"Examining Inter-professional Collaboration in an ELL Context"

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COLLABORATION IN AN ELL CONTEXT

Abstract

I will be conducting a qualitative research analyzing the collaboration between main classroom teachers and ESL teachers. I will be interviewing an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher in elementary schools within the Greater Toronto Area. I will be inquiring about their daily teaching practices and collaboration that occurs between them. I am interested in finding out how their inter-professional collaboration affects the English Language Learner’s learning process. I will gather my primary data through transcribing the interviews. The data will then be analyzed to find different themes and important insights. Through this research project I want to investigate and find the issues that still exist within our ESL programs and how we can further improve them.
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Research Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Topic/Questions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Researcher</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL programs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the Curriculum in ESL programs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration between ESL teacher and Main Classroom Teacher</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Training</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments of Data Collection</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection and Analysis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Review Procedures</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COLLABORATION IN AN ELL CONTEXT 5

4. DATA ANALYSIS 21

5. FINDINGS 32

6. REFERENCES

7. APPENDICES

   Appendix A: Interview Questions 22

   Appendix B: Letter of Consent for Interview 25
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research Study

There are many students within the primary and junior classrooms who are English language learners. Many of these students struggle with the academic work as they are not able to comprehend the content being taught. Many schools provide English language learners extra help through the pull-out method or in classroom assistant. The ESL teachers work with these students only during the Language period. This is a problem for the students as they continue to struggle throughout the day where the main classroom may not be accommodating to their needs. It is important for the main classroom teachers and the ESL teachers to collaborate and provide the best learning environment to meet the needs of ELLs. It is vital for main classroom teachers and ESL teachers to communicate daily about the students’ progress. The transition between the two classrooms can have a negative effect on the ELLs as the teachers may implement different teaching strategies and have different expectations. Furthermore, when students are removed from their main classroom to receive extra help, they are missing vital classroom time. In addition, as they come back to the classroom, they often feel lost and isolated. This creates a disconnection between the two classrooms which negatively affects the learning of ELLs. This is why it is important for the two teachers to collaborate with one another to ensure that the English language learners are going to be successful in both classes.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to analyze the collaboration between the ESL teachers and main classroom teachers and how the interaction between the two teachers can benefit the learning of ELLs. Through this study, teachers can learn the different ways of implementing same teaching strategies in order to create a connection between the main class and ESL class. Many main classroom teachers may not know how they can help their English Language Learner students. This study tries to focus on the different instructional methods and collaboration that can be implemented to ensure the best learning environment is implemented for ELLs.

**Research Questions**

The focus of this research study is to examine the inter-professional collaboration in an ELL context. The main question of this study is, “How do main classroom teachers and ESL teachers collaborate affectively to enhance the learning of ELLs?” Through this question I will be analyzing the different methods teachers use to collaborate and what teaching methods they both implement. Some other sub-questions I will be focusing on, “What are some of the positive and negative aspects of pull-out methods for ELLs?” “What instructional methods work best for ELLs?” “How do main classroom teachers accommodate their teaching methods for the ELLs?”, and “How do ESL teachers ensure their students are learning in the main classroom?”. These questions will foster the goal of this project. Through the data analysis and literature review, these questions can thoroughly be answered. The focus of this research study is to gather information on how ESL teachers and main classroom teachers can work in partnership to ensure that ELLs are going to be successful.
Background of the Researcher

As an English Language Learner, I remember the memories of being taken out of the main classroom, and going into a small classroom with 2 other ELLs. I remember having an ESL teacher help me learn English during my language period and then it was time to go back to the main classroom where I was expected to do the same work as the other students. My grade 5 teacher expected me to follow along with my classmates and complete the same work when I did not understand the content being taught. I always felt like a failure as a student because I could not measure up. Through my past negative experience, I am interested in investigating how ESL classes have changed throughout the years. I want to explore the collaboration that occurs between the main classroom teacher and the ESL teacher. In addition, I am interested in exploring how teachers are accommodating for ELLs. This research study can demonstrate the different strategies where teachers and ESL teachers can collaborate to create a modified program for ELLs.

Overview

The overview of this research study is as follow, chapter 1 will include the introduction and purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as how I came to be involved in this topic. The next chapter contains a review of the literature relating to my topic of collaboration between main classroom teachers and ESL teachers. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedure that will be used in this study including information about the participants and data collection instruments. Chapter 4 will focus on the data, analyzing the transcripts and finding themes. Chapter 5 will be on the findings of the study and implications. References and a list of appendixes follow at the end.
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are growing numbers of ELLs in the Canadian classrooms, however many main classroom teachers and ESL teachers are struggling to meet the needs of these students. The focus of this study is to analyze the collaboration between the ESL teachers and main classroom teachers. There are not many extensive research on how the two teachers can collaborate in order to create the best learning environment for these students. In addition, the teachers need to implement similar teaching strategies in order to create a connection between the two classes. When the ESL teacher and main classroom teacher collaborate to create a program for ELLs, it is important to have ongoing communication and provide support for one another.

There are many different ESL programs that are implemented in Canadian schools. Although each school will focus on a different method that best meets the needs of students and the scheduling of teachers. In the article, “ESL PROGRAMS: Not ’One Size Fits All’” (Honigsfeld, 2009) it reviews the different ESL program available for students and the benefits and limitations of each program. Some of the programs mentioned in this article cannot be implemented within the Canadian schools as the classes only focus on one specific language (e.g. Spanish).

As research demonstrates, most Canadian schools implement the pull-out method for their ESL programs. The ELLs are taken out of the classroom during the literacy block to receive extra support and return to stay in their main classroom for the rest of the day. The main problem occurs during the other subjects, as the ELLS often do not comprehend the content being taught and they do not receive extra support. The articles,
“Preparing English Language Learners for the Mainstream: Academic Language and Literacy Practices in Two Junior High School ESL Classrooms” (Peercy, 2011), and “Teachers’ Perceptions of ELL Education: Potential Solutions to Overcome the Greatest Challenges” (Batt, 2008) focused on bringing the curriculum into the ELL pull-out classes and the benefits of having the ELLs continue their academic work from the main stream classroom rather than doing something different. These articles explained how both main stream classroom and ESL teachers can use the curriculum to help the ELLs in the pull-out or pull-in method.

Another issue that is in existence with the ESL programs is the lack of training for main classroom teachers as well as insufficient support. In two articles, “Dropping out of School among ELLs: Implications to Schools and Teacher Education” (Sheng, Sheng, & Ande, 2011) and “Creating Inclusive Learning Communities for ELLs: Transforming School Principals’ Perspectives” (Adams, Brooks, & Mullaney, 2010) the authors argued that there is a lack of support and training for the main stream classroom teachers with ELLs. Many teachers have ELLs in their class and are expected to know the different teaching strategies to meet the needs of these students. In many cases, these teachers are confused and the lack of support and communication from other staff can leave them feeling lost. This is why it is important for teachers to collaborate with one another, for support as well as indirect training.

There are many different teaching strategies that ESL teachers and main classroom teachers can implement in order to create a connection between the two classrooms. In the articles, “Challenges and Solutions for ELLs” (Edmonds, 2009) as well as “Success with ELLs” (DelliCarpini, 2012) focused on specific strategies main classroom teachers
can use to help ELLs become more involved and be able to comprehend the content being taught. The two articles demonstrated the strategies used by ESL teachers and how they can also be implemented in the main classroom.

Reading is one of the most important academic skills and this is an area where most ELLs struggle with. This can also negatively impact their learning of other subjects in school. Therefore it is important to support the ELLs in other subject areas as Clara (2007) argues in her article, “Supporting English Language Learners in Content-Reading”. Teachers can support their ELLs by ensuring they have the background knowledge about the subject area before starting a unit.

There are many different types of collaboration that can occur between ESL teachers and main classroom teachers. The article, “A Collaboration between ESL and Main classroom Teachers for ELLs’ Literacy Development” (Fu, Houser & Huang, 2007) explored the ideal collaboration between an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher. This is the type of support and collaborating I hope to observer during my research. It mentioned the different strategies both teachers can use to create an effective ESL program

There are some important themes that emerged from the articles. The articles provide vital information on the background of ESL programs and how they are implanted. In addition some articles focused on the specific strategies that main classroom teachers and ESL teachers use. These are the themes that have emerged from the literature review.

**ESL programs**

The article, “ESL programs: Not ‘One Size Fits All’” (Honigsfeld, 2009) analyzed the different ESL programs available for students and the benefits and limitations of each
program. The different programs are as followed: English-Language monolingual, English monolingual plus ESL program, transitional bilingual education program, maintenance bilingual program, and structured immersion program. The article argues that the transitional bilingual education program and maintenance bilingual program are two programs that benefit the ELLs the most. However, in Canada, most of our ESL programs are English monolingual plus ELL, it is important to recognize why this is and why we aren’t changing our ESL programs to provide the best learning environment for students. This relates back to my research topic as I want to focus on the types of ESL programs that are being implemented in schools and how that affects students’ learning. Although my research topic is focusing on the collaboration between the ESL teacher and main classroom teacher, it is evident that the type of ESL programs that is being implemented in school also affects students’ learning. It is important to take this factor into consideration when analyzing data and making recommendations.

Computer assisted instructional methods are another possible ESL program that can be implemented in schools. The article, “Computer Assisted Instruction and Elementary ESL Students in Sight Word Recognition” (Williams & Beechler, 2012) demonstrated how the program can be put into action in schools. By using computer assisted instructional method, in both the main classroom and ELL classes the students experience the same method of instruction which will create a consistency for their learning. This is important as many ELLs need consistency in their learning to be able to adapt to the new language and environment. This type of instruction can be viewed as a recommendation for teachers within my research project.

Teaching the Curriculum in ESL programs
The importance of emerging the curriculum into the ESL program was reviewed through two articles “Preparing English Language Learners for the Mainstream: Academic Language and Literacy Practices in Two Junior High School ESL Classrooms” (Peercy, 2011) and “ESL PROGRAMS: Not 'One Size Fits All'” (Honigsfeld, 2009). As ESL teachers take students out during the literacy block, they often work on reading and writing skills. When the students return to their main classroom, they struggle to meet the expectations as they are not receiving extra support. The two articles focused on integration the curriculum into ELL classrooms. The ESL teachers can work with the students to continue what they are doing in the classroom and assist them through the different subjects. This would mean that the ESL teacher would meet with the students at least twice or three times a day in order be able to effectively support them.

Furthermore, “Preparing English Language Learners for the Mainstream: Academic Language and Literacy Practices in Two Junior High School ESL Classrooms” (Peercy, 2011) suggested that by using academic language with the ELLs, they will become more familiar with the vocabulary that is being used in the main classroom. This can enhance their learning in the main classroom as they are able to comprehend the information being taught better. By teaching students the main vocabulary of the different subject areas, they are able to apply their understanding when learning new contents.

Through the support of these articles, emerging the curriculum into the ELL classrooms is an important aspect of an effective ESL program. During the data analysis, I am interested in finding out whether ESL teachers are merging the curriculum into their ELL classroom or do they follow the TESOL program.
Another important aspect of a successful ESL program would be for teacher to pre-teach new content to ELLs. As Clara (2007) argues in her article, “Supporting English Language Learners in Content-Reading”, it is vital for teachers to implement different activities to help ELLs become familiar with the new content being taught. They need to create a vocabulary list and teach it to the ELLs, supporting them to comprehend the content that is being taught (Clara, 2007). In addition, books can be selected to read during read alouds to have the ELLs become more familiar with the content. Teachers need to be aware of the language and word choices when teaching a unit as well (Clara, 2007).

**Collaboration between ESL teacher and Main Classroom Teacher**

There was a main theme of collaboration that emerged from the articles, “A Collaboration between ESL and Main classroom Teachers for ELLs’ Literacy Development” (Fu, Houser, & Huang, 2007), “Preparing English Language Learners for the Mainstream: Academic Language and Literacy Practices in Two Junior High School ESL Classrooms” (Peercy, 2011), “Teachers’ Perceptions of ELL Education: Potential Solutions to Overcome the Greatest Challenges” (Batt, 2008) and “Creating Inclusive Learning Communities for ELLs: Transforming School” (Adams, Brooks & Mullaney, 2010). These articles focused on the collaboration between ESL teachers and main classroom teachers. This relationship is particularly important as the two teachers need to be consistently communicating with each other about the content being taught in their classrooms as well as important information about the ELLs.

The article, “A Collaboration between ESL and Main classroom Teachers for ELLs’ Literacy Development” (Fu, Houser, & Huang, 2007) demonstrated the ideal relationship
between an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher. The two teachers were consistently in communication with one another; they planned and assessed the ELLs together. Through this research study, it is evident that the collaboration between the two teachers is an essential factor when creating an effective ESL program. The two teachers also implemented same teaching strategies that created consistency for the students, for example many times the students continued their academic work in the ELL classroom with the help of the ESL teacher. These types of strategies and collaboration between the two teachers positively enhanced students’ learning as demonstrated within the collection of their academic work. This theme is an important part of my research project as it relates to my research question, “How do main classroom teachers and ESL teachers collaborate affectively to enhance the learning of ELLs?” therefore the information within these articles are vital to my data analysis.

**Professional Training**

Another theme that emerged through my literature review was the lack of professional training amongst many ESL teachers and main classroom teachers. Three articles specifically analyzed this issue, “Dropping out of School among ELLs: Implications to Schools and Teacher Education” (Sheng, Sheng, & Ande, 2011), “A University and Middle-School Partnership: Preservice Teachers’ Attitudes Toward ELLs” (Walker, Sanders & Dalhouse, 2009) and “Creating Inclusive Learning Communities for ELLs: Transforming School” (Adams, Brooks & Mullaney, 2010). These three articles focused on the lack of teacher training and how that can affect the ESL programs being implemented in schools. Most of these teachers may not have had an ELL teaching background or may have been trained to follow the TESOL program
which does not integrate the curriculum. In addition, most often the main classroom
teacher and ESL teacher have not had any prior experience as to how they can
communicate with each other and what they should be doing in order to create a positive
learning environment for the ELLs. This research project will provide a sample of how
ESL programs are being implemented in schools and what can be done in the future to
help train teachers professionally.

Through the article, “Creating Inclusive Learning Communities for ELLs:.Transforming School” (Adams, Brooks, & Mullaney, 2010) and “A Collaboration
between ESL and Main classroom Teachers for ELLs’ Literacy Development” (Fu,
Houser & Huang, 2007) the ideal collaboration between an ESL teacher and teacher was
demonstrated. The two teachers planned and implemented the ESL program together.
They also assessed the students using the same strategies. This is the collaboration I hope
to see throughout my research.

The background research on ESL programs created a foundation for my research
project. The different themes related back to my research question and provided
background knowledge on effective ESL programs. There are some issues that still exist
within different programs such absence of professional training and lack of
communication between the teachers. The aim of this research project is to explore the
different ESL programs being implemented and seize a better understanding of what is an
effective program. Through the data collected and analyzed, next steps can be created to
ensure the best programs are being implemented for ELLs in schools.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Procedure

Through this research project, I will be analyzing the collaboration between ESL and main classroom teachers. In addition I am interested in collecting data on the different teaching strategies both teachers are using to enhance the learning of ELLs.

I gathered background information on different ESL programs. Through the different articles I was able to grasp a better understanding of the different teaching strategies, effective collaboration and professional training for teaching. The literature review will be the foundation of my research project as I will be comparing my data and findings to see the differences and similarities. I can also compare my findings to see how ESL programs have changed throughout the years and what the next steps can be for schools.

After learning more about the history of ESL programs, I have decided to interview an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher who work together. I will conduct the interviews at one school. I will ask a variety of questions that relates to their methods of teaching as well as their collaboration with the other teacher in order to create an effective ESL program.

After interviewing the participants, I will be transcribing and analyzing the data for themes that correspond with collaboration, and teaching methods. I will explore different themes that might emerge within the data. In addition I also want to focus on what the teachers believe are the challenges and strengths of pull-out ESL programs.

I will compare my data to the literature review to understand more about what is happening within our Canadian schools specifically in the ELL context. Comparing and
contrasting the data from my research project and the literature will allow me to observe what needs to be changed to further enhance the learning of ELLs. This will provide background information relating to implications and future research.

**Instruments of Data Collection:**

I will be collecting data by conducting informal interviews with one ESL teacher who implements pull-out method ESL program. I will also interview one main classroom teacher who has an ELLs that is part of the pull-out ESL program. I will be interviewing the participants separately however on the same day. I will be conducting interviews in one school. Therefore I will have 2 participants for my research project. A complete list of my interview questions are in Appendix A.

**Participants**

I will be interviewing an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher. The ESL teacher has been teaching ESL for 8 years. She teaches primary and junior ELLs and implements the pull-out method with her ELLs. She takes the students out of the classroom during the literacy blocks and assists them in variety of activities that enhances their reading and writing skills. The main classroom teacher has been teaching for 9 years and is also a trained ESL teacher. She is currently a grade 1/2 teacher and has 1 student who is part of the pull-out ESL program.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

I will be recording my interview on my computer through a program that record audio recordings. I will be asking the participants similar questions relating to their role as a teacher, focusing on the collaboration, teaching methods and professional training. After the interview I will transcribe my interviews. Then I will begin by reading the
transcribed interview, focusing on the different themes (e.g. collaboration between the two teachers, teaching methods etc ). I will use different colour highlighters to highlight the important quotes and themes within the interview data. I will also look for different themes and write them on the side of the page as I go along. Then I will create an overall data collection, by writing down the important themes, quotes and organize them into sections for data analysis and conclusion.

**Ethical Review Procedures**

I will review and follow the ethical procedures for the Master of Teaching program. I will ask the participants if they would like to take part in my study and describe my study to them. Once they have agreed, I will send them the “letter of consent for interview” (Appendix B). After reading the letter of consent, the participants will have a better understanding of the research project, their rights, and how the interview will be conducted. The participants have the rights to drop out of the research project at anytime. They are also able to say “pass” to any questions they do not want to answer. The interview audio recording will be kept on my computer and will not be shared with any other person. I will be analyzing the audio tape and transcribing it into writing which will be stored on the same computer. It is important that the identity of the participant not be released as it is part of their rights. I will also be reviewing what ethical producers I will need to take to delete the data when I am done with the research project.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations of my project relates to the sample size. I will be interviewing only one ESL teacher and main classroom teachers within the Greater Toronto Area. This limits the amount of data I can collect that would be a reflection of
our Canadian schools. I am not able to compare the interviews to another set of ESL teacher and main classroom teacher to see whether I see similarities or differences. In addition, I am only focusing on Ontario, which is a small region and my data cannot be a reflection of the Canadian education system.

Another limitation is the research method that I will be implementing; I believe a quantitative research would have been a better fit for this research topic as I can create a better methodology to analyze the data. Collecting more data for this research project could have been helpful as well, for example, looking at students’ work throughout the year to examine their progress.

In addition, having limited time to implement the research project required me to only interview 2 people and analyze my data based on that. It limited the information that was gathered and analyzed. The data that was collected was very limited and only a small sample which then was compared to the literature. It was not compared to other data collected by the same research project. Collecting more data would have been beneficial when thinking about implications in schools and future research.

There were some limitations within this project that need to be taken into consideration when reviewing the final results.
Chapter 4: DATA ANALYSIS

The interview data revealed five themes on how the ESL teacher and regular classroom teacher collaborate, what accommodations are made for the ELLs and how both of the teachers communicate with the parents. I will organize this chapter into these dominant themes.

Theme 1: ESL Literacy Program

ESL Stages of Accommodation

Generally in an ESL program, there are four stages in which the students are placed in. These stages have been created by the Ministry of Education to determine how much support and accommodation a child may need. The 4 stages are as followed:

Stage 1: Using English for Survival Purposes

Stage 2: Using English in Supported and Familiar Activities and Contexts

Stage 3: Using English Independently in Most Contexts

Stage 4: Using English With a Proficiency Approaching That of First-Language Speakers

Furthermore a curriculum has been created for teachers to assist them on how to modify the Ontario curriculum for students in stage 1 and 2. The ESL program that is currently in place for English Language Learners in the Camilla* elementary school includes students from stage 1 and 2.

Daily 5: Parallel Program to Classroom

The ESL teacher, Sarah, explained that she implements the Daily 5 and CAFÉ strategies parallel to a literacy program within the main classroom: “I use lots of visuals to help the students, lots of technology and its differentiated instructions in order to meet their needs and individualized programming” she went on to say.
I have the homeroom classroom’s long range plans and I’ve used them so that my students are running some-what a parallel program. But if the classroom is doing something that is not meeting the needs of the kids, then I’ll run my own individual program.

She further added:

My activities for the students are very similar especially when we got the Daily 5 program: work on writing, read to self, reading with a buddy or when it will be different it will be with the word work. The word work will be geared towards them. The reading is at their level just like it would in the classroom.

It is evident that although the programs are the same within the ESL classroom and regular classroom, the ESL teacher focuses on creating a program that is individualized to meet the needs of the ELLs. By implementing similar programs, a connection between the ESL class and the main classroom is created. This is emphasized by Carol, the main classroom teacher:

Since the ESL program run a daily 5 and CAFÉ strategy just like we do here, it makes it easier when we have the ESL students stay in for some reason where the ESL teacher is not available. They have their ESL material for the Daily 5 that they world on alongside the other students.

Carol also explained that:” Sarah and I informally communicate about the literacy program that runs here so then when running her own program she can align what the ESL students are learning to the main classroom content.”

The curriculum that is created for the ELLs are taken from the main classroom’s literacy program and then further individualized and accommodated to meet the needs of
the students. This creates balance and a connection between what happens in the ESL class and the regular class.

**Theme 2: Methods of Support**

The ESL teacher and main classroom teacher support the English Language Learners through two different types of accommodations and social skills. Accommodations refers to the changes the teachers make for the students in order to meet their needs. This could be changing expectations from the curriculum to providing one-on-one support. Social skills support consists of providing opportunities for the English Language Learners to feel connected to the classroom, the school and the classmates.

**Accommodations and Evaluations**

The ESL teacher provides students with different accommodation during her literacy block in order to ensure their learning goals are being met. She uses the ESL stage spectrum to first identify the students then creates a program based on their learning target. In addition, she uses the Ontario “English As Second Language” document to create accommodations for their literacy program. The main classroom teacher, Carol, also uses the same document when changing the expectations for her English Language Learners in her classroom. She also uses the document when creating specific learning goals and accommodations for her ELLs.

Sarah, the ESL teacher explained the accommodation and/or modifications that she makes:

“This is completely modified, I pick and choose the curriculum expectations that the students will have success meeting. The accommodations are the small
group instructions that they are getting. They are also assessed on their
modified program in stage 1 and early stage 2 in any other classes as well.”

Similarly, Carol explained:

I will take actual expectation from the continuum rather than the curriculum
document. This will also affect their assessment, as it will be modified as well, for
example I might change their rubric or it might just be anecdotal notes.

Although the two teachers may not formally collaborate on a daily basis, they
both implement a modified curriculum for the English Language Learners. Their informal
meetings ensure that they are assessing the students on similar expectations.

This indicates that the accommodations for the ELLs start by changing the
curriculum expectations and assessment. By changing the curriculum to meet the needs
of the students, Sarah and Carol are ensuring that they are going to be successful in
accomplishing their learning goals.

Another important aspect that has been mentioned by both Sarah and Carol was
the assessment method. It is important that when the curriculum is modified, the
assessment changes as well. In both classrooms this has been demonstrated by both
teachers as they create the same expectation for the students.

During the ESL literacy program, students learn in small groups which provide a
more intimate environment where Sarah can work one-on-one with the students. The
small groups also help the students have more confidence when sharing ideas and
answering questions. In addition the ESL and main classroom teacher change the
curriculum as a whole and teach in small groups. Sarah explained that she supports her
students by creating a safe environment through small groups; she is able to give
instructions slower and use repetition if needed. She also uses simpler language during
instructional time and in the worksheets or activities she provides for the students.

During the Daily 5 program, she gives the students books that are at their reading level,
their writing goals will be based on their needs and the word work will be geared towards
them. She simplifies and changes the Daily 5 materials to ensure they are at the ELLs’
learning level.

Carol provides very similar accommodation for the English Language Learners.

Carol, explaining:

We do a lot of anchor charts in our class, this helps all students not just the
ELLs, but for the English Language Learners. We do a lot of word banks using
the white board to help with the spelling, use lots of pictures with words,
repetition is also key, providing one-on-one support and if needed to in the past
I’ve used the Google translator for language or relied on another student to
translate.

Although the collaboration between the ESL teacher and the main classroom
teacher is often informal, the accommodations that are made in both classes are very
similar. Both of the teachers use visuals cues, repetition, simple language and modified
expectations for the ELLs.

The ELLs have modified expectations based on the ESL stage they are in. As
Carol, the main classroom teacher clearly explains:

So the modifications for this one student in particular for celebration [in social
studies] they had to compare a celebration and because of his cultural
background, he doesn’t know a lot about celebrations to even compare them. So I
modified the expectations by saying to state a few details of the celebrations.

When other students are given written work, he is able to tell me orally and I'll scribble, he is also allowed to do pictures and maybe a few words to label. We give him a word bank or he may have an extra booklet with extra words. Obviously he is given more one on one support or paired up with a student. We had some fill in the blank vocabulary, that he understood after sometime, but still gave him the prompt of maybe like the first letter to help him. Otherwise he was able to cope.

This is a great example of how a modified program would be implemented within a regular classroom for ELLs. Maintaining the same accommodation based on mutual agreement creates a consistency between the two classrooms.

To assist the students even further, Sarah and Carol have a mutual agreement that the ELLs are able to bring work from other subjects to the ESL class to receive one-on-one support. Sarah agreed with Card who said, “They brought work that they may not understand, the terminology or may just need some modification, then yes they have brought work to do that.” This agreement between the 2 teachers enhances the support that the ELLs receive as they may struggle with the vocabulary and content of other subjects.

It is apparent that the 2 teachers informally collaborate to run parallel programs providing similar accommodations and modifications for the ELLs. Both of the teachers modify the expectations using the Ontario “English As A Second Language” document to ensure the students are successful in meeting their learning goals. In addition, they provide a variety of accommodations such as visual cues, simple language, one-on-one
support and word banks. This creates consistency and a connection between the two classrooms which enhances the students’ academic learning.

**Social Skills**

In addition to students’ the academic learning, Sarah and Carol also support the ELLs with opportunities to build on their social skills. Carol uses TRIBES and community building to help the ELLs cope within a large classroom setting and make them feel included. She explained:

> All the students take part in community building through tribes and our community classroom basic rules and community circles are on-going basis. I was actually given 2 ELLs after the classroom had started up, so we included them by allowing them to have a buddy. If I can, I match them up based on the same language and they were kind of acted as an ambassadress for a week. Took them [ELLs] to the washroom, gave them a tour of the school, helped them get familiar at recess and all the routines. That way they would felt comfortable enough and give them a little bit of time to introduce themselves.

As Carol helps the ELLs become comfortable with the new environment through the buddy system, Sarah will assist them and teach them social skills. Specific social skills, such as asking questions, will help the students cope within the classroom. One of the transitional challenges mentioned by Sarah is moving from small group setting to a large class where the ELLs often feel intimidated that they may say something wrong as Sarah explained:

> Some of the challenges they face is moving from a small group setting to a whole class setting. Primary students do not seem to have this fear of talking in
public as the juniors and intermediates do. Before I move my juniors or my intermediates students into the classroom, we do practicing as how they are gonna ask questions and what kind of questions they can ask. Making sure that the homeroom teacher knows that they are going to practice asking questions in large group setting, to make sure that they call on their memory and force them to help move that transitional along. I will also check in on them after they've transitioned back to the full classroom and they always know that they can come back to me during the literacy time that the juniors and the intermediates that I have had can come back for tutoring help, like a tutorial basis so they can flow back and forth.

Sarah is able to work collaboratively with the homeroom teacher to ensure that the social skills the students are practicing are being implemented in the main classroom.

As Sarah will teach social skills such as asking questions to help the students cope within the large group setting, Carol will positively support the students to demonstrate those skills. She further makes them feel comfortable in the classroom through tribes and community circles. The collaboration and support of the two teachers will help the students cope within a new environment.

**Theme 3: Communication**

**Parents**

Communication between parents and teachers is vital, especially when the students are English Language Learners. When the regular classroom teacher or the ESL teacher needs to communicate with the parents, depending on the area of concern, they will first talk amongst each other to discuss the issue. Sarah mentioned that she will often inform
the regular classroom teacher of any major issues or concerns she has about the child and together they will discuss how they will be communicating with the parents. She prefers communicating with the parents in person:

I might communicate with them in person, it’s easier than over the phone and frequently parent nights they will come in and I'll have the students make sure to come and meet me. Also, a lot of the times they will bring a friend or relative to do the translation. We can get translators if it’s needed too, we've done that as well.

Since Carol sees the parents more often, her method of communication differed:

The children being in primary, a lot of them still get picked up which is great because you catch them when they are getting picked up and we can have a conversation that way. Written is very good because if they can’t understand it, either one of the parents, I find are more verbal and have strength with English so they are able to take that to someone who can translate it. I've never really encountered someone where I've needed a translator but I do know a lot of different teachers in the school that I could go to as a resource to translate if needed.

Although the two teachers may differ in their method of communication with parents, they still discuss issues with each other before formally contacting the parents. In addition, during parents’ meeting night the ESL teacher will be present when the regular classroom teacher is meeting the parents.

**Theme 4: Collaboration**
The theme of collaboration is one that connects all the other themes within the data. It is important to recognize the way that the two teachers collaborate with one another to ensure the ELLs are being supported and their needs are being met. In addition, the two teachers need to ensure that the curriculum is modified and accommodations are made for the students in both classes.

Sarah communicated with Carol in this way:

It’s casual and ongoing. During report card time we touch basis to talk about learning skills as well. I've also will let them know that if they need help modifying any of the other subject areas I am always available to help them modify. I've done that when the homeroom teacher bring tests ahead of time or tell me what unit it was on and I would help modify it.

Carol added:

It’s pretty random, like Sarah* will seek me out and kind of update me on "oh we are doing this" or "he did a really good job doing this" or we'll kind of pass each other in the hallway. We don't really pass on work to each other because he is withdrawn but we do communicate before the report card goes home for learning skills and that sort of thing and talk about maybe when they are ready to be integrated back into the regular classroom

It is evident that although the communication between the two teachers is often informal, it is consistent and takes place on a daily basis. This communication helps Carol and Sarah to run a parallel program that benefits the students. They always make sure to discuss the behaviour of a student with one another before officially contacting the parents. The collaboration that exists between 2 teachers is daily and informal. It is
the method that works best for them. It has allowed them to run their own individual programs while still being able to collaborate with one another during report cards and when creating learning goals for the students.
Chapter 5: FINDINGS

Introduction

This research study focused examined the inter-professional collaboration between an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher. There are many students in their school who are English language learners. Many of these students struggle with the academic work, as they are not able to comprehend the content being taught. It is important for the main classroom teachers and the ESL teachers to collaborate and provide the best learning environment to meet the needs of the ELLs.

The literature review in chapter two provided many case studies on different ESL programs that are being implemented in different schools. Some studies focused on the pull-out method and others investigated implementing in class support. In addition, some research studies believed strong collaboration between the two teachers can further enhance the learning of the ELLs.

The pull-out method of support (Peercy, 2011) was evident in my research study as the ESL teacher used the curriculum and modified it to the needs of the students. The ESL teacher focused on teaching the students the same content that was being taught in the main classroom. She adapted her program to the long range plans that was given by the homeroom teachers. Furthermore, her literacy block was parallel to the one that was being implemented in the main classroom. Both the ESL class and the homeroom class implemented the Daily 5 and CAFÉ strategies during the literacy block. Modification and accommodation were made for the ELLs based on their needs.
Teacher training was an issue that often came up in previous research. Many teachers felt unprepared as to how they would modify and create a program for ELLs (Adams, Brooks, & Mullaney, 2010). These teachers were confused and felt lost because of the lack of support and communication from other staff.

Although the topic of teacher training was not discussed with the main classroom teacher in my study, Carol mentioned that she used to be an ESL teacher and therefore she knew how to modify the curriculum and use different teaching strategies to help the ELLs in her class. In addition the ESL teacher mentioned that if the main classroom teacher ever needed assistance modifying a unit or test that she would help them. Therefore even if the teacher does not have any background knowledge on how to help the ELLs, the ESL teacher can assist the main classroom teacher through collaboration and exchanging of teaching strategies.

The ways that the ESL teachers and main classroom teachers provide support for their ELLs in my research was similar to that recommended. These practices included focusing on visual cues, one-on-one support, home language translation, repetition and giving instruction slowly, in addition to prompting (DelliCarpini, 2012; Edmond, 2009).

Previous Research also showed that teachers can support their ELLs by ensuring they have the background knowledge about the subject area before starting a unit and creating a vocabulary list and teaching it to the ELLs helping them comprehend the content that is being taught (Clara, 2007). Again, this strategy was noticeable as the main classroom teacher provided word banks, visual cues, prompting and received help from the ESL teacher when teaching science and social studies to the ELLs. This method was also seen in the with the ESL teacher as she stated that the students in junior grades
would often bring down work from other subjects and she would provide one-on-one support.

The theme of collaboration was the main focus of the research study, however there was a difference between the literature review and the data collected. Fu, Houser and Huang (2007) explored the ideal collaboration between an ESL teacher and a main classroom teacher. The two teachers would meet on a daily basis and plan together how and what they will be teaching. The ESL teacher would take the students out of the classroom, at least twice a day and work on different subjects with them. In my research study, however, the collaboration was different amongst the two teachers. They had an informal collaboration. At the beginning of the year they exchanged long range plans and would implement their own program, but always touched base with one another to ensure they were running a similar program. Although the collaboration did not seem as formal as what it was in the literature review, it is what works best for both of the teachers. The informal collaboration allows the teachers to be able to run their own program side by side without having to meet on a day to day basis.

**Explanation of Findings**

The findings in this research study were divided in five main themes: ESL literacy program, method of support, communication and collaboration. The 5 themes demonstrated a typical ESL program and how it is implemented and how the main classroom teacher and ESL teacher collaborate with one another.

**Theme 1: ESL Literacy Program**

**Daily 5**
The ESL teacher created the Daily 5 program for the ELLs which is very similar to the main classroom literacy block, however modifications are made based on the students’ needs. The students do not feel that they are being taken out to do something different because they don’t know English, but rather they are doing the same activities in smaller groups. This is important for ELLs since no children wants to feel that they are different or that they are missing out on class time. This makes the transition from ESL class to the main class much easier on the students and the teacher as they can continue their work when they come back to the classroom. Implementing parallel program has great benefits for the ELLs. As the teachers exchange long range plans, they are able to create individual program but still have it be similar to one another. The ESL teacher will always know what is happening in the main classroom and whether her students can benefit from learning the same contents or they need to focus on something else. Implementing the parallel programs also provides the teachers with opportunities to exchange students’ work and be able to discuss their progression since without formal meetings.

**Theme 2: Methods of Support**

Both the ESL and main classroom teacher talked about methods of support for the English Language Learners in their classroom. The two teachers use the same teaching strategies for the ELLs when assisting them in learning.

**Accommodations and Evaluation**

It is important that the two teachers use the same document when modifying the curriculum for the ELLs. This creates a balance when it comes to learning goals and assessment. After the ESL teacher decides what stage the students are in (Stage1,2,3 or
COLLABORATION IN AN ELL CONTEXT

4), she can use the Ontario document, “English As Second Language” to use specific accommodations that are geared towards the ELLs. During this time the main classroom teacher is also notified of the students’ stage and he or she can then further modify the curriculum based on their needs.

In this research study it was evident that the ESL teacher and main classroom teacher worked together to ensure the students’ needs are being met in both classes. As they have informal weekly meetings, they discuss the progress of the students, what their next steps are and how they can get there. In addition, the main classroom teacher and the ESL teacher are able to work together during report card time since their individual programming and method of assessment is very similar to one another.

Social Skills

The two teachers work collaboratively to ensure the students are included in the main classroom. It is hard for students to be out of the classroom for a period of time, therefore the main classroom teacher implements community circles and sets up a buddy system to ensure they are feeling comfortable in the new environment. The ESL teacher also provides opportunities for the students to stay back in their class if a special event is going on or if the main classroom teacher wants to them to stay back. The ESL teacher also teaches the students social skills, such as asking questions, so the students are encouraged to participate more. The two teachers work together as a team to encourage the students to build on their social skills and learning skills. It is important to recognize that the collaboration between the two teachers is at the core of the program that is created for the ELLs. If the two teachers did not work together and ran their own
individual programs, then the students would have been getting different expectations and accommodations causing a disconnection between the main classroom and ESL class.

**Theme 3: Communication**

**Parents**

Parents and teachers of English Language Learners need to communicate with each regularly. When the regular classroom teacher or the ESL teacher needs to communicate with the parents, depending on the area of concern, they first talk to each other. They may have a quick chat, often on a weekly basis. It is important that the conversation is happening and that it is ongoing between the two teachers. Therefore when it comes to contacting the parents, although it is usually the responsibility of the main classroom teacher, the ESL teacher is just as involved.

**Theme 4: Collaboration**

It is important to recognize the way that the two teachers collaborate with one another ensures that the ELLs are being supported and their needs are being met. They modify the curriculum for the ELLs making sure to include accommodations for students. They work together during report card times to ensure they both agree of what is going on the report. In addition the main classroom teacher may give the ESL teacher a test or unit to help modify, based on the students’ needs. They collaborate in order to implement similar accommodations during their teaching times, this creates consistency and connection between the two classes.

**Implications for Teaching**

Through this research study I was able to observe and investigate how a typical ESL program operates. It really taught me a lot about how hard it can be when students
are taken out of the classroom for extra support and how important it is to collaborate with the other teacher to ensure there is a connection between the two classes and not have the students feel isolated.

Although the literature review argued that the best collaboration happens when teachers plan together and the ESL teacher provides support during Literacy and other subjects, it is rather a difficult process as many school systems have specific way of operating. I believe that the way the two teachers collaborate with one another is a great example of how they can make it work without spending long periods of time setting up formal meetings. It is important to recognize how the short ongoing, informal meetings are just as effective as formal monthly ones. When the teachers are running similar programs and can quickly touch base on the progress and development of the students, it makes it easier for both to focus on what the next steps would be for the ELLs.

The two teachers can also exchange long range plans and meet at the beginning of the school year to touch basis on how they would like to continue their communication (e.g. weekly, daily informal or communication book). The two teachers need to consistently touch basis with each other to ensure the students are on track and that their learning goals for them are the same in both classes. The collaboration that occurs between the two teachers can influence how the students cope within a new environment and academically develop.

I believe the way that the two teachers are collaborating and running parallel literacy blocks is the most beneficial for the ELLs. Many of the accommodations that the main classroom teacher and the ESL teacher implement I have used during my past practicum when I had ELLs in my class. Furthermore I believe the accommodations that
were provided for the ELLs would benefit many of the primary students; therefore using them for the whole class would be effective.

**Recommendations**

This research study also showed that main classroom teachers should have prior training so they are able to adjust the curriculum and modify it based on the students’ needs. Providing accommodations such as visual cues, word banks, translate in home language, transcribing and modifying expectations. These are some examples of how both teachers can use the same method of support to create consistency for the ELLs.

**Qualifications and limitations**

Some limitations of this study were the interview process and the number of participants. During the interviews I was very nervous, and started speaking very fast. I believe that also made the participants nervous and they were rushing through their answers instead of taking their time. As I went back to transcribe the interviews I noticed how fast I was speaking and I can tell in their voice that they were also rushing and trying to make their answers short.

In addition, I only interviewed 1 ESL teacher and 1 main classroom teacher. If I had interviewed another main classroom teacher then I could have further examined how the 2 main classroom teachers collaborate and communicate with the ESL teacher. It would have also provided me with more data to analyze and compare. Including few other schools in the research study would have also changed the outcome of the data and the findings. However due to timing I was only able to interview the ESL teacher and 1 main classroom teacher.

**Further Research**
Some possible next steps to think about would be to focus on how we can make collaboration between the two teachers stronger by providing the ESL teacher more support time with the students and have the ESL teacher become more involved with the main classroom. It is important to review how schools operate and how those issues could be solved internally. Further research is suggested to see how other schools are implementing their ESL programs and what is working and what things can be changed. Through additional research, a bigger picture of the ESL programs can be seen and what methods are working for teachers and students and what isn’t and needs to be changed. In addition, comparing schools can demonstrate the different ways teachers collaborate with one another.

**Conclusion: Summary of Findings and Discussion**

The focus of this research study was to examine the collaboration that occurs between an ESL teacher and main classroom teacher in order to create an effective program for ELLs. As two teachers were interviewed for this study, it became clear that many teachers do not have time to be able to meet formally on a daily basis, in addition there is no specific reason to as they run their own individual programs.

It is evident that although the communication between the two teachers is often informal, it is consistent, and often on a daily basis. As a result, they implement parallel programs that benefit the students. They always make sure to discuss the behaviour of a student with one another before officially contacting the parents. The collaboration that exists between 2 teachers is daily and informal. It is the method that works best for them. It has allowed them to run their own individual programs while still being able to
collaborate with one another during report cards and when creating learning goals for the students.
REFERENCES


Appendix A: Interview Questions

Hi, my name is Niki Ghazi and I am a student from University of Toronto doing my Master of Teaching. I want to thank you for participating in this research project. My research topic is about the collaboration between ESL teachers and main classroom teachers. I am interested in finding out more about the way ESL programs are being implemented in schools as well as how the relationship between the two teachers can affect students’ learning. I will be asking 15 questions today. You may review the questions before answering them. As you know from the consent letter, I will also be video-taping our interview. Do you have any questions before we start?

ESL Teacher Interview Questions:

Background Information:
1) a) How long have you been teaching as an ESL teacher?
   b) Tell me about a typical day as an ESL teacher.

Teaching Methods
2) What stage of language development are the students with whom you typically work and support?
3) What methods do you have in place to help your English Language Learner to learn English?
4) What are some challenges that your ELLs face during transitional time? Can you tell me a story of students you have worked with regarding the transition out of ESL classrooms.
5) What subject areas do you focus on in your sessions with the ELLs?
6) What curriculum do you implement with your ELLs? (e.g. if the main class is learning about poetry, do you teach the ELLs poetry as well?)
7) How similar are ESL classroom activities to regular classroom activities?
8) What accommodations and/or modifications, if any, are made for the ELLs in the regular classroom?
9) How are the ELLs assessed? (e.g. the same in their classrooms and in your class?)
10) Do you and the regular classroom teacher work collaboratively? If yes, can you provide an example?
11) What is the most important goal you have in mind when working with ELLs?

Communication
12) How do you communicate with the students’ teachers? When? How often?
13) How do you communicate with the students’ parents? Do you use translators?

Challenges
14) As an ESL teacher, what challenges do you face in implementing a pull out method when working with ELLs?
15) Do you think there is another method that would be beneficial?

Main classroom teacher questions:

Background Information:
1) a) How long have you been teaching?
    b) What grade are you currently teaching?
    c) How many ELLs do you have in your class?
    d) Tell me about a typical day as a teacher.

Teaching Methods
2) What methods do you have in place to support the ELLs in learning to read and write?
3) What methods do you have in place to help your ELLs cope in the classroom? (e.g. inclusion activities, team-builders, translators, other?)
4) Do you allow the ELLs to finish work from the ESL program during your teaching time? (e.g. if they are working on a story in the ESL class, but don’t finish, can they finish it in your class?)
5) Are the ELLs able to work one-on-one or in small groups with the ESL teacher on your classroom work?
6) What accommodations and/or modifications, if any, are made for your ELLs in your classroom?
7) How are the ELLs’ assessed?
8) Who writes the report card and meets with the parents? (e.g. Do you and the ESL teacher collaborate? Please explain how this works.)
9) Do you and the ESL teacher work collaboratively? If yes, can you provide an example?
10) What is the most important goal you have in mind when working with ELLs and the ESL teacher?

Communication
11) How do you communicate with your students’ ESL teacher? When? How often?
12) How do you communicate with the students’ parents? Do you use translators? Translated newsletters?

Challenges
13) As a teacher, what challenges do you face working with your ELLs?
14) What other support do you think would be beneficial?

Thank you for your time and input!
Appendix B: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ___________________

Dear ___________________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying ________________ for the purposes of investigating an educational topic as a major assignment for our program. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr._________________. My research supervisor is _____________________. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 40 minute interview that will be tape-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the tape recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: _________________________________

Phone number, email: ______________________________

Instructor’s Name: ____________________________________________
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by ______________________ (name of researcher) and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ________________________________

Name (printed): ________________________________

Date: ________________________________