave EAL, despite encouragements from teachers to move out! Two participants remained in EAL credited courses through to graduation and sought to upgrade. Regardless of the differing lengths of time these participants stayed within EAL support programs, I do see common experiences shared amongst them all. Within these experiences are themes that require further exploration.

The following section addresses the commonalities shared amongst these participants. It is important to note that, even though they have traveled from different parts of the world, none of these nine participants have come from affluent backgrounds. They did not come from the highest of economic gains. They were all from either middle class or refugee backgrounds and their families struggled to settle when they arrived here in Winnipeg, Canada. As such, all of these participants dealt with added responsibilities within their home lives. Taking care of siblings, completing household chores, seeking employment to help supplement the family's income, completing homework without assistance from an adult, these were their realities within their home lives. It is with this consideration in mind that I venture into my discussion section, where I look more deeply at these participants' schooling in Winnipeg.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Thematic Analysis

This thematic analysis is separated into two sections. The first section addresses

participants' responses to my research question #2: From EAL learners' perspectives, how is

Manitoba's k-12 education system catering to and validating the needs of its multilingual

learners? As I listened to participants within my study, I began to hear them address similar

experiences, which uncovered specific concerns. Participants spoke of the various interpreters

that had been available—and in some cases unavailable—to them. They spoke of a monolingual,

English-only system of instruction that prevailed within their schooling experiences. Finally,

they spoke of discrimination. As I consider the question of "validation" towards the multilingual

learner, I see from these participants' recollections that the discrimination they had faced within

their schools did not serve to validate them.

The second section addresses responses to research question #3: How has the

implementation of the E credit at the high school level shaped the learning environment for

newcomers? Here I specifically examine participants' responses regarding their understanding

and opinions on Manitoba Education's E credit system. You will see that many of these

participants were ill-informed and wished for more. Much of these accounts from participants

points to a system that must question its inequalities.

Access to Interpreters

Roessingh (2006) had found that newcomer students needed to feel supported and sought

people with whom they could trust to support for them through their schooling experiences.

Roessingh (2006) had primarily referred to "the teacher as key" to the student's support system. I

have noted that one way in which participants within my study felt supported was when

interpreters were available to them. Yet interpreting, in these cases, stemmed far beyond the

translating of language. It was the cultural confusions, the systems of school that were also

interpreted for these participants. Intriguingly, where Roessingh (2006) found that it was the

trust in the teacher that helped her participants, I found that the support stemmed far beyond the

teacher. All participants mentioned that adult interpreters had supported them, at the very least,

on one occasion. Along with teachers, other adults mentioned were educational assistants, and,

to a surprisingly lesser extent, intercultural support workers. One participant, Sarah, also

included her mom as her "personal interpreter" (Sarah, 2017). Most prominently, however, the

peer group was identified. Peers provided the most support to these participants.

Adults as Interpreters: Teachers. Only the three participants of Filipino descent

mentioned that they had teachers who could interpret for them. Once again, the form of

interpretation extended beyond language translation. These participants appreciated the cultural

understanding that their Filipino teachers could provide. Gucci, for example, often went to one

of these teachers' rooms after lunch, when she had a spare. Gucci explained that this connection

even helped her to feel safe in either one of the two Filipino teachers' rooms: "I felt more secure"

(Gucci, 2017). Gucci also recounted how she would seek one of the Filipino teacher's help with

her English homework: "I usually go to [this teacher] and I just ask her. It was nice. Even

though she doesn't speak fluently in Filipino, she understands" (Gucci, 2017). It is that form of

communication, beyond the translated word, the intercultural language shared amongst those of

the same cultural background that Gucci needed to connect with in order for her to feel secure

and confident to move forward with her pursuits.

Adults as Interpreters: Educational Assistants. Both Kasim and Ali spoke glowingly of an educational assistant (hereafter E.A.) who supported them throughout their schooling. Like these two participants, she is Iraqi, and that connection to place helped both boys navigate their way through their high school experience.

Kasim recalled a time when he was desperate to speak, yet he needed an interpreter. He had witnessed two boys fighting. He wanted to report it, yet he could not express himself in English comfortably enough to the teacher. So he sought the Iraqi E.A. Kasim referred to her as "The Queen" (Kasim, 2017). He flexed his muscles as he continued, "She's tough" (Kasim, 2017). The respect he held for her was clear. Kasim even explained that had they gotten someone else who spoke a different variety of Arabic, not from his region, it would have been too hard to communicate: "We don't know what they're saying" (Kasim, 2017). With this particular E.A., Kasim felt confident that he could express himself freely, and she would listen.

Ali felt the same level of respect towards this E.A. In fact, in our conversation, he always referred to her as "the teacher" even though her job title was E.A (Ali, 2017). Upon first mention of her, Ali said: "Luckily we had a teacher of EAL who spoke Arabic. And yeah she helped us fill out the papers and do the application" (Ali, 2017). He then questioned what would have happened to him had she not been there the first day he arrived for registration: "How am I supposed to know what is being said to me? I could probably fill out the application using phone or whatever but I wouldn't understand everything" (Ali, 2017). This E.A. was Ali's access to information. She helped him make sense of his new environment.

Within his English class, Ali continued to receive the support from this E.A. Once again, her role as interpreter extended beyond the translation of words. In fact, at times, he explained, she avoided interpreting: "She also tried not to interpret a lot so we would get used to it" (Ali,

2017).   This E.A. was present. He felt he had her support. She also knew when to allow him to take a chance and problem solve on his own. Yet that sense of security, her presence, reassured him that he could do it.

Adults as Interpreters: Intercultural and Community Support Workers. Schools within Winnipeg may hire personnel who are assigned as intercultural support workers, meant to interpret, both language and school culture to newcomer families. Community organizations also hire community support workers who can even bring newcomer families to schools from these community organizations from which they work. Even though all of these participants would have had access to these services, only two of the nine participants in my study utilized the services of their support workers.

Lily was the only person to mention an intercultural support worker. She had met him once. She had heard an announcement about writing the Special Language Exam. This is an exam administered to test one's proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking in another language. If one passes this exam, one can earn credits towards graduation. This intercultural support worker explained this opportunity to Lily and her friends and gave them the form. Although it is important that this option was clearly explained to Lily, I do find it disconcerting that this is the only time that this intercultural support worker had met her and her friends. This is especially disconcerting when I note that this particular intercultural support worker's office was within the school that Lily attended.

Than spoke of a community support worker who helped his family enroll him and his sister into their school on their first day. He also recalled how this support worker helped his family find a home and settle. However, this was the only time Than recounted utilizing the community support services.

Ali did not receive any community interpretive support when he first arrived. In fact, he

expressed his frustration with community support workers. As was mentioned, when he and his

sister registered in school, he received help from the E.A. There was no community support

worker who came with them. He stressed the need for one local community organization to do

more: "[The community organization] should send an interpreter with you to do the application.

All those things" (Ali, 2017). Ali has pointed out the disconnect between the community

organizations and the school. Yet this is merely one case. We cannot generalize the experience

of all. It is the lack of presence that calls the relevance of this role into question.

Of the nine, Lily and Than were the only two to mention receiving support from

community organizations. This does not imply that there was neglect on any one's part but

rather participants either simply did not feel the need for the support or they received support

from other sources, like teachers and E.A.s. One perturbing thought, however, is perhaps these

participants did not know that support was available to them. Yakub, for instance, stated that he

did not think interpreters would have necessarily helped: "I did not know what questions to ask"

(Yakub, 2017). This statement problematizes the issue. Had he been provided with an

interpreter, one who, as I have discussed, not only offered support in language translation but

also in the navigation of the school system's culture, perhaps Yakub would have felt differently

about his need for support.

When I compare Than's experience to Ali's, another question must be asked. In Than's

case, his support worker brought him to the school on their first day. Yet he and his sister were

nine and 10 years old. When Ali and his sister started school, they were 18 and 19 respectively.

The other participants too were all in their teens when they first arrived within their schools.

Does this mean that newcomers who are younger are receiving more support from community

settlement workers? Are those teenage years somehow being overlooked? This age comparison

is beyond the scope of this small study and would be a question for further study.

Overall, amongst these participants, neither divisional nor community intercultural

support workers played a significant role in supporting these newcomers. This disconnect may

be due to their inconsistent presence within schools. Support workers are not assigned to a

single schools in the same way that either teachers or E.A.'s are. These support workers report

to either a number of schools or to their respective community organizations.   They are not a

constant, reliable presence within one individual school. Although in Lily's case, where the

support worker had an office in the same school she attended, one would assume that this could

have made contact and connection a little more readily accessible. It would seem that these

support workers have an unmanageable work load. Considering the constant stream of

newcomers arriving and settling, how could a single support worker keep up with demand?

However, this is where Schmidt and Block (2010) and Schmidt (2016) have argued that more

can be done within the school staffing community. If a school staff were more representative of

the community it served, the need for community support workers would diminish.

Adults as Interpreters: Parents. Finally, recall Sarah, who stated that she required no

outside interpreter. This statement may seem surprising at first. One may have assumed that out

of all of these participants, Sarah would have needed the most help, for she had never attended

school before coming to Winnipeg. However, Sarah's mother speaks French. In any of the three

schools Sarah attended, there was always someone who was able to speak to her mother.

Therefore, having access to one of Canada's official languages did help Sarah's family settle. At

least, for Sarah, this part of the acculturation process became a comfort, for she had her mom,

who she trusted unequivocally.

Peers as Interpreters. Eight participants recounted experiences where peers interpreted for them. These peers helped with explanations regarding school routines, class lessons, school rules and procedures.

Than, who arrived in Winnipeg at a younger age than the other participants and was placed in a grade 5 class, knew no one who could speak Karen, aside from his sister who was placed in the grade ahead of him. There was no school staff to understand him. However, he did, on occasion, have one interpreter: "There was one kid who went to school as well and his English was a bit better. I think he's been here longer. Yeah, so sometimes they would ask him to come and translate for us. He was younger, but he knew better English" (Than, 2017). Than laughed as he recalled these times of need where this child would come to his aid. However, without this child, he and his sister would have been lost, for Than stated that there was no adult able to help them.

Yakub found support from peers even before starting school. Within the community, he had met two young men who attended to the same school that he was about to attend. He felt "lucky" to have met these two young men, for they were the ones who gave him and his siblings a tour of the school, read their timetables, and showed them how to open their lockers. Yakub did say that he had met with the guidance counselor who did show him his timetable, yet he stipulated that the newly developed friendship with peers was paramount: "The person who went with us and led us in the right direction, was [my new friend], from the first day. And he's still a good friend of mine, until this day" (Yakub, 2017). This kinship, Yakub found, was built upon a common understanding for someone who shared the same language, shared the same feeling of being new. This was a lifeline for Yakub that school staff could not provide.

Both Anne Kristine and Gucci also stressed the importance of peer support during those first few days of school. Both had mentioned a peer support group, "student ambassadors," that had been established at the school. They both explained how these ambassadors led an orientation session on their first day of school. In Tagalog, they toured the school with them, explained the school rules, introduced the credit system, helped them with their lockers, and reached out to them as friends. Gucci explained that these ambassadors established a sense of security right away: "They would always ask, 'Do you understand? Can we help you?' Throughout that time maybe I'm more confident asking the student that had been long to the school because I'm still shy in asking teachers" (Gucci, 2017). Once again, Gucci felt more comfortable asking peers who had been through this similar experience. She felt that they had a better understanding of her needs.

Some participants also stressed a reliance on peers to help them throughout their studies. Anne Kristine recounted one of her first experiences trying to complete her Math homework: "I was crying all night because I couldn't answer the homework because it was different from what I learned in the Philippines. I know the easier, short method of doing it, but I was crying that I didn't know how to do it. It was different" (Anne Kristine, 2017). Anne Kristine sheds light here on the cultural differences within curriculum content. It was not that she did not understand the math. She did not comprehend the method of instruction as stipulated by Manitoba's curriculum. When asked how she managed, Anne Kristine responded: "I asked for help. I asked my classmates to compare homework" Anne Kristine, 2017). In order to make sense of her homework, Anne Kristine went to her peers. Although Anne Kristine did say that she went to her teacher as well, she still needed her peers to help her understand the cultural differences of the discipline. That too was something the teacher could not provide.

Upon entering the school on his very first day, Kasim came across an issue of

miscommunication regarding a school rule: "The first time at the school, the teacher said: 'You!

Take off your hat!' But I don't know how to speak English, right? Then there was an Arabic

guy and after he came and was like, 'ugh, you're not allowed to wear hat. And I was like, 'Ah!

Is that what that teacher wanted me to do'" (Kasim, 2017). Kasim's very first memory of school

was that of a teacher who scolded him for not following school policy. He sensed that he was to

follow some order, that he was getting in trouble, but he could not understand why. This

stemmed from simple miscommunication. Kasim was by himself when he entered the school. It

was not until a peer happened to intervene and help him that he understood what was expected of

him.

Interpreters played critical roles within these participants' lives. Yet these interpreters

varied in age and access. With peers having been mentioned as the most readily accessible, it

does beg the question, where were all the adult interpreters? It seemed that their availabilities

were more by happenstance. Once again, this finding could be worrisome to those (Schmidt and

Block, 2010; Schmidt 2016) who have called for a more equitable distribution of school staff,

one that is more reflective of the students they serve.

The Monolingual Principle Revisited

Amongst these participants, the Monolingual Principle prevailed. You will recall this

notion that English should be taught in isolation of other languages. This method of instruction

has prevailed as the norm since 1961, according to Howatt (1984; 2004), despite researchers'

disputes (Phillipson, 1992; Cummins, 2007; Garcia, 2009; Canagarajah, 2011). For decades

now, these researchers have endorsed a multilingual classroom setting and the use of

translanguaging in order to access information. However, based on these interviews, all

languages are not valued equally. English reigned supreme.

The Monolingual "rule". When asked if they were permitted to speak other languages

in their classes, four participants said no, they were not. The other five said it was not a hard-fast

rule but still English-only was encouraged. Whether the "rule" was enforced or not, all nine

participants endorsed an English-only policy within the classroom. Sarah, for example,

commended her teachers for such reinforcement: "That's a beautiful thing that EAL teachers do,

they'll remind you, 'don't speak your language in class. You're here to learn English'" (Sarah,

2017). Sarah referred to these little reminders as "beautiful!" To her, there is beauty in

perfecting a language. Sarah praised her EAL teachers who reinforced this perfection in the

mastery of the English language.

Monolingual conversations. The need to practice speaking in English was paramount

for all of these participants. Nica said that she needed to practice despite the difficulties in

stuttering and grammar. She even suggested that if one truly must speak their first language in

order to understand a concept, one must first ask the teacher's permission.

Not only was English encouraged within the context of the learning environment, but it

was also paramount within a conversational context. When peers spoke casually, not necessarily

about their lessons, then some would resort to using their first language. Yet even within casual

conversations, some of these participants felt that it was intolerable behaviour. Nica confessed to

speaking Tagalog from time-to-time within her classes, but as she reflected upon it, she

considered that her behaviour back then to have been inappropriate: "Thinking now, this

moment, I think it's kinda rude that you speak your first language in class because what if there

are people that don't understand Filipino or your first language? They will think, 'oh they're

talking about me.' So I think it's kinda rude to speak" (Nica, 2017). Nica felt that speaking her

first language isolated others from her conversations. Since this opinion has come to her just

recently, now in her twenties, perhaps she is reflecting back to those teenage years where

adolescents think that everyone is watching them, everyone is talking about them. These

egocentric moments could be amplified if peers perceive language as a way to isolate others

from conversations.

Others suggested that simply speaking in English solely within the classroom was not

good enough. Yakub, Gucci, Anne Kristine all endorsed English not only while students are

learning but also while they are socializing, both in and out of school.

Yakub reinforced this point as he stated: "You should speak [English] outside of class

too, because you have basically been speaking your language for a long time, you're probably

speaking it at home too, so I think it was a good rule, if it was implemented" (Yakub, 2017).

Getting by, day-to-day

As I have discussed, the EAL framework stipulates: "Learning and communicating in

Canadian society requires competence in either English or French" (2011, p.1-5). I wanted to

see if these participants felt the same way. Could one get by, in day-to-day society, without this

"requirement" of competence in one of Canada's official languages? All nine participants said

varying degrees of "No!"

Ali was firmest with his response: "Absolutely not. There's no way" (Ali, 2017). He

also explained how he himself came to Winnipeg with no English, and he struggled. Asking

directions, calling 911 in emergency situations, he realized that English was crucial: "It's an

asset" (Ali, 2017).

Participants Than and Lily stated that people could "get by" but that they needed someone to support them. Alone, as Lily pointed out, "it was be really hard" (Lily, 2017). In turn, this means that one achieves a sense of independence when one knows English here.

Yakub and Sarah pointed to the lack of opportunity if one did not know English. Yakub stated: "You can get by definitely, but you can't get far. That's what Canada is great for, but you can't progress. If you have goals to go somewhere else in life, you're not going anywhere" (Yakub, 2017). Yakub viewed the country of Canada as a provider, as a viable support system for newcomers. As an independent, however, trying to move ahead and establish a career, he thought that, without English, one would be at a dead end.

Yakub made reference to post-secondary institutions that have rigorous language requirements. Yakub discussed a technical trade industry he is pursuing and that he had to take the TOEWS certification test:

> So if we don't have that certification, we can't get into the workforce. And that's
>
> being asked by the big companies like Boeing and Magellan, so
>
> we need to have that. What does it entail? Reading, document use, and
>
> numeracy. So you need a higher level than the average person that's walking
>
> down the street. If you don't have that level you can't get the job. (Yakub, 2017)

In order to achieve success within his line of work, Yakub needed to complete this high stakes test that required sound English literacy and numeracy skills. Without these skill sets, he would not be able to pursue his employment path.

Poignant in her response was Sarah: "I mean you can survive, but you cannot live well or thrive. I like living. I don't like surviving" (Sarah, 2017). Sarah's response is quite telling if we consider the background she had come from. Sarah had lived fourteen years of her life by

"surviving," but now mere survival was not enough. She wanted more out of life. She wanted to "thrive." For her, one way to do this was to use English.

Even when I had questioned participants on the sentiment of Canadian multiculturalism, they did not seem to see the relevance. I discussed the Multiculturalism Act (1992) that protects multilingual rights. I asked why we could not see the building of culture as a "two-way street" as Ngo (2009) had suggested. Yet when it comes to earning an education, to breaking into the workforce, for these participants, the Multiculturalism Act (1992) played no part.

Ali explained that Canada's official languages continue to preside over any other: "There is a lot of communities. . . . I would say Canada has a lot of multicultures, but I wouldn't say Canada is a multicultural country. Sure there are a lot of languages being spoken, but coming to documentation and coming to government, it's English and French. So if you need something, in order to get by, you need English."

From communicating day-to-day, to reporting emergency situations, to accessing career opportunities, to studying for high stakes tests, to literally "surviving," these participants all stressed the necessity for English in their lives. These comments are an extension of Kouritzin's (2012) findings; she examined Canadian English speakers' views on the necessity of learning another language and its potential for economic gain. Finding revealed that participants believed that knowing another language would not serve them as well as a) English and b) knowledge of STEMM related subjects. Findings from my study reveal a similar belief, however, this perspective comes from newcomers themselves, those who do already have access to an additional language. Therefore, I propose that even when an additional language is accessible, as was the case with all of the participants in my study, that these participants did not see the economic benefit of their own skillsets. They saw English as the way to achieve their goals.

Getting by, with the Framework Documents

Overall, based on these participants' responses, I see that the EAL Framework

Documents' (2011) recommendations that one "requires competence in either English of French"

(p.1-5) holds merit for these participants. In order to be independent, to pursue one's choice of

employment, these participants believed that English is an asset. Participants' continued belief

in the predominance of English as equated to opportunity would support researchers' previous

findings as well (Piquemal & Bolivar, 2009; Kouritzin; 2012). Piquemal and Bolivar (2009)

found that francophone newcomers to Manitoba felt that their French provided neither

sociocultural supports nor economic opportunity. Rather these researchers' participants found

that it was only English that would lead to economic gain and an ease of life. So too does that

that belief perpetuate amongst participants within my own study. Intriguing is the EAL

Framework Documents' (2011) stipulation that competence in French could be an alternative for

those who do not speak English. Piquemal and Bolivar's (2009) findings contradict this

statement. None of the participants' first languages within my study were French, so I am unable

to compare these responses. It does beg the question why the inclusion of French is included

within that one line of the "English" As an Additional Language Framework document (2011)

without it really being substantiated at all either within the document or within Manitoba's larger

sociocultural and economic context.

Monolingual Methods

Velasco and Garcia (2014) reasoned in their findings that their participants' preferences

towards monolingual methods of instruction may be due to these participants' learned behaviours

from their prior schooling experiences. I too wonder if participants in my study were more

inclined towards monolingual, English-only instruction because it is most familiar to them. For

example, Gucci explained how English was taught to her in the Philippines. She described a

teacher who had a particular form of discipline when students spoke Filipino in English class.

They had a version of a "swear jar" (Gucci, 2017). Whenever someone spoke Filipino, they

would have to put 25 cents (Filipino currency) into the jar. Therefore, early on, the message

Gucci received was that one did not learn multiple languages at the same time. This was a

principle she continued to see and endorse within her school in Winnipeg.

No Alternatives

Than acknowledged that, once he arrived in Winnipeg and started school, he was

surrounded by English: "It might have dominated my language a little bit" (Than, 2017). English

presided over Than's mother tongue as he navigated his way through the school system. The

notion of translanguaging, of the use of all languages at one's disposal to seek understanding, as

has been proposed as a viable instructional tool (Garcia, 2009; Canagarajah, 2011; Cummins and

Early, 2011; Cummins et al, 2012, Cummins 2016) has never been proposed to Than. Once I

mentioned this alternative, though, he considered the possibility: "If I put myself in a situation

where they are both equal, I think using both language would be helpful as well, because for

some understanding if I were to understand some questions and such, I would probably want to

translate that. Yeah, I would use both" (Than, 2017). There are a few salient points in Than's

response. First, Than noted, if *he* were to put *himself* in the situation. He still did not quite see it

as the school system's or the classroom teacher's responsibility to provide the space that allows

for multilingual use. Second, Than acknowledged the present day's hierarchical force of

languages. He has yet to be placed in a situation where the languages he knows "are both equal"

(Than, 2017). Than's response would support researchers' findings (Garza and Crawford, 2005;

Kouritzin, 2012; Daniel and Pacheco, 2016) that a linguistic hegemony prevails within schools.

English remains dominant. It was not until an alternative form of teaching and learning was

explicitly proposed during our interview that Than even considered the possibility of accessing

his first language to support his educational endeavours. For him, during his schooling, it was

English only.

Discrimination

It is unfortunate—no, deplorable—that the issue of discrimination continues to inevitably

arise amongst discussions with newcomers. I had wished that I could have reported it to be a

non-issue. Wishing does not make it so. As had been noted, researchers (Stewart, 2011;

Oxman-Martinez, et. al, 2012; Garver and Noguera, 2015) continue to call out examples

discrimination plaguing newcomer youth. My findings are no different. While Oxman-Martinez

et. al (2012) noted that 25-37% of participants in their large-scale study reported "perceived

discrimination," I will argue that all nine participants "perceived" a level of discrimination

within their schools. As you will see, two of the nine were hesitant to use the term

discrimination when it came to describing their experiences. However, I examine these

experiences based on Oxman-Martinez, et. al.'s (2012) analysis of responses from their study,

where perception of discrimination was based on the following: "The focus of the article is on

the responses of children who perceive themselves as targets of discriminatory behaviors, acts, or

practices and on the relationship of the experience with their psychosocial functioning and

academic performance" (p.377). Two of the nine participants experienced levels of self-doubt

based on their race and their newcomer status within the school, even though they hesitated to

use the term discrimination. The other seven called out their experiences. Discrimination was

outright and blatant. They reported name-calling, stereotyping, and defending themselves as part

of their high school experiences. When an issue such as this persists and remains "highly

existing" as Stewart (2011) reported, the conversation must shift. It is no longer a question of *if* it exists but rather how do people cope? I will review the discriminatory acts these participants faced and discuss their survival coping mechanisms. These participants' coping strategies exemplified their resilience and their strength. They used their peer group as a supportive foundation, reclaimed ownership, and built a sense of power amongst themselves.

Name-calling

Four participants cited that they had encountered derogatory names throughout their schooling experience. Although these were bothersome and upsetting, some used these names to build strength and reclaim their identity. Anne Kristine recalled an experience from school: "I was walking down the hallway. I remember some students calling us F.O.B. (fresh off the boat). Then some of the Filipino boys formed a group called F.O.B" (Anne Kristine, 2017). These boys used this derogatory term and reclaimed it as their own. Whether this is a positive strategy or not, whether it solved the problem of discrimination or not, it was a strategy nonetheless. It was an attempt to reclaim a sense of power that others were trying to take from them.

Nica and her friends also experienced name-calling from classmates when she was no longer in the EAL program. Phrases like, "Go back to your own country!" were heard in class. The name-calling only lessened (but did not abide altogether) when peers saw how she and her friends were excelling in these classes: "We kind of proved something. We could excel in academics. We could speak English. We could understand what they're saying" (Nica, 2017). Unfortunately, Nica and her other Filipino friends had to master all of these skills before being treated respectfully. Even then, whatever "proof" they thought they had attained only lessened the blow but did not diminish it.

Than described how the term "EAL" became derogatory within his school setting.

Students who were not in EAL class, would condescend and dismissively address him and his

classmates by saying, "Oh, these are EAL." He even mentioned a teacher addressed them

differently. "[He] would tease a lot: "Not really say bad things but think that we're weak. We

can be just bullied. He's a born Canadian. He just think that we're weak and vulnerable. Not

able to stand up for ourselves" Than, 2017). Without direct derogatory statements, this teacher

made Than and his peers feel uncomfortable, defenseless. However, he and his peers had a

coping strategy: "I had friends who were say African, or other friends from the same country as

me so whatever racism that comes to us we just stand together. We didn't really have that

depression of thinking about suicide, or nothing like that, because we had each other. So it was

good" (Than, 2017). Than and other newcomers rallied together. They supported one another.

Unfortunately, in this case the Canadian teacher let them down and did not advocate for them. It

was the strength of the peer group that allowed them to maintain their dignity.

Defending

Unlike the others who relied on peer groups for support, Ali stressed that the individual

must take a stand. Ali's recounts of the discrimination he faced were the most reactive. What

started as name-calling escalated to more. He too recalled the name-calling: "People called me

you know, 'I'm Muslim. I'm a terrorist. I'm Middle Eastern. I should go back there" (Ali,

2017). The name-calling escalated to the point where Ali had to defend himself. A group had

approached him in the school field, verbally assaulting him. As Ali explained it, he stated: "It

had to get physical" (Ali, 2017). When asked if he felt fighting had been the only feasible

option, he countered: "Not to fight. To stand up for yourself" (Ali, 2017). The distinction here

was crucial to Ali. He explained that telling an adult, going to the principal or a teacher would

not have helped him in this case: "If you cannot really defend yourself, if you cannot stand up for yourself, and you're always running to the principal, that gives them more room to be racist to you, more room to bother you, more room to bully you. It's when you can't stand up for yourself" (Ali, 2017).

Ali also viewed the school division's punitive policies of suspensions as "pointless." Lecturing, giving perpetrators a few days off school, this would not help. But "standing your ground . . . standing up for yourself" is what is necessary (Ali, 2017). .

Ali recounted others who were also targets of racism. He mentioned too how girls seemed most especially vulnerable: "They got it a lot. I remember crystal clear. One day when one of the girls, she was bawling her eyes out in the washroom. My sister told me, so I told her to come out. Basically, they tried to take her hijab off of her head in school" (Ali, 2017). Ali neither described who these assailants were or what he did next. Yet this begs the question were these young women easier targets? Were they unable to stand up for themselves in the same way as the young men? For some reason, their supportive peer group could not fend off perpetrators in the same way as the others had described. This seems to be cause for further study and most certainly cause for greater concern.

Stereotyping

Yakub felt that others were judging him based on the group he hung out with: "I would be talked to a certain way. You know, talking to you with attitude. So I'll get the treatment that's not really warranted. Especially when I'm in a group. So if I'm sitting with a lot of rowdy people, basically I am the group. And I didn't like that. I noticed that a lot" (Yakub, 2017). Yakub felt that people had not recognized the individual amongst the peer group. The same belittling would be used towards both him and his peers. This was commonplace practice.

Yakub surmised that this mistreatment was directed towards Yakub and his friends because they

were black and spoke Arabic together. Some were louder and a little more boisterous. Yet the

belittlement was directed towards the entire group.

Self-doubting

The other two participants, Lily and Sarah, were hesitant to call their experiences

discrimination. Yet neither one definitively said they had never experienced it. It was more their

reflections of themselves and how they handled what they perceived to be discriminatory

situations that predicated their answers.

Lily doubted the discriminatory acts; she thought that it was more due to self-

consciousness that she felt rather than a mistreatment towards her. She described her self-

consciousness within her school setting, particularly when she moved out of her EAL classes.

She contemplated: "I think if I did, it was more in my head, because we have a lot of newcomers

in that school and it's always scary to be in a regular program and you don't speak English so

well and you can't follow the conversation. So we would feel inferior somewhat, but maybe it's

just in your head. Because they don't explicitly laugh at you when you talk" (Lily, 2017). Here

Lily still felt an ineptitude, an inferiority as she compared herself to her peers. Even though she

chose not to see this as discrimination, and she, in fact, blamed herself for feeling this insecurity,

one must question a classroom culture that brings one to feel this way. Why did she feel that she

did not belong? Why did she feel that she could not speak confidently? This may not have been

solely an issue that was "in her head," but very much a prevailing sentiment within the

classroom.

Sarah too stressed the difficulty she had with the question. She did not trust her own

instinct. She "doubted" herself when it came to answering the question: "Sometimes just

because you feel it, doesn't mean it's there . . . I try not to be one of those people who scream

racism on every little thing. . . . if I think long and hard about it, it probably wasn't. And if it

was, I choose not to think it was (laughing)! Today. Tomorrow I might change my mind"

(Sarah, 2017). Sarah drew upon the notion of sentimentality and brought up an intriguing point.

If one simply feels that either a comment or act is racist, is it not racist? To me, as a white,

middle class woman, I cannot pretend to know what it is like to be within a racial minority. It is

disturbing to me that Sarah has to almost censor herself. She has to worry about "screaming

racism" *too* often; as a consequence, she may not be believed or taken seriously. These comment

indicate that racism continues to be alive and well.

 One reason why Sarah may be hesitant to call out discriminatory acts is because she does

not want to live her life fueled by negativity:

 There will be so many people that will say things without thinking about it that you're

 always going to be so angry. And I had my share of it, and I was not a happy woman.

 But the minute I decided I would drop it and try to think critically about everything, try to

 understand where they were coming from and just really think if this was meant to be

 racist, just because this is somebody different that said it. (Sarah, 2017)

Sarah's positivity reigned through in this statement. She chose to believe in people's best

intentions; no deliberate harm was meant towards her. She chose this mindset in order to remain

positive, because had she chosen the alternative, she would live angrily. She chose not to live

her life this way.

 I, on the other hand, must call into question a system that continually perpetuates

discrimination. These participants had to find strategies amongst themselves in order to

overcome adversity. They had to look beyond the name-calling, even to the point of

appropriating derogatory terms. They had to defend themselves both verbally and physically.

They had to overlook stereotyping. They were riddled with self-doubt. A sense of equity, of

fairness, was not here.

Newcomer Programming: to Shelter or to Pullout?

Thoughts from within the shelter

All nine participants were placed in sheltered EAL programs at some point in their time

in schools. Yet as Garver and Noguera (2015) had found, sheltered programs can create a

segregated effect on a school environment. In their study, 40% of newcomers in one U.S. school

did not feel safe in their sheltered environment. I asked these participants if this segregated

effect was a concern for them. Anne Kristine responded: "I think those people that were born

here, they would get used to [having newcomers within a class], but at the time, it would have a

negative effect on the newcomers, because, for me, the EAL classes really prepared me for the

real world" (Anne Kristine, 2017). For Anne Kristine, these EAL classes were her literal shelter,

but at the same time, they provided a space for her to prepare to step away and move on.

Gucci, Lily, Nica, and Than all explained that sheltered classes allowed them to make

friends more easily. Than's story is intriguing because up until junior high, he had only been

pulled out to receive additional support. Once he was placed in the sheltered EAL class, he felt

the positive impact: "Oh my goodness. In every way. You know like being surrounded by other

people from other country. Them having broken English, just like me. It was like, thank

goodness! They're not trying to be all high up, you know? We can be equal, you know" (Than,

2017)? Within this EAL shelter, Than felt that he had found a sense of equality. His peers

represented his equals and his environment provided him with relief.

Than even admitted that he did not want to leave the security of the sheltered program.

Twice his teachers advised him to move into regular programs. His grade 8 teacher suggested

that, when he started in grade 9 in the high school he should move over to mainstream classes.

Than tried that for a short time, but then he explained that he did not like them, so he went to his

high school guidance counselor and changed his entire timetable to remain within the EAL

sheltered program. It is interesting to note that Than took it upon himself to advocate for his

own education. Perhaps this was because he had experienced both systems, of pullouts and

sheltered that he knew where he felt most comfortable. This was despite any adult's

recommendation to the contrary. Than knew what was best for him.

Thoughts on Pullouts

When asked what kind of programming these nine participants received, it was only

Than, while in elementary school, who received pull-out support. All of the participants in my

study were in sheltered EAL programs at some point within their schooling. This means that

they were in classes with other students who were newcomers.

Since Than was the only one who had experienced pull-out supports, I asked him if he

remembered how he felt when he had been pulled out of class to receive additional support:

> I think this was only happening in grade 6, because in grade 5, there was nothing like
>
> that. So I guess I was pulled out, going to see [the EAL teacher], but I wasn't the only
>
> one going to see her. There was also other students as well, newcomers. And we all
>
> went together. I really enjoyed that. I would rather stay at her room more than stay with
>
> all those other people not knowing what is going on. (Than, 2017)

Than remembered what it was like when he received no support, and he recalled not liking that.

Yet he also pointed out that he was not alone in being pulled out. There were others with him.

In that way, a form of shelter was created. He even expressed his preference to stay within that

EAL room rather than return to his class with his age-appropriate peers, where he felt lost.

Sarah and Yakub were the only two participants who stated that a pull-out program

option may be necessary in certain instances. Yakub had never experienced being pulled out

from class, but he pointed out, as had Than, that sitting in class and not understanding anything

was not really helping the student. Yakub, therefore, did understand why pullouts were

sometimes necessary. However, when I asked if he felt that these pullouts are degrading in some

way, he responded: "I'm pretty sure it is. I mean, you're gonna be in the class, well I don't know

how close you'll be with your classmates, but it'll be obvious that you're not getting what is

being taught. But, yeah, the talk will start. You will be known as the kid who's pulled out of

regular class because you can't keep up" (Yakub, 2017). Yakub pointed out both the attention

and the isolation that the student would experience from their classmates.   Peers' attentions

would be drawn to this student who has been singled out for not understanding. At the same

time, removing the student from the class creates immediate public isolation.

Sarah had a differing opinion on the matter. She explained that, for her, she would have

felt motivated to learn faster and push herself to achieve more quickly. Yet she did recognize

how others would not feel the same: "I think that makes people feel less. I don't know, if you're

in a class and you have to get pulled out in front of everybody then that might lower your self-

esteem. Makes you feel like you're dumb, you just don't get it. Whereas in EAL, you're all

together. You're not alone. There's other people that are feeling the way you're feeling" (Sarah,

2017). Sarah noted the camaraderie that developed within her EAL classes. For those students

who get pulled out of class, Sarah notes that sense of camaraderie diminishes and a sense of

hierarchy develops.

Of the six remaining participants, none would have wanted to be pulled out of class to

receive additional support. Both Anne Kristine and Lily worried about the class assignments that

would be missed when the student was pulled out. Gucci called it "an embarrassment." Ali was

bluntest in his response: "Look, with all due respect. It's stupid. It's embarrassing. It is

shooting the student down on so many levels. Why put the student in class to begin with just to

embarrass him and take him out in front of all of the other students" (Gucci, 2017)?

Since none truly supported the idea of the pullout, they were asked what the alternative

would be. All nine participants supported the sheltered EAL classroom model, at least for

newcomers' initial programming. Therefore, they did see a need for additional supports that

offered newcomers a sense of equity. After that initial period, however, they had some

stipulations.

Advice for Students

When these participants were asked to provide advice to newcomers who were entering

Manitoba's high school education systems, two themes prevailed: find strength within a group,

and find strength from within oneself. This advice was disconcerting. I will first consider their

need to find strength within a group, which implies that there is danger without. It implies a

need to fit in rather than be singled out. Finding strength within a group comes from finding

friends, according to Anne Kristine, Gucci, and Nica. They encouraged newcomers to find

friends not only within their classes but also within the community. They encouraged

newcomers to volunteer and engage in conversations with native English speakers.

Group Strength. All participants found a sense of strength within their EAL classes.

They encouraged newcomers to attend EAL classes, at least when they first arrive. These would

be safe spaces to find friends, to find comfort. As Than described it, "Go to EAL class. Attend

EAL class, that's for sure! Because that's where I felt most at home, most at peace. Because

since everyone is similar, especially understanding, especially the teacher." Than felt most felt

assured within the EAL classes. Both his peers and his teachers provided him with the supportive

environment he needed to achieve his goals. These participants' views emphasize the need for

more EAL support programs, but it is also disconcerting that they could not find that same level

of comfort within their mainstream classes. Once again, that feeling of equality diminished as

these participants expressed their discomfort within their other classes.

> **Individual Strength.** These participants also referred to an aspect of individual strength

that was required in order for them to pursue their goals. Kasim urged newcomers to ignore

prejudicial slurs and focus attention on studies: "Don't feel different. Don't feel offended, like,

'oh, they talk about me. Just focus on school" (Kasim, 2017). Perturbing was Kasim's advice to

"not feel different," for it seemingly contradicts researchers such as Cummins and Early (2011)

and Cummins (2016) who encourage educators to foster an environment for youth that accesses,

activates, and acknowledges individual identity and intercultural education. These researchers

endorse projects such as identity texts (Cummins and Early, 2011) where students celebrate their

differences and their multilingual capabilities. Yet here Kasim encouraged others to "not feel

different." There is no doubt, being "different" is hard. Discrimination feeds on difference. The

latter half of his advice is also telling: "Focus on school," as though he is implying that the

school setting is no place for the individual, no place to honour differences. His advice would

seem to contradict Cummins and Early (2011). I must therefore consider where Kasim comes

from. He is from a place of survival. Losing a family member, moving for fear of the family's

safety, starting over again in a new country where he did not know the language. Kasim knows

what it takes to survive. When he was trying to find a sense of place, his coping strategy was to

try to fit in. Therefore, in theory, celebrating difference is a beautiful notion. In reality, it is

merely a notion.

Anne Kristine also alluded to negativity, but these were toward the self-doubt that

plagues newcomers. She advised: "Do not think that, being a non-native speaker, don't take that

negativity because you will improve over time" (Anne Kristine, 2017). She calls upon

newcomers to be patient, to believe in themselves and trust that their English will improve.

Nica's advice was telling as well. This new reality newcomers face is very much out of

their control. This is certainly the case for teenagers whose decisions to leave their home

country were never their own. One cannot expect life to be the same: "Just don't compare.

Expect new things. Expect you will be doing very different things, so don't compare and don't

expect things will be the same" (Nica, 2017). Seemingly natural is this need to compare and

contrast life how it was to how it is. Yet to Nica, there is no comparison. If one were to continue

to fixate on these differences, it would limit one's ability to move forward with the new life in

front of them. Also worrisome in this sentiment is the possibility of lost identity. By looking

forward, will these newcomers forget to look back to remember who they were, where they came

from?

Last was Sarah's "tough love." She warned newcomers of not relying on the system and

using it as "a crutch," which prevents them from moving forward: "When I was here for one year

I had no choice but to speak English. Support is good. Too much support is not good" (Sarah,

2017).

Advice for the School System

Of the nine participants, only Sarah seemed to think that the school system was doing

enough to support newcomers. The rest all had suggestions.

Diversify staffing. All eight remaining participants felt that the schools they attended did not reflect the diverse student population. For Gucci, she explained how the lack of diversity amongst staff could cause a barrier between staff and students: "It would be nice if the school staff was more diverse. Their [students] will be more open to ask questions with the staff and it will be easier to communicate." When Gucci had first arrived, she felt so shy. She tended to lean on the teachers who were Filipino for support. She felt more comfortable asking them questions. This cultural connection allowed her to gain confidence and an understanding of the system she was in.

Add EAL teachers. Schools needed to have more specialized EAL teachers, according to Nica. She had said that typically there were "only a couple" of EAL teachers at her school and more were required in order to support all newcomers. Anne Kristine suggested more professional development so teachers could be better informed about newcomers' needs. Kasim also referred to a form of professional development pointing out that if staff were more diverse and reflected the student body better, these staff members would be able to share their experiences with their colleagues, open up dialogue and these collegial conversations would keep staff better informed.

It was also suggested that classroom teachers needed to acknowledge students' cultural backgrounds. Anne Kristine offered a variety of suggestions to teachers: "Always try to incorporate students' cultures within the classroom. Be multicultural. Put up a world map, put up different languages of each of your students. Based on my experience, when I saw something Filipino in the classroom, I felt comfortable because you see something that is familiar. You have a sense of belonging" (Anne Kristine, 2017). Perhaps if more educators were able to

construct a multicultural, multilingual classroom space, the need to fit-in, as Kasim had

expressed, would dissipate. Students would feel as though they already belonged.

Add more interpreters. These eight participants expressed the need for more

interpreters. Even Sarah had stated that interpreters are helpful in the first month of the

adjustment period. As discussed earlier, these participants stated that there was a heavy reliance

on peers to act as interpreters and support each other. However, if school systems had more

interpreters accessible, perhaps the need to rely on peers would dissipate, especially when it

came to making sense of the school system. Just as Gucci had pointed out that classroom

teachers who reflected her cultural background brought her more comfort, Yakub too had the

same sentiment toward interpreters. If there were interpreters within EAL classes, for instance,

they would be able to build stronger relationships with these newcomer students, as Yakub had

pointed out.

Connect with the community. Whether or not staff reflected the student population, Ali

clarified that schools needed to make a greater effort to bring in speakers who have had similar

experiences as the students. Ali suggested having former students return to classrooms and speak

to classes, providing them with motivation to continue their studies: "You just gotta have

someone from their culture, their community. Trust me, it is really helpful. It makes a lot of

difference" (Ali, 2017). Ali is pointing out the importance of representation, of role models that

students can relate to and look up to. Ali talks of his experience going into schools. He

described this moment where students felt so comfortable opening up to him:

> [A teacher] invited me because she had a lot of Syrian kids in her class. She invited me
>
> because I lived in Syria, I know what it is. I went to school in Syria. And I talked and
>
> you get that reaction from them. You can tell. And the questions from them. Right and

left. . . . And on and on. And that's when we started talking about it. 'Well you can drop

off, and end up being in gangs,' and giving them basically put everything on the table.

Be straight up. Tell them what's their options. And tell them there's a lot of people will

come offer you and drag you into gangs and drugs and all that. End up in jail. Probably

deported. Or you can learn from your mistakes and move on. (Ali, 2017)

The students had so many questions for Ali. Some the questions, teachers could have probably

answered, but once these students knew that Ali shared similar experiences, shared a similar

story, these students sensed a kinship and felt freer to ask for his guidance: "There's a lot of

information that [teachers] didn't know. They don't know exactly what the students have been

through" (Ali, 2017).

This is where I, as a classroom teacher, must acknowledge my own limitations. I do not

know what it is like to come from a war-torn country, to be displaced, to have to leave my home.

Sadly, many people do have this depth of understanding. They can connect, they can relate to

these students in ways that I cannot. Yet rather than ignore these limitations, I must accept them

and to seek others who can offer these supports. This would therefore inform my work as I seek

to advocate for and with my students both within and beyond the classroom. I need not be the

resource, but it is my job to find it. By opening the classroom door to those who can share their

cultural backgrounds, histories, stories, travesties, I can assist in the creation of a classroom

culture fostered upon empowerment.

The Implementation of the E

In this next section, I draw attention to the implementation of the E credit at the high

school level here in Manitoba. As previously mentioned, researchers from other provinces such

as Ontario and British Columbia (Guo & Mohan, 2008; Kim & Jang, 2009; Han & Chang, 2011

Gariapy, 2013) have examined EAL courses and the complexities surrounding credit

accreditations. A critical examination of the E credit here in Manitoba is similarly warranted.

All nine of the participants within my study had been issued, at one point or another, an E credit

in one of more of their courses. Two of the nine graduated with E accreditations. Findings

suggest that the E credit had most definitely shaped the learning environment of these youth.

During these interviews, I explicitly asked participants if the E credit had been clearly explained

to them, if they were aware of its limitations, and if they supported the use of the E credit despite

these limitations. Overwhelmingly, these participants shared that the E credit was not clearly

explained. Furthermore, although all were in favour of EAL programs, and the E credit to an

extent, all stipulated, that both programs and the E credit should be considered mere starting

points. More must be done to encourage newcomers to move beyond these supportive programs

and into what they referred to as the "regular" system.

The E Credit Explained?

        All nine participants started their high school programs here in Winnipeg within the E

credit system. As previously mentioned, only Kasim and Ali remained and graduated within the

E system. The others transitioned into mainstream programming at various points. Since all

started within this system, it was my assumption that all would have received some sort of

explanation as to what it was. Yet when participants were asked if the E credit was ever

explained to them, there were mixed responses. Only two of the nine participants, Anne Kristine

and Nica, said that they were informed by both teachers and guidance counsellors and they knew

of the limitations of the E credit. Gucci did think that it was explained to her at orientation by

peers from the ambassador program. She remembered feeling too shy to ask teachers, but peers

were there to answer her questions. The others, however, did not share these similar experiences

and did not feel as informed.

Than's initial response was both humourous and the most illuminating: "Oh EAL credit,

that's what it is? (laughing). No it was never explained to me" (Than, 2017). This seems to me

most disconcerting because it was Than who had been in the system the longest, since he was

placed in 5th grade. He moved himself back into EAL programming when teachers advised

against it. This implies that when he requested to be transferred back into EAL, no one had

actually explained to him the differences between the two systems.

Than said he "just gradually figured it out" around grade 11 or 12 (Than, 2017). It was a

comment from a teacher in his 4E class who said, "if you want to go to post-secondary you need

40S" (Than, 2017). He then realized that there were more classes to take. For him, though,

since he was only 16 at the time, he ended up upgrading his course to S credits and graduating at

the same time as his same age peers, so these additional classes did not bother him to any great

extent. He had the time. Others did not.

As previously discussed, for Kasim, who only found out that he was in E credits when he

was in 4E and about to graduate, he felt misinformed to the point that he considered dropping out

of school. Kasim explained that he became frustrated with the school when, at the age of 21, he

first realized that he was in E designated courses, four years after arriving in the school. He was

in the 4E class at the time, which is the grade 12 course and offers the potential to graduate. As

he understood it, he thought that he would be done school and able to pursue further education.

However, once he realized that he would have to upgrade, he became upset:

I had no idea. No idea! Until I finished 40E. Then they said, 'You need to now take

[regular] grade 11 and if you don't want to take grade 11, you can take [mainstream]

grade 12.' I didn't know what is that. No one explained to me, these levels. So I really

struggle with it. It's like, you know how you get stressed with yourself sometimes. Like,

ugh, I just wanna quit school, you know. (Kasim, 2017)

For four years, Kasim was led to believe that he was on the right path to pursue his dreams. He

had no notion of another path, a longer path, that he would have to undergo. This realization,

especially when he was so close to graduating, led to his frustration and to the thought of giving

up.

"The Regular"

Every participant used the term "regular" to distinguish between the EAL program and

the mainstream. This term highlights the notion of a tiered system that I had referred to earlier.

Ali was not the only participant to distinguish the two programs that way. You will see, from

these participants uses of the term, that E credit programming did not lead them to feel a sense of

fairness, of equity, but rather of anger and isolation.

Ali, who did not start high school here in Winnipeg until he was 18, felt as though he was

"misled." From the beginning on the registration process, he felt misinformed. Ali reasoned that

it was probably not until midway through the second semester that he began to understand the

system. He had ended up failing his English class first semester, so he went to a guidance

counsellor to discuss it. Again, the point must be brought up that he himself sought out the

information. It was only when he finally sought counsel that he learned of the EAL system, the

system in which he was already currently in: "I didn't know what EAL means. Or 'The

Regular.' I thought school is school, like we have back home" (Ali, 2017). Ali pointed to the

logic in his thinking. How could someone who is new to an education system possibly know that

there was more than one path to graduation?

Sarah recalled the term quite clearly. She remembered it as common use and a driving

motivator for her to get out of the EAL program: "The word 'regular' sounded very appealing to

me. So I wanted to be regular, so I never really cared to ask [about EAL] because I knew that I

just wanted out. I have to be out" (Sarah, 2017)! Compared to the alternative, for Sarah, the

term "EAL" took on a derogatory tone.

So common was this usage of the term "regular" among participants that I felt the need to

refer back to the curriculum documents to see if the term "regular" was actually applied. Sure

enough, the distinction is made. While referencing the allotted percentage of EAL support, the

EAL framework document states that once the learner achieves a level proficiency at a stage 3 or

4, "this student may actually receive the regular F, S, or G designation for the course" (2011, p.7-

34).   Furthering the explanation, the document stipulates, "A student who begins a course with

an EAL designation may make rapid progress in language learning and meet the majority of the

subject-area outcomes by the end of the course. In this case, the course designation would

change to the regular one" (p.7-34). Both of these quoted phrases were bolded within the

document as well, apparently for emphasis. Yet this simply highlights the distinction between

the terms. One term overtly declares normalcy, the other implies something that it is something

irregular, less than normal. With the prevalence placed upon these two dichotomous terms, it

seems little wonder that Sarah felt the need to be "normal" or "regular"!

Time within the E credit

As was reviewed, the EAL framework document states: "EAL learners also need to

understand and express their understanding using English in all subject areas" (2011, p.1-8).

One reason for the E credit implementation was to allow EAL learners to access curriculum

content in all subjects while still working towards English language proficiency. You will recall

that Manitoba's EAL consultant, Diana Turner, had explained that the purpose of the E is, "to

allow students access to subject area courses, but they still need a place to get some solid,

systemic instruction of the [English] language" (Winnipeg School Division, 2014, p.2). Yet

many of these participants did not experience the use of the E credit used in this way. Seven

participants had transitioned out of the E credit system before graduation. All seven stated that

they remained in EAL English classes the longest. The other subjects areas they transitioned out

quickly, between one semester and two years. There could be a few reasons for this:

These participants' English proficiencies were high enough to understand concept

material without substantial adaptations. Yet if this were the case, why did they remain in E

designated English classes so long?

Another reason for these quicker transitions into the mainstream for the other subject

areas could be because teachers should have been adapting more for these students, yet they

either did not know or did not want to know how to properly adapt. If the purpose of the E credit

is meant to allow participants to access content-area material and to work to build their English

language proficiencies at the same time, then it did not serve its purpose here.

Support for EAL programming—with a catch

Despite these participants' endorsements of the EAL programs they were in, there

seemed to be one prevailing trend, something that was missing from the process of their school

integration. Seven participants reported upon a lack of information that was passed on to them

regarding the school system at large and the EAL systems they were placed in. All of these

participants pointed out a communication gap that led them to be at times confused and

frustrated with the system.

Provide clearer intake assessments. Kasim expressed his frustration that arose his very first day of school. He had no idea that he was to write an intake placement test and that this test would determine which level of English he would be placed in: "I wasn't expecting to take a test. I didn't know that was going to affect my level" (Kasim, 2017). This test caught him by surprise. He had no sense of its purpose, as though he was not privy to this information.

Yakub stated that he was given an intake placement test right away but these results were not explained to him. There was also no sense of progression. No follow-up meetings after that initial assessment to provide him with a clearer picture on where he stood. Yet another example of someone left out of his own education plan.

Lily recalled her experience with the initial intake process. She had taken English classes in Vietnam but these focused more on reading and writing. Instruction was often given in Vietnamese and it was unnecessary to speak in English. On the day of her intake assessment, Lily's strategy was just to say, "no" to everything, whether she understood what was asked of her or not. She was then placed in the literacy level class, even though she was literate in English. Perhaps, if someone was there for her that first day, someone who could interpret and explain the purpose of the assessment, she might have had more accurate intake results and been placed somewhere that was better suited to her needs.

Provide clearer explanations of the E credit and its limitations. Ali, as previously mentioned, felt "misled" about the whole process. He believed that the school needed to be much more upfront and explain to students their options upon the initial assessment: "Put everything on the table. Tell them their options. Tell them there's regular. There's EAL. Regular means this and EAL means that" (Ali, 2017).

Nica, as you may recall, was transferred into a higher EAL class during the semester and then into the mainstream English program the following semester. Even though this system was eventually explained to her, it was not explained right away. She too believed that the E credit system should be explained at the orientation, so on the student's first day of school.

Provide clearer transition plans. Nica also explained that the transition into regular programming needed to be a little smoother. EAL teachers should remember that the goal is to prepare students for regular programming. Therefore they needed to challenge students more by providing not only with receptive tasks like reading but also more productive writing tasks. Anne Kristine suggested that teachers needed to be upfront in providing clear, "constructive criticism" to their students when they returned assignments (Anne Kristine, 2017).

Provide choice. Some of these participants explained that though EAL is an essential program, newcomers have the right to either accept or refuse the support. Sarah, Yakub, and Ali all felt that students should be in EAL programs for approximately six months (one semester) and certainly no longer than two years. They all insisted that newcomers need to move on, move out in order to get ahead.

Choice within the structure of a lesson is important too, according to Anne Kristine: "Have them make the choices as well. How would you like to show what you've learned. Do you want to do a presentation, a portfolio? Give them choice. Empowerment. Empowering. Believing. It's important" (Anne Kristine, 2017). Perhaps this strategy is an important tip for any classroom teacher, whether or not they teach newcomers. However, for newcomer teenagers this does seem to be even more critical. Remember that these teens had lost much of their power to choose. They did not choose to leave loved ones behind. They did not choose to come to Canada. They may have had very little choice in school selection once they had arrived.

Therefore, within the classroom, teachers need to structure ways in which these students could

regain their sense of empowerment. With empowerment comes a belief that one can overcome,

that one can get through difficult, uncertain times. Teachers need to bring this belief into the

classroom, bring it forth to these youth who may have lost it.

Certainly, this lack of information these participants received may have been related to

the recommendation that there were neither enough interpreters nor diverse staff to support

newcomers when they arrived in schools. This would have led to either miscommunication or

simply that information that was not passed along due to the complexity of the explanation.

Another disconcerting factor could be that the school took on a form of parental role, in loco

parentis, claiming that they knew best regarding programing for these participants. Considering

that their parents would have been new to the school system as well, one could view this as a

reasonable responsibility for the school to take on. However, at what point is it the school's

responsibility to inform the newcomer community of their educational options, both

opportunities and limitations surrounding students' educational plans? At what point should the

school no longer act in loco parentis and allow students and their families to make these

informed decisions for themselves?

Research Questions Revisited

As I reflect now upon my three research questions, I see the collective experiences of

these nine individual participants emerge. In my first research question, I asked, what were the

experiences of some multilingual newcomer learners who have been through Manitoba's

education E credit system? Each participant told their own story. Yet these individual stories

led to commonalities. All came to Canada seeking a better life: safety, opportunity, prosperity.

All nine participants had been placed within EAL sheltered programs at some point during their

time in Manitoba schools, more or less accepting this and finding safety and camaraderie

amongst peer groups. Yet as I examined further, I noticed that this comaraderie did not always

extend beyond the EAL classroom. Participants told of their experiences coping with

discrimination and isolation.

I then examined my research question #2: From EAL learners' perspectives, how is

Manitoba's k-12 education system catering to and validating the needs of its multilingual

learners? In many ways, the current Manitoba education is not validating the multilingual

learner. Participants reported a predominance and even preference for a monolingual, English-

only teaching and learning environment. These participants even called into question ways in

which they simply wanted to fit in with their peer groups. This would seem to contradict

researchers (Cummins, 2007; Cummins and Early, 2011; Cummins, 2012; Cummins and Persad,

2014; Garcia, 2009; Canagarajah, 2011) who advocate for the celebration and acknowledgement

of multilingual modes of instruction.

Finally, my research question #3 considers how the implementation of the E credit at the

high school level has shaped the learning environment for newcomers. Here I found that most

participants were not informed of the implications of the E credit until much later in their high

school years. Than had even asked during the interview, "Oh EAL credit, that's what it is"

(Than, 2017)? Kasim and Ali, the two who had graduated with the E credit and had to return to

upgrade were not informed until their grade 12 year within EAL that they required further study

in order to continue into university or college. This lack of information and the limitation of the

E credit is deeply disconcerting when one considers that these participants' reasons for coming to

Canada were to seek more opportunity. In these cases, they had been told that their opportunities

were limited.

Equity vs Equality

All in all, when I view these participants' experiences under the lens of social justice, I must ask, is the E credit equitable, is it fair? In some ways, it does offer opportunity that may not have presented itself otherwise. As Kasim pointed out, he received 26 credits under the E credit system: "If I didn't have my 26 credits, I wouldn't be graduating" (Kasim, 2017). He questioned whether he would have gotten through the school system without being able to access those credits. In that way, I see the E credit as equitable. However, what these participants wanted was equality. They wanted to be treated the same as any other student. They wanted the same opportunities as others. They wanted to be "regular." In fact, none of these participants thought that one should be able to graduate with E credits due to its limiting opportunities. It would seem, then, that Manitoba's education system continued to be plagued by irregularities, inequalities, and inequities.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

As I reflect upon these nine conversations these young adults shared with me, I am awed

by their lived experiences, I am inspired by their courageous efforts to overcome adversity and

start over again and again. Furthermore, I am truly grateful that they were willing to share their

opinions and insights so candidly with me. The recommendations that follow are based on these

participants' experiences. With these nine people in mind and with the hopes that the Manitoba

Education system considers these recommendations, I seek improvements to the system, I seek

more support for newcomers, and I seek change.

 Recommendations

Better Assessments. Many of these participants felt a lack of clarity and transparency

not only within the intake assessment process but also as they progressed through their

schooling. Habitual progress meetings between the teacher and student need to be established as

part of students' ongoing learning plans. If students had a better sense of where they were and

where they needed to go, perhaps they would not feel so lost within the system. Perhaps the

feelings of failure that some of these participants reported upon (Kasim, 2017; Ali, 2017; Yakub,

2017) would dissipate. Once schools provide that information, then it is up to the student to

choose what to do with it.

Building Connections. Ali's recounted experience of returning to classrooms and

speaking with students suggests a lack of diversity within the educational staff at his former

school. The educators in this situation were unable to reach their students in a way that he and

other newcomers can. This finding would be on par with researchers Schmidt and Block

(Schmidt and Block, 2010; Schmidt 2010; 2016) who found that Manitoba's divisional hiring

policies do not stem far enough to support the hiring of internationally educated teachers. If

these policies truly supported diversity and policy makers truly abided by them, then perhaps

these students would have found kinships with more of their teachers as well.

Recommendations for further study

      Diversify staffing. As was presented, these participants relied on both adults and peers

for support. Yet support came from people who had similar experiences as these newcomers.

Divisions need to re-examine their hiring policies and their affirmative action practices support

the promotion of a diverse staff, a staff that is reflective of the student population. Researchers

need to continue to examine this issue. Quantitative studies that compare student demographics

to staff demographics could lead to some interesting findings. Qualitative studies that continue

to ask participants about hiring processes and job qualifications would also shed light on this

area of research. A more critical examination of intercultural support workers would be an

important finding as well. Questions surrounding how many support workers divisions hire,

where are these support workers are located, what is their work load? These would all be

questions I would like answered.

      Remember the adolescent newcomer. In the field of second language acquisition, there

are many studies that focus on youth at the initial development ages at the elementary school

ages. There are also studies that focus on the acquisition of language and the adult learner. The

adolescent newcomer, it would seem, is overlooked somewhat in the body of research. The

adolescent phase of development, the gravitation towards peers, the insecurities that are

heightened at adolescent stages, these could all be variables that affect language acquisition. A

greater examination of this area could produce intriguing findings.

Reconsider the pullout. Overwhelmingly, these participants did not support pullout

methods of school instruction. I would suggest that research on a larger scale could be

beneficial. A larger sample size along with both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews

from both current and past EAL students could provide incentive for greater action for change in

this area of newcomer programming. These findings could be provided to school divisions as

they decide upon how they wish to structure their EAL support.

Reprimands for discrimination. These participants continued to be plagued by

discriminatory acts. Whether they heard comments in passing or they were direct targets of

violent acts, all of these participants grappled with how to react and how to protect themselves

from these acts. Manitoba researchers and school divisions need to continue to examine school

divisions' zero tolerance policies, their effectiveness and alternative mediation strategies. At the

forefront would be a specific focus on discrimination facing newcomer adolescents. More

qualitative studies, voices from newcomers, need to be heard. Focus groups need to be created

and include a variety of stakeholders such as teachers, community support workers,

neighbourhood tax payers, students. All must take part to bring forth the level of discrimination

that continues to affect the communities at large.

Quantify the E. In Manitoba, we still do not know how many students are graduating

with E credits. Quantitative, longitudinal research is required to track percentages of fall-outs,

dropouts, and disappearances, starting from the beginning of high school (grade 9) to grade 12.

Re-evaluate the E. There continues to be a sense of mystery surrounding the E credit.

More qualitative studies with administrators, support staff, even EAL teachers themselves, along

with former students, their parents and community support workers could point to the

misunderstandings surrounding the E designation. With a larger sample size, one could get a

clearer picture as to whether or not there is even support for an E credit designation. For if the community is not in support of it, more questions will need to be asked.

As was noted, many of these participants did not believe that one should be able to graduate with E credit designation. This then comes back to the issue of equality, not equity. Ultimately, these participants wanted the same opportunities as their peers. They knew and supported the need for help in the beginning, when they first arrived, but they also all wanted a transition plan. They wanted out of EAL classes in order to pursue further education and more employment opportunities.

Re-imagined E. When I first started this research, I had (naively) assumed that the participants within this study would have views that aligned more so with researchers such as Cummins, or Canagarajah, or Garcia who believe that there is a rightful place for multiple languages within a classroom. Yet these participants' aversion to multilingual practices, their endorsements of monolingual policies has shown that they fundamentally did not support these researchers' notions.

However, I wonder, as Garcia (2009) had, if these participants, as other students, have simply never been taught another way and cannot even fathom that there would be another way to learn. The act of translanguaging had not been used as a teaching tool, the use of the "swear jar" that enforced English-only in the bilingual country of the Philippines, these had been messages that these students had received.

Coming from a French immersion school system, I see other possibilities. Slowly, opportunities to learn languages other than French and English are emerging in Manitoba's school systems. Currently, students are able to attend Ukrainian, Hebrew, Cree, Ojibwe, and Spanish immersion programs. One school division in Winnipeg has begun discussions on a

Tagalog immersion program, but, at the time of this dissertation, is awaiting to ensure there is

enough public interest before pursuing the possibility. I wonder if more bilingual and immersion

programs, in a plethora of languages, were offered, could lead to positive changes. Inevitably,

the hiring of diverse staff would increase, there would be a validation and accreditation of any

language, not simply a hierarchy of languages that preside over others. Perhaps the prevalence

of discrimination would dissipate if the value for any language were to increase. Perhaps, there

would also be no need for the E credit.

If students were able to attend school in their first languages and have English offered to

them as the additional language, if students could receive dual diplomas in the languages of their

choosing, then there would be no need to create a tiered system of "regular" and "irregular"

students. All languages, all persons would simply be equal.

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Appendix A:
Letter of Consent
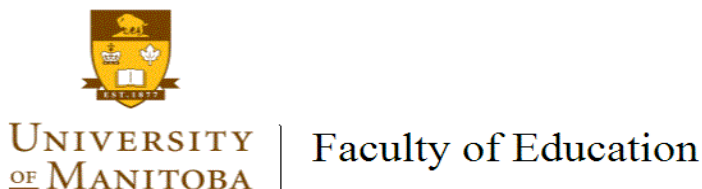
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Research Project Title:
Found: Former Students' Experiences in Mantioba's EAL Programs
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Sandra.Kouritzin@umanitoba.ca

Human Ethics Coordinator:
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose and Background:

The purpose of this study is to uncover experiences and beliefs about supports for newcomers within Manitoba's k-12 education system. I would like to invite you to participate. You, along with other participants who were formerly receiving English language support within Manitoba high schools, will be asked to share your experiences and perspectives on supports available for newcomers at the high school levels within Manitoba. This interview is part of my thesis research. I ask your permission to retain your contact information should I wish to contact you again in future for further research.

Procedures:

You have been invited to participate in this interview because you had earned EAL credits in Manitoba's high school education system. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts in an interview, through a series of questions. I will provide you with the questions prior to the interview. I will audio record and take notes during this interview. Do not answer any questions you are uncomfortable answering. This interview will take approximately one hour to complete. We will arrange a date, time, and location that works for you, before November 2017.

After the interview, I will email you a copy of the transcript and you will have one week to add, delete and make any changes you deem necessary.

Risks:

Participating in this study poses a minimal risk. Your interview will remain confidential. I will ensure this in the followings ways:

- Your name and contact information will only exist on the signed informed consent materials and stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home.
- Your name will not be recorded in transcription and any identifying information will not be reported during any presentation or report. I will refer and quote you as your pseudonym, which I will assign to you throughout the course of this research.
- At the end of the research study, by December 2021, all of the notes and voice recording of the interview will be destroyed.

There is a minimal risk to your confidentiality. If, at any point, you do not wish to respond, or you would like me to remove your response, simply let me know and I will follow your request.

At any point, whether it is before, during, or after this interview, you have the right to withdraw from this study, without negative consequence. Please email me if ever you have any questions or concerns. I will withdraw any statements you are uncomfortable sharing. If you would like to withdraw from this study, please email me and I will honour your request.

Benefits:
Through this interview, you will be able to share your experiences and express your insights and beliefs about supports for newcomers within Manitoba's k-12 education system. Your reflections could potentially inform the need for equity and social justice in the fields of research and practice of EAL education.

Disclosure:
I must remind you that that should you disclose any kind of abuse of children or persons in care in the course of this study, current laws require that certain offenses against children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities. I am bound to report these disclosures.

Compensation:
You have the chance to express your insights and beliefs about supports for newcomers within Manitoba's k-12 education system. Your reflections and views could potentially influence the need for social justice in the fields of research and practice of EAL education. Your insights are valuable, yet you will receive no remuneration for participating in this study.

Debriefing:
After the interview, I will stop recording, and we can discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding the study and questions. I will email you the interview's transcript and you may have one week to review its content and add, delete, change anything you wish.

Dissemination:
This interview is part of my Master of Education thesis research. I will be submitting my interview transcripts, field notes, and analytic memos to my thesis advisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin. I will also make these notes available to my thesis committee, if they choose. My findings could also be shared in presentations and publications. Findings from this study will be included within my thesis publication. I will also be sending a Final Report to the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board. I may also use this research as part of later studies. All of the data pertaining to this study, including your confidential information, will be shredded by December 2021.

Consent:

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus: Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____   Date _____

Would you like a copy of the Final Report, which I will be submitting to the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board?

(Please circle:)   YES   NO

If yes, which format would you prefer? Please circle and provide contact information:

Post: ADDRESS: _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

           Email: _____