

**WHEN EAL AND SNE HOOK UP:  
AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MANITOBA CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS**

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
The University of Manitoba  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER of EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

This thesis represents a journey: after many years of teaching both in Canada and overseas, I found myself working with students who were learning English and had profound intellectual disabilities, but had no idea how to teach them. This thesis, therefore, follows my path of exploration and discovery as I looked for ways to support these students' learning. In chapter one, I provide an introduction to my study where I present an overview of the problem, discuss the confusion surrounding the meaning of various kinds of disabilities, consider several normative definitions of EAL (English as an Additional Language) and SNE (Special Needs Education), and provide my own stipulative definitions of EAL/SNE. I also state my research questions and purpose for conducting the study, illustrate the significance of the study, and acknowledge its limitations. In chapter two, I examine the strengths and weaknesses of the research literature and end with five principles that flow from my reading of the research. In chapter three, I explain my means of analysis, where I critically examine three Manitoba curriculum EAL documents and three Student Services/Special education resource documents. In chapter four, I summarize the six curricular documents (three in the area of SNE and three in the area of EAL) and criticize each one, determining its uses and relevance to students with EAL/SNE needs and how appropriate and helpful these documents are for classroom teachers who work with these students. Finally, in Chapter five, I discuss the implications of my study of these documents and suggest future needs in the areas of research, policy, and teaching in the area of SNE/EAL.

## Acknowledgements

There are many people that I would like to acknowledge at this time: First, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, for her assistance and support along the way. Sandie persuaded me to go against the grain and do work about which I felt passionate.

I would also like to thank Dr. Dorothy Young, for her time and dedication to me. Dorothy gave me many suggestions, comments, corrections, and support during this journey. She has been a mentor and a friend.

Next, I would like to thank Dr. Rodney Clifton, who has met with me on a regular basis to read, edit and provide me with countless hours of his assistance (in actuality, his blood, sweat, and tears) over the past few years. Rod has gone over and above anything I could have asked for and has shown me so much dedication, patience, and support. And when I felt like giving up, he would always push me forward.

I would like to thank Dr. Clea Schmidt, for it was in her course that I discovered this topic and was inspired to explore the world of EAL and SNE.

I would also like to thank Dr. Yi Li, for her assistance during the first part of my Master's coursework, where she taught me to be patient and that when I found the right my topic and methodology, that I would know it.

I would like to thank my colleagues, students, and their families at St. Amant. In working with all of you, I learned a tremendous amount and am grateful for the opportunity. I especially thank K, L, and M for inspiring me to explore EAL/SNE in order to better support your educational programming.

I would like to thank my friends: you put up with me over the past few years, while always listening, supporting, and loving me.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: Thank you Mom for sharing your insights with me and encouraging me; thanks Sheryl for asking about my research even though it is in an unfamiliar domain for you; thanks Dawne for your wisdom about education; thanks Auntie Barbara and Uncle Dave for being my cheerleaders; and a special thank you to Brad for cooking meals, cleaning the house, letting me hog our home office, and, in general, being the most wonderful husband ever.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, Calvin Sydney Alexander Kirwan (February 8, 1933 –September 11, 2014); he was a consummate writer and an excellent editor. Since I was in grade five, he read every composition, essay, and term paper I wrote (until this thesis). Over the years, he corrected my spelling and grammatical errors, taught me how to revise and edit my written work and showed me that writing is a thoughtful process that requires time, effort, energy, and determination: it is never truly done. I love you Daddy and so appreciate all of your efforts.

## Glossary of Terms

**ABI-** Acquired Brain Injury

**AEP-** Adapted Education Plan and Appropriate Educational Programming

**ARND-**Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders

**ASD-** Autism Spectrum Disorder

**BICS-**Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

**CALP-**Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

**CLB-**Canadian Language Benchmarks

**DD-**Developmental Disability

**EA-**Educational Assistant

**EAL-**English as an Additional Language

**EFL-**English as a Foreign Language

**ELL-** English Language Learner

**ELL/D-** English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities

**ESL-** English as a Second Language

**FASD-** Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

**FIPPA-** Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

**GARS-**Gilliam Autism Rating Scale

**GDD-** Global Developmental Delay

**IAP-**Individualized Assessment Plan

**ID-** Intellectual Disability

**I/DD-** Intellectual and/or Developmental Disability

**IEP-**Individualized Educational Plan

**IPSA-** Individualized Programming in Specialized Adapted Setting

**ISEP-** Integrated Special Education Program

**LAL-** Literacy, Academics, and Language

**LD-** Learning Disability

**MEAL-** Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning

**MR-** Mental Retardation

**PC-** Politically Correct or Political Correctness

**PDD-** Pervasive Developmental Disorder

**PHIA-** The Personal Health Information Act

**POs-** Performance Objectives

**PPVT-III-** Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

**PSA-** The Public Schools Act

**SIB-R-** Scales of Independent Behaviour

**SDD-** Specific Developmental Disorder

**SNE-** Special Needs Education

**SSOs-** Student-Specific Outcomes

**TBI-** Traumatic Brain Injury

**TPR-** Total Physical Response

**URIS-** Unified Referral and Intake System

**VABS-** Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales

**WISC – IV-** Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

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## Preface

*A few years ago, there was an eight year-old boy named Billy who lived on a First Nations' reserve in northern Manitoba. Now Billy loved being outside; he loved hunting and fishing with his nimosóm [grandpa]; he loved the thrill of snowmobiling so fast with his nóhtáwiw [dad]; and he loved playing outside for hours with his ociwâmihtowin [cousins]. Billy loved building forts out of branches and snow; he loved running and jumping and being mischievous; he loved playing war; and he loved playing cops and robbers. But Billy's favourite activity of all was riding on the tire swings with his ociwâmihtowin. He loved the dizzying motion when his nimis [older sister] spun the tire around and around and twisted the tire swing as high up as possible and let it unravel. And now that he was eight, Billy was happy that he knew how to spin by himself on the tire. He was proud of this accomplishment. It had taken him months of trying in order to master this skill.*

*One cold winter evening, things were kind of chaotic in Billy's house. His parents weren't home; they were out at the rec centre playing bingo. His older sister was partying in the living room with her friends, smoking and drinking and watching music videos on TV. Things were pretty loud so Billy escaped and went outside, walking across the lake to the school playground. Billy went over to the tire swing and it was free, there was nobody playing and there were only a couple of adults in sight, smoking outside the rec centre, so he hopped on and started swinging, first back and forth then around and around then he decided to spin, swinging higher and higher and higher. He let the chains unravel when something terrible happened... his scarf became entangled with the swing chain and started to choke him. But Billy was alone; he couldn't make a sound and he couldn't breathe and so the tire spun around and around, tangling itself up and then*

*unraveling over and over until it finally stopped. By that point, however, Billy had stopped breathing and finally fell over, unconscious.*

*Awhile later, somebody came outside of the recreation centre and found him, lying on the ground and not breathing. The man who found him was his nohchawis [uncle]. He tried to revive Billy and finally succeeded but by that point it was almost too late. Billy had been without oxygen for a few crucial minutes and had severe brain damage. But Billy was lucky, his uncle carried him to the nursing station once he was breathing and the nurse took over. She was able to keep him breathing and he was evacuated by airplane to Winnipeg.*

*After months of being at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, Billy was moved to a residential ward at River Road Place, St.Amant<sup>1</sup>. And he started going to St.Amant School. Although he would sometimes smile, Billy kept his eyes closed most of the time, and seemed to be sleeping. Billy now had to be in a wheelchair. He couldn't move his arms or legs without help. He had to have a special diet of puréed food and couldn't swallow liquids and so he was tube-fed. He couldn't speak or lift his head or walk or play or run any more. And though his caregivers and teachers tried, Billy wouldn't respond to anything or anyone. But one day, Billy's nikawiy [mom] came in to visit and she started speaking ininokisowewin [Cree] to him and Billy opened up his eyes. And she played a CD of powwow music and he smiled.*

*When I heard about this, I had an 'a-ha' moment!*

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<sup>1</sup> St.Amant is written without the space between the words St. and Amant because it is a brand. I have received written permission to refer to St.Amant by name in this thesis.

## Chapter One: The Problem

I am a teacher who worked at St. Amant School for five years. St. Amant School is an independent school in Winnipeg, Manitoba, whose sole focus is to address the educational needs of students with intellectual disabilities (ID), developmental disabilities (DD), and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD). When I first started this teaching position, I knew I would be working with students with profound challenges, specifically students with severe disabilities including autism spectrum disorder, genetic conditions, difficult births, seizures in early childhood, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and substance abuse by their mothers while they were in utero, to name a few. However, what I did not expect was to be working with students who had English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs in addition to their developmental and/or cognitive disabilities.

Situations similar to Billy's as presented in the preface, are quite common in the classrooms across Manitoba and throughout Canada and the United States. For a variety of reasons, including internal migration, illness, accidents, and employment, many children from First Nations' reserves and northern communities find themselves in Winnipeg urban schools. Some of these students do not speak or understand English well or at all, and some may also have other problems such as developmental and intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and/or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). These factors, of course, impact on their education, because they require more than just English language supports or programming from resource teachers.

In addition, immigration to North America is on the rise (Migration Policy Institute, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2006). Because of this, public and private school systems in both Canada and the United States are facing the simultaneous challenge and

opportunity of a growing number of people for whom English, in most provinces, territories, and states (or French in Québec) is a second or an additional language. Furthermore, due to equitable education for all policies derived from the “No Child Left Behind” legislation in the United States and policies derived from similar legislation in Canadian provinces, such as ‘The Appropriate Education Act’ (Bill 13) in Manitoba, students with special needs or disabilities are becoming integrated into classrooms and schools within the public education systems (Public School Act, 2005). In short, because of immigration and internal migration, EAL learners are part of all classroom realities. Thus, it is not a stretch to deduce that students with both EAL and special needs exist and therefore need to be included in mainstream classrooms in Manitoba.

### **A Confusion of Definitions**

In an age of inclusion for all, it is undesirable for us to view people with disabilities as being disabled; instead, we are supposed to view them as being essentially the same as other students. This is commonly called political correctness (or PC). I oppose this notion, at least to some extent: why pretend that something like a serious disability does not exist when it is often there for all to see? I am racially mixed and have brown skin; those who feign colour-blindness when talking with me, do me a disservice in not acknowledging my colour and background. But, being part-black is not the essence of who I am; it is just part of me. Likewise, people with disabilities deserve to be recognized, but the disabilities do not--and should not--define them as people; disabilities are only part of who these people are.

In order to understand disability as a concept, one must first understand the notion of variability. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), variability “refers to how

much observations of something take on different values” (p. 118). In the natural world, objects such as trees and plants vary in a number of ways: colour, size, and the types of leaves and fruit they produce. Likewise with human beings, variability exists in dimension, such as height and weight, as well hair, eye and skin tone. As well, humans have variable intellectual functioning. Some people are highly skilled at mathematics, while others struggle to learn the basic concepts. Most of us, however, find ourselves situated somewhere in the middle. Statistics teaches us that factors such as intelligence fit into a pattern or model called the normal distribution, or the bell curve, where most of us fall into the *normal* range in the centre of the distribution, and few people fall into the *outlier* range or outer edges of this graphical representation. Therefore, in the way the bell curve is conventionally represented, students with profound disabilities are found on the farthest left-hand side of a bell curve, whereas those termed *geniuses* are found on the farthest right hand side of the bell curve (Murray, 2003, pp. 461-66). Thus, the population on which this thesis is focused are students who are generally three standard deviations from the mean or those in the first few percentiles on the left side of the distribution (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994, pp. 553-59; Murray, 2003, pp. 461-46).

Variability in humans, such as abilities and disabilities, is a complex and controversial notion. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, I have sought out universal definitions. As such, the World Health Organization (or WHO, 2013) views disabilities as:

...an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or

action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations... (para 1)

In a similar vein, according to the United Nations (UN, 2007):

...the term persons with disabilities is used to apply to *all* persons with disabilities *including* those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others... Disability Resides in the Society and not the Person (*sic*) (p. 1).

For me, the last sentence in the definition is crucial, for it asserts that disability is a socially constructed phenomenon and, therefore, various societies and cultures could possibly view those with specific disabilities differently and that at various time periods, people with disabilities may be viewed differently than they are at present. Thus, as suggested, the notion of disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of people's bodies and functions and features of the society in which they live. For the purposes of this thesis and to simplify matters, although I concede that various societies view disability differently, I will use the World Health Organization's (2013) definition of disability because it is more comprehensive.

As mentioned previously, I taught at St.Amant School, an independent school that caters to the needs of a specialized population and holds the shared belief that:

all individuals are inherently predisposed to learn and adapt to their physical, emotional and social environments.... view[ing] all students as developing persons with potential for growth and behavioural development. [St.Amant School's] learning model is based in individuality, dignity and student

responsibility, and [they] rely on [their] Best Practices in Special Education to guide the educational experience for all students (St.Amant, 2013a, paras. 1 & 2).

As a practicing resource teacher, with many years of teaching experience both in St.Amant School and public schools in Manitoba, and as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in South Korea and Japan, I recognize that disabilities may be affective, cognitive, psychomotor, and/or combinations of these (Bloom, 1956, pp. 7-8). There are many appellations used to describe the teaching of students with disabilities, including: Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Developmental Disabilities (DD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Global Developmental Delay (GDD), Intellectual and/or Developmental Disability (I/DD), Learning Disability (LD), Sensory Impairments, Mental Retardation (MR), Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), Specific Developmental Disorders (SDD), Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI), and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) to list only a few of the terms (see the Glossary for many of the terms used in the research literature). For the purposes of this thesis, I use the expression, *Special Needs Education* (or *SNE*) to include all of these terms, as well as to be more concise. From my preface to this proposal, the character of Billy has a traumatic brain injury (or TBI) as a result of his accident.

Although much of the current research uses the phrases ‘English as a Second Language’ or ‘ESL’ (Abraham, 1981; Celce-Murcia, 2001) and ‘English Language Learner’ or ‘ELL’(Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Harklau, 2000), these expressions are rather limiting and somewhat exclusionary. Many students, who are learning English, speak or understand more than one other language and thus English cannot be accurately deemed to be their second language. As well, there is

considerable controversy and indeed debate as to when one is a language learner and when one is considered to have mastered a language. In this respect, many contemporary scholars, including Kouritzin (2000) and Ellis (2004), for example, prefer the term, ‘multilingual learner’ because it recognizes the abilities of those who speak or understand more than one language. However, for the sake of clarity in this thesis I use the phrase *English as an Additional Language, EAL*, which is currently employed in the Province of Manitoba, and is the context from which I am writing. Therefore, when speaking about EAL students who are also SNE learners, I have combined these terms into *English as an Additional Language and Special Needs Education* or *EAL/SNE* and will use this term throughout the thesis. I will use this designation interchangeably (*EAL/SNE and SNE/EAL*) to ensure that neither term may be viewed as superior (or inferior).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) website (2011):

...inclusive education is based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches [their] lives. Focusing particularly on vulnerable and marginalized groups, it seeks to develop the full potential of every individual... (p. 1).

Thus, the ultimate goal of inclusive education is to end discrimination against students and foster social cohesion among all students. However, ending all forms of discrimination is impossible, or nearly so. Students may be integrated into schools, but if they receive supports such as educational assistants (EAs) or adapted curricula, these students are now being discriminated for rather than against. However, this type of discrimination is often a reasonable accommodation so that the students can function in

classrooms and schools. The notion of inclusive education is now espoused by countless educational policy makers, administrators, and teachers, as well as advocated by powerful stakeholders, including parents and politicians. Consequently, classrooms where pupils possess a myriad of learning needs have become the norm and not the exception in the province. As a result, teachers and administrators seem to be searching for effective, research-based strategies and methods with the goal of meeting the needs of these multifaceted or multiply-disabled learners. Although considerable research has been done in the areas of SNE as well as EAL, to date, the research on the co-occurrence of SNE/EAL is limited, perhaps because this is perceived to be a rather rare phenomenon.

### **Research Questions**

Prior to my job at St.Amant School, I worked for nearly two years at a private language school in South Korea and for one year at a public high school in Japan. In these jobs, I taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to students ranging in age from three years to senior citizens. As well, I spent five years teaching elementary students in the public school system in Winnipeg where inclusion or mainstreaming was the norm. In this role, I worked with students who had a variety of learning needs including EAL, SNE, behavioural challenges, learning disabilities, and giftedness. Until recently, I worked outside the public school system at an independent school that, according to its website, specializes in “provid[ing] individualized educational opportunities for children (0-22 years) with intellectual disabilities who require life-long intervention” (St.Amant, 2013b, para. 1). In my capacity at St.Amant School, I worked with students who require SNE as well as EAL supports. Therefore, working with students with SNE/EAL needs is not new to me.

Thus, for this thesis, the three research questions are:

1. What does the research literature in North America say on the convergence of EAL and SNE that is useful for teachers who teach these students?
2. What provisions do the Manitoba curriculum documents make for EAL and SNE students that are helpful for teachers?
3. In these documents, what resources are suggested to teachers, and are these resources likely to be helpful?

Accordingly, I plan to analyze and synthesize this research literature, to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of this literature, and to identify the areas that require further examination. I also plan to critically examine three Manitoba Education Student Services (SNE) and three Manitoba Education EAL curricula documents to determine how helpful these documents are for practicing teachers. In Manitoba, these are the primary documents on which teaching practices and curricula are supposed to be based. Finally, I plan to suggest future research and policy development for improving the teaching and learning of SNE/EAL students.

### **Significance of the Study**

My rationale for asking these research questions comes from my experiences as a mainstream classroom teacher, a special education teacher, and a resource teacher. Surprisingly, on being hired at St. Amant School, I had very little training in special education. However, I had worked with students with many learning disabilities and needs during my time as a regular classroom teacher, and of course, I brought the skills I had developed to my work at St. Amant School. Currently, I am employed as a resource

teacher in the River East Transcona School Division where the skills I gained from all of my previous teaching positions have come together for the benefit of my students.

At St. Amant School, there is no reliance on the Manitoba curricula documents as the foundation for its teaching programs. Instead, teachers work with a team of clinicians including Speech-Language Pathologists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Behavioural Specialists, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Medical Doctors, Nurses, Music Therapists, other Teachers, Paraprofessionals, and, of course, with the students' families in order to design and implement individualized programs that are tailored more-or-less to the needs of each student. Although there is work on goals and objectives that target a variety of educational, vocational, physical, and emotional needs, the primary purpose is to meet the students where they are, and to work towards helping them fulfill their potential for educational growth and development.

Being more of a traditionalist in my educational philosophy, I tend to look to the advice of experts, those who have worked in this field and made successful contributions to the education of SNE learners. As such, in addition to the assistance of my colleagues, both at St. Amant and in other schools, I have sought out other resources, documents, and research studies in SNE. However, in seeking out EAL/SNE articles and resources, I have found very few that have practical recommendations for teachers working with the kind of students I worked with for five years while I was a teacher at St. Amant. As such, I decided to critically examine the provincial documents with the hope that this educational field will continue to be studied in the future and that better practices will result. However, I acknowledge that this may not be possible because research and extensive documentation for such a minuscule proportion of the student population – less

than one percent, according to the Bell Curve Theory – may be deemed impractical, too costly, and may not lend itself to generalizability in educational practices. However, because of the increased advances made in medicine over the past few decades, students, such as those with SNE/EAL needs, are a reality and since medical science has kept these children alive, as educators, I believe it is our responsibility to educate them. By educate, I mean to help students gain as many life skills and as much independence as is possible. In other words, I believe these students deserve to have as much of their potential realized as is possible through the medium of school.

Finally, I wanted to write about students who are often marginalized in the public schools in Manitoba. Obviously, EAL/SNE students are often marginalized because they are such a small percentage of the population and, as a result, they must contend with many challenges that many other students do not. As such, working with the SNE/EAL students for five years has pushed me outside of my own comfort zone, and it has forced me to approach my teaching practice with much more creativity and a higher desire to learn ways of helping these students. Now, I am more inclined to try new things, to fail, and to gain awareness and understanding. In essence, I think the SNE/EAL students in St. Amant School have helped me to become a more effective and empathetic teacher.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As is the case with all research studies, there are many limitations to my study. One limitation concerns my location and time: as I write this thesis, I am in the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in 2014. Thus, I am only able to examine current research and curriculum documents and resources that are available to me at this time. The future

may hold the key to great changes in teaching these students, but I live at a time when these advances have not been discovered.

A second limitation is the type of school in which I taught. I worked at an independent school that caters to students with serious disabilities, a school which is presently outside of the Manitoba public school system; thus, this school is an independent school. However, because of my eleven years of teaching experiences in other schools, I am aware of some of the realities of mainstream classrooms in public schools in Winnipeg and recognize that many students could be educated in public school classrooms. However, for a variety of reasons some students cannot be included in public school classrooms.

A third limitation of my study is my own bias as a teacher who approaches her students with the belief that it is my job to educate and teach them; I am not simply a baby-sitter whose purpose is to keep students happy. In so doing, I know that everybody is capable of learning, even though not all students are the same nor will they be able to master every task in the same manner or to the same extent. Although I know that my students have the right to be educated, I also recognize that my challenge is to find the ways or methods of working with them so they learn to function more effectively and independently. I do not claim to be an expert in all their disabilities, nor do I claim to be someone who can work miracles; instead, I seek to facilitate their learning through hard work, creativity, and experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. Although this bias may be seen as a limitation, I also see it as a strength, for in wishing to educate all students, I believe I bring a sense of equity to my work.

A fourth limitation is that my suggestions and thoughts on the intersection of SNE and EAL are just that, my thinking and ideas for future development in the intersection of these two domains. Moreover, I approach my analysis from a conservative viewpoint. My viewpoints often challenge the contemporary literature and research, called constructivist teaching, where inclusive classrooms and integration is not to be critically questioned (Zwaagstra, Clifton, & Long, 2010, pp. 5-8). While I acknowledge that inclusion and integration is good for many and quite possibly most students, I know that in some extreme cases, some students need to be educated in special classrooms and/or special schools, schools like St. Amant.

A fifth and final limitation of my study concerns the fact that there is little empirical research on EAL/SNE learners and most of the studies are not very useful, at least for my purposes. Many of the studies on EAL and students with disabilities concern the over-placement of EAL students into special education programs, a practice that was very common until quite recently, which meant that these students were often segregated from so-called normal students (Fiedler, Chiang, Van Haren, Jorgenson, Halberg, & Boreson, 2008; Figueroa & Newsome, 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006). To my mind, the reason for this concerns the fact that it has only been very recently that students with both EAL and SNE needs have been identified, integrated into mainstream classrooms and schools, and addressed in the research literature. Perhaps this is due to the fact of the realities of inclusive education policies and mainstream classrooms at present. The literature suggests that teachers and academics are seeing such diversity in North American classrooms and are beginning to study these topics (Aird, 2000; Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Hart, 2009). One may be tempted to point to the idea of

marginalization with respect to severely SNE students, but the reality is, until very recently, many people including immigrants to North America, Aboriginal people, and others, who had children with profound disabilities, institutionalized them or kept them at home, and thus it was just not common to see these students in public school classrooms.

### **Overview of the Thesis**

In chapter one of this thesis, I provide an introduction to my study. In so doing I present an overview of the problem, discuss the confusion there seems to be with definitions of various kinds of disabilities, consider several normative definitions of EAL and SNE as well as provide my own stipulative definitions of EAL/SNE which will be used in this thesis. I also state my research questions and purpose for conducting the study, illustrate the significance of the study, and acknowledge its limitations. In chapter two, I examine the strengths and weaknesses of the research literature. In chapter three, I explain my means of analysis in critically examining six Manitoba curricular documents and resources. Chapter four summarizes the six curricular documents (three in the area of SNE and three in the area of EAL) and criticizes each one, determining its uses and relevance to students with EAL/SNE needs and how appropriate and helpful these documents are for classroom teachers who work with these students. Finally, in chapter five, I discuss the implications of my study of these documents and suggest future needs in the areas of research, policy, and teaching in the area of SNE/EAL.

## **Chapter Two: A Critical Review of the Research Literature**

A wealth of research literature on various topics concerning English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Needs Education (SNE) exists. There are journals that focus on each of these topics, but when investigating EAL/SNE as a combined topic, I found few relevant journals and even fewer studies. Moreover, much of the literature does not address these two issues in combination. Instead, all too often, the notion of special education became synonymous with learning disabilities, such as reading disabilities, behavioural difficulties, or visual impairments (Conroy, 2006; Graham & Grieshaber, 2008; Uberti, Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). For me, learning disabilities are very different from profound and/or multiple cognitive disabilities or challenges (meaning, SNE), and, as a result, articles about SNE were much harder to find. Nevertheless, I found eleven articles that addressed SNE with students for whom English is also being acquired.

Even though there is little research on EAL/SNE, the literature includes studies that have multiple stances, philosophies, and perspectives. Some authors are more conservative, where more traditional teaching ideologies and strategies are used with fixed goals, while others are more constructivist, presenting multiple viewpoints and goals that are determined on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, some of the research articles are more practical, while others are more theoretical. Most of the research literature, however, used qualitative research methods and focuses on one individual or a few students, instead of larger groups of students, from which generalizations can be made. In fact, I was unable to find any quantitative research and I found only one mixed methods study on the topic of EAL/SNE. Accordingly, my discussion of the research

literature will include the examination of the qualitative and mixed methods studies that I was able to locate.

### **The Studies**

#### **Action Research in the Classroom: Assisting a Linguistically Different Learner with Special Needs (2003)**

Schoen and Schoen's (2003) article comes from a qualitative perspective and uses action research methods. Specifically, the authors only examine one student, Andy, a fourth-grade student who has been identified as being learning disabled. Andy was originally from South Korea, and because his family now resides in the United States, he is therefore, trying to learn English. The authors open the article with a brief but informative explanation of what action research is and then they state that the article has four sections (which they call steps); this makes the research logical and comprehensible for readers. In each step, the reader is provided with multiple perspectives of what is going on. For example, the point of view of Andy's teacher, Andy's parents, and Andy himself are recounted. Insight into cultural differences between South Korea and the United States, such as the differences in eye contact in the American and Korean contexts, as well as linguistic differences, such as the lack of pronouns and articles in the Korean language, and the different sociolinguistic registers that Korean commands, are discussed (Schoen & Schoen, 2003, p. 17).

The article is easy to read: it is well organized and written in a clear, easy-to-understand way and shies away from being overly analytical. It is practical especially with the section entitled "Helpful EAL Strategies" and examples of activities and types of assessments that were used with Andy (Schoen & Schoen, 2003, pp. 19-21). These

strategies include using Total Physical Response (TPR) where students learn by doing, labeling classroom items so that students are continually exposed to English vocabulary and a print-rich environment, developing classroom routines so that students know what is coming next, and using cooperative learning techniques, such as the jigsaw teaching approach, all of which are procedures advocated by Schoen and Schoen (2003, p. 19). One particular strength of this article is that the authors used many methods of collecting data and a variety of assessment tools including: "pretest and posttest data , ...anecdotal records, journal entries and standardized test scores,...as well as sight word analysis and writing samples" (Schoen & Schoen, 2003, p. 20). This allows the authors to triangulate the data analyses and to make straightforward conclusions and suggestions. Clearly, as an educator who wants research that can be easily and realistically applied to my own teaching practices, I found this article to be quite useful.

Although Schoen and Schoen's (2003) article includes some positive attributes, it is by no means without flaws. For example, in the brief section entitled 'Andy's Reflections', the authors state:

Andy felt like he was becoming more successful in his work as well. At the end of the project, he expressed that he had learned many new things. He started to become a little more confident about his word recognition and writing skills, which was shown in his increased enthusiasm to work (Schoen & Schoen, 2003, p. 21).

For me, this quotation demonstrates a glossing over of the issues, especially since Andy's reflections are not adequately verified by the researchers. I believe that the authors have a duty to accurately report Andy's perspective in his own words. In some

ways, the analysis appears superficial since the authors fail to include multiple perspectives, such as those of Andy, his parents, his peers, or his teachers on this particular point, all of whom were included in the study. Because of the subjective nature of the qualitative report, the authors' multiple viewpoints should be acknowledged in order to eliminate as much bias as possible, while giving a more accurate portrayal of the situation and also explaining what can be done to help other students like Andy learn the curriculum. Moreover, the authors do not clearly define how to identify students who are similar to Andy; instead, they rely on the expertise and common-sense of teachers to be able to identify students who are similar. While simplicity may be a good thing, I think that Schoen and Schoen should have acknowledged the difficulty of teaching Andy and that their suggestions were shown to work with this young student. I also do not know to what extent a teacher could generalize from Andy's case to other students in his/her classroom.

**Language Difference or Learning Disability? Answers from a Linguistic Perspective (2005)**

In contrast with this action research, Case and Taylor (2005) take a more theoretical approach to the notion of SNE/EAL in their article. However, it should be noted that the common thread between these two articles is the similarities in their qualitative methods and constructivist perspectives. In this article, the authors discuss the idea that EAL/SNE students have similarities in learning languages such as problems with pronunciation, syntax, and semantics (Case & Taylor, 2005, pp.127-28). For me, the term "shared symptoms", used by Case and Taylor (2005) is a curious phrase, because it conjures up the notion of a medical model, where the students seem to be pathologized or

portrayed from a deficit perspective, which seems to be contrary to their constructivist perspective (p. 127). This is an important point that applied to my work at St. Amant where the mission statement is “Freeing the spirit, Fulfilling potential, Together” (St. Amant, 2013a, p. 1). Staff members often reminded themselves, contrary to popular opinion, that the students were not broken and, therefore, did not need to be fixed. Instead, it was our job to meet our students learning needs where they are and determine how to facilitate their gifts and talents. As a result of the similar language challenges that both EAL and SNE experience, Case and Taylor (2005) contend that EAL students are often, and erroneously, placed in SNE classes because of the inadequate training of teachers and the absence of good assessment instruments that differentiate between EAL learners and SNE students (pp. 129-30). Perhaps the authors are telling readers, albeit in a rather veiled manner, that there may be difficulties found in some students with SNE and EAL needs that cannot, or will not, be remedied by teachers and clinicians.

The section entitled “Creating a Classroom Environment that is Conducive to SLA [Second Language Acquisition]” was somewhat helpful because Case and Taylor (2005) recommend that teachers need to provide students with access to oral language, access to native cultures and languages, and access to reading material, which are, to my mind, solid teaching practices that should be used by all teachers with all students, but especially with EAL students (pp. 129-30). Although the article provides a few strategies for teachers who are new to teaching students like this, I wish they had provided more examples of how SNE/EAL students differ from other students in their academic struggles and what teachers can do about these specific challenges. As well, I would like to know more about the research beyond generalizations that are common sense. In my

opinion, the article would have been enhanced had it possessed more depth, because it only superficially addressed the practical issue of teaching students with these issues.

### **Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners With Learning Disabilities in the General Curriculum (2010)**

Like Case and Taylor (2005), Garcia and Tyler (2010) also take a theoretical approach and discuss the commonalities and misidentification of SNE/EAL learners (pp. 114-15). The authors begin with a snapshot of an American eighth-grade classroom where EAL/SNE students are enrolled in what is called a mainstream classroom (Garcia & Tyler, 2010, pp. 113-14). This snapshot is familiar to many teachers because in most public school classrooms in both the United States and Canada, teachers work with students who have a variety of needs and abilities. Garcia and Tyler (2010) describe several characteristics of students who have a number of other academic challenges besides the learning of English. Correctly, they note that often EAL learners are assumed to have a variety of learning difficulties, and they suggest that the curriculum must be “[c]ulturally and linguistically relevant [to their lives] and also responsive to their disability” (Garcia & Tyler, 2010, pp. 114-15).

In other words, the authors suggest that students from diverse backgrounds often learn better when their situations are reflected in the curricula and acknowledged by their teachers. This concern recognizes the uniqueness of students, not just those with disabilities, and suggests that teachers are able to reach and teach students at their points of learning. However, the recommendation of using “adaptations to support learning of all students... [including] supplementary, intensive reading interventions provided by a reading specialist or special education teacher who is familiar with [EAL] adaptations”

(Garcia & Tyler, 2010, p. 117), while very optimistic and very theoretical, may not be achievable because there are financial constraints and/or because there are few teachers who have specialized in EAL/SNE teaching. Nevertheless, this article provides a framework, albeit a vague one, for understanding that for teachers to better serve the diverse needs of their students, they must be open to many pedagogical methods and strategies and to use them in their classrooms (Garcia & Tyler, 2010, pp. 118-19). Garcia and Tyler (2010) do not, however, provide any specific strategies, nor do they suggest any specific techniques for use with EAL/SNE students; instead they advise teachers that adaptations and differentiated instruction must be a part of their teaching (p. 117). This recommendation is, in my opinion, rather trite, because many textbooks already say the same thing (see, for example Coelho, 2004, p. 252; Ovanda & Combs, 2012, pp. 357-58; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992, p. 81; Sorrells, Reith, & Sindelar, 2004, p. 220; Ur, 1996, pp. 115-18, 353).

### **The Intersection of Race, Culture, Language and Disability: Implications for Urban Education (2009)**

Like Garcia and Tyler (2010), a recent article by Blanchett, Klinger, and Harry (2009) also approaches teaching from a theoretical stance, focusing on the overlap of race, culture, language, and disability in urban American education. Blanchett et al. (2009) assert that:

an overwhelming majority of children of color [that is, non-Caucasian] throughout the United States attend schools that are largely made up of students of color, and the quality of their school experience seems [although we have no way of truly knowing] to be affected by the intersection of issues of race, culture,

language and disability ... almost three fourths of African American and more than three fourths of Latino children attend majority student of color schools. ...[Therefore], segregated schooling is not a thing of the past as some would like for us to believe, but rather, it is still quite prevalent in the American public school system and in fact has been steadily increasing for the past decade (pp. 389-90).

These authors illustrate the realities for many families in the US showing how students of colour, disability, and language differences have been segregated by public schools, both in the past and in the present (Blanchett et al., 2009, p. 390). However, in my reading of the article, though the authors provide a good argument, it is speculative at best because they cannot unequivocally state that these students' educational experiences have been impaired or damaged by their race, culture, language or disabilities. Blanchett et al. (2009), nevertheless, provide an historical context for how the school system in the USA has evolved and how it continues to serve mainly the educational needs of white, middle-class students, and moreover, how it often fails to meet the needs of minority students (visible, linguistic, and ability statuses), viewing them from a deficit perspective (pp. 393-95).

Without actually saying it, Blanchett et al. imply that these students are marginalized and do not receive the same quality of education as do white, middle-class students, especially those in suburban schools. Thus, the authors suggest that urban American school administrators must re-examine their policies and practices and determine ways to better serve these marginalized students (Blanchett et al., 2009, pp. 403-05). Although this article does not present any practical suggestions or strategies for

how to better serve the needs of these students, it does suggest some strategies for working with their families. Both recommendations of having the school employ professional interpreters to foster clearer communication with the students' families and that these conversations include using uncomplicated, jargon-free language whenever possible, represent a good beginning in establishing a solid school-home relationship for students (Blanchett et al., 2009, pp. 403-04). These suggestions however, while useful, are not unique to Blanchett et al., because they are merely common-sense practices that many good teachers already use.

**Stigma and Discrimination: Perspectives from Mexican and Puerto Rican Mothers of Children with Special Needs (2005)**

The notion of implied marginalization is a common thread in several other articles. Like Blanchett et al. (2009), Alvarez-McHatton and Correa (2005) discuss marginalization without actually using the term, and they depict several experiences of discrimination and stigma that are perceived by fifty single mothers of Latina descent who have young children with special needs. The authors use a mixed methods design and, as part of their study, they used in-depth interviews in Spanish, English, and a combination of the two languages (Alvarez-McHatton & Correa, 2005, pp. 132-33). Alvarez-McHatton and Correa (2005) provide a description of the use of stigma, citing Goffman's (1963) definition where:

stigma [is] a discrediting attribute assigned...to those who differ in some manner from society's expectations, customs, and mores. It results from a social categorization process that allows for the quick identification of those who are similar and those who are different and can therefore be considered as "others." It

is not simply the act of categorization that results in stigmatization of certain groups, but, rather the coupling of negative value judgments with particular characteristics that result in an adverse reaction to difference (Alvarez-McHatton & Corea, 2005, p. 132).

Clearly, stigma, or the “othering” of children who are different from the mainstream population, means that the children are both perceived negatively and, in turn, treated adversely, is a form of marginalization, much akin to discrimination. The stigma of labeling children as disabled, for example, often means that they are excluded from activities, experiences, classes, and other milestones that typical children are expected to accomplish. Consequently, these children are seen as less than or as having a deficit. Operational definitions, like this one for stigma, assist readers to more clearly grasp the authors’ intentions. However, since Alvarez-McHatton and Correa (2005) fail to operationalize the notions of disability and Latino/Latina, they do their readers a disservice, since both of these terms require further explanation to ensure that the reader clearly understands the implications of their research. It is not clear who could be helped by the interventions they suggest.

As well as failing to provide complete operationalizations, I wonder why Alvarez-McHatton and Correa (2005) chose to analyze only twenty of the fifty transcripts they collected (p. 134). I believe that focusing on a mere forty percent of the data probably limits the study, rendering it weaker than it could be. On the other hand, I appreciate the fact that the authors acknowledge several sources of bias in their work including their multiple identities and roles as researchers (Alvarez-McHatton & Correa, 2005, pp. 134-35). In fact, they say that “both researchers were cognizant of their individual identities

and thus engaged in self-reflection and discussion to ensure that the interpretations were, to the extent possible, accurate portrayals of the women's lived experiences" (Alvarez-McHatton & Correa, 2005, p. 135).

In addition, these authors openly acknowledge the limitations of their small sample of mothers, which made generalization difficult (Alvarez-McHatton & Correa, 2005, p. 140). For my purposes, this article, though by no means perfect, provided a snapshot of some of the challenges, including discrimination and stigma that were experienced by a group of EAL, Latina, single mothers whose children have serious disabilities. It, however, did not provide any suggestions or strategies about how to better meet the educational needs of these EAL/SNE students.

#### **Involvement of Immigrant Chinese Canadian Mothers of Children with Disabilities (2004)**

Lai and Ishiyama (2004) have conducted a qualitative study in Canada that focused on the perceptions of mothers who have children who are EAL/SNE. Lai and Ishiyama (2004) present evidence from British Columbia where ten Chinese-Canadian mothers of disabled children were studied (pp. 99-100). The authors provide a rationale for their study, suggesting that there is a gap in the literature on the education of EAL/SNE students in general, and SNE/EAL students who are Chinese-Canadian specifically. This included the lack of involvement of Chinese-Canadian parents in the educational process, for traditionally in Chinese cultures, parents leave education completely to their children's teachers (Lai & Ishiyama, 2004, p. 98). The authors also describe the Greater Vancouver and the Lower Mainland regions of British Columbia for the benefit of readers, many of whom, one presumes, would be in other parts of Canada,

the United States, or in other countries. However, this description may not be necessary for many Canadian readers.

For me, this article has many positive aspects. For example, I appreciate the fact that the authors were particularly careful to maintain confidentiality and that they respected the privacy of their participants, which was deemed to be particularly important from a cultural perspective for the mothers (Lai & Ishiyama, 2004, p. 99). As well, as an educator, I welcome the authors' recommendations that teachers who work with immigrant parents of Chinese descent need to be aware of a number of important cultural and linguistic issues, dynamics, and expectations that may differ from other Canadian parents (Lai & Ishiyama, 2004, pp. 105-07). Moreover, as a Canadian teacher, I welcome the suggestion that "empathy is key.... Educators in multicultural societies have an obligation to be open to different practices for teaching and learning, and not dismiss educational practices from other parts of the world" (Lai & Ishiyama, 2004, p. 106).

However, this suggestion is not new; it, obviously, should be heeded by all teachers and not just those working with SNE/EAL students. Overall, this article is useful, especially because it is a study of Canadian students, whereas all of the other articles I have reviewed in this chapter are from the United States. Nevertheless, this article also fails to provide any practical suggestions or strategies for helping these Chinese-Canadian students with their school work.

### **Differentiating Curriculum and Instruction for English-Language Learners with Special Needs (2005)**

In a similar vein, Hoover and Patton (2005) emphasize the necessity of valuing students' cultures, including their family structures and dynamics (p. 233). The authors

perceive that the main issue in EAL/SNE is that the curriculum should meet the diverse needs of the various students in actual classrooms (Hoover & Patton, 2005, p. 231). Also, the authors list several suggestions on how to differentiate curricula for students with various abilities and needs, how to use a number of teaching strategies to help all students, and how to evaluate the curriculum for cultural appropriateness (Hoover & Patton, 2005, pp. 233-34). Moreover, the authors provide a broad, theoretical and philosophical approach on how to effectively work with EAL/SNE students. Their suggestions include: “emphasiz[ing] learning and development that facilitates joint productive activities among the students; ... [and] ongoing verbal dialogues [as well as] cognitive and academic goals in integrated ways; ...high expectations while valuing diversity; and ...active learning and inquiry based tasks” (Hoover & Patton, 2005, p. 232).

Although the Hoover and Patton (2005) article is mainly theoretical, in that it provides an overview of issues and corresponding research, it is also somewhat practical, as evidenced by the user-friendly checklists of things that teachers should do (Hoover & Patton, 2005, pp. 233-34). This, upon deeper reflection, remains rather commonsensical and may not help busy teachers who often want concrete suggestions of what to do with struggling students. For example, thinking about whether or not the curriculum is culturally appropriate may be important when teachers are reflecting on their classroom practices, but it does not solve the problem of why Maria cannot answer comprehension questions on today’s reading assignment and why Jane can. Overall, the article works from the premise that differentiated instruction, as well as providing adaptations to the curriculum and other supports will enable EAL/SNE students to be academically

successful. This is in keeping with our current educational reality where these students are integrated into the mainstream classroom, but the suggestion is so trite that it did not need a research study to make the point.

### **Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners with Disabilities in Urban Settings (2009)**

In a similar study, Rodriguez (2009) also works from a theoretical standpoint in examining SNE/EAL students. Rodriguez (2009) noted the often erroneous tendency that teachers have of equating language differences with disabilities (pp. 453-54). This is evidenced by the author's cautionary statement: "language difference is not a disability" (Rodriguez, 2009, p. 454). Rodriguez (2009) then suggests assessing EAL/SNE students using multidisciplinary teams of evaluators, while employing "accommodations throughout the evaluation and assessment process to ensure nonbiased procedures that do not cover up the skills and content knowledge [these learners] bring to school" (pp. 454-55). However, in discussing this process, Rodriguez fails to mention the cost of using multidisciplinary teams of evaluators. I think this type of educational model is desirable and it is used, in fact, at St. Amant School, as well as in many public schools in Manitoba, but it could be financially prohibitive for many school divisions and districts. In reality, it is difficult to know how to properly remediate children with disabilities without adequate assessment.

Additionally, Rodriguez (2009) emphasizes that teachers need to develop EAL-specific academic language, including Cummins' notions of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (or BICS), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (or CALP), and Krashen's theories on comprehensible input (Cummins, 1984; Krashen, 1991);

strategies such as scaffolding and Vygotsky's knowledge transfer (Vygotsky, 1962); and specific teaching approaches, such as cognitive language learning and bilingual models of education, all of which indicate that teachers need to have a solid understanding of the issues found in the literature (Rodriguez, 2009, pp. 455-57; Cummins, 1984; Krashen, 1991; Vygotsky, 1962). As well, Rodriguez (2009) emphasizes that teachers and administrators need to possess cultural awareness and sensitivity that will benefit all learners (pp. 457-58). Although this may seem idealistic, it is nonetheless an important goal toward which educators should continue to strive.

However, my biggest criticism of this article is that it is published in a journal entitled *Urban Education*, which uses the word 'urban' as a politically correct euphemism for impoverished areas in large cities, where the majority of residents belong to racial and/or linguistic minorities. In other words, the journal equates urban with what many residents of Winnipeg call the core area of the city, the majority of whose residents are Aboriginal or new immigrants to Canada and who live below the poverty line. To my mind, the authors should have been more forthright with their use of the term urban instead of hiding behind so-called politically correct jargon.

### **Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services (2007)**

Hamayan, Marler, Sanchez-Lopez, and Damico (2007) also emphasize assessing SNE/EAL students' needs using multidisciplinary teams (p. 15). In fact, Hamayan et al. (2007) advocate using a collaborative model comprised of mainstream classroom teachers, EAL specialists, SNE specialists, administrators, guidance counselors, occupational therapists, and parents (pp. 18-20). In this way, members of the team bring

their expertise and experience to make decisions about how to best serve the learning needs of the students. Hamayan et al. (2007) advocate the use of the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach, which is “a three-tiered framework that seeks to improve the learning environment for all students within the classroom by supporting both teachers and students and keeping track of the students who resist interventions” (pp. 222-23).

Clearly, RTI is a method that can be used with all students, including those who are EAL/SNE students since the authors say: “RTI can benefit all students by providing timely support in the classroom as needs are identified. If employed appropriately and carefully, RTI can also introduce high-quality instruction into general educational classrooms across the grades” (Hamayan et al., 2007, p. 49). Moreover, Hamayan et al. (2007) encourage the use of both SNE and EAL educators’ expertise to generate the necessary interventions (pp. 51-53). In this way, the authors claim that EAL/SNE students, like all students, will benefit from having a variety of learning models and teaching strategies.

### **English Language Learners and Response to Intervention: Referral Considerations (2008)**

Rinaldi and Samson (2008) also favour using an RTI model with students who are EAL when there is doubt about whether they should be classified as SNE or not (p. 6). Rinaldi and Samson (2008) take a systematic, three-tiered approach. Tier 1 (or Primary Prevention) includes a curriculum-based measurement of all students, including those who are thought to be high-risk, are monitored in terms of their oral and academic language proficiencies (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008, p. 7). Those pupils who appear to have

learning difficulties are moved up to Tier 2 (or Small Group Training) where they are given extra support for fifteen to twenty week sessions and are monitored for progress on a weekly basis (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008, p. 7). If this intercession, the second tier, is unsuccessful, the EAL student is then referred to SNE experts. Rinaldi and Samson (2008) call this Tier 3 (or Tertiary Prevention) where:

first, the student is provided with one-to-one support and progress monitoring; second, a multidisciplinary team devises and conducts an individualized assessment plan (IAP); and finally, the pupil is given an individualized education plan (IEP), where her/his BICS and CALP are monitored for progress on a monthly basis and where interventions are used in the classroom or at home with the parents (pp. 7-10).

While Rinaldi and Samson's (2008) model for education and support seems hopeful, the realities of schools with large classes of students and inadequate teacher-support, not to mention scarce multidisciplinary teams, present a serious challenge. The reality is that not many schools have the resources to implement such a program. Clearly, this article attempts to take an ideal situation and make it a reality. Of course, these ideas are interesting and many teachers could use some of their suggestions in their own teaching. Overall, however, using a model like this warrants the support of teachers, administrators, parents, consultants, and school superintendents if it is to become a reality. The likelihood of this happening, I believe, is rare.

### **English Language Learners and Learning Disabilities: Research Agenda and Implications for Practice (2005)**

The final article in this literature review was written by McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, and Leos (2005), and attempted to “illuminate and underscore the complexity of identifying learning disabilities [SNE] in English Language Learners” (p. 68). In other words, the authors present an overview of the themes and topics that emerged from the 2003 National Symposium on Learning Disabilities in English Language Learners. I reviewed this article to show that SNE/EAL students are beginning to be recognized by many academics and researchers and not just by teachers. While the authors contend that there is a wealth of research in SNE within monolingual English-speaking students, they point to the paucity of evidence for EAL students with extreme academic and learning disabilities (McCardle et al, 2005, p. 68). Although the authors acknowledge that there is a great deal that needs to be examined in order to better meet the needs of SNE/EAL students, they agree that by using a variety of assessment practices, multiple ways of accommodating students, and a variety of teaching strategies, EAL/SNE learners will begin to learn better (McCardle et al., 2005, pp. 74-75).

The authors also suggest that the use of modern technology in teaching SNE/EAL students would be of benefit (McCardle et al., 2005, p.75). Finally, McCardle et al. (2005) remind readers that “attention to cultural and context will promote cultural awareness and sensitivity in both researchers and practitioners who work with ELLs [English Language Learners] and ELL/Ds [English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities]” (p.75). As a teacher and a researcher, I agree that we need to be aware of our SNE/EAL students’ cultural context in order to assist them in ways that do not

conflict with their values and beliefs. However, these authors, like all the others, have not provided many new strategies to help EAL/SNE students succeed in public, mainstream classrooms.

### **Summary**

In preparation for the literature review, I read these articles and many others about students who have been identified as EAL/SNE learners. However, I found that many of the articles did not address truly SNE students, tending instead to look at specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia in combination with EAL needs. But, as SNE/EAL learners are becoming more commonplace in schools throughout North America, school personnel, including teachers, administrators, and other professionals, need to begin assessing these students' disabilities and using teaching methods that help them meet their educational needs. There are five general principles that flow from the research literature on SNE/EAL.

The first general principle is there are no agreed upon or specific teaching methods for use across the board with EAL/SNE students. Instead, the researchers recommend that teachers need to be flexible enough to meet each student's specific needs. In this way, the teaching methods and strategies must be tailored to the specific learning needs of each student. This is easier said than done because in a mainstream classroom there is only one teacher and up to thirty students. While paraprofessionals, specialists, clinicians, and others may be in the school or even in the classroom, one teacher is ultimately responsible for the programming for every student in the class. Thus, this idea, while in principle is helpful, it may not be feasible or practical for every school where SNE/EAL students are integrated into mainstreams.

The second general principle flowing from the EAL/SNE literature is that the curriculum must be adapted to fit the needs of the students' abilities, interests, cultural and/or language backgrounds. That is, there is no best curriculum for SNE/EAL students. Instead, teachers need to look at the students and fit the curriculum to their specific needs, abilities, and disabilities. In this way, individualized educational plans (IEPs) must be developed for each of the students. Again, this suggestion is a time-consuming and resource-heavy endeavour, one that requires many hours, meetings, and initiative in order for it to be achieved. The classroom teacher, in coordination with other members of the professional team in the school and the division, needs to devise these IEPs for specific students and then, with the assistance of professional and paraprofessional staff, carry out the educational plans with each of the students. If this is truly to work, I believe the students' families/guardians should also be a part of this procedure to ensure that the school and home are on the same page, in terms of expectations, demands, and routines. If so, it is likely that things will go more smoothly for the students.

The third general principle is that EAL/SNE students should be assessed carefully before a curriculum is implemented. This assessment is then a precursor to the second principle, because an appropriate assessment must be conducted by the members of the multidisciplinary team, using all of their skills, before an individualized education plan can be developed for each student. This principle is challenging because there are many assessment tools that may be needed, but perhaps not all teachers and clinicians have been trained to use them, or even to know which instruments are appropriate for each student. Therefore, a number of professionals using a combination of assessment tools

along with anecdotal observations must be used to gather the most accurate information on each of the students.

The fourth general principle is that in order to better serve the needs of SNE/EAL students, multidisciplinary teams of people, including teachers, assessment specialists, clinicians, families, support staff, and others must be involved in assessing and developing appropriate curriculum, which allow a more student-centred and appropriate educational program to be developed for each student. Again, this requires every member of the team to work toward a common goal of meeting the specific needs of each identified SNE/EAL student. As has been stated before, this is an excellent idea but one that must be brought into play by the school and the school division in order that the appropriate resources are available and properly used for each student.

Finally, teachers should have specific psychological dispositions towards their students. In other words, teachers for EAL/SNE students should be empathetic but still able to push each of the students toward higher levels of learning. This is particularly important with SNE students, although they may not progress at the same rate as their peers, they should still be encouraged to move forward and to accomplish whatever is possible for them to accomplish, while, at the same time, the teachers must keep in mind the learning differences that each of the students have. To this end, all members of the team should embrace an empathetic style when working with EAL/SNE students.

Of course, it is reasonable to suggest that these five principles should apply to all students and not just to those who fall into the SNE/EAL group. In other words, all learners including EAL/SNE students deserve excellent teaching. The resources required to provide excellent assessment, curriculum, and teaching, however, are obviously much

greater than the resources provided by many public schools or school divisions at the present time. Essentially, the research literature I reviewed has not identified any new strategies or techniques for helping EAL/SNE students become more successful in school. This leads me to think that perhaps there is no “magic bullet” for helping these students succeed either in school or in their lives beyond school. All we can promise is that these students deserve to have excellent teachers, but then do not all students deserve excellent teachers? Based on my experience, this generalization is one with which most parents of EAL/SNE students would probably agree.

### **Chapter Three: The Social Context of EAL and SNE in Manitoba**

Chapter three focuses on the social context of EAL and SNE in Manitoba. In other words, I examine how the teaching of EAL and SNE came to be a part of the public education system in Manitoba. In doing this, I examine several key people who have influenced Manitoban education as well as the various pieces of legislation and documents that have brought increased diversity into Manitoba's public schools. I begin with a short history of contemporary education and then narrow my focus to demonstrate how the teaching of EAL and SNE came to exist in the province. Finally, I describe the documents and resources I will critically analyze in chapter four.

#### **A Brief History**

In order to have a better understanding of the current climate, procedures, and situations in schools, it is often better to have an historical perspective. In Canada, Section 93 of *The Constitution Act of 1867* (previously called *the British North America Act*) states that education is a provincial responsibility (p. 4). Although Manitoba's educational history differs from that of the other Canadian provinces and territories, with its own laws and regulations, the Manitoban educational system has been influenced by the prominent scholars, authors, government legislation, and directorates from the USA as well as from the other provinces and territories in the country. However, since Manitoba is relatively small, population-wise, its education, like the rest of Canada, has been impacted by the philosophies of American authors such as Bruner, Kilpatrick, Holt, and Dewey, to name a few.

North America has a long history of teaching EAL (Cavanaugh, 1996, p. 40). Since the seventeenth century when Europeans were colonizing North America, Canada

and the United States, particularly, the issue of language was important. Early settlers included people from England, Scotland, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, Hungary, Poland and Russia, all of whom spoke different languages or dialects from one another and from the Aboriginal peoples (Cavanaugh, 1996, p. 40). According to Cavanaugh (1996), as time went on the need for a *lingua franca* or common language for purposes of communication, trade, education, and governance, became more and more apparent (p. 40). Because the majority of settlers (read: colonizers) in North America prior to 1800 hailed from England and other parts of the United Kingdom, English became the language of power. Of course, French became the *lingua franca* of Québec, parts of New Brunswick, and other communities through the area that eventually became Canada. A large proportion of the new colonists who came from Britain were literate (and many were even university graduates). Education, most notably literacy and numeracy, was a priority for the North American settlers of this era (Cavanaugh, 1996, p. 40). Because of this, English emerged as the common language in much of North America. This has continued as the United States and Canada became independent countries in 1776 and 1867 respectively.

The teaching of SNE, too has a history, although much shorter and more sporadic than the teaching of EAL. In the mid-eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment, an era when humanism, philanthropy, and questioning of the old ways became prevalent, some European countries began to look at how to educate people with disabilities (Winzer, 2007, p. 21). This was most notable in France, the country that pioneered teaching of people who were deaf, blind, and intellectually disabled (Winzer, 2007, p. 21). Accordingly to Winzer (2007): "following the French initiative, movements to provide

services for those in the normative categories of deaf, blind, and intellectually disabled were contemporaneous in continental Europe, Britain and North America” (p. 21). As time went on, powered by the Enlightenment values of humanitarianism, evangelical commitment, and philanthropy, nineteenth century Americans established many institutions designed to care for those who were disabled and in many cases to train citizens who had exceptional needs (Winzer, 2007, pp. 24-5). According to Winzer (2007), “institutionalization as an idealistic reform sought to concentrate persons with disabilities where the daily regimes were typical of rural life” (p. 25). However, this meant keeping people with disabilities separate from others. Since the United States claims to value equality for all, consequently over time the ideas of separate institutions for disabled people became less and less desired. Instead, the idea of common schools, or educational spaces where all students were embraced, “from the docile and tractable to the deviant and intractable,” became something that was sought (Winzer, 2007, pp. 25-26). And thus the need for SNE in public schools was born.

The majority of education in contemporary North America, including Manitoba, has been modeled, to a considerable extent, on Chicago Schools. The first public educational facility in Chicago emerged in the early 1830s (Rury, 2005). Rury states that nineteenth and early twentieth century schools provided a host of purposes such as teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills “to monitoring health and physical development, Americanizing immigrants, and addressing problems of social and economic inequality” (Rury, 2005). At this time, education in the USA included the “three Rs” as well as vocational training, and what is called Americanization, which included the topics of citizenship, fairness, morality, and positive behaviour or, in other

words, how to be a good American citizen (Rury, 2005). One can extrapolate from this information that Canadian schools of this era also emphasized similar skills including vocational training, reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as Canadianization presumably, in order to ensure that students became good citizens of the Canadian Dominion and perhaps, more importantly, good British subjects.

Current practices and policies often emanate from what has been proposed and theorized in the past or in reaction to what has been attempted previously. In terms of education in North America, much of the current rationale stems from the philosophy of John Dewey, an early twentieth century philosopher and academic who was the director of the University of Chicago Laboratory School (McCain, 2004; Rury, 2005). Dewey and his supporters are often seen as belonging to the Progressive, or what others call the Romantic, or Modernist educational camp (Hirsch, 1996, pp. 6 & 214; Zwaagstra, Clifton & Long, 2010, pp. 5-6). According to McCain (2004), the progressive philosophy traces its roots back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau:

the seeds of progressive education can be found in British [really French] and American Romanticism, particularly in the writings of Rousseau. According to Rousseau, learning can and should occur naturally. Provided that the [student] is given a suitable learning environment, his or her instincts should guide the learning process (p. 44).

Dewey (1956) was the professor who borrowed this perspective and developed it for American education, espousing a belief in the student's "instinct of investigation" (p. 44).

Thus, the modern educational practices of progressive education, including experiential learning, project based learning, social promotion, and other common

practices, were influenced by Dewey who based his philosophy on the writings of Rousseau. Dewey, in particular, was perceived to be revolutionary because he believed that the education of children needed to have experiential components. That is, teachers needed to be engaged in their students' learning at a deeper level than they supposedly had done in the past.

The notion that Dewey's educational philosophy was new is erroneous, since much of it actually builds on Aristotle's and Plato's philosophies of education. Aristotle, in fact, argued for experiential learning and said "anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it.... We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate ones, brave by doing brave ones" (Smith, 2001, p. 1). Moreover, Plato advocated for the Socratic teaching method where knowledge is gained as the result of well-informed teachers questioning their students (Smith, 1997, p. 1). In this way, the teacher poses a series of challenging, open-ended questioning to students and in turn, the students assert their viewpoints in order to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of the subject. Thus, the fact that Dewey argued for both experiential learning and Socratic questioning was not a new philosophy. Nevertheless, Dewey (1938) said, in a rather awkward way:

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means to attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the

most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world (p. 7).

From this, it is obvious that Dewey's views on education were contrary to approaches where the teacher lectures or provides instruction and students merely listen, playing a passive role in their learning. However, Dewey (1938) recognized limits of experiential learning by stating:

I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely the organic connection between education and personal experience; or some kind of empirical and experimental philosophy....The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative...some experiences are mis-educative... any that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience ... engenders callousness...produces lack of sensitivity or responsiveness ... Everything depends on the *quality* of the experience which is had (pp. 11-13).

Dewey's writings are important because many educators now see experiential or inquiry learning to be crucial, almost the only reasonable perspective in both Canada and the USA. This is true in many traditional subject areas such as Science, History, Mathematics, and English as well as the newer areas including EAL and SNE. According to the Canadian Schools Boards Association website (CSBA), the parent association of the Manitoba School Boards Association, experiential or inquiry learning, is often viewed as being the best practice in education (n.d.). But, many of our current policies and practices in education, in both the USA and Canada, seem to take Dewey's ideas and statements out of context from what he had initially written. In other words,

educational scholars interpret Dewey as more strongly supporting constructivist methods than seem to be implied in his actual writings (see Dewey, 1938; Dewey, 1956).

Having briefly examined some of the philosophical origins and practices of education in Manitoba, I now move onto examining the history of EAL and SNE in Manitoba. Both SNE and EAL arise from the needs of students in our province as perceived by many educational administrators and teachers.

### **EAL in Manitoba**

The teaching of EAL students in Manitoba has been impacted by the various waves of immigration to Canada and Manitoba since this province became part of Canada in 1870. The *Report on the English as a Second Language Program Review: The Renewal of Kindergarten to Senior 4 ESL Programming in Manitoba*, a document published by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth in 2003, opens by asserting that “Manitoba has a long history of teaching English to non-English speakers, ESL began to emerge as an area of specialization and as a formal, well-defined programming option only three decades ago [that is, in the 1970s]” (p. 1). The document goes on to say that the direct teaching of English to non-English speakers was initially something that only happened in urban schools. Since then, formal EAL programs have spread and are now in most schools across the province (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 1). This is demonstrated in the following statistic: “[I]n 2001, 453 public schools and approximately one quarter of Independent schools in Manitoba reported having ESL learners within the last three school years” (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 1). In 2013-14, there were 688 public schools in Manitoba (Manitoba Education,

2014a, p. 11). Thus, more than two-thirds of the public schools in Manitoba have EAL (previously referred to as ESL) learners in attendance today.

The 2003 Manitoba Education Report says that the EAL learners of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century are comprised of two groups: those who were born in Canada and those who are new to Canada (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 1). The report states: “while some newcomers are fluent in English and/or French, others have had limited exposure to English and it is an additional language they need to acquire. ESL programming plays an important role in the successful integration of these new Canadians” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p.1). The document also notes that Manitoba Education or the Department of Education began to support ESL programming in 1979-80, but only in the Winnipeg School Division and some schools in Aboriginal communities. Currently, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning supports EAL students in most of the public schools in the province (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 4).

Although English has been taught to new immigrants from non-English speaking countries since the province joined Canada in 1870, what we now call EAL instruction is quite new. Reading between the lines, the changes are due to a variety of factors including changes in the education system and teaching practices, changes in the countries of origin of immigrants, increasing numbers of immigrants, and changes in perception of who EAL learners are. According to the report, the immigrants of the 1990s and early 2000s have “greater linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity [and therefore] require more effective responses to their educational needs, to ensure their eventual success in school” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 2).

The 2003 Manitoba Education Report recognizes that many Aboriginal learners also need EAL instruction, and that increased immigration has changed the way EAL is being taught (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 2). The report moves on to recognize the impact that the increased number of immigrants from war-affected countries and/or those who are refugees affect their ability to learn English (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 2). Finally, the report recognizes that some EAL students are international students who come to learn English, but may not stay in Manitoba permanently (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 2).

The report then asserts that EAL must be a crucial part of the Manitoban educational landscape, declaring that stronger EAL programs will “enhance **accessibility**, ensure **excellence** in ESL programming and create more **equitable** school and learning environments” for all students (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 11). In other words, making EAL an educational priority leads to a more inclusive educational system. The report concludes by making eleven recommendations, the first of which is the development of a provincial EAL programming framework, curriculum companion, and supporting documents to adequately sustain the learning needs of EAL students (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 11). It also is careful to say that EAL needs to be conceptualized as an additive language, so that educators keep in mind that EAL learners come with language experiences in at least one other language and that the maintenance of this first language is also important (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003, p. 11).

From this educational report, the reader realizes that although the history of EAL in Manitoba may be short, it is nonetheless important, especially at the present time because

the province continues to gain new citizens, both adults and children, who come from many countries around the world. Moreover, readers of this educational report understand that EAL education is a key component of our public school system that needs to be developed. This has led to the creation of EAL curricular documents and frameworks, which support the education of EAL students across the province, which is the subject of this study.

In Manitoba, as in many other provinces and territories of Canada, curriculum documents have been created by teams of people who are considered to possess a high level of expertise both in education and the various subjects therein. These teams may consist of provincial government employees, educational specialists and consultants, classroom teachers, parents, school administrators, experts in the particular curriculum field, and members of the community such as university professors in history, etc. These people write the curriculum documents that prescribe concepts, topics, and subjects, deemed appropriate for all students at the primary and secondary levels of school, to be taught in all public schools and funded independent schools across the province. In the various subject areas, these documents are organized depending on students' grade level, ages, and developmental stages.

According to the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (or MEAL) website, English as an Additional Language (or EAL) is identified as a subject, in much the same way that Mathematics is a subject. In the EAL section of the website, there are many documents including those that are intended to help schools apply for grants from the provincial government in support of EAL students. As well, there are two main curriculum documents,

- *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming*, (Manitoba Education, June 2011 Draft), and
- *English Language Arts: English as an Additional Language for Academic Success-A Course for Senior 4 EAL Learners (40S)* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006).

There are also three documents that review the learning resources recommended by MEAL that complement the two curricular documents,

- *English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics and Language (LAL): A bibliography of resources for language learning in the content areas, Middle and Senior Years* (Manitoba Education, March 2010a),
- *English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Learning Resources: A Reference for Selecting Learning Resources* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, March 2008), and
- *English As An Additional Language Kindergarten to Grade 12 Learning Resources: A Reference for Selecting Learning Resources* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, April 2007b).

There are, as well, three documents that focus on assisting educators and schools with students who have experienced war and have come to Canada as refugees,

- *Life After War: Education as a Healing Process for Refugee and War-Affected Children* (Manitoba Education, 2012a),

- *Life After War: Professional Learning, Agencies, and Community Supports* (Manitoba Education, 2012b), and
- *War Affected Children: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Manitoba Education, 2012c).

Since many of our Manitoban EAL learners are Canadian-born indigenous peoples, there is an EAL document entitled *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Literature Review of Promising Approaches and Practices* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b).

Finally, *Promising Pathways: High School and Adult EAL Programming Options for English as an Additional Language (EAL) Youth* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009a) focuses on students who have come to Manitoban schools with interrupted learning (due to war, poverty, or a variety of other reasons) and helps schools to program for and support students who come to high school or to adult educational programs without the levels of literacy, numeracy, and content-area knowledge needed to complete secondary education and move toward tertiary education and work-related training.

### **SNE in Manitoba**

According to Philips (1957), an historian who specialized in the Canadian education system:

as population and wealth increased and sensitivity to misfortune was heightened, provision was made for the education of those who could not profit from ordinary instruction. Prior to 1850 very little was done. Later in the nineteenth century institutions were built for some who were severely afflicted in obvious ways. In the present century [i.e., the 20<sup>th</sup> century] special education was provided in some

centres for those whose partial handicaps had escaped detection and provoked only punitive measures before (p. 369).

And so began the practice of special education in Canada. Phillips (1957) goes on to say that after 1910, “there began to appear open-air and forest classes for tubercular and sickly children, schools and classes for crippled children, speech correction classes, visiting teachers for stay-at-homes” (p. 370). Although Hughes, the Chief Inspector for Toronto Schools, recommended in 1894 that special education classes for ‘mentally handicapped’ students be created, the first special education classes did not emerge until 1913 (Phillips, 1957, p. 370). According to survey data collected in 1941-42 by Russell and Tyler, there were about 525 classes in Manitoba for students with IQs between 50 and 75, 48 of those existed in Winnipeg (Phillips, 1957, p. 370). Moreover, Gidney and Miller (2012) state that in Canada “at mid-century [i.e., the 1950s] provisions for those with special learning needs was meagre, and outside of the larger cities, [and were] pitifully inadequate” (p. 342).

Similarly to the history of EAL in Manitoba, the history of SNE has been strongly influenced by John Dewey (1916) who noted that democracy depends on educated citizens with diverse gifts: “to find out what one is fitted to do, and to secure an opportunity to do it, is the key to happiness” (pp. 357, 360). Also, like EAL, inclusion-based SNE is a more recent phenomenon where up to the 1960s and 1970s “individuals with learning and behavior needs were separated from the general public and received their education in institutional settings” (Mitchell, 2012, p. 15).

According to Manitoba Education and Training (1999):

special education programming was introduced in Manitoba about 30 years ago [about 1969]. In 1967, the Manitoba government enacted legislation that required [regular public] schools to program for students with special needs. In 1989, Manitoba Education and Training published *Special Education in Manitoba: Policy and Procedural Guidelines for Education of Students with Special Needs in the Public School System* (August 1989) which outlined the policy and procedural guidelines related to special education (Chapter 1, p. 1).

Although children with SNE were legally allowed to be in schools beginning in about 1967, true policy guidelines for the integration of these students into regular classrooms did not occur until 1989 (Manitoba Education and Training, 1999, p. 1).

At present, the focus of SNE in Manitoba is on inclusion, that is, having students with different needs and abilities as other similarly aged students in the same classroom. According to the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning's current website:

Inclusive schools provide a learning environment that is accessible to all students as a place to learn, grow, be accepted and enjoy all the benefits of citizenship. In an inclusive school, all students are provided with the supports and opportunities they need to become participating students and members of their school communities. ... Core values and beliefs include:

- All students can learn, in different ways and at different rates.
- All students have individual abilities and needs.
- All students want to feel they belong and are valued.
- All students have the right to benefit from their education (2013b).

Clearly, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning wants teachers, parents, and students to value inclusive education for all students. According to *Student Services Philosophy of Inclusion*, a section of the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning current website:

- Students with special needs should experience school as much as possible like their peers without special needs.
- To make inclusion applicable in Manitoba schools, educators will:
- Foster school and classroom communities where all students, including those with diverse needs and abilities, have a sense of personal belonging and achievement.
- Engage in practices that allow students with a wide range of learning needs to be taught together effectively.
- Enhance students' abilities to deal with diversity (2013b).

The inclusion of disabled children was further advanced by the Amendment to the Public Schools Act: Appropriate Educational Programming (Bill 13), which came into effect in 2005. According to *The History of Appropriate Educational Programming Legislation*, a section of the Manitoba Student Services page on the current Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning website:

- The Amendment to the Public Schools Act: Appropriate Educational Programming provides the regulation to guide policy and programming for all students, particularly those with special needs, in receiving the appropriate educational programming they require.

- The regulations confirm in legislation that all students in Manitoba are entitled to receive appropriate educational programming that fosters student participation in both the academic and social life of the school.
- The legislation supports Manitoba's philosophy of inclusion (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014b).

The inclusion of SNE students is a common practice throughout North American schools. In order to better support students with differing needs (i.e., SNE, EAL, etc.), the practice of having paraprofessionals (also known as educational or instructional assistants) who work in the regular classroom to support students who have individualized educational programs (IEPs) is common. This allows students with different educational needs to work on their tasks alongside other students in classrooms.

However, while these paraprofessionals may assist students with their individualized programs, they are not supposed to teach, nor are they to develop programs for these students (Manitoba Education, 2009, pp. 4-5). Instead, it is the duty of the regular classroom teachers in conjunction with resource teachers, EAL and SNE specialists, clinicians, etc. to create these individualized educational lessons from the curricular documents and resources that are suggested by Manitoba Education (Manitoba Education, 2009, pp. 4-5).

Special Education, according to MEAL, is not considered a subject area, but falls under the jurisdiction of Student Services. On the MEAL website, Student Services contains 16 categories of documents on topics such as Appropriate Educational Programming (or AEP), Safe and Caring Schools, Documents, and Planning and Programming for Students with Special Learning Needs, among others. The Student

Services documents section includes a variety of reports on, for example, the history of special education legislation in Manitoba, protocols on working with students in care and helping students to transition to adult programs, handbooks for both educators and parents on assisting children and adolescents with multiple needs, and other guidelines, frameworks, and resource guides.

### **Methodology**

Over the years, there have been many documents published by Manitoba Education on EAL and SNE students, curriculum, and teaching. This study, as noted previously, will examine six of these documents in order to determine how useful they are to teachers who work with EAL/SNE students. This section discusses my methodology. I will explain which documents I intend to analyze, how I will analyze them, and the framework from which I will proceed. In terms of the EAL documents and resources (as identified previously), I will analyze and review the following three documents:

1. *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming* (Manitoba Education, 2011 Draft);
2. *English As An Additional Language/English As A Second Language, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Manitoba Recommended Learning Resources* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, April 2007b); and
3. *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Review of Promising Approaches and Practices – Full Report* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b).

The SNE documents are classified as Student Services documents and curriculum documents. There are many of these documents listed on the website, but I have selected three of the most relevant ones:

1. *Appropriate Educational Planning: A Handbook for Student Services* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a);
2. *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* (Manitoba Education, 2010b); and
3. *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005).

These documents are assumed to have meaning to educators (teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, and the people who wrote the documents. According to Van Dijk (2001) Critical Discourse Analysis (or CDA) is “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). Even though CDA focuses on the conflicting perspectives of those who are charged with implementing policies, classroom teachers for example, and those who are charged with creating and enforcing those policies, Department of Education officials and superintendents, for example, the analyses of the documents will not necessarily reveal competing ideological perspectives. I can, however, identify some of the values inherent in these documents.

In other words, this analysis will examine the six documents to identify:

1. Who the stakeholders are;

2. What are their values and interests in the policies suggested by the documents;
3. What conflicts are likely to be inherent in those suggested policies; and
4. What should be done about the ideological differences and inequalities of status of the stakeholders?

In terms of my research method, I will use the error model of policy analysis, that is, I will “first identify and then remove or reduce sources of potential error so that [the] findings can be trusted” (Katzner, Cook & Crouch, 1998, p.7). In utilizing the error model, I will critically analyze these six documents, and I will draw from the work of Fairclough (2001) who examined “connections between language use and unequal relations of power... [in order to see] how language contributes to the domination of some people by others.” (p. 1). In exploring the language-power connection, Fairclough is careful to distinguish between the gaining of power through various types of coercion, including physical violence, and the gaining of power through consent or the acquiescence of consent (2001, p. 3). Moreover, Fairclough recognizes that power relations depend on both coercion and consent and that ideology is the primary way that consent is gained (2001, p. 3). Thus, I will explore the language of the Manitoba policy documents in the areas of SNE and EAL, examining their usefulness to teachers and some aspects of the power relationship that exists between the writers of policy and the teachers who are required to implement these policies, as well as the implied relationship with students and their families. In doing so, I will look at what they state and purport to believe, but also their suggested practices, which topics are given the most focus, for whom the documents are intended, and most importantly what these documents omit. In this way, I also employ an “error model” established by Katzner, Cook, and Crouch (1998) where I will

review these six EAL and SNE documents for sources of error or misleading information, and in this way, I will be able to challenge their usefulness and practicality to classroom teachers (pp. 7-8)

### **Summary**

This chapter focused on the social context of EAL and SNE in Manitoba. The chapter opened with a brief history of education in Manitoba, noting the influences of the Chicago School and John Dewey, as well as the foundational work of Plato, Aristotle, and Rousseau, all of which had a lasting effect on public education in this province. I then examined how English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Needs Education (SNE) have come to be a part of public education in Manitoba, noting how immigration, diversity, and changes in public policy have impacted how education has changed to serve the needs of all students. Finally, I described the six Manitoba documents I will use for my policy analysis, utilizing the work of Fairclough, Van Dijk, and Katzer, Cook, & Crouch as a springboard for this analysis. Looking ahead, chapter four will be the actual analysis of the documents and chapter five will included a summary of the thesis, implications for future research, implications for educational policy and finally, implications for teaching practice.

## Chapter Four: Analyses of the Documents

In this chapter, I critically review six documents (three EAL and three Student Services/Special Education). These documents are:

1. *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming* (Manitoba Education, 2011 Draft);
2. *English As An Additional Language/English As A Second Language, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Manitoba Recommended Learning Resources* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b);
3. *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Literature Review of Promising Approaches and Practices—Full Report* (2009b);
4. *Appropriate Educational Planning: A Handbook for Student Services* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a);
5. *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* (Manitoba Education, 2010b); and
6. *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (2005).

For all six documents, I will first summarize each of them and then I will critically review each of them using Katzer, Cook, and Crouch's (1998) "error model", where I examine and illustrate their main strengths and weaknesses. I will also examine the conception of power and language in each of the documents, using Fairclough's (2001) and Van Dijk's (2001) "critical discourse analysis."

### **The SNE Documents**

I have chosen to launch my examination of the six documents with the three SNE ones:

1. *Appropriate Educational Planning: A Handbook for Student Services* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a),
2. *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* (Manitoba Education, 2010b); and
3. *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005).

From the titles, it is clear that each is considered a guide for educators who work with students who fall under the SNE umbrella. In this way, these documents are prescriptive because they lay out the laws, both federal and provincial, as well as regulations and provincial policies and a plan of action that are to be adhered to by school divisions and schools that receive provincial educational funding.

#### **Appropriate Educational Planning: A Handbook for Student Services (2007a)**

The first Student Services/Special Education document that I will analyze is called *Appropriate Educational Planning: A Handbook for Student Services*. It is a 136 page document that contains nine sections including: foundation principles; federal and provincial legislation; ministerial letters and directives; regulations; standards; policies and protocols; guidelines; and resources and other support documents. The introduction provides the reader with a page-long succinct explanation of the document's purpose, its intended audience, and how teachers, counsellors, and administrators can use the

handbook. According to Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2007a) this handbook is “a reference guide containing information that supports appropriate educational programming in Manitoba” (p. 3). The document’s intended audience is “student services administrators, school division and school administrators, educators, and school clinicians. Parents and other members of student support teams may also find it useful” (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2007a, p.3). Finally, the instructions on how to use the handbook are as follows:

In Manitoba, the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth is responsible for administering the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system. The education system is structured to direct and support students’ full participation in their educational environment in a way that is responsive to their unique circumstances. The education system is directed and supported by

- legislation
- ministerial letters/directives
- regulations
- standards
- policies and protocols
- guidelines
- support documents (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a, p. 3).

In many ways *Appropriate Educational Programming: A Handbook for Student Services* adheres to the principle of parsimony. After the brief introduction, there is a

chapter on foundation principles, which begins with operationalizing what the philosophy of inclusion means according to the Education Department in Manitoba and goes on to explain what is meant by the foundational principles from provincial legislation, ministerial letters and directives, regulations, standards, policies and protocols, guidelines and supporting documents (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a, pp. 7-10). Chapter two discusses federal legislation on the rights of people and includes excerpts from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, and the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and how these federal laws connect to inclusive education in Manitoba (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a, pp. 13-16). The third chapter describes other Manitoba legislation that applies to students. These legislative acts include: The Blind and Deaf Person's Maintenance and Education Act; The Child and Family Services Act; The Education Administration Act; The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA); The Human Rights Code (Manitoba); The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA); The Public Schools Act (PSA); The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming); The Safe Schools Charter; and The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a, pp. 19-22, 27-42).

The next chapter, chapter four, includes a discussion of the ministerial letters and directives. This section contains 14 pages of letters from provincial government ministers concerning school-related issues including recommendations for school field trips, the anaphylaxis policy, and the issuance of certificates to students who are on IEPs at the senior years level, to name a few. Chapter five is 28 pages long and deals with regulations including those concerning pupil files, Individualized Education Planning

(IEPs), specialized assessments and who qualifies for these tests, behaviour intervention planning, and multi-system or circle of care planning (most recently termed the Wraparound Protocol), among others. The Wraparound Protocol may include clinical psychologists, medical doctors, psychiatrists, pediatricians and other specialists.

The sixth chapter contains a page long overview of the document *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006), the precursor document to the Handbook. Chapter seven includes an 11 page overview of several policies and protocols including planning in education, transition plans, child protection and abuse protocols, and the Unified Referral and Intake System (or URIS), as well as others. The URIS protocol allows students with health needs to be provided with medications and appropriate medical interventions at school and URIS nurses train teachers and EAs on minor medical procedures such as administering an Epi-pen or on what to do when a student has a seizure. The eighth chapter summarizes the Manitoba Pupil File Guidelines as well as what schools are to do in storing and disposing of school division records. Finally, chapter nine of the handbook provides a list of resources, website, policy standards, guidelines support, and other resources that are important for teachers and administrators to understand.

*Appropriate Educational Programming: A Handbook for Student Services* is a document that does what it sets out to do: simply, it provides a concise overview of a variety of topics that are relevant and easy to understand by teachers, clinicians, and administrators who work in the area of Student Services/Special Education. As well, it is user-friendly because it provides information that is useful to teachers who work in

resource, guidance, and special education as well as those mainstream and subject-area teachers who help students with SNE requirements. However, it has two major flaws, the first of which is the fact that its authors are unnamed. In fact, the only mention of any titleholder of the document can be found on the copyright page of the document which states:

[c]opyright © 2007, the Province of Manitoba as represented by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, School Programs Division, 1970 Ness Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 0Y9 (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007a, p. ii).

The author of the *Appropriate Educational Programming: A Handbook for Student Services* is therefore, collectively the Province of Manitoba, which, in turn, is represented by the Minister of Education (at that time, Peter Bjornson). This omission of a named author, reviewer, and/or researcher for an education document is unusual, since most other documents from Student Services/Special Education have been written and reviewed by a team of people who take responsibility. The lack of a named writer, therefore brings about an air of unquestioned authority, since it was created, presumably, by an undisclosed team of educational experts who somehow are associated with and/or have ties to the provincial government, and are trusted so implicitly that the government of Manitoba completely endorses this product.

Not only is this handbook compiled by a nameless source, the document is also composed in a factual manner so that it appears to be very objective. This is its second key shortcoming in my opinion. Since the handbook is devised by one or more human beings, it makes sense that it must therefore contain a standpoint or perspective. By using

phrasing that appears to be noncommittal, the authors of this guide quote portions of other published documents, policies, protocols, and legislation, positioning them in such a way in order to successfully play the game of political correctness.

**Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (2010b)**

The second SNE-related document *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* is a 106 page handbook that:

provides student support teams, [that is] those individuals who support students to achieve appropriate learning outcomes with a foundational student-specific planning process to address the wide range of exceptional learning needs of students throughout their school careers (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 1).

Like *Appropriate Educational Programming*, this document starts by explaining what is meant by the philosophy of inclusion:

Manitoba Education is committed to fostering inclusion for all people. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.

In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our

capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 1).

Moreover, this handbook includes the beliefs that:

[e]ducators in Manitoba are committed to helping all students reach their individual learning potential. Core beliefs that provide the foundation for education in Manitoba are that all students

- can learn
- have individual abilities and needs
- learn in different ways and at different rates
- learn in different places
- come from diverse backgrounds
- need their differences to be respected
- need to feel that they belong and are valued
- have the right to appropriate educational programming (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 1).

While statements such as these signify a sense of optimistic idealism, putting these beliefs into practice is often more challenging than the authors of this document anticipate, and demands commitment from all stakeholders as well as members of the wider community.

Clearly, *Student-Specific Planning* is designed to be user-friendly. It has a preface, an introduction, an overview of student-specific planning, a chapter on documenting student-specific planning, and a chapter on the process of student-specific planning, as well as a few appendices, a glossary, and references. Each of the chapters

begins with the key ideas and explains the content using a few words and a number of graphics to demonstrate the interconnectedness of concepts and topics. Each chapter also notes references where further information may be obtained. The chapters conclude with a summary of the main points.

Chapter one explains that student-specific planning is “a collaborative team process that requires the identification of appropriate outcomes, instruction, and assessment” (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 9). It goes on to explain that many different options are available in order to “address student diversity” and that “student support team membership will vary according to the needs of the student” (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 9). The chapter then provides operationalizations of many terms such as individualized programming, modification, adaptation, and differentiated instruction (Manitoba Education, 2010b, pp. 14-17). Chapter one concludes with the idea that through the collaborative planning process of student support teams, student-specific planning occurs and results in the written document known as IEPs (Manitoba Education, 2010b, pp. 18-20).

Chapter two describes how to identify, to document or record-keep observations and assessments, and to commence the student-specific planning process (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 23). According to this handbook, despite “skilled classroom instruction, some students continue to demonstrate difficulty in meeting the expected learning outcomes” (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 11). Therefore, the document recommends that school personnel, specifically, classroom teachers, student services teachers, and/or administrators, employ techniques such as observation and basic classroom assessments in order to identify students who are challenged with having

special needs. Chapter two also provides criteria for those students who require IEPs and the corresponding legal and provincial education documents that support these requirements (Manitoba Education, 2010b, pp. 23-25).

Chapter three describes the nature of the student-specific planning, its four essential steps, and how this process is based on a thorough understanding of the students (2010b, p. 29). It includes how the IEP is to be written, the members of the student support team, the roles and responsibilities of a student's case manager, and how the IEP is carried out and facilitated. According to the *Student-Specific Planning* handbook, student-specific planning is a “collaborative team process... [that] involves four essential and overlapping steps/components,” which include developing the student's profile, developing and writing the IEP, implementing the IEP and reviewing it, and evaluating and revising the IEP (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 29). These steps are a “continuous and flexible process rather than a series of separate and discontinuous steps” and “should be integrated into the regular routines of planning, instruction assessment, evaluation, and reporting that occur[s] for all students” (2010b, p. 29). The student support team includes the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), the classroom teacher(s), the student services teachers, administrator(s) and EA(s), as well as the school support team, which may include school divisional clinicians, consultants, community resources personnel, and/or medical personnel (Manitoba Education, 2010b, pp. 33-34). Usually, the case manager is the resource, special education, or guidance teacher and is designated by the school's principal (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p.35). According to the document:

Responsibilities of case managers generally include

- coordinating the development and ongoing revision of the IEP

- facilitating group decision making
- maintaining communication among team members, including parents
- ensuring that a process to monitor student progress and achievement is established
- organizing and chairing student-specific planning meetings
- distributing a written and timed agenda prior to meetings
- ensuring meeting minutes are kept and distributed
- documenting and distributing revisions of the IEP
- initiating and maintaining contact with external agencies, as required (Manitoba Education, 2010b, p. 35).

Finally, chapter three describes how the IEP is to be written, carried out, and monitored. This process includes the writing of student-specific outcomes (SSOs), which are “concise descriptions of what the student will know and be able to do by the end of the school year” and performance objectives (POs) which are “student-specific outcomes [SSOs] broken down into small manageable components or steps” (Manitoba Education, 2010b, pp. 39 & 41). Once the SSOs and POs are written, the IEP then describes how these outcomes and objectives are implemented, which instructional strategies and materials will be used, and the person or people from the support team who will assist the student achieve these objectives and outcomes.

The last three parts of *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* includes a number of appendices, a glossary, and a list of references. The appendices section contains 15 topics, such as

provincial regulations on appropriate educational programming, the roles and responsibilities of student specific planning team members, samples of student profiles, and examples of daily planners for students who have IEPs, among others. The glossary provides definitions of various terms that are used in the document and in the province. The references includes a list of Manitoban government documents that support and offer further explanation and background information about IEPs and special education.

*Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* does what it sets out to do; that is, it assists the user with creating, developing, using, and evaluating IEPs. Moreover, it is concise and well-organized. As well, it includes a list of authors and reviewers who helped to create and revise this document which I find to be helpful since at least I know who has been responsible for writing and editing the document. Of all of the documents I have read, this is the most helpful because it progresses in a logical fashion and is accommodating to teachers who are new to working in student services.

However, this document is not flawless and I have three criticisms of it. The first concerns its language use and wording. While the document tries to be accommodating to and inclusive of all students, this is impossible, and the attempt to do so is somewhat deceptive. Secondly, the handbook is full of what to do in terms of process and procedures, but lacks substance in terms of how to accurately program for students with various special needs. Thirdly, this document does not question inclusion in mainstream classrooms for ALL learners. Also, it does not question whether or not IEPs are the best way to go, and it says nothing about who will be accountable for the IEP or the qualifications needed to do so. In essence, the document provides some of the structure

and processes that are required by student services teachers, but it lacks specifics on how to actually come up with SSOs and POs, and how to evaluate their success. Therefore the document does not truly accomplish what it claims to do.

**Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (2005)**

The last SNE document that I critique is *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, which was published before the other two and contains a whopping 334 pages. Like the other two documents, it begins with the Manitoba Department of Education's philosophy of inclusion, which repeats the points I have summarized above. The document contains a preface, an introduction, five chapters, six appendices, a list of suggested readings, and a bibliography. Although the document is long, it is well-organized and provides a wealth of information about characteristics of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), many suggestions on how to plan and program for these students, various teaching or instructional strategies, and how students with ASD learn.

The preface says:

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurological disorder that affects the function of the brain. The symptoms of ASD include impairments in communication and social interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviours, interests, and activities.

ASD is referred to as a spectrum disorder because symptoms can be present in a variety of combinations and range in severity from mildly to profoundly disabling.

The cause is not known and males are approximately four to five times more likely to have ASD than females (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. P-3).

The preface goes on to explain that the handbook is organized into five chapters which “coincide with the steps involved in the planning, develop[ing] and implement[ing] of appropriate educational programming for a student with ASD” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. P-4). There are four stages of planning which correspond to the first four chapters in the document. These are: understanding ASD, in chapter one; developing the individual student profile, in chapter two; developing the IEP, in chapter three; and general instructional strategies for use with students across the autism spectrum, in chapter four (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2005, p. P-4). Chapter five includes “an overview of instructional strategies for students with ASD... [t]he selection and implementation of strategies is guided by knowledge of ASD and the student, the plan, and how the student learns”; in other words, in order to implement the strategies in chapter five, one needs to have understood and completed the four stages of planning found in the previous chapters (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. P-4).

Chapter one of *Supporting Inclusive Schools* covers the various definitions, causes, characteristics, and associated features of ASD. Chapter two discusses the student profile and the process used for developing it. According to the document:

A student profile is a summary of what the team knows about a student, including current and historical information (such as previous assessments and academic achievement). It identifies priority learning needs that guide the team in

determining appropriate educational programming options and developing the student's individual plan (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 2-3).

The process of developing a student profile includes three steps: gathering information, sharing information, and creating the student profile (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 2-4). The chapter goes on to explain how to collect information about students using many types of formal and informal instruments that may be conducted by the various members of the student support team. Examples of formal assessment tools include The Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children – IV (WISC – IV), The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS), The Scales of Independent Behavior (SIB-R), The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – III (PPVT-III), The Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS), all of which must be used by qualified school clinicians or clinical psychologists (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005 p. 2-12). The document states:

Informal testing covers a wide range of approaches and offers a highly adaptable and flexible way to gather information about a student. Informal testing complements formal testing, providing information about individual student function. It also offers an alternative way to assess students for whom formal testing is not appropriate.

Informal assessment measures may be

- criterion-referenced
- teacher-made
- clinician-made

- interviews
- observation (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 2-12).

Once this information has been gathered, the team will schedule a meeting and discuss the findings (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 2-14).

Afterwards, the team creates the student profile and includes the following information:

1. history and background information
2. diagnostic/assessment summary
3. a summary of interests, strengths, and learning styles
4. current level of development
5. priority learning needs (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 2-15).

Chapter three begins with a description of the various programming options (provincial curricula, adaptations, curricular modification, individualized programming) for students with ASD (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 3-3-4). It then goes on to discuss the planning processes for helping the student make the transition into school, the IEP, ways to help a student transition out of school, and the various placement options (within the catchment area, school division and other learning environments). The chapter concludes with examples of domains, SSOs and POs, instructional strategies, and materials and resources for a fictionalized student called Ricky (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2005, pp. 3-18-23).

Chapter four opens with descriptions of the learning characteristics of students with ASD including strengths and needs, motivations and interests, structure, routine and predictability, and responsiveness to visual support (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and

Youth, 2005, pp. 4-3-5). It then moves to a list and explanations of 24 general instruction strategies including task analysis, planning for transitions, and choice-making tools, to name a few (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 4-6-17). It then describes how to teach students with ASD using five strategies, including connecting actions with specific reinforcers, teaching interaction, teaching joint attention and focus, teaching imitation, and teaching waiting before acting (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 4-17-23). The chapter concludes with a procedure for how to teach new skills to students with ASD (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 4-23-26).

Chapter five includes material on how to use the instructional strategies of social interaction, communication development, restricted repertoire of activities, interests and behaviours, and some associated characteristics of students who have ASD. Examples of social interaction include using tools such as social stories and structured play/social skills training groups, to name only two (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 5-7-8). Communication development strategies include using Augmentative/Alternative Communication (or AAC) tools such as Mayer-Johnson Picture Symbols and Voice Output Assistive Aids (or VOCAs), such as iPads that can be programmed to enable non-verbal students to communicate (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 5- 22-23). An example of a restricted repertoire of Activities, Interests, and Behaviours is designed to help students reduce or replace their repetitive behaviours, such as rocking or banging their heads. This strategy requires teaching the student alternate behaviours that are more socially acceptable than the student's original behaviour (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 5-25).

Associated features include ways of teaching anxiety management strategies such as ensuring a student has an appropriate communication system, checking comprehension of instructions, and providing a customized visual daily schedule (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, pp. 5-40-43).

The last section of *Supporting Inclusive Schools* contains six appendices including a variety of useful forms and more technical information on ASD as well as a lengthy bibliography.

Although *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder* is a well-written document with a wealth of information, it also has two main flaws. The first concerns the fact that it is not up to date. Since the document was published in 2005, much of the information on the description and diagnosis of ASD is based on the DSM-IV-TR. Since the DSM-V is now available, this document will need to be revised so that it includes the notable research that has been published since 2005.

The second weakness is that the handbook is very long and contains too much detail about ASD. In some ways, the document reads like an ASD textbook. Much of the information presented in this document should have been covered in university courses and/or in-depth professional development sessions before teachers begin working with ASD students.

### **The EAL Documents**

At this point, I have critically analyzed the three SNE documents and I will now move on to examine the three EAL documents, namely:

- *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming* (Manitoba Education, June 2011 Draft);
- *English As An Additional Language/English As A Second Language, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Manitoba Recommended Learning Resources* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, April 2007b); and
- *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Literature Review of Promising Approaches and Practices-Full Report* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b).

**Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming- Draft (2011)**

As noted, this is the primary EAL document in Manitoba and it is located in the curriculum section of the Manitoba Education and Advance Learning (or MEAL) website. It is in its second draft which became available in 2011, and the first draft was available in 2006. This document has seven sections and contains 260 pages. Section one is an overview of EAL and LAL in Manitoba, section two provides theoretical background on what EAL is and various theories that form the foundation of teaching EAL, and section three contains the domains of EAL learning. Section four is divided into three subsections, teaching Early Years students, teaching Middle Years students, and teaching Senior Years students with EAL and/or LAL needs. Section five discusses the domains of LAL learning, section six targets the middle and senior years LAL acquisition continuum, and section seven discusses assessment for EAL and LAL learners.

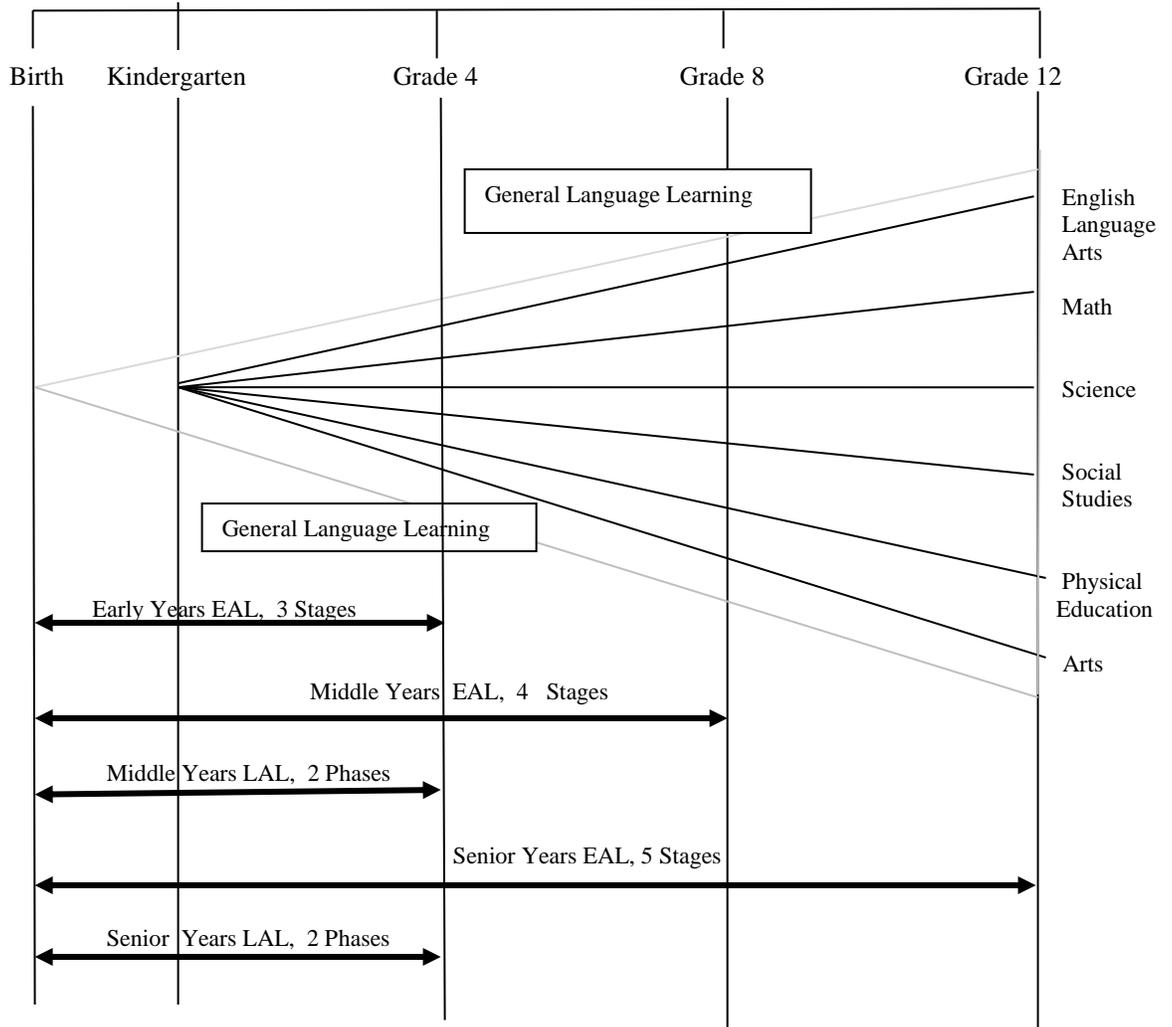
The *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming* (or the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework as it is often called), opens with an explanation that it has been “informed by recent research initiatives” (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-3). It then proceeds to list the documents which were its main influences including several Australian documents, the Canadian Language Benchmarks, as well as K-12 curricular documents from Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. The document then goes on to operationalize many terms including EAL, LAL, framework, the EAL/LAL acquisition continuum, curriculum, domains, stages, clusters, samples of descriptors/indicators and what they mean. Of particular interest is the definition of LAL students as “learners of Middle and Senior Years [i.e., grades 5-8 and 9-12] who have significantly interrupted, limited, or no school experience and therefore their literacy skills and school-based knowledge are well below age-appropriate level” (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-4). Clearly, many, if not all the LAL students are those who have had little school exposure or have had interrupted schooling, but because of their age, are placed in age-appropriate classrooms where expectations are modified to suit their particular academic needs.

Section one of the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework is entitled “Overview” and contains a whopping 62 pages with 15 subsections. Within the EAL/LAL acquisition continuum, according to the document, there are four domains of learning and a number of clusters of related strands within each domain (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-7). Moreover, the document describes 12 stages of EAL language development (three at the early years level, four at the middle years level, and five at the senior years level)

(Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-9). In addition, there are also four phases of LAL development, two at the middle years level and two at the senior years level (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-10). Figure 1 on page 77 of this thesis is a pictorial representation of the how the core curriculum areas are connected to the EAL stages and the LAL Phases across the grade levels.

**Figure 1**

EAL & LAL STAGES/PHASES and their Relationship to the K-12 English Program



(Manitoba Education, 2011, p.1-11)

Clearly, section one of the EAL/LAL Framework document reminds us that the framework is meant to be congruent with the ELA curriculum framework, the French Immersion and Français curriculum frameworks and with the other English and French documents (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-23). In all, section one represents an overview of EAL in Manitoba, how it came to be, and how the curriculum document is set up to meet the needs of EAL learners in grades K-12.

Section two is entitled “Connecting Theory and Practice” and examines the foundations of EAL in Canada, provides an overview of the EAL/ESL literature, and focuses on the work of many scholars in EAL theory. In the first part of the chapter, the authors provide an explanation of second language acquisition, acquisition versus learning, comprehensible input, output, and intake, implicit and explicit learning, interlanguage, basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), cognitively demanding, context embedded, and context reduced language, linguistic registers and discourse genres, common underlying proficiency (CUP), and the Iceberg Analogy (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp. 2-3-11). The latter half of the chapter provides suggestions on how to apply the theory to students in a classroom setting, albeit in a rather broad and general way. Suggestions such as acknowledging individual learning differences, the necessity for EAL/LAL learners to interact in English, and approaching EAL learners from an additive, and not a deficit, perspective are recommended, although they are neither very explicit nor very practical (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp. 2-12-19). This section may be a helpful overview for teachers without any EAL educational background, but find themselves working with EAL students.

Section three is called “Domains of Learning” and focuses on the four domains of EAL/LAL as defined by MEAL. These include: Linguistic Competence, Contextual Applications, Intercultural Communication, and Global Citizenship and Strategic Competence and are deemed by MEAL to be “complementary and overlapping elements of a comprehensive curricular approach” (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 3-3). These four domains are supposedly used for both EAL and LAL learners in this province.

Section four is divided into three sub-sections, Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years, and each describes ways of using EAL/LAL programming. Each sub-section goes through the four domains, looking at reasonable expectations for each domain, cluster, strand, and stage. At the end of each sub-section, there are lists of general language learning strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies, as well as lists of language use strategies, including receptive, productive, and interactive strategies. These lists provide useful advice for teachers.

Section five of the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework examines the four domains and the two phases of LAL learning, explaining how students with interrupted or very little schooling at the Middle and Senior Years levels can fit into mainstream English (or French) classrooms provided teachers use some adaptations and modifications. Since LAL is the foundation to EAL, the four LAL domains are Foundational Linguistic Competence, Foundational Competence in Contextual Applications, Foundations Intercultural Competence and Global Citizenship, and Foundational Strategic Competence (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 5-5). For both Middle and Senior Years LAL students, phase one learning goals include:

- be[ing] welcomed to the school community and adapting to the classroom and school environment
- develop[ing] beginning interpersonal communication skills in English
- developing emergent literacy skills, develop[ing] foundational numeracy and subject-area skills
- develop[ing] ‘survival’ like skills required for everyday living in Manitoba (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 5-4).

The goals for LAL phase two are:

- develop[ing] good interpersonal communication and foundational academic English language skills
- develop[ing] strong basic literacy skills that can be applied across different subject areas
- develop[ing] foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes in all compulsory and elective subjects that are essential for success or of interest to the student in the Middle and Senior Years courses
- explor[ing] and develop[ing] a long- and short-term learning and career plan (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 5-4).

In other words, the two LAL phases complement the EAL stages as seen in Figure 1 (on page 77 of this thesis).

Section six of the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework focuses on the Middle and Senior Years LAL acquisition continuum where the outcomes of each cluster and strand for both phases one and two are explained. In this section, examples of each outcome are provided for teachers as well as lists of general language learning strategies, cognitive,

metacognitive, social/affective, and language use strategies, including receptive, productive, and interactive. This is similar to the outcomes, examples, learning strategies and language use strategies provided in section four.

Section seven addresses the assessment of both EAL and LAL learners. This thirty page chapter provides an overview of assessment policies and practices in Manitoba, the purposes of EAL assessment, guidelines for initial assessment and placement of EAL and LAL learners, student-specific planning for EAL/LAL learners, and examples of assessment tools to use with LAL/EAL learners.

Although the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework has many positive attributes, it has weaknesses. In my mind, there are four major flaws. The first and most important concern is with its publication status. While the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework is a comprehensive document, it is not yet a published document and neither has it been formally implemented; instead, the document remains in draft form. In fact, this document has been in draft form since 2006. The MEAL (2014c) website under the heading of Curriculum and English as an Additional Language subheadings states:

[f]ollowing extensive feedback from the field, the refined and revised document is currently expected to be published in fall 2011. The current draft, retitled *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum Framework for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming* is available here for review and feedback.

Clearly, there is something amiss either with the document itself or with its political affiliations and priorities, for despite its creation, which no doubt took countless hours of work from a dedicated team of academics, researchers, practitioners and other

stakeholders, the document not yet been published! As well, why is it on a public website and freely accessible to teachers and the public?

The second flaw I perceive about the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework is that although it claims to have been “informed by recent research initiatives” (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-3) from a variety of countries where ESL/EAL is currently used in the K-12 curriculum, it does not mention any research from the USA, the UK, or New Zealand. The EAL/LAL Framework does, however, review documents from Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. In addition to several other provincial educational curricular documents and initiatives, the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework recognizes the influence of several Australian curricular projects. While this demonstrates some openness to resources, both Canadian and international, it made me wonder why the curriculum development team did not look at initiatives from the UK, New Zealand, and most importantly, from the United States, as they said they would.

My third criticism is its failure to successfully include all students. Although the section entitled “A Note on Terminology” (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-4) does an excellent job of providing operationalizations of EAL and LAL, I think the authors would have been more vigilant in defining “literacy”, “dialect”, “Standard English” and “Aboriginal English” because these terms are used but they are not self-explanatory (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp. 1-4, 1-15-16, 1-18-19). I appreciate the clearly set out definitions, purpose, rationale, and audience for which this document is designed as well as the components of the curriculum framework (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp. 1-5-6). This document is naturally related to the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, and to other content-area subjects is crucial, as are the somewhat confusing stages of EAL

and phases of LAL learning, and how both of these continua fit into K-12 programs (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp. 1-8-11).

While I find the document is overgeneralized, it can help new teachers gain a clearer perspective on the theories and concepts used in EAL education. However, it is confusing. The overlap of three stages with four, then five stages is confusing and not very helpful as is seen in Figure 1(found on page 77 of this thesis). Language learning is a continuum. There are descriptions of language programming options that are considered EAL in the document but in actuality they do not exist. These may include EAL for Deaf students and EAL for Aboriginal students. Moreover, there is no indication of optimal programming for EAL students.

As well, I appreciate the focus on Aboriginal students in Manitoba who may or may not fit into the EAL world, depending on their linguistic backgrounds and needs, but I am not impressed by the concession to SNE/EAL students which states: “EAL learners who also have exceptional learning needs may require additional services” (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp.18-19 & 21). Clearly, this is an attempt to satisfy some stakeholders who may have demanded inclusionary practices, although exactly what these additional services are or who is able to provide them is left to the reader’s imagination.

In addition, Manitoba schools are seeing an increasing number of French-speaking immigrants and refugees from a number of countries such as Rwanda, Sénégal, Morocco, and the Congo. The last few pages of this chapter gives suggestions and background information about how these students can be welcomed into schools and how teachers can interact with immigrant families in more culturally sensitive ways. The chapter then moves on to an overview of how to plan and select teaching approaches for

working with EAL/LAL students as well as numerous teaching strategies, some generalized characteristics of EAL/LAL students at the various learning stages and some background information on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and how they are connected to the EAL/LAL curriculum.

This is illustrated in the Overview that concludes with a short section on how to provide struggling EAL/LAL students with additional support. The authors acknowledge the tendency of many well-meaning teachers to:

misclassify EAL learners with low oral proficiency as at-risk for [having] reading or learning disabilit[ies]... [since] educators have difficulty distinguishing learning disabilities or other learning needs from EAL needs... [since] [l]anguage and academic difficulties displayed by EAL learners may appear quite similar to those shown by students with exceptional needs, but the underlying factors are quite different (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-58).

The authors then go on to discuss the many reasons for this misclassification including “[m]isunderstanding, lack of cultural awareness, bias,... [and] inappropriate assessment processes and tools” by teachers. (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-58). In my mind, the suggested strategies of early intervention, supportive classrooms, and culturally and linguistically appropriate programs are all plausible ways to identify, plan for, and support EAL students in the public education system (Manitoba Education, 2011, pp. 1-58-9). The authors acknowledge that EAL learners may have:

the same spectrum of abilities as any other cross-section of the school or the community...the fact that they may require specialized programming to learn the language of instruction does not exclude the possibility that they may need

assistance or specialized supports related to other learning needs... EAL learners may have additional learning needs that stem from specific learning disabilities, or other cognitive, physical, or psychological challenges... includ[ing] deafness and hard of hearing; blindness and visual impairments; physical and medical disabilities; cognitive impairments; speech, language and communication needs, pervasive developmental disorders, learning disabilities, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, [and] alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorders (ARND) (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1-59).

Clearly, the authors wanted to appear truly inclusive by mentioning all of these possible learning needs. Their assertion that “finding linguistically and culturally appropriate assessment instruments and educators with relevant cultural and/or linguistic awareness to conduct and interpret assessments” is no easy task (Manitoba Education, 2011, p.1-59), and is, in fact, an understatement. However, their recommendation for early intervention and that these students will require “a continuum of supports and services that address both English language learning and their other needs” is easier said than done (Manitoba Education, 2011, p.1-59). Finally, the authors stress the need for students to be placed in appropriate educational programs because these students have an increased risk of dropping out of school (2011, p.1-60). Although the authors are careful to recognize the problem, there are few suggestions on how teachers can really help these students. In essence, the students are expected to learn the required subjects while not being proficient in the language of instruction. This indubitably leads to the students dropping out or perhaps more appropriately being pushed out of school (Watt & Roessingh, 1994) Moreover, in terms of students with SNE, in my reading of the 260-

page document, there is only one mention of students with SNE needs. This occurs on page 21 where the document states: “EAL Learners who also have exceptional learning needs may require additional services” (Manitoba Education, 2011, p.1-21). For me, this is clearly problematic because it mentions the problem, but fails to give any possible solutions.

The fourth and last issue I have with the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework is that it is very long and convoluted. In other words, the document contains too much redundant information. As a corollary, the document is too descriptive and is not user-friendly, and it is especially unfriendly for teachers who have had little EAL classroom teaching experience. In many ways this document seems like a textbook on teaching K-12 EAL students. This may be desirable, but a useful curriculum document should clearly and concisely explain the concepts/subject matter that should be taught at different grade levels and provide teachers with ideas on how to successfully use these strategies with students. In this way, curriculum documents should be prescriptive, as opposed to descriptive; that is, the documents should lay out the content for subject areas, break down larger ideas into smaller component parts, and suggest ways of teaching the material to EAL students. Although in published curriculum documents, the authors are identified, their biases are not discussed. As well, curriculum documents should help instructors who have a good understanding of the subject matter teach these students. While a prescriptive approach may not be necessary for seasoned teachers, it is often useful for new teachers who are struggling to work with students who have a variety of needs.

**English As An Additional Language/English As A Second Language, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Manitoba Recommended Learning Resources (2007b)**

Closely associated with the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework, *English As An Additional Language/English as a Second Language, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Manitoba Recommended Learning Resources* is a 262-page document comprised of five chapters “Introduction”, “Titles and Descriptions”, “Audience”, “Grade” and “Suggested Use”.

The first chapter, “Introduction”, is a succinct three page explanation of who created the document, how the resources were selected, some operational definitions of important terms, and where learning and teaching resources may be obtained. This resource was compiled at the request of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (now MEAL) by “[t]eachers, nominated by superintendents of school divisions, [that are] selected as teacher-evaluators” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5). These teacher-evaluators used a “collaborative review process... [in order to] examine the materials according to the resource selection criteria to make recommendations regarding the suitability of the resources for Manitoba students and teachers” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5).

This learning resources is compiled as an annotated bibliography, “arranged alphabetically by title, [and then] followed with indexes. The indexes may include audience, (for example, resource for teachers, resource for students, etc.), grade, distributor, category (for example, depth resource), and suggested use (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5). According to the document, these:

[l]earning resources are selected based on the basis of their fidelity with the rationale, philosophy, processes, and learning outcomes identified in each curriculum. Four evaluation criteria are used in selecting learning resources:

- **Curriculum Fit/Content/Philosophy:** Evaluators determine the suitability of each learning resource by considering the degree to which the content and processes of the resource align with the curriculum, thus providing support for curriculum implementation.
- **Instructional Design:** Evaluators determine the appropriateness of each learning resource in terms of instructional design, determining the degree to which the resource provides for multiple approaches to learning, has a wide range of use[s], is current, and reflects current pedagogical theory and practice.
- **Social Considerations:** Evaluators determine the appropriateness of each learning resource in terms of social concerns. They consider the degree to which the resource is free of bias and stereotyping. The resource is examined for Canadian content, the use of culturally diverse examples, and accurate portrayal of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Cautionary notes are added to alert teachers to potentially sensitive curriculum-fit issues or potential community concerns related to the resource.
- **Technical Design:** Evaluators determine the appropriateness of each learning resource in terms of technical design, considering the degree to which the resource is visually appealing and has a logical and consistent form (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, pp. 5-6).

Chapter two, “Titles and Descriptions” contains 86 pages and starts out by listing the bibliographic information about the resource. It then provides information about the audience and the type of instructor for which it is designed, the student level for which the material is suitable (that is, Early, Middle, or Senior Years), and the date the resource was recommended. The section concludes with a brief discussion of the content, breaking it down into the types of skills the material targets and features that the resource includes. In this last section, the authors provide helpful hints for the reader. For example, phrases such as “[u]nderpinned by sound theory, the book is full of practical guidelines” and “[t]his is a good supplement to integrated or teacher-created programs” indicate both professional value judgements and ways that the resources may be used (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, pp. 11 & 25). These are good value judgements that are reasonable for a curriculum document that fits with the ideology of integration rather than inclusion.

The third chapter, “Audience,” contains 20 pages filled with a list of resources that have already been presented in the “Titles and Description” chapter, but now they are alphabetically arranged and grouped according to four types of audiences for which they are suited: “Classroom Teacher with EAL students”, “EAL/Resource Teacher”, “Student”, and “Teacher Professional Resource.” Presumably, not all resources are designed for the same audiences: some are to be used in mainstream and/or subject-specific courses led by classroom teachers with EAL students, while others are intended for use in small groups led by EAL teachers. Some resources are intended for students, either individually or in groups, while other resources are to assist teachers with background information as well as suggesting a variety of teaching methods.

“Grade” is the title of the fourth chapter and provides 58 pages of resources now alphabetically organized by grade level, ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Chapter five or “Suggested Use” is a 13 page list of the same resources, this time organized according to stream, Early, Middle, and Senior Years.

*English As An Additional Language/English As A Second Language, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Manitoba Recommended Learning Resources* is a companion document for the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework document. Companion or supplemental documents, especially those with information about resources for use in practical ways, are what many teachers desire, but this document is not without flaws. My first concern is that this companion document has been published prior to, (in fact, *years* before) its curriculum document. This is, to say the least, rather curious. Although the first Manitoban EAL Curriculum Framework draft was circulated between 2006 and 2011, and the second draft became available in 2011, these documents have evolved over time. Presumably, the final version of the EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework, yet to be published, will have evolved further. While having useful resources available to teachers, who is to say that many of these resources will fit with the curriculum framework in its final form. Clearly, once the curriculum document is finalized, this resource document (along with the two other documents, one published in 2008 and the second published in 2010, which focuses on more grade level- and content-specific materials) will need to be revamped.

My second criticism is that, like its companion EAL/LAL Curriculum Framework document, this document is rather verbose and very repetitive. While a list of suggested resources along with useful information such as grade-level appropriateness, content-

specific details, and other features are positive attributes, I wonder why the authors had to repeat the resources, organized in different ways, in separate chapters? To me, the information provided in chapter two is sufficient and, it is well-organized for EAL teachers to understand and use. By repeating the lists of resources three more times, the document becomes redundant and less user-friendly. By not repeating the list of resources three more times, the document will be thinner and, in my opinion, teachers, who are already very busy and pressed for time, will be more likely to read it

My third and final criticism of this document is how its language (that is, its wording and jargon) is used to ensure that it is both professional and politically correct. In other Manitoban curriculum documents, the authors, reviewers, advisors, and editors are listed at the beginning of the document and considerable care has been taken to include key stakeholders in the process of advising, writing, and editing the documents. This is observed, for example in the *Life After War: Education as a Healing Process for Refugee and War-Affected Children* as well as its two companion documents (Manitoba Education, 2012a, 2012b, and 2012c). Instead this document opens with a short paragraph that states:

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth acknowledges the individuals involved in the review and selection of learning resources to support provincial curriculum implementation. Appreciation is extended also to school divisions within Manitoba that supported teachers' participation in the review. Finally, publishers, producers, and distributors are thanked for their submission[s] of learning resources for consideration (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 3).

In addition, the introduction chapter says that: “[t]eachers, [who have been] nominated by superintendents of school divisions, [were] selected as teacher-evaluators (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5). Clearly, there are no contributors who are explicitly named. Instead, the reader is expected to realize that a team of well-qualified, yet unnamed teachers, all of whom are deemed to be superior teachers by their divisional superintendents, are responsible for the writing and editing of the document. Also, no mention is made of the qualifications of the teacher-evaluators to do so! What is more, the document claims that these teacher-evaluators used a “collaborative review process... [in order to] examine the materials”, although exactly what this review process is remains a mystery to readers (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5).

In a similar vein, the unknown authors claim that they examined learning resources “according to the [four step] resource selection criteria [in order] to make recommendations regarding the suitability of the resources for Manitoba students and teachers” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5). While I agree that the document’s authors had a duty to ensure that the recommended resources are in keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum framework, it is impossible to know if the document’s contributors had:

consider[ed] the degree to which the resource is free of bias and stereotyping... [as well as to ascertain that each] resource [wa]s examined for Canadian content, the use of culturally diverse examples, and accurate portrayal of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Cautionary notes [we]re added to alert teachers to potentially sensitive curriculum-fit issues or potential community concerns related to the resource” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007b, p. 5).

In essence, this learning resources guide does little to identify who its authors were and is full of platitudes explaining how bias-free, politically correct, and culturally competent it is. For me, these blanket statements seem meaningless.

**The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Literature Review of Promising Approaches and Practices—Full Report (2009b)**

The third and final Manitoban EAL document that I will review is *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Review of Promising Approaches and Practices- Full Report*. This document is quite different from the other two EAL documents analyzed in this chapter. The report is divided into three sections, the first of which is 31 pages on background information, census data, and a discussion of many issues, challenges, and theories that stem from the author's reading and interpretation of the literature on Aboriginal students. Included in this section are discussions of Canadian policies with respect to aboriginal languages and status, sociolinguistic terminology, lack of relevant research, and the notions of decolonizing education and support for linguistic diversity. The second chapter is 25 pages and focuses on recommendations that arise from the literature on language education for Aboriginal learners. This chapter includes the policy, programming and planning, assessment, curriculum, materials and resources, and ways of teaching "Standard English". The last chapter includes two pages of implications and conclusions that the author, Ruth Epstein, has derived from her understanding of this issue.

*The Languages We Speak* is a more detailed and developed version of *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A*

*Review of Promising Approaches and Practices- Executive Summary (2009)*. While the executive summary contains a concise 13 page summary, the report contains 77 pages, 13 of which are references to indigenous and Native American language resources. The report arises out of the ESL Action Plan and Program Review of 2005 as well as *The Ways We Speak*, a provincial symposium held in February 2007, which addressed EAL and Aboriginal students (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b, p. 3). Overall, the report addresses the need for EAL teaching for many aboriginal students for whom English is not considered to be their first language (or L1). The report is clearly in response to a need for EAL to help Aboriginal students succeed with the provincial curriculum.

*The Languages We Speak* is intended primarily for researchers and education consultants. However, it may also be of interest to some teachers and administrators who have Aboriginal students who are EAL learners in their classrooms. In many ways, this report is superior to the other EAL documents I critically reviewed because it contains a moderate amount of research-based information and it provides useful operational definitions of sociolinguistic terminology such as standard language, dialects, vernacular, master discourse, conflicts of identity, “officialise”, and language varieties (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b, pp. 15-22).

However, similarly to the other EAL documents, the report has several flaws including the fact that it is a wordy 86 pages when it could easily have been 20 pages, and it is not user-friendly to teachers because it requires a considerable amount of time wading through it to determine what is of practical value and what is mere political or academic rhetoric. However, my biggest concern is the language used, wording that bows

to political correctness and words that are simply educational jargon. A glaring example of politically-motivated acquiescence is found on the title page, where the Department of Education concedes: “N.B.: The views expressed in this literature review are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b, p.1).

Clearly, even though this document was approved by MEAL (as is noted in the Acknowledgements found on page vii), the provincial government is not standing behind this work, lest someone deem a sentence or a paragraph to be problematic or controversial. Moreover, this wording allows the Department of Education to remain non-committed in terms of ideas presented; in other words, should ideas in this report be deemed favourable, the government can acknowledge its support, whereas should the report be criticized, the government is shielded from blame. This sentiment is reiterated again, where the report states: “[a]lthough this review was published by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, it is a report of Ms. Epstein’s findings, and does not necessarily reflect the Department’s philosophy or policy” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009b, p. 3).

### **Summary**

In using Katzer, Crouch and Cook’s (1998) “error model”, Van Dijk’s (2001) and Fairclough’s (2001) “critical discourse analysis”, I discussed the strengths and weaknesses and examined the conception of power and language in six Manitoba Education documents. As a result of these analyses, there are four generalizations that flow from the documents.

The first generalization is that these documents often use language that supports a politically correct perspective. By this, I mean that the way in which the documents have been worded seem to please everyone by being as inoffensive as possible. In many ways, politically correct language is a positive thing. However, trying to include everyone can sometimes result in long-winded, ambiguous, or clumsy-sounding phrases that are constantly changing in accordance with what is deemed appropriate by various sectors of society. An example of this is the phrase ‘cultural understanding’ which over time has evolved into cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency, cultural proficiency, and even cultural safety – all of which just mean treating people from different cultures with respect, openness, and acceptance. However, the problem with using politically correct language is that the terminology changes and it is difficult to keep up with what is deemed appropriate and what is deemed inappropriate. To use the term ‘Indian’ for many groups of indigenous peoples in Canada fifty years ago, for example, would have been considered appropriate. These days, this term is considered offensive. The Manitoba documents, therefore, often reflect the politically correct language of our time which continues to change. In other words, in order to keep up with the times, the language in these documents will have to change and due to technology, this will mean more and more frequent publications or updates, since language use and political correctness change at an ever increasing speed.

The second generalization is that the documents are written to sound neutral and bias-free, but they all have an underlying perspective. In other words, as much as the authors intend them to be impartial, they contain biases. An example of this is found in the ideas of inclusion for all. The notion of inclusion for all in public education stems

from a desire to rectify errors from the past, where students were aggressively streamed so that those with profound disabilities did not exist in public schools. While in many ways, what we did in the past where students were excluded from public schools and many facets of every day life is wrong, I believe we have now thrown out the baby with the bathwater, so to speak, for acting as if everyone needs to be included in all classrooms may be doing a disservice to many students. Perhaps some degree of streaming would be beneficial. Having special classrooms or (even schools like St. Amant) for students with profound needs, (that is, intellectual, physical, emotional, behavioural, etc.) where teachers have been specifically educated to work with these students, would help them to succeed. To my mind, this is a much better solution than what I have observed at present where some classrooms have students with a multitude of needs, where one teacher and several EAs help work with a group of students who experience frequent disruptions due to a student or two experiencing severe frustration (sometime due to not having their needs met) and outbursts that require classroom evacuations or result in someone becoming injured (students, adults, or classmates). This is not a good climate for learning since one must feel safe and comfortable in an environment before education can take place. Thus, the emphasis on inclusion for all, that is, being able to meet the needs of all students in a classroom or in a public school, as Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (MEAL) recommends, may be neither prudent nor truly possible.

The third generalization that flows from my analyses of the six documents is that they are full of long explanations that often seem to disguise the fact that there are no definitive solutions on what to do with students who are two or three standard deviations below the mean for their age cohort. Therefore, one may extrapolate that even less is

known about how to support and teach SNE learners who also have EAL needs. Because of this, teachers are left to determine, on a case by case basis, what to write in IEPs and how to teach these students. To my mind, I think MEAL ought to be more truthful about these realities. They should not be claiming that education for all in inclusive schools and classrooms is possible at this point in time because clearly there are no real answers at this time. Instead, organizations like St.Amant where there is a school dedicated to SNE students, psychologists who work with these individuals using behavioural approaches, and specialized Autism Services, where intensive training is used to help young children with ASD to gain developmentally appropriate skills, should be valued and recognized for their novel educational approaches while valuing the individuality of each student.

The fourth and final generalization that flows from my analyses is that although Manitoba policy values inclusion for all, it fails to recognize that equitable programming does not necessarily have to be the same for everyone. We already recognize that students with profound learning, behavioural, and/or social-emotional needs may require the assistance of EAs in classrooms. But why does this mean that everyone needs to be in the same classroom? In order for some students to be successful, they may require alternate settings. This may mean allowing students to take frequent breaks during class time or allowing them to work in spaces where there is much less stimulation (for example, fewer students in a room or classrooms where the florescent lighting has been removed in favour of natural sunlight). As well, this may mean schools where specific needs are being focused on, such as St.Amant School, where students work in smaller groups with wheelchair-accessible spaces, have specialized equipment for physical

activity, use adapted educational equipment and tools, and have access to various classrooms and educational spaces that cater to the students' specific needs. At St. Amant, for example, students attend music therapy in a room with special lighting, adapted musical instruments that allow many students to experience holding and playing instruments, and comfortable seating that promotes relaxation, even for those who spend most of their time in wheelchairs. As well, the school has access to an indoor green space, complete with a water fountain, where due to extensive skylights, plants grow in natural sunlight and students can take bike rides through this area. This is particularly good in winter, when many students are unable to go outside due to the cold and icy conditions. Moreover, St. Amant has an indoor swimming pool that is equipped with overhead lifts, specialized changing rooms, and a swimming pool with a sloped entry that allows those in wheelchairs to get into the pool without the use of a lift. In having a school such as this, students can feel truly included in a community of learners, for they are able to see themselves in others. For me, this is really what inclusive education is all about.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

I began this thesis with a story, in the preface, about Billy, a young boy who lived in Northern Manitoba who had an accident and suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI). As a result of this TBI, Billy ended up living in Winnipeg at St. Amant. Because of this tragedy, Billy's needs had become so severe that he could no longer reside with his family at home in Northern Manitoba; now he required people who had medical training to care for him, specialized equipment, such as a hydraulic lift and a wheelchair, to move him around, and a puréed diet and fluids administered through a tube, all of which was unworkable on his home reserve in Northern Manitoba. While at St. Amant School, Billy was unresponsive until one day his mother came to visit. When Billy heard the sound of his mother speaking to him in Cree and the sound of the drums on the powwow music CD his mother played for him, Billy perked up. This situation caused me to stop and take notice.

Billy's story is a composite of several students I worked with at St. Amant School, all of whom had profound special needs as well as difficulties understanding and communicating in English. When I discovered that this small group of students was EAL/SNE, I began to explore the available resources: the research literature and the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (MEAL) EAL curriculum and Student Services documents, for teaching practices, methods, and suggestions on how I could meet the needs of these students. And I found very little that was helpful.

### **Summary of the Thesis**

In this chapter, I summarize the thesis and then I discuss some implications the analyses have for research, educational policy and teaching. Chapter one opened with an

introduction to my study where I provided an overview of the problem and a discussion of terminology and definitions in the areas of SNE and EAL. In so doing, I reviewed definitions of these terms to be clear what EAL and SNE mean. As well, I described my purposes for conducting the study and stated my three research questions, namely:

1. What does the research literature in North America say about the convergence of EAL and SNE that is useful for teachers who teach these students?
2. What provisions do the Manitoba curriculum documents make for EAL and SNE students that could be helpful for teachers?
3. In these documents, what resources are suggested to teachers, and are these resources likely to be helpful?

In addition, in chapter one, I described the significance of the study and acknowledged some of its limitations.

Chapter two led me through an examination of ten research studies and one published resource book, for a total of eleven documents, where I reviewed and analyzed the available research literature on the convergence of EAL and SNE in K-12 students. In this chapter, I observed that there was very little published research that actually applies to students with SNE/EAL needs. What research I could find was very small scale; that is, the sample population often consisted of only a few students, targeted the short-term instead of exploring teaching practices longitudinally, tended to be qualitative and mixed methods, rather than quantitative, and were often more theoretical than practical. In essence, the research did not help me with my quest for teaching methods, practical ideas, and possible suggestions of how to work with EAL/SNE students, similar to the ones I was teaching at St. Amant School.

I concluded chapter two with five generalizations that flowed from the research literature. The first generalization was that no specific teaching method for use with EAL/SNE students exists. In other words, there is no one teaching method that would work for all students with SNE/EAL needs. The second generalization was that the curriculum must be adapted to fit the needs of the students' abilities, interests, cultural and/or language backgrounds. To me this also meant that there is no one curriculum that is the "magic bullet" for all EAL/SNE students. The third generalization was that EAL/SNE students should be assessed carefully before a curriculum is implemented. This principle is closely tied to the fourth which was, in order to properly serve the needs of SNE/EAL students, multidisciplinary teams of people, including teachers, assessment specialists, clinicians, families, support staff, and others must be involved in assessing and developing appropriate curriculum, which would allow a more student-centred and appropriate educational program to be created for each student. In other words, multidisciplinary teams of experts in various fields connected to education, need to look at each EAL/SNE student individually and assess his or her needs on a case-by-case basis in order to provide effective educational programming. The last generalization that flowed from the EAL/SNE research literature was that teachers should have specific psychological dispositions towards students. In other words, teachers for EAL/SNE students should be highly empathetic but still able to push each student toward higher levels of learning. To me, this is the most crucial point for one may be an expert in her/his field but without compassion, the desire to connect with a student, and the belief that the student is able to progress, it may be impossible to move the student along, and academic success maybe nearly impossible.

In chapter three, I explored the history of education in North America, focusing on the teaching of students with EAL and SNE needs and within this context presented the methodology of my study. In this chapter, I found that education in North America was rooted in the work of the philosophers Aristotle, Plato, and especially Rousseau. Moreover, most of our current educational beliefs in Canada and Manitoba specifically stem from the work of Dewey, the great American education scholar. The teaching of EAL in Manitoba has had a rather short history (really, only formally since the 1970s) and an official K-12 EAL curriculum document has not yet been published (although it has been in draft forms since 2006). The teaching of SNE, on the other hand, has been in existence in Manitoba since 1910, although it existed predominantly in specialized schools where a certain segment of the school-aged population, for examples, school for the deaf, school of the blind, etc., were targeted and specific teaching practices were used. The notion of special education in the Manitoban public system did not emerge until the late 1960s in legislation, and not until the early 1990s in practice. Our current policies of inclusive education have only emerged over the last decade or so and continue to be practiced to varying degrees in various school divisions, schools, and classrooms.

Chapter four comprised the critical analysis of six Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (MEAL) documents, three in the area of SNE and three in the area of EAL. In reviewing these six documents, I first summarized each document. Second, I critically examined each document using Katzer, Cook, and Crouch's (1998) "error model", where I considered each document's strengths and weaknesses. Finally, I explored the conception of power and language in each document, using Van Dijk's

(2001) and Fairclough's (2001) "critical discourse analysis" as a springboard for my assessment.

In this chapter, I explored the usefulness and relevance of these documents to teachers of EAL/SNE students. In reality, I demonstrated that although the documents attest to the idealistic claim that every student can be educated regardless of the challenges the student has, there is very little practical advice to be found in any of the documents. Moreover, whatever suggestions do exist in these document are buried in a ream of paper that the average classroom teacher does not have time to read, especially given the extensive demands for the variety of needy children found in most classrooms.

I concluded the fourth chapter with four underlying generalizations that come from my critical reading and interpretation of the six Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (MEAL) documents. My first conclusion is that these documents often use language that supports a "politically correct" perspective so as to be as inoffensive as possible. My second conclusion is that although the authors may have tried to sound neutral and bias-free, all contain biases that are not acknowledged by the authors. My third conclusion is that the documents are very wordy and fail to give any solutions on what to do with students who are classified as SNE. My final conclusion is that the provincial government has not recognized that some SNE students may be educationally better off if they were taught in separate classrooms. The policies and documents are for Manitoba and the 38 public school divisions/districts and the documents stress that SNE/EAL children, with few exceptions, should be integrated into public school classrooms, and not be relegated to separate schools, such as St.Amant, or special education classrooms. Further, the documents stress that teachers and administrators will

have little if any difficulties teaching these children along with the other children in their classrooms.

Finally, in chapter five, I summarize the thesis and discuss the implications of the study. In other words, I suggest the direction of future research in EAL/SNE, future educational policy development, and future teacher training and practices to adequately support the education of EAL/SNE students.

### **Implications for Future Research**

From my assessment of the research literature, it is evident that there has been little published research reporting on ways of teaching students with profound disabilities who also are English language learners. Most of the research, in fact, dealt with EAL students who had learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, and not profound cognitive deficits, ASD, or other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Moreover, most of the research came from the US where the education systems differ from the Manitoba systems. For example, in many American school districts, students who are labeled with special needs are placed in separate classrooms or separate schools where their specific needs are targeted by specially trained teachers. In situations such as this, mainstreaming or inclusive educational practices, as we are doing in Manitoba, is not happening.

As well, much of the research literature I read tended to have small samples and some studies included only a single student. To my mind, research like this, while interesting, is more difficult to derive practical generalizations that would be useful for teachers. In my opinion, more research is needed on identifying teaching practices that work with students who have both SNE and EAL. Moreover, this research should emphasize larger scale, longitudinal studies with mixed research methods, and especially

quantitative methods. Clearly, there is a need for more research in Canada and in Manitoba to accurately identify ways to improve the education of EAL/SNE students in this province.

### **Implications for Educational Policy**

Based on my research, I conclude that the policy of inclusive education, such as it is being practiced in many schools in this province, is not truly inclusive. A former colleague of mine used the phrase, “the illusion of inclusion” to indicate what she observes in many schools. By this, she meant that in many Manitoban schools, SNE students are physically present in classrooms because they come to school every day and spend much of their time in classrooms with their common-aged peers. But, these students are not keeping up with their peers in many ways and they complete academic work that is much different from the work completed by the majority of students in the classroom. We call this making adaptations or modifications, but in reality, it is just a teacher having to do more: he/she must teach different lessons and create different learning materials, while trying to ensure that the classroom is a place where all students are learning the curriculum. In these classrooms, teachers are expected to perform miracles. Why not establish more homogenous classrooms where students can learn at their own pace and where teachers can design lessons and materials that focus on similar goals and educational needs? I believe this would serve the needs of all students better than the procedures used now!

### **Implications for Teaching**

During the writing of this thesis, I critically reviewed six Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (MEAL) documents. Three of them were curricular documents on

EAL and the other three were documents on SNE. While I found many positive things in the documents, none of them were truly helpful, especially for teachers who are new to teaching EAL and SNE students. Instead, the documents were very long, wordy, and provided gross generalizations instead of specific practical suggestions and teaching techniques that would be useful for teachers.

Moreover, none of these documents gave any specific suggestions on how to work with students who are profoundly disabled as well as EAL learners. For me, this is quite odd, because MEAL claims to be so inclusive in terms of its policies and procedures, it seems that it has excluded a considerable part of the provincial student population which is growing with the increasing number of EAL students and students with SNE needs. Obviously, as time goes on, we will have more and more students who have EAL/SNE needs.

In my opinion, teachers need more professional development in the areas of EAL and SNE. Since Manitoba Education has designated EAL as a subject in Manitoba, K-12 teachers should take one university course in EAL and do some practice teaching with EAL students. In SNE, I suggest that undergraduate students be required to complete at least two courses and be required to do one student teaching placement in a specialized program such as the ISEP (Integrated Special Education Program) and IPISA (Individualized Programming in Specialized Adapted Setting) programs in the public school system or at St. Amant School. I also suggest that courses at the Post-Baccalaureate level in both EAL and SNE should focus on teaching strategies and on practical ways to teach SNE and EAL students. I believe that more student teaching at this post-graduate level should be a part of the program.

Finally, I would like to end with Billy's story again. Because of St. Amant School, students like Billy have been able to thrive and grow academically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. He is among peers, students who face similar challenges and require specialized educational programming, which is best delivered in such a school setting. In this way, he is truly included, because he belongs and does not stand out among his classmates. Isn't this the purpose of an educational setting: a place where one is able to learn, grow, and be accepted in a group of peers?

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