

**INCLUSION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN A
MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF THE BELIEFS
AND PRACTICES OF ONE ELEMENTARY TEACHER**

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the ways in which one elementary teacher included English language learners (ELLs) in her mainstream classroom. A case study design was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of this teacher's beliefs and practices about ELLs and their inclusion. Descriptive data were collected from teacher interviews, classroom observations, and various artefacts. Data from these three sources were found to be highly consistent, indicating a close relationship between the teacher's beliefs and practices.

Two main themes emerged relating to the teacher's ways of supporting and including young ELLs. The first theme was concerned with the teacher's beliefs in and employment of broad-based instructional strategies such as differentiating instruction and assessment; emphasizing engagement through the use of a variety of meaningful activities and materials; focusing on oral language; stressing problem solving and cooperative learning; and encouraging students to take the lead. While the literature endorsed these general practices, it also stressed the need for teachers to address ELLs' distinct language and cultural needs.

Appreciating and incorporating diversity to facilitate ELLs' inclusion was the second theme. Here, the data primarily came from interviews with the teacher who reported the value of exposing children to diversity and examining one's and others' biases, as well as utilizing practices that integrate the cultural knowledge of various groups and involve parents of diverse linguistic/cultural backgrounds. An analysis of these data found that many of the teacher's approaches to incorporating diversity were integral to her program and addressed diversity from a critical standpoint. It was in this way that the findings connected to Dei et al.'s (2000) work—a key component of the study's theoretical framework.

Upon examining the data through the lenses of various theoretical constructs, one main concern regarding this teacher's views and practices was raised throughout. Although the teacher

appeared to recognize the value of students maintaining their home languages, there was little evidence of her promoting first language usage in the classroom. Ramifications of this omission were discussed, pointing to the need for further research to uncover some of the concerns educators may have about supporting ELLs' first languages in the classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

For a short period of time many years ago, I worked in Ontario as an English as a second language (ESL) teacher pulling elementary English language learners (ELLs) out of their classrooms to assist them with their English language skills and to help mainstream teachers work with ELLs in their classrooms where such learners spent the majority of their time. I noted that many teachers knew little about ESL teaching/learning and how to include ELLs in their classrooms. At that time, I had only one additional qualification course in teaching ESL and little classroom teaching experience. As such, my skills were limited, particularly in terms of providing classroom teachers with effective strategies to include and support ELLs in the classroom. Most of my experience since then has been teaching literacy and numeracy to adult learners, interspersed with some ESL teaching to adults. However, now I would like to return to an elementary school setting.

I designed a case study to gain a better understanding of how the needs of ELLs can best be met in the regular classroom and the ways in which ELLs can be included genuinely in as many classroom activities as possible. In particular, I focused on the ways in which one teacher (who was considered by her principal to be effective in including ELLs) accommodated and supported ELLs in her elementary classroom. In this chapter, I begin with a brief discussion of some of the key terms used in this study and then I delineate more fully the purpose of the study, including questions that enabled me to explore my central question. My rationale for studying the inclusion of ELLs in a mainstream classroom is presented next and finally, I articulate the theoretical frameworks from which I analyze, in part, my data.

Chapter two provides a review of some of the research literature related to the topic of ELLs' inclusion. The qualitative research methods I used in carrying out my case study are

described in chapter three and I then present my data in chapters four, five, and six. Chapter seven discusses the data in terms of their relationship to other studies and my theoretical framework, and I end, in the final chapter, with some remarks regarding this study's applications and implications.

Key Terms

In the 2007 Ontario Ministry of Education document, "English language learners, ESL and ELD programs and services," English language learners are defined as "students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario's schools" (p. 8). Another Ontario Ministry of Education guide, "Supporting English language learners" (2008a) for grades 1 to 8 teachers, delineates four stages in ELLs' English language acquisition. (See Appendix A for an overview of these stages.) For the purposes of this study, however, ELLs were referred to as those students whose English language skills were at the first three stages. The participant of this study asserted that at her school ELLs who were at stage four of English language acquisition and ELLs who spoke a variety of English were not officially labelled as ELLs at the time of this study. That is, these ELLs were not considered as ELLs in terms of the school board's allocations of ESL services.

I chose to use the term "English language learner" (ELL) rather than other labels such as ESL learner or English learner because of the term's widespread use in more recent articles and Ontario Ministry of Education documents. As well, it was the term employed by the participant of this study. When referring to specific programs for ELLs (e.g., pull-out programs) or teachers who have specialized training in teaching ELLs (e.g., an additional teaching qualification), I use the term English as a second language (ESL)—again, the term most commonly utilized at this time. It should be noted that although ESL refers to the field of English language teaching, ELLs are not necessarily learning a second language: English may be their third or fourth language.

In this inquiry, I make use of the phrase, ‘mainstream classrooms’ to refer to classroom groupings of children (ELLs and non-ELLs) of similar ages who are taught primarily in English by generalist teachers who are required to follow the Ministry of Education curriculum for that grade level in all specific subjects (e.g., language, mathematics, social studies). Because the context of this study was a Kindergarten classroom in Ontario, the written curriculum most often referred to the various skills, concepts, and content across disciplines at this level, as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education. In instances in which curriculum means the enacted program employed by the teacher, I indicate that as such. Mainstream curriculum refers to the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education that “typically imply a generic student (white, monolingual, middle-class)” (Chow & Cummins, 2003, p. 54).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the practices or strategies used by one elementary teacher endeavouring to include ELLs in her elementary classroom. To achieve this purpose, I formulated four specific questions:

- What were the teacher’s beliefs/understandings about ELLs and their inclusion in her mainstream classroom?
- How were this teacher’s beliefs reflected in her teaching practices?
- What resources (human or other) did this teacher use to facilitate ELLs’ inclusion?
- Who and what helped to shape this teacher’s pedagogical beliefs and practices?

Rationale

In recent decades, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of children entering North American schools who have a limited knowledge of English, the dominant societal language and main language of instruction in the majority of schools (Cummins & Schecter, 2003; Hawkins, 2004; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004). Clegg (1996) presented the philosophical and policy changes that took place in Canada, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom

regarding the placement of ELLs from separate language-oriented classes for ELLs only to regular curriculum-based classrooms for ELLs and non-ELLs. The main argument for this shift to mainstream classes centred on issues of equity: mainstreaming ELLs was purported to provide greater educational opportunities (e.g., full curriculum, cognitively challenging teaching, full participation in the school). Furthermore, Clegg indicated that ELLs benefit from natural interactions with their native English speaking peers and their English language and literacy skills improve in mainstream classes. Meyers (2006) concurred but stressed that the provision of ESL services and the employment of effective approaches with ELLs should be present in order to reap the aforementioned benefits. However, as reported by an Ontario researcher, journalist, and ESL consultant (respectively, Cummins, 2006; Duffy, 2004; Meyers, 2006), these approaches and supports are lacking. Funding intended for ESL (which may include translation services, bilingual tutors, new classroom materials, as well as ESL teachers) has been diverted to other areas in education (Duffy, 2004; Meyers, 2006) and most classroom teachers have little or no education in how to support the needs of ELLs (Cummins, Bismilla, Cohen, Giampapa, & Leoni, 2006; Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Meyers, 2006).

Numerous studies (e.g., Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Rueda & Garcia, 1996) have indicated the need for teachers to receive professional development for teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms. According to Byrnes, Kiger and Manning (1997) such an education should “focus on attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate language development and cultural diversity” (p. 642). Likewise, I believe that examining one’s attitudes and beliefs about ELLs and second language learning and reflecting upon how those beliefs affect one’s teaching strategies should be an important component of professional development. It is my hope that this study, as a form of professional development, will inspire teachers to reflect upon their own teaching beliefs and practices with ELLs in their classrooms.

Through his synthesis of findings about the nature and importance of teachers’ beliefs, Pajares (1992) found that there seems to be a strong relationship between teachers’ education

beliefs and their classroom practices. Fang (1996), however, reported that while some studies indicated a consistency between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, others did not. Fang noted that paper and pencil surveys may reflect "what should be done rather than what is actually done" (p. 53) and thus, teachers' beliefs and practices may appear to be more consistent. On the other hand, both Fang and Pajares claimed that qualitative approaches, such as observing teachers in the context of the classroom, can add more depth "for richer, more accurate inferences" (Pajares, 1992, p. 327), revealing inconsistencies. For example, in a study that used both quantitative and qualitative methods, Rueda and Garcia (1996) stated that teachers sometimes strayed from their reported beliefs, particularly when there were mediating factors such as teachers feeling pressures for students to learn English quickly.

One common misconception that many teachers hold is the belief that ELLs' use of their native tongue, even in the home, interferes with their learning of English and their school performance. These teachers discourage ELLs from using their home language which means that they rarely or never use bilingual materials (Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Rueda & Garcia, 1996). However, studies show that "less instructional time through the majority language does not lead to academic retardation in that language" (Cummins, Chow & Schecter, 2006, p. 299). Indeed, evidence indicates that students who develop their literacy skills in two or more languages benefit in numerous ways—linguistically, cognitively, and affectively (Cummins & Schecter, 2003). Literacy skills in a child's native language can scaffold the process of learning to read another language and can promote overall conceptual development and academic knowledge. Cummins and Schecter aptly tied together how the deficit belief affects teachers' relations with ELLs:

This construction of children's bilingualism as a problem to be resolved (as opposed to an asset to be nurtured) frequently results in patterns of teacher-student interaction that communicate to students that they should leave their language and culture at the schoolhouse door...In classroom interactions, respect and affirmation are central to motivating second language learners to engage actively and enthusiastically in academic endeavours. (pp. 10, 11)

When teachers see the inclusion of ELLs as an opportunity for everyone, including the teacher, to learn about another language and culture and then incorporate materials that reflect linguistic and cultural diversity into the program, ELLs become more actively engaged in their learning and their needs are better met.

Although there have been many quantitative studies that survey teachers' thinking/beliefs and attitudes, there is a paucity of qualitative research that explores teachers' perspectives and teaching practices about the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Additionally, while there has been much written about best practices and accommodations for ELLs (Hawkins, 2005a, 2005b), most research in this field has examined strategies for ELLs taught in bilingual programs by bilingual teachers. Such programs were designed for students who came from the same language background (most often Spanish) to learn English through using the students' first language. However, because of the multitude of languages represented in many Ontario schools, bilingual programs are often not seen as a feasible option (Duffy, 2004). There is little research that focuses specifically on effective approaches for mainstream teachers to use with ELLs in multilingual/multicultural contexts or in classrooms where the teacher does not speak the language(s) of the ELLs (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000). Haworth (2003) also reported that the "literature to date has provided little in-depth insight into the everyday realities for primary teachers with NESB [non-English speaking background] students in their classrooms" (p. 142). Even fewer still are studies which describe practices/strategies that incorporate ELLs' language and culture into the classroom program as an approach for including ELLs, affirming their identities, and supporting their academic needs. I hope that my study will build on the existing research literature by focusing on the beliefs and practices of one teacher who values diversity in her classroom and is committed to providing all students with opportunities to learn and be active participants within a learning community.

Theoretical Framework

My study was informed by two interrelated theoretical frameworks: one model of inclusivity (Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson and Zine's, 2000) and one perspective on teacher-student relationships (Cummins & Schecter's, 2003), each of which relates to the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Dei et al. (2002) conceptualized inclusivity in schools from a critical perspective that examines issues of power and privilege within an educational system that privileges Western ways of knowing, leaving culturally and linguistically diverse students to assimilate to fit in or to disengage from school. What children often learn in school is that certain histories, languages and cultures are valued over others. The dominant culture is overvalued and minority cultures are undervalued (Nieto, 1999). Dei et al.'s (2002) "diversity as a critical perspective" (p. 8) works to decentre Euro-American models of discourse and practice so that other cultural knowledge bases may be removed from the margins and centred alongside the dominant knowledge base. Thus, an inclusive classroom environment is one where "minoritized students' culture, heritage, and understandings of the world are incorporated into the centre of the education process" (Dei et al., 2000, p. 256). It is important to note that critical multiculturalism differs from the traditional multiculturalist model that many schools have adopted to address diversity. Like Dei et al., I believe that traditional conceptions of multiculturalism dealing with only specific events or celebrations added on to the curriculum, do not lead to equity and, hence, inclusion. "Marginalized groups and their histories and experiences remain peripheral to dominant education discourses and practice" (p. 14).

Although Dei et al.'s (2000) framework generally applies to teaching adolescents from a variety of cultural backgrounds whose first language or language variety may or may not be English, parts of this model can be related to teaching elementary ELLs as well. For the purposes of my research, I used two central features of Dei et al.'s model because I found they seemed to relate most to the elementary classroom setting. The first feature relates to teachers tapping into the knowledge of students, their families and communities and raising questions about whose

voices, stories, or images are not heard or seen. The second refers to teachers valuing diversity in their classrooms and accommodating students' differing linguistic and cultural needs. My study examined the ways in which one particular teacher incorporated her students' languages and cultures into the classroom program and included parents and the community to facilitate the centering of these languages and cultures. Appendix E outlines the interview questions I asked which reflect Dei et al.'s framework.

Similarly, Cummins and Schecter (2003; Cummins, Chow, & Schecter, 2006) posited a theoretical orientation that focuses on integrating students' languages and cultures into the curriculum. Although their framework is primarily concerned about developing ELLs' academic expertise, in my view, it also provides educators with insights regarding ELLs' inclusion in the mainstream classroom. At the heart of this model are teachers' interactions with their students, as seen through the lens of efforts made by teachers to enhance students' self-concepts and cognitive engagement. Cummins, Chow and Schecter (2006) argued that the relationship between these two components is reciprocal. In order for students to invest in learning academic knowledge and an additional language, teachers need to affirm students' identities through active learning about the experiences, cultures, languages, and understandings that they bring and giving them occasions to share their knowledge. In turn, students will become more cognitively engaged. Conversely, when teachers provide opportunities for students to become immersed in their academic learning, the more their identity as a learner grows. The teacher's role is critical in designing learning environments in which both teachers and students are experts and learners.

Like Dei et al. (2000), Nieto (1999), and Kubota (2004), Cummins and Schecter (2003) stressed the need to move away from assimilationist notions and practices that ignore or dismiss culturally and linguistically diverse students' identities. When ELLs, their languages, and their cultures are validated and are seen as resources within the classroom, more equitable learning opportunities for all children are created (Hawkins, 2005b). Inclusionary practices that integrate the students' language, culture and understandings of the world can help culturally and

linguistically diverse students develop an “identity of empowerment” rather than an “identity of subordination” (Dei et al., 2000, p. 245). In my study, I looked at my participant’s interactions with her students and how she demonstrated a genuine interest in her students, encouraged their cognitive development, and was receptive to learning.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research that informed my study about the ways in which teachers include (or exclude) ELLs in elementary classrooms is grouped under four interrelated headings: teachers' attitudes and beliefs about ELLs and their inclusion in the mainstream classroom; valuing children's home language; connecting with families and the community; and classroom teaching styles and practices. Although much of the empirical research I found did not explicitly explore issues of ELLs' inclusion in mainstream classrooms, the topic of inclusion was implied through discussions of effective classroom practices for ELLs—practices that facilitate ELLs' participation in the classroom and practices that address and support ELLs' distinct needs—which cultivate an inclusive classroom environment. Before embarking on a review of the literature, though, I begin with a discussion of who English language learners are and a consideration of some of their needs.

English Language Learners and their Needs

The vast array of differences among children who are learning English as another language is not usually recognized (Freeman & Freeman, 2007). In an Ontario context, some ELLs are Canadian-born children who speak a language other than English; many others are new to Canada. Of the newcomers, some have had formal education in their native countries (and, of these, some may have studied English) while others have either not received any or have had limited or sporadic schooling. Additionally, not only do ELLs come from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds but the range of homeland experiences varies greatly. Some families have experienced trauma in their countries due to war or other crises and arrive in Canada seeking refuge. Others have immigrated to Canada voluntarily and have not suffered in these ways (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006b).

Given the wide variance in ELLs' school background, level of English language proficiency, level of first language literacy, and home country experiences, in addition to differences in family circumstances such as parents' educational and socioeconomic background, ELLs' academic, language, social, and emotional needs may vary significantly. One of the noticeable needs of all ELLs, however, is their need for ongoing English language support. Less well-known but equally important is ELLs' need for continuous support in the development of their home language. The following two sections look at these specific language needs.

English Language Needs

Numerous academics (e.g., Cummins & Schecter, 2003; de Jong & Harper, 2005) have made note of the distinction between the English ELLs need for communication in informal, social situations and the English ELLs are required to attain in more formal, academic settings. In discussing these different language registers, Watts-Taffe and Truscott (2000) stated that while context cues such as facial expressions, body language, and visuals assist the understanding and learning of conversational English, these kinds of cues are absent or reduced when individuals listen to, speak, read, or write in academic language—language that is tied to thinking/reasoning and content, often found in school settings. Cummins and Schecter reported that while ELLs can learn conversational English in about one to two years, it takes several more years for ELLs to attain proficiency in academic English. Teachers, then, need to be aware that even ELLs whose conversational skills in English are well-developed will still require continued instructional support in academic English in order to meet curriculum expectations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008).

Meyer (2000) and others (e.g., Lake & Pappamihel, 2003) have pointed out that academic concepts and content become more challenging as students progress to higher levels of education. In this way, the distinction between conversational and academic English is not as apparent for Kindergarten ELLs as it is for older ELLs. Despite the reduced emphasis on academic language at the Kindergarten level, Lake and Pappamihel indicated that teachers still

need to provide both young ELLs and non-ELLs contextual support to develop their understanding of school concepts and language.

First Language Needs

Research indicates that there are many academic and personal advantages of bilingualism (Cummins, Chow & Schecter, 2006; Lee & Oxelson, 2006). In particular, Ernst-Slavit (1997) noted studies that drew attention to the numerous benefits of “additive” bilingual approaches that foster second language learning at the same time as encouraging the development of first language acquisition. “When both languages and cultures are valued and perceived as complementary, bilingualism contributes positively to the cognitive, linguistic, and psychological development of children” (p. 26). More specifically, Ernst-Slavit stated that knowledge of two languages can improve self esteem which is often associated with academic success, strengthen family and community connections, and enhance metalinguistic understanding. Research also indicates that many of the literacy skills students have acquired in their first language will transfer to English (Cummins & Schecter, 2003; Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000). Armed with this knowledge, educators are in a position to encourage ELLs to draw on their first language skills to scaffold their language and literacy learning in English and their learning academic content/concepts (Commins & Miramontes, 2006; Freeman & Freeman, 1993).

In contrast, a subtractive bilingual approach values the second language more than the first language such that students may lose the language of their home and all of the aforementioned benefits of additive bilingualism. Many researchers (e.g., Cummins & Schecter, 2003; Fillmore, 2000; Lee & Oxelson, 2006) have documented the risks of language minority children losing their first language upon learning English and the concomitant losses that occur as a result (e.g., loss of intimacy and communication/understanding between parents and children, creating tensions; loss of passing on family/cultural knowledge, values, beliefs; lowered self esteem). According to Fillmore, there is evidence that language loss has accelerated in today’s world, affecting first generation children as opposed to second or third generation children of the

past. She claimed that internal forces such as a desire for social inclusion and conformity and external forces (e.g., sociopolitical influences operating against outsiders, difference, and diversity) are causes of language shifts from the home language to English and the likely loss of one's native tongue.

Lee and Oxelson (2006) cited one study which indicated that ELLs who do not develop fluency in their first and second languages are more likely to drop out of school than those who become proficient in both languages. Cummins (2006) summarized the far-reaching extent of first language loss:

This language replacement process represents a loss of opportunity and linguistic capital for the individual child, a squandering of linguistic resources that are highly valuable within a globalized economy for the country as a whole, and frequently an interruption of communication and cultural transmission within the family. (p. 6)

Teachers' Attitudes/Beliefs about ELLs and their Inclusion in Mainstream

Classrooms

Most of the quantitative and qualitative studies in this review that examined classroom teachers' attitudes toward ELLs and their inclusion in the mainstream classroom revealed that classroom teachers have generally positive attitudes toward ELLs but neutral or less than favourable attitudes toward ELLs' inclusion in the classroom (e.g., Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Qualitative studies uncovered some of the complexities of teachers' beliefs about ELLs and their learning. For instance, although the three teachers in Franson's inquiry (1999) showed great empathy toward ELLs, they questioned the practice of placing ELLs in regular classrooms because of the enormous responsibility it places on the classroom teacher who is ill-equipped to effectively teach ELLs.

Of the studies that examined teachers' beliefs about first language maintenance, teachers generally viewed bilingualism as a benefit. However, teachers tended to have less favourable beliefs about including ELLs' first languages in their classrooms (Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Karabenick and Clemens Noda looked extensively at other facets of

beliefs in a large-scale study that examined differences between teachers who had positive attitudes toward ELLs and teachers who had less accepting attitudes. The attitudes of the K-12 teachers were correlated with various beliefs about language diversity. Results indicated that teachers more accepting of ELLs in their classes were more likely to believe that students' first language does not interfere with their learning English; first language proficiency facilitates school performance; and bilingualism and biculturalism are beneficial.

A number of quantitative studies found a relationship between positive attitudes toward ELLs and some kind of exposure to cultural diversity such as experience with ELLs, living or teaching in another culture, and/or second language training (Byrnes et al., 1997; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Karabenick and Clemens Noda found that the more experience teachers had with ELLs, the more favourable their attitudes toward having ELLs in their classrooms. Interestingly, although Youngs and Youngs generally concurred, their study probed further and found that there was a stronger connection between positive attitudes toward ELLs and teachers who had experiences with ELLs from a variety of cultural backgrounds than teachers who were exposed to many ELLs from fewer cultural backgrounds. In other words, it was teachers' experiences with wide-ranging cultural diversity that was a more significant predictor of teachers' positive attitudes. Focusing on a related factor, Byrnes and her colleagues reported that not only did teachers who had more experience with ELLs have more favourable attitudes, but it was more specifically teachers who had a better quality of experience with ELLs. These researchers looked at teachers from three different regions of the U.S. (Utah, Virginia, and Arizona) and found that teachers from Arizona, a supportive, resource-rich context for teachers and students, had the most positive attitudes.

Several studies showed that positive language beliefs were associated with formal training in second language learning (Byrnes et al., 1997; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). One issue that was raised by many of the researchers was the question of what kind of coursework is most effective for teachers. Indeed, this seems to be an area that has not

been well investigated (Rueda & Garcia, 1996). Clair (1995), though, addressed this issue in her qualitative study that focused on three classroom teachers' perspectives on teaching ELLs. She found that these teachers were critical of the "one-shot professional development workshops" (p. 192). Teachers from other studies shared this sentiment (Franson, 1999; Rueda & Garcia, 1996). Rueda and Garcia reported that teachers stated that in-service programs often emphasized a single strategy rather than attending to the underpinnings of a particular practice.

In a three year collaborative study comprised of teachers, university researchers, and community members who explored teachers' understandings of diversity, Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter (2002) looked at the discourses and associated practices of educators from two urban, culturally diverse schools in Ontario who were involved in professional development projects related to their work with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Based on audio-taped interviews and group meetings with the participating teachers, field notes of the teachers' formal and informal meetings with school personnel, and the teachers' journal writings of their thoughts about group meetings and readings, the researchers found that teachers fit under one of four groupings that identified each teacher's perspective on minority students' integration within the school system. The researchers contended that the first category is characterized by the view that ELLs' lack of English is an obstacle to learning. Familiarizing minority students and their families with 'Western' ways (e.g., healthy lifestyle, school curriculum) was the focus of teachers with the second orientation. In the third grouping, participating teachers stressed the importance of being sensitive to children's varied backgrounds, learning styles, and needs in order to transmit the core curriculum to students. Finally, the last teaching stance was exemplified by teachers promoting the development of children's first language literacy and integrating the diverse resources of students, their families, and communities into the classroom curriculum.

Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter (2002) stated that they were hopeful in the results of their findings which showed that over the course of the three years, a significant minority of participating educators changed considerably to a more inclusive teaching approach after being

exposed to community-oriented views. While there were only two participating teachers whose ideological stance fell in the first category, the researchers claimed that the first orientation was much more prevalent in other professional development studies that they had conducted.

Additionally, the authors noted that their study reported on a minority of teachers (39 of 90 teachers) who volunteered to participate. Less favourable findings indicated that 21 participants had views that were grouped in the second category and many of them remained in this group despite their readings and discussions about using diversity as a resource.

One comment I had about this study was that although Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter (2002) stated that some teachers' orientations did not remain fixed in one category over the course of the professional development period, the researchers did not discuss the possibility that teachers' views might cross over more than one orientation. In fact, when I read their examples of teachers' perspectives, I found evidence of other orientations. For instance, one teacher whose stance was grouped in the second category discussed the importance of family stories and the need for teachers to draw on these resources. This excerpt suggests that besides the data that placed her in the second category, this teacher also saw, to some extent, diversity as a resource: the fourth grouping. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter's study, though, was helpful as a guide to identifying some of my participant's more dominant beliefs. Furthermore, these researchers' notions of using diversity as the curriculum connect to other tools used for my analysis, especially Dei et al.'s (2000) framework.

In another more recent Canadian study that looked at another kind of deficit notion, Peterson and Heywood (2007) conducted interviews with 10 principals, 12 teachers and 23 parents of children in K-Grade 8 to examine their perspectives and assumptions about the contributions of children's first language and culture to ELLs' literacy. In analyzing the data, the researchers used McCaleb's (1994) critique of a minority language and culture deficit model commonly employed in schools—a model that assumes that parents' linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds determine the extent to which parents can assist in their children's education. Thus,

it is assumed, for example, that parents who speak a language other than English and whose knowledge differs from the knowledge valued by the school cannot contribute to the English literacy development of their children. Furthermore, it assumes that minority parents do not employ home literacy practices.

In their study, Peterson and Heywood (2007) found that although there was some evidence of support for deficit notions, participating teachers, principals and parents challenged the deficit model's assumptions overall. All participants believed that parents play a significant role in their children's learning and many of the minority parents read to their children in their native language and/or English. Furthermore, teachers and principals demonstrated a high regard for and interest in ELLs' languages and cultures through learning about their languages and cultures, encouraging parents to read and write to their children in their native language, purchasing dual language books or involving parents and children in the creation of dual language books and providing translation services and heritage language classes. As well, all participants supported the view that respect for ELLs' first language and culture is the basis for English language literacy learning. This study aligns with the research I conducted in terms of focusing on the beliefs about the value of minority language families' linguistic and sociocultural 'capital' (the knowledge base that ELLs and their families bring to the classroom) and incorporating that knowledge into the classroom program. My research, however, explored, to a greater depth, one teacher's perspectives and practices through a series of interviews and observations. Indeed, Peterson and Heywood recommended a case study approach to add more depth to the "interaction of assumptions and practices" (p. 534).

Valuing Children's Home Language

Closely related to matters of teacher attitudes toward ELLs is the issue of how teachers perceive their role in promoting their students' heritage languages. Through surveying and interviewing K to 12 teachers in California, Lee and Oxelson (2006) found that, whereas teachers with ESL training believed that heritage language development was the responsibility of the

home and school, classroom teachers without any such professional development believed that parents should take full responsibility for maintaining their children's native languages because many of them perceived home language support as a family activity. Additionally, many of the teachers without ESL coursework stated that they did not have the time in class, nor did they know how to support students in this way. One confounding aspect of the study, as noted by the researchers, was the matter of whether or the extent to which ESL programs affect teachers' attitudes in a favourable way or whether teachers who already possess positive attitudes toward promoting students' home languages in the classrooms are individuals who choose to enter ESL programs. Another significant result of this study was the finding that teachers who were fluent in another language besides English were more likely to encourage students to use their home languages in the classrooms than teachers who spoke only English. Consequently, Lee and Oxelson stressed the need for schools to promote the learning of foreign languages for all. In their concluding remarks, the authors stated that they were not suggesting that teachers be expected to instruct students in their heritage languages. Instead, they were stressing the important role all teachers can play in the maintenance of their students' languages through showing an interest in and highlighting students' linguistic resources in class.

Based on the collaborative work of one professor, one Kindergarten teacher, and one graduate student, Schwarzer, Haywood and Lorenzen (2003), respectively, addressed some teachers' attitudes and misconceptions about the usage of ELLs' home languages in the classroom (e.g., the overriding mistaken belief stressed in the article is the notion that monolingual teachers cannot support linguistic diversity in a linguistically diverse classroom because they do not speak, read, or write in the languages of their students) and offered ideas for educators to create "multiliterate" classrooms. Some of these researchers' suggestions included the following: learning some key words and phrases in the students' languages and encouraging students to use some key words in their languages to share with the classroom community; using stories, songs, and simple conversations in the students' languages, including the creation of

audio-tapes; creating posters and other print in multiple languages; and inviting parents and the community to help with the aforementioned projects. In a yearlong study (Van Suys with Reinier, 2006) that examined not only the ways in which teachers may draw on ELLs' home language knowledge, Van Suys highlighted other resources that ELLs may possess which may be shared with members of the classroom to the benefit of all. Here, through an ongoing process of observing and interviewing one monolingual teacher who valued the multiple linguistic resources of the classroom community and her Grades 4 to 6 students, Van Suys gained an understanding of the classroom community's shared, multilingual views toward learning. In particular, Van Suys reported on the literacy practices of four ELLs, observing numerous collaborative interactions between the ELLs and their classroom peers which utilized specific resources such as students' native languages, visual arts' gifts, and technology skills of each ELL such that each classroom member learned about and from one another.

From another perspective of valuing children's heritage languages, Ernst-Slavit, (1997) and Shannon (1995) examined the role of language status as a distinct feature of inclusionary or exclusionary practices. In Ernst-Slavit's study, the author reported on various interactions between teachers and students in an all Spanish Grade 1 classroom. Although the two main classroom teachers were both native Spanish speakers and spoke to the children in Spanish only, the variety of Spanish used by the children differed from that used by the teachers. In fact, the children's Spanish contributions were often not accepted or acknowledged, sometimes made fun of, and usually corrected to the 'authorized' version of Spanish. Interestingly, it was the non-Spanish speaking art teacher who incorporated the children's Spanish words and phrases into her lesson with English and Spanish speaking students, thus validating all student contributions.

Unlike Ernst-Slavit's (1997) study where the school language had a higher status than the home language, Shannon (1995) found in her inquiry of a fourth-grade classroom that the school and home languages were equally valued. "Mrs. D," a bilingual teacher in a classroom of Spanish, English, and Spanish-English speakers, explicitly emphasized the value and power of

bilingualism and created an environment where high quality course content and materials were available in both Spanish and English and both languages were equally represented in communicative interactions. Although I did not observe a bilingual teacher or bilingual program in my research, these studies clearly show the ways in which teachers' beliefs about the value of students' home languages send significant messages to students and how a monolingual teacher, such as the art teacher in Ernst-Slavit's (1997) inquiry and the teachers in Schwartz et al.'s (2003) and Van Suys' (2006) studies, can incorporate students' languages into the classroom program.

Connecting with Families and the Community

In this section, I look at studies that acknowledged differences between the home and school languages and cultures and explored ways in which teachers can bridge these differences, through connecting with minority language children's families and communities. Masny and Ghadremani-Ghajar's (1999) ethnographic case study in the Ottawa area investigated school based literacy practices in relation to Somalian children's home literacy practices. Similar to what Dei et al. (2000) noted, Masny and Ghadremani-Ghajar drew attention to the educational bias toward Eurocentric knowledge and educational practices in which children's identities were not represented in texts and the curriculum. Both the classroom teacher and ESL teacher held traditional views about literacy that did not acknowledge the literacies of Somalian children/families who were seen as 'illiterate' in their own language. On the other hand, one of the researchers who tutored the two Somalian children reflected a pedagogy of multiple literacies whereby the children's cultural and linguistic knowledge, and oral literacy knowledge (Arabic knowledge of the Koran) was brought to the foreground. The researcher also actively encouraged the Somalian children's parents who were perceived by school personnel as having limited literacy and linguistic resources to participate in classroom activities where their knowledge base was recognized and included. In particular, the researchers reported that initially, Somalian parents were uneasy about coming into the classroom because of their discomfort with the

English language and they were uncertain about how they could help; however, upon realizing that their language was accepted in the classroom, they found a ‘place’ (e.g., listening to children read, participating in games).

In a collaborative undertaking between teachers and researchers, Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) visited Spanish speaking homes in Mexican communities in Tuscon, Arizona and tapped into families’/communities’ ‘funds of knowledge’ (a term used frequently in Moll et al.’s study) to develop innovative classroom practices. For example, after discovering that one parent had expert knowledge about candy, a class project evolved around a candy theme whereby students employed investigative strategies to learn about candy. Activities included brainstorming about definitions of candy, hypothesizing about what ingredients would be listed on labels, graphing results, and making Mexican candy. This latter activity involved the expert parent coming in to teach and talk about many topics related to candy.

In a multicultural/multilingual Canadian school context where 40 languages were represented, another collaborative teacher-researcher project involved parents in a different way. Cummins, Chow, and Schecter (2006) created multilingual reading surveys for ELLs’ families to find out about children’s reading experiences and habits; parents’ access to children’s literature and audio technology; and parents’ interest in sharing their linguistic and cultural expertise with classrooms. As a result of this input, dual language books—stories in English and the children’s first language—were purchased for students to read at home and in school. Dual language books were also created by the children with the help of teachers, families and friends, giving children occasions to delve into their language and English and resources through which to share their stories with others.

As noted by Haneda (2007), underlying these approaches is “deep respect for, and appreciation of, students’ home languages and cultures and an attempt to make students’ experiences in both home and school coherent and mutually reinforcing” (p. 343). In my research, I explored the ways in which one teacher included parents as resources to other knowledge bases.

Classroom Teaching Styles, Practices, and Routines

I divide this part of my review into two sections. In the first, I review four studies that looked at effective and ineffective practices with ELLs related to teachers' overall teaching style, professional development, and theoretical orientation. I then examine four longitudinal, ethnographic studies (three of which are part of the same larger study) in the second section which described mainstream elementary classroom practices and routines that limit or facilitate ELLs' access to participation (e.g., play, conversations, literacy activities) and resources (e.g., media, books).

Teachers' Styles/Orientations Affecting ELLs' Inclusion

I begin with a study that focused on exploring what mainstream teachers regarded as effective practices with ELLs. While this study only reported on those strategies that teachers raised, I include Facella, Rampino and Shea's (2005) inquiry because, after presenting my own data, I found that there was a close relationship to my participant's general practices with ELLs and those discussed in this study. Based on interviews with 20 primary teachers of large ELL populations in two communities in Massachusetts, Facella et al. divided their data into three main groups: general teaching strategies (examples considered most effective by the majority of teachers included using hands-on materials, repetition, gestures and visual clues, and multisensory approaches); specific strategies for teaching English (half of the teachers referred to giving ELLs opportunities to speak and listen in English); and strategies to engage students emotionally (six of 20 teachers mentioned positive reinforcement). I noted that although the researchers asked about the strategies the participants found effective in fostering language acquisition with their ELLs, none of the participating teachers, nor the three researchers, talked about the importance of encouraging children to use their native languages, other than four teachers who stated that an effective strategy is "familiarity with native language to increase [the] child's comfort level" (p. 214).

One of the ways in which teachers' practices with ELLs have been investigated is through examining their overall teaching style with all students. Over a six month period, Curtin (2005b) interviewed and observed six regular classroom teachers who taught at an urban middle school in Texas. After her initial interviews and observations, Curtin found that Dreikurs' (1972) discipline model and Bank's (2002) teaching model aligned most closely with the data she collected. According to Curtin, two veteran teachers with ten or more years experience used an interactive teaching style that Curtin stated is promoted by the literature as culturally responsive and one that she characterized as a "personalized," and "child centred" (p. 37) approach. The other four, less experienced teachers, on the other hand, employed didactic methods of teaching or didactic-interactive methods that were impersonal and oriented toward subject material whereby students were given more independent, worksheet-type tasks and few, if any, accommodations were made for ELLs. Particular teaching behaviours and discipline styles were associated with these two teaching approaches as well. The interactive teachers, for example, frequently circulated around the room, invited each student to participate, and employed a democratic style of discipline. Didactic teachers, on the other hand, tended to ignore ELLs, often sat at their desks or remained near to the blackboard/projector and were either autocratic or autocratic-permissive in their methods of discipline. The characteristics of the two teaching styles delineated in this study assisted me in the analysis of some aspects of my participant's overall teaching style.

Hite and Evans (2006) investigated mainstream teachers' practices with ELLs through a different lens. Whereas the participating teachers in Curtin's (2005b) study had no ESL qualifications, Hite and Evans surveyed and interviewed 22 first grade teachers who had qualifications and/or successful experiences teaching ELLs—qualifications that, since 1990, the Florida Board of Education has required for all teachers who work with ELLs. The purpose of the research was to explore how these teachers understood and applied the theoretical and practical components of their professional development. Thus the teachers' reported practices were

analyzed in terms of three interconnected models of second language acquisition: (a) Gass's (1997) "input-interaction-output" model (p. 90) which emphasized that ELLs require language that is understandable and opportunities to integrate this input with their current knowledge, and then employ it to produce a response; (b) Krashen's (1985) "affective filter" hypothesis (p. 91) that looked at the ways in which teachers may raise or lower students' emotional/mental states that may in turn impede or assist students' input-output levels, respectively; (c) Schumann's (1983) "acculturation theory" (p. 92) which asserted that when ELLs start to identify with the majority language group, they learn their additional language faster.

Hite and Evans (2006) discussed each of the six themes that emerged from their data in relation to the theoretical frameworks: accommodating ELLs by making lessons comprehensible through slowing speech, using simpler words, modeling; attending to students' learning styles and cultural backgrounds; and utilizing manipulatives, visuals, and gestures; modifying instructional materials to match ELLs' level of English proficiency; providing ELLs with many collaborative opportunities; establishing good communication with parents of ELLs, through the use of interpreters, if possible; using native English speaking peers as teachers for ELLs, providing ELLs with opportunities to understand and use English; and encouraging the use of ELLs' home language. Regarding this latter point, the authors remarked that while research indicates the importance of such encouragement, only three of the participants mentioned they did so. In their conclusions, the authors stated that although the participants held a high regard for their ELLs and went beyond the strategies often employed by Grade one educators to enrich ELLs' educational experiences, the teachers did not recount providing ELLs with specific language instruction. Additionally, while these teachers recognized the significant role parents play in their children's education, they did not acknowledge the ways in which the rich knowledge base of families may be incorporated into the classroom program and homework assignments.

In an in-depth case study of one Florida classroom teacher and her one English language learner, Platt and Troudi (1997) found that, in contrast to Hite and Evans' (2001) inquiry, aspects

of the input-output, affective filter and acculturation theories that, as previously stated, had been promoted within the Florida Board of Education did not effectively address the needs of this one newly-arrived grade three ELL, Mary. Rather, Platt and Troudi proposed a Vygotskian sociocultural perspective by which the student was assisted in her learning through the guidance of a more competent individual and through which her experiences were placed in context. The participating teacher in this study was considered an “expert teacher in the district” who had played “an active role” (p. 3) in an ESL professional development course with the main researcher, Platt who, subsequently, was both an observer and participant during the course of the study. While this teacher created a welcoming, cooperative learning atmosphere for all students, she emphasized Mary’s acculturation into the classroom, believing that Mary would learn English and concepts naturally through socializing with her classmates. Thus, Mary’s teacher depended, almost exclusively, on Mary’s peers teaching her. As a result, Mary rapidly acquired basic communication skills in English but the researchers noticed that her peers could not adequately tutor Mary in the conceptual understanding that was needed for her to genuinely participate. Mary seemed to develop non-verbal behaviours that simulated involvement. Mary’s teacher, in fact, made few efforts to teach academic skills to Mary, nor was she sensitive to the challenges and frustrations that she faced as an ELL. Furthermore, I noted that it seemed there was no attempt to incorporate Mary’s language and culture into the classroom program. In these ways, Mary was not fully included in the classroom program and her academic needs were not adequately addressed. Although I examined one teacher’s approaches to including ELLs in a mainstream elementary classroom, unlike Platt and Troudi’s (1997) investigation, my case study was not a longitudinal inquiry, nor did it extensively explore the inclusion of ELLs from the standpoint of the ELLs in the classroom, and hence, while I embrace the more holistic, sociocultural perspective of inclusion, I was unable to utilize this orientation in my study.

Practices and Routines that Encourage or Discourage ELLs' Inclusion

Similar to Platt and Troudi's (1997) inquiry, the following studies looked at teaching practices from a sociocultural perspective of language development and learning that considers classrooms as communities of learners comprised of interdependent relationships and practices that weave together to help shape the identities and participation of the learners within that community (Hawkins, 2005a; 2005b). One key component of this orientation involves examining the complex and multifaceted identities of ELLs—identities constructed by them and assigned by others (Toohey, 1996)—in terms of ELLs' connections to the social structure of the classroom and the ways in which those identities enabled or disabled their inclusion in the classroom community (Norton, 2000; Toohey, 1996). Although I see this kind of analysis as valuable to a deeper understanding of issues pertaining to ELLs' inclusion in mainstream classrooms, it was beyond the scope of my targeted focus of one teacher and her practices. The second component of these studies, however, informed my study about the ways in which mainstream teachers' practices (e.g., seating arrangement, management of resources, classroom rules and routines) limit or facilitate ELLs' access to participation and resources.

Toohey and Day (1999) summarized data that came from two cohorts of ELLs in mainstream primary classrooms. The researchers reported that choral speech/choral singing and small group activities appeared to give ELLs access to the language of the teacher and their peers while teacher-led whole group discussions appeared to discourage such access. In the latter practice, teachers followed a particular format: the teacher asks students a question, the students respond individually and the teacher gives evaluative comments to each student's response (often referred to as IRE: "Teacher-Initiation, Student-Response, Teacher-Evaluation," p. 46). During these IRE sessions, Toohey and Day noticed that several ELLs often "declined bids to participate or provided minimal responses in such settings" (p.48).

In an earlier study, Toohey (1998) closely scrutinized three classroom practices, constructed by a Grade 1 teacher—practices that negatively impacted the classroom community

such that the community fell apart. Each practice (ones that the author noted were frequently used in many classrooms) emphasized individual ownership. Children were required to remain in their own seats, manage their own resources and do their own work, unless otherwise directed. Children were implicitly encouraged to report on one another when these rules were broken. Furthermore, ELLs were seated near the teacher at the front, next to native English speakers who had some academic difficulties. ELLs from the same language background were not seated together. As Toohey noted, these practices severely limited opportunities for ELLs to talk to peers who spoke their first language and to native English speaking peers who could help them. “This individualizing of the children starts a process of community stratification that increasingly leads to the exclusion of some students from certain activities, practices, identities, and affiliations...L1 [first language] subcommunities do not survive” (p. 80). In this classroom, both ELLs removed themselves from the large group activity, suggesting to Toohey that these learners were resisting the classroom activities.

Willett’s (1995) study also looked at a classroom community of Grade 1 students that was governed by seemingly similar rules. On closer inspection, though, there were significant differences that led to some different findings between Toohey’s (1996, 1998, 1999) studies and Willett’s. For one thing, it seemed that the social environment of the classrooms was dissimilar. Although rules of “do your own work” were stated in both classrooms, Willett stated that these rules were only emphasized when the class became too noisy. In Toohey’s (1998) study, on the other hand, children were reprimanded for not following the rules. Willett claimed that newcomers were quickly integrated into the highly routine classroom tasks in which children knew what to do and how to act and work. She reported that the children learned they had “a secure place in the classroom community” (p. 485). Additionally, it seems that another significant factor affecting children’s sense of security was the inclusion of bilingual aides in the classroom of Willett’s study who provided 20 minutes of daily instruction in each child’s language. It is interesting to note that the classroom teacher claimed that she made no accommodations for the

ELLs (perhaps because of the large numbers of ELLs). Yet, the provision of bilingual aides and the strategies that she and her aides used to scaffold children's learning (e.g., repeating, rephrasing, emphasizing key words, miming, and using pictures) suggested otherwise.

Second, in Toohey's (1996; 1999) studies, ELLs were separated while three of the four ELLs were seated together in Willett's (1995) investigation. During the course of Willett's study, the ELL girls formed a cohesive group as friends, assisting one another with school tasks. Nevertheless, the other participant (Xavier, a Mexican-American boy) sat between two English speaking girls who did not help him because he was a boy. Xavier was separated from his Spanish speaking friends and other boy friends. Unlike the ELL girls, Xavier had nobody with whom to collaborate; he had to turn to the teacher and aides for help. Consequently, the teacher and aides regarded Xavier as needy. Xavier's classroom identity seemed to evolve directly from the seating arrangement.

Third, while repetition and imitation were discouraged in the classroom of Toohey's (1998) study, these were strategies used consistently by teacher and students in Willett's (1995) study—strategies that are considered effective for ELLs (Curtin, 2005a; Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005). According to Willett, the teacher-student transactions which included the teacher explaining the text and modeling ways of solving workbook tasks, provided “important cultural and linguistic information that the children could use to increase their competence and construct their identities as fast learners of English and good students” (p. 487).

Summary

Research indicates the importance of ELLs receiving ongoing English language support and support for maintaining their first language. Few studies, however, have examined the ways in which teachers attempt to meet these two language needs of ELLs within an elementary mainstream classroom. As the literature implies, it is my view that helping ELLs learn English at the same time as demonstrating an interest in their first languages and cultures are key components to an inclusive classroom. Further research in this area is needed.

One main study that assisted my understanding of the participant's perspectives on bringing ELLs' languages and cultures into the classroom was Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter's (2002) investigation which found that only a small number of participating teachers embraced a curriculum that was based on the diversity of the students. Other studies informing my research included those that focused on how classroom teachers can show a high regard for and foster students' first languages in the classrooms, including the ways in which teachers can involve ELLs' parents and the community in collaborative classroom projects. In terms of English language support, the literature indicates that the employment of an interactive teaching style and approaches to making English and academic concepts understandable seem to be effective.

In the next chapter, I provide details about the method I employed in my case study that explored the teaching beliefs of one teacher and the practices she used or reported using to address ELLs' inclusion in the classroom.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This chapter delineates the method of research for the study. I present my method in eight sections: the qualitative method I used, the context of this study, the selection criteria, the participant, the data sources, the process I employed for recording and analyzing the data, the limitations of my method, and an overview of how I present my data in the next chapters.

A Case Study Method

I chose a case study approach so that I could focus on and immerse myself in the complexities of one elementary classroom teacher's beliefs and practices and thereby formulate an in-depth, holistic understanding of the phenomenon of the inclusion of ELLs in this particular mainstream classroom. Because I was primarily interested in gaining insights into the practices used to include ELLs and to support their needs in the classroom, my case played a supportive role in facilitating that understanding. It is in this way that my inquiry is called, as Stake (1995) named it, an instrumental case study rather than an intrinsic case study where the primary interest is in the case itself. By studying a single case through interviews, observations, and document analysis, I have learned about this phenomenon in greater depth, encouraging me to reflect upon my own beliefs and practices with ELLs through a different lens. It is my hope that teachers reading about this case might also be encouraged to consider their beliefs toward and approaches to teaching ELLs.

One of the defining features of case study research is its "boundedness" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). In this case study, the case was one teacher and her perspectives and practices about the inclusion of ELLs in a mainstream classroom. I focused on the teacher. As such, I did not consider how individuals outside the classroom (administrators, teachers, parents, students)

perceived the ways in which my participating teacher included ELLs nor did I solicit views from any of the students within the classroom.

Context of Study

This inquiry took place in a public elementary school in a southern Ontario city whose main industries are tourism and government-related business and whose residents represent various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. I chose this context because of my connections with a classroom teacher in this city who worked at a school that seemed to effectively include a large population of ELLs. According to the school's website at the time of this study, approximately 40% of the 277 students (some of whom were new to Canada) spoke a second language at home. My participant stated that many of the children were bussed from numerous communities within the city and, thus, students' families came from an extensive variety of linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds.

The school, located in a middle-class residential area, offered the usual programs and services of many Ontario elementary schools: academic subjects that followed Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines, Special Education and ESL programs/services, and extracurricular activities. In addition to having 1.5 ESL teachers on staff, a Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO) was on site one full day per week to provide services to improve communication with new Canadian families and to encourage their participation in the school. At this school, Junior and Senior Kindergarten, the levels my participant taught at the time, were offered as a half-day program. Although there were ELLs in both the morning and afternoon programs, more ELLs were enrolled in the afternoon. In the morning, there were six ELLs (linguistically grouped as five Arabic speaking and one Somali speaking) out of 19 students whereas eight children out of 16 were ELLs (two speaking Bengali, one Chinese, four Arabic, and one Somali) in the afternoon. Two additional children in the afternoon were considered ELLs by the participating teacher, but my participant stated that these children were not officially classified as ELLs by the School Board's criteria because they spoke another variety of English. One was Jamaican and the

other was Native-Canadian. According to the teacher, some of the children in her classroom attended Saturday morning heritage language classes operated by the Board of Education.

The classroom where all of the interviews and most of my observations took place (except for a 10-15 minute period in which I observed the participant in the hallway by the classroom) was organized into activity centres for the children. These centres included a comfortable reading corner with numerous children's books and magazines, including some multicultural books, a couch and three bean bag chairs; a Chinese restaurant with table and chairs, toy appliances and utensils, and Chinese artefacts such as a tablecloth, bowls, and a hanging lantern; an art centre equipped with paints, easels, and bins of assorted paper; a block centre that included blocks of different sizes and materials; and a writing centre. The centres were arranged around the periphery of the classroom, separated by bookcases filled with baskets or bins of toys, shapes, puzzles, and games. In the middle of this spacious classroom sat a sizeable aquarium with tadpoles. Large areas of space were left for children to play freely on the floor or at tables with their activity centre materials. Charts and posters, predominately related to the alphabet, science (e.g., butterfly stages), mathematics (counting, shapes) and spring (the theme at the time of the study) were displayed on the walls and bulletin boards; children's artwork was also showcased; and signs in English, Arabic, and Somali (the three main languages) were posted at the activity centres.

According to my participant, centre activities were introduced to students every Monday, at which point the students were informed where the teacher would be giving them most of her attention "so they know which group is getting me for that period of time." My participant reported that she floats around observing children. Usually there were four different kinds of centre activities per week. Three activities were planned by the teacher and one activity was "free" play where the students could choose what to do. Thus every day, each of the four groups of children moved through a different centre, thereby having the opportunity to participate in all

four activities that week. The fifth day of the week followed a different schedule that included a library period and a block of time in the gymnasium.

Selection Criteria

Patton (2002) noted the importance of selecting information-rich cases that shed light on the study's queries. In my research, I chose an extreme case because more can be learned from the best practices of a classroom teacher who is seen to effectively include ELLs. Pease-Alvarez and Hakuta (1992) pointed out the value of studying exemplary examples in case studies of second language learning: studies that focus on successes inspire change in others.

When considering a potential candidate for my case study, I asked the principal at this school to identify teachers who viewed the inclusion of ELLs in their classroom in a positive way, used strategies that affirm the ELLs' language and culture, reflected upon their teaching practices, and demonstrated an openness about sharing some of the rewards and challenges of working with ELLs. I requested that the principal generate a list of four or five teachers in order of priority, according to the above criteria, to be potential participants. I then emailed the first teacher on this list and asked whether or not she was interested in participating in my study. Shortly after emailing this teacher, I received a positive response from her and together we proceeded to decide on a tentative schedule of interview and classroom observation times. Appendix G outlines the schedule that we ended up following.

The Participant

After graduating with a B.A., my participant, Pam (a pseudonym), worked as an Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher for five years and then attended an Ontario Community College earning a diploma in ECE. Following this professional training, Pam attended an Ontario Faculty of Education and obtained her Bachelor of Education. Pam then did some freelance teaching for a year which involved substitute teaching, organizing and leading arts projects in various schools, and teaching Kindergarten at the YMCA/YWCA which followed an arts-based,

global education curriculum. At this point, Pam began full-time teaching at the school where she taught at the time of this study. Besides teaching Kindergarten for most of the ten years she had taught, Pam also taught Grade 3, ELLs in an ESL pull-out program, and children with learning disabilities.

In addition to her teaching experiences, many of Pam's other pursuits and activities reflected a strong interest in people and learning about cultures outside her own cultural background as a White, Euro-Canadian, middle-class female. Pam's involvement for five years as an organizer and participant in the School Board's multicultural/anti-racist workshops was a case in point. My presentation and discussion of the data highlight to a greater degree the extent to which her association with these workshops and other activities played a role in shaping Pam's work with ELLs. When Pam stated that she did not speak any languages other than English, after I asked her ("No...barely speak French"), I noticed that her voice sounded wistful and she indicated that this was unfortunate. At the same time, though, I did not hear Pam mention any interest in learning another language (nor did I ask if she had such an interest).

Pam stated that she had additional qualifications in ESL, Part 1 and would like to take Parts 2 and 3 (specialist certification) at a later date in her career. Her motivation for taking ESL Part 1 was to enable her to teach ESL with the Board. When asked whether she had any other additional qualifications, Pam mentioned that after she finished her B.A., she worked in the summer on a development project in Tanzania—an experience that she claimed was "life changing."

Data Sources

The following are the three data sources I used in this study: interviews, field observations, and documents.

Interviews

Interviews are a way of accessing feelings, thoughts, and intentions that cannot be observed (Patton, 2002). In Platt and Troudi's (1997) case study, researchers interviewed one teacher to find out about her beliefs and practices teaching ELLs. The interview format used by these researchers involved a technique whereby "there was a constant interplay between the guiding research questions and new understandings" (p. 30). To foster this interplay in my study, I alternated between interviewing and observing so that new understandings could be followed up in my interviews. This format also helped me to determine which aspects of the classroom program I should closely attend for observation in order to obtain the richest data.

I interviewed the classroom teacher on five occasions, each approximately one hour in length. (Because the participant declared that she was able to stay longer than one hour for one of the interviews, the fourth interview was one hour and 25 minutes.) Each interview session used a semi-structured format to allow for flexibility, clarification and elaboration. The first interview provided me with an overview of the teacher's background, credentials, and general views about ELLs and their learning. Johnson and Weller (2002) stated that it is a good idea to start an interview by asking "broad, descriptive questions" (p. 497). Exploring a topic first allows the researcher to then focus on meaningful areas of inquiry. In addition to using the results of previous interviews and/or observations to design further questions in my study, specific, open-ended questions related to my research queries were used for subsequent interviews with my participant. The main interview questions for the first four sessions are outlined in Appendix E. In the fifth interview, I asked Pam to reflect on her journey as a teacher and I posed questions arising from previous interviews and observations.

Field Observations

Patton (2002) discussed the importance of naturalistic observations in the field. First, fieldwork allows the researcher to understand the context where individuals interact and to

discover firsthand what is happening within that context. Hence, I described in detail the classroom, the context of this study. This description included an examination of the physical components of the classroom (e.g., the arrangement of furniture, bulletin board and wall displays, organization of student materials, activity centres, and teaching resources and the social environment such as how groups are organized. Second, fieldwork provides an opportunity to find out about things people may have overlooked or may be unwilling to disclose in an interview.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which my participant included ELLs in the classroom, I observed Pam in her classroom on four occasions for approximately one hour each. One observation, however, was only 40-45 minutes. As much as possible, I observed different components of the classroom program to gain a more holistic understanding of some of the factors such as subject, time of day, large/small group or one-on-one meetings with Pam that may have influenced teacher-student interactions. Although it was my intention to observe Pam teaching both Kindergarten groups on two occasions, due to some unforeseen circumstances, our original schedule was changed, resulting in three morning observations and one afternoon observation.

In order to reduce my interference in the daily classroom activities and to fully focus my attention on the practices Pam used to include and support ELLs, I restricted my role as a researcher to that of an onlooker. As such, during all of my classroom observations, I did not interact with Pam or her students, except on two brief encounters with two different students who called upon me for assistance. On the first occasion, Pam quickly redirected the child's attention to something else and in the other instance I unbuttoned an ELL's art smock for her.

Vacca et al. (2006) gave suggestions about strategies to use with ELLs: using simpler language, rephrasing using body actions; modifying materials to include pictures and graphic organizers; encouraging students to express themselves through drawings, pointing, using objects; encouraging students to bring in various artefacts, music, food, etc. from their culture;

encouraging students to write and read in their first language; and giving students time to process the new language. These and other strategies became sensitizing concepts such as teacher language, visual modifications, cultural artefacts, students' native language literacy, and processing time which provided a framework to help organize my fieldwork observations "but not to the point of straining or forcing the analysis" (Patton, 2002, p. 457). Appendix F shows the classroom observation guide I used to assist me in my observations of the participant's practices, the classroom context, and artefacts.

It is important to note that my personal thoughts and reflections were also recorded throughout my field work but were either kept separate from my observations of Pam or were written within brackets. As much as possible, I recorded Pam's exact words during her interactions with her students.

Documents

Document analysis allows the researcher to look at the program from another angle, providing information not seen or heard in interviews and field observations (Patton, 2002). Through the examination of various documents such as books for native English speakers and ELLs, teacher resource books, Kindergarten materials and displays at the various centres, and teacher, parent and student prepared products, I was able to address what resources Pam used to facilitate the ELLs' involvement and to further triangulate the data. Furthermore, I asked Pam how she used some of the aforementioned items, particularly multicultural reading materials, with her students. My thoughts about the documents and Pam's comments became part of the data as well.

Data Recording and Analysis

Detailed descriptive notes (dated and recorded as to the time of day, date and type of activity) were taken to document the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of my participant and her strategies. During and shortly after my in-class observations and teacher interviews, I jotted down

accounts of what took place. Descriptions were separated from my interpretations and quotations were used whenever possible. During the interviews with Pam, I audio-taped and later transcribed the sessions verbatim. I removed all of the “um’s” and “uh’s” from the interview data when I inserted quotes in the following chapters. All names were changed. Notes and interpretive comments were recorded about the audio-tapes, in addition to any documents or classroom artefacts I examined. Some of the field notes of Pam’s teaching and classroom documents/ artefacts were summarized in the format of my classroom observation guide. All were included as data. Throughout the process of collecting data and transcribing and typing field notes, I often noted possible categories or themes.

The data were initially organized by source: the transcripts and notes of the five interviews with Pam, classroom observation field notes (including my personal reflections), and details about documents and artefacts. Following a variation of the format outlined in McMillan and Schumacher (2006), I proceeded in the following way: after reading and re-reading my notes from each source, I began by jotting down some descriptive names or codes in the margins of my data, using my participant’s words/phrases as much as possible or words from my interview questions. My theoretical framework and literature review also assisted me in generating codes or categories. I then created a table of three columns: interview, observation, and documents/ artefacts. Data were then copied and pasted under one of the three data sources and a descriptive name. My research questions formed larger groupings. Thus, the first group corresponded to my overall research question: “What practices/strategies did one elementary teacher use to include ELLs in her classroom?” The second was related to my participant’s teaching beliefs/understandings about ELLs and ESL learning/teaching. Data associated with the resources (human or other) used to facilitate ELLs’ inclusion formed the third and data concerning who and what helped to shape her teaching beliefs and practices became the last. The enabling question of how Pam’s beliefs were reflected in her teaching practices was a question I thought would be

addressed through comparing the interview data with my classroom observation and document data recorded on my table.

Various comparisons between data sources were made to triangulate the data as much as possible. For example, I compared the data I collected from my field observations of Pam with the data from my interviews and these comparisons were cross-checked with my document analysis. Patton (2002) stressed that triangulation may not show a wholly consistent picture. However, triangulation can significantly add “to the overall credibility of findings” (p. 560) by either indicating a largely consistent pattern of data sources or by offering acceptable explanations for differences in the varied sources of data.

After noting the extensiveness of and duplication in the number of descriptive terms (a total of 185 were initially compiled), I refined and collapsed these under broader, abstract categories while retaining the original groupings that corresponded with my research questions. However, I found that Pam’s beliefs, practices, resources, and sources of knowledge could not be easily separated. There seemed to be considerable overlaps between Pam’s beliefs and practices, in particular. Thus, I merged the data concerned with Pam’s beliefs with data related to the practices and resources she used. Two central themes surfaced, addressing the ways in which Pam approached the inclusion of ELLs in her classroom. I included data related to the question regarding who or what helped to shape Pam’s teaching in an introductory section about Pam.

Citations from interviews that exceed 40 words have been labelled as “T”, followed by a number that indicates from which interview the quote came (one through five), and the transcript page number. In a similar manner, I have identified all observations as ‘O’, followed by an observation number (one through four) and page number. It is important to note that after I completed my first draft of the fourth chapter, I sent a copy to Pam via email for her to verify the accuracy of my notes and to ask her some follow-up questions to clarify some statements she had made. Pam then responded by email, answering my questions in detail. These email responses are noted as such in the text.

Limitations

Although I triangulated the data as much as possible through finding evidence of her reported beliefs and practices from the interviews and through checking my field notes about my observations of Pam in her classroom and my notes regarding classroom artefacts and documents, I found that the interview data were more extensive in breadth and depth than the other two data sources. Thus, I tended to rely more heavily on the interview transcripts. I believe, however, that Pam's accounts of her practices were reliable, for the most part, because she seemed honest and open about telling me some of her biases and struggles (e.g., Pam admitted to making certain assumptions about ELLs and their families). Nevertheless, I am aware of how this limitation may have affected my findings and interpretations of the data.

Another limitation is the condensed schedule of my data collection. Although I received approval from the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) in mid-January 2008 (see Appendix B for a copy of GREB's approval of this study), I did not receive approval from the Board of Education until April and I was not able to start my inquiry until the last week of April. As a result, I felt some pressure to shorten my data collection period. Some days involved both an interview and an observation which did not allow me to reflect on the data over a long period of time and address more extensively some gaps or questions that arose. Ideally, I would have liked to have transcribed each interview before my observation. Additionally, although I kept some notes on my thoughts about the data during the data collection period, I was not able to specifically record more in-depth personal responses to the data in a reflex journal as I had originally intended.

An Overview of the Presentation of the Data

My presentation of the data begins with a chapter that introduces Pam because it is my belief that through showcasing what I saw as some significant features of who Pam is enhances one's appreciation of her teaching beliefs and the practices she employs. Additionally, it is in this

chapter that I address the question of who and what helped to shape Pam's teaching beliefs and practices.

Following this, I present data that relate to what I perceived to be Pam's two main approaches to supporting young ELLs' needs and facilitating their inclusion in a mainstream classroom. Chapter five deals with the first theme: applying broad-based instructional practices. Data pulled primarily from interviews and observations informed me about the practices that seemed to be important to Pam in her teaching of ELLs in her classroom—practices that also seemed to be employed on an ongoing basis. In Chapter six, I present data that document Pam's beliefs, practices, and reported practices on the more specific topic of diversity. Incorporating diversity into the classroom was the second theme. While the first theme emerged inductively from the data, the second is more deductive, shaped by the big ideas in my theoretical framework.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INTRODUCTION TO PAM

The data I gathered from my interviews with Pam and my observations of her in the classroom left me with some strong impressions of her as a person. This chapter reports on that data. One of the most prominent themes here was the love Pam expressed and put into action regarding her work with children. Related to this first theme was Pam's awareness of and sensitivity to some of the distinct needs and issues of ELLs and their families. The third theme emerged from data regarding Pam's leanings toward oral/aural activities which seemed to infuse her teaching. Fourth, I report on data that reveal Pam's receptivity to learning. Finally, I put forward data that look at the individuals who and the material resources that seemed to have influenced Pam's beliefs and practices about anti-bias education.

Love of Children

Pam's love of children, her dedication to supporting all children, and her enjoyment of each of them in the classroom became apparent when she made frequent references to and told a number of stories about various children, particularly focusing on ELLs. Her slower, quieter voice conveyed a concern for their well-being when talking about children who had some difficulties or her faltering voice and sad, thoughtful look indicated her affection and empathy with children who have had some harrowing experiences. At other times, the spirited tone of Pam's voice showed a delight in her students' achievements or their ways of being. On one occasion, Pam recalled a memorable time in class when her students were talking about what they dreamed about after they looked at a book together called, *I Dream of Peace: Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia*, a compilation of poetry, prose, and artwork by children ages five to 14. In response to Pam's question to the students about dreams, one little girl from Iraq stated

that her dream was that Iraq would stop fighting. Here, Pam reflected on the impact of this incident:

It makes me all...[word is unclear; Pam looked distressed] when I think about that. And I'll never forget her. And she, it's funny, and I don't know if it's related or not related, but she's in Grade 3 or 4 now and **every** time I see her she comes and hugs me. **Every** single time! And she's just, she's such a warm person. (I4, pp. 18-19)

When talking about another ELL, Pam noted this child's enthusiasm and then added, lost for words to describe him, "He's, he's a very, very, I, I just love that little guy."

The words and phrases Pam used in her conversations with me and the endearing terms she used with the children (sometimes calling individual children, "honey" [O4, p. 2]; referring to the children as "my friends" [O1, p. 1] during whole class activities) also indicated to me her love for children. On various occasions, Pam used the phrase "Honour where the child is at." For example, in response to a question about how she welcomes ELLs into the classroom, Pam explained about how she conducts her first meetings with parents and their child:

...with children whose language is English, first language is English, I'll often say "Okay, you guys can go and play for a little while...I'm going to sit down with Mummy and Daddy." But I do it the other way 'round with English language learners. I, I take the child in and I say "Would you like to see your room?" and, and we do a, a tour of the room and, and I, I touch things as I'm talking about them, and I ask them, you know, if they've seen it... I've seen parents who'll say, you know, "Go with the teacher, go with the teacher" but the child's just not ready for that. I honour where the child is at. And if they are really resistant I'll say, "Well, you know what, do you want to play for a little bit?" and, and I make suggestions of toys but they, they're welcome to sit and play with whatever they want. (I4, p. 1)

Pam demonstrated her honouring of children in less explicit ways as well. While talking about a recent puppet activity at the book centre, Pam recalled making an exception to her rule about the number of children allowed at this centre because the needs of a particular child were most important. This indicated to me that her first priority was to support the children rather than the rules. She recalled:

It [the puppet area] was full, but one little boy wanted to, to, I could tell he wanted to be at it and he, he's had some bully issues. He's been, i.e. he's been the bully and people are now starting to ostracize him and so I'm trying to support him so he, so he doesn't get scapegoated when he's really doing just fine and so I didn't want to say, "Sorry, you can't play because we're full." I would, I would have for somebody else but I didn't think

that would be good for him. So I said, “Well, why don’t **you** be the narrator and you can tell the story and they’ll, [other students at this centre], they’ll act out what you say.” (I4, p. 40)

In a similar way, Pam emphasized children’s needs over curriculum objectives. When talking about her frustrations with teaching particular concepts outlined in the curriculum to children who are “just not there yet,” Pam stated, “It doesn’t matter if that’s the curriculum... you can’t make a child run if it [he/she] can’t walk yet.”

Another way Pam manifested her respect for children was shown when she discussed how some themes varied from year to year (other themes such as “All About Me” and “Harvest” were regular themes but were often done differently each year), depending on the interests of her students—interests that shaped the direction of her classroom program: “I had one year where the children were just **enthralled** by all things environmentally friendly. So we spent an entire month...burying our garbage and watching it and finding out what happened to it and, and graphing...(I3, p. 11). Later, in the same interview, Pam stated,

I have a little boy this year who is, **dies** for dinosaurs. He just loves them. I can’t stand the dinosaurs. And so I’ve never done it before **because** it’s not **my** particular thing but it’s **his** so that’s where he needs, that’s where he’s going to learn the most. (I3, p. 36)

An example of a theme related to ELLs’ cultural, linguistic or other knowledge/ interests was not given nor requested, unfortunately.

During my classroom observations, Pam also showed the same strong degree of interest in and respect for her students: encouraging all children to participate in classroom discussions whereby each child had a turn to speak and most of the children seemed very eager to speak; continually interacting with her students on an individual or small group basis and in whole group gatherings by responding to their concerns and assisting them with their understanding or vocabulary; affirming all children’s contributions (Pam often repeated, rephrased, commented on or asked further questions about what the children said); giving each child her full attention in a one-to-one situation; standing or crouching close to the children when interacting with them and sometimes putting her arm around them; and emphasizing and highlighting the children’s positive

behaviour and efforts. Regarding this last point, I noted that in every observation Pam frequently congratulated students or told the children to give themselves “a pat on the back” (O1, p. 1) for their good effort or good behaviour (e.g., as children gathered in a circle, Pam stated “Congratulations to...[various student names were given]. I’m really impressed on how fast you came to circle” [O3, p. 1]). Pam also gave a lot of positive feedback on their work and the choices they made. During an art centre activity, Pam commented, “Oh, you’re painting with the thin brushes. How smart!” (O4, p. 2). Moreover, Pam consistently affirmed the children’s significant roles as learners and helpers, referring to the children at the science centre, for instance, as “researchers” (O2, p. 1) and calling upon the children to be “under shelf detectives” (O2, p. 2) as they tidied up the classroom.

Not only did Pam show great respect for individual children and children as a group, I also observed how much she enjoyed interacting with her students. In all of my observations of the whole group sessions, I heard Pam inject much humour and fun into her lessons. For example, when talking to the children about the names of various shaped items and what they are used for, she picked up a pylon and asked, “What’s it used for? For announcements?” Then Pam spoke into the pylon and said, “Hello everybody!” (O4, p. 2). The children all laughed. Pam encouraged the children’s sense of humour as well. During a science lesson about the life cycle of a frog, after Pam walked amongst the children, showing them some live frog’s eggs and giving the children an opportunity to touch the eggs, Pam asked her students to talk about what the frog’s eggs looked like. A number of the children then came up with some creative and sometimes amusing responses such as “French fries” which generated much laughter. Pam, immediately participated in the merriment and exclaimed, “Looks like French fries!” which brought about more laughter (O1, p. 1).

Sensitivity to Some of the Needs of ELLs and their Families

Besides the respect, love, and concern Pam showed to all children, she seemed to be attentive to some of the distinct needs of ELLs, particularly their dual needs of learning the

English language while learning new concepts related to various subjects. In one interview, Pam talked about some difficulties for ELLs in the upper grades:

We rush them [ELLs] through so much content. So that's where you know the poor kids who are struggling with just learning language, plus they don't have enough time to even understand concepts. You know, they, they fall through [the cracks] sometimes [Pam's voice was solemn]. (I5, p. 23)

In addition to showing Pam's understanding of ELLs' double challenge, this quotation also reveals her recognition of ELLs' need for time. On two separate occasions I observed Pam applying this knowledge. During a one-on-one session, I noticed that she gave an ELL an extended opportunity to process information and at another time, while conducting a whole group lesson, she gave a child (possibly an ELL) time to express herself. The young girl started with, "I saw...I saw..." Pam did not finish her sentence (O1, p. 1).

Additionally, Pam mentioned the importance of building on ELLs' conceptual knowledge and checking for their understanding of concepts through making specific accommodations for ELLs (e.g., giving ELLs opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in non-verbal ways such as pointing and nodding). Indeed, on more than one occasion, she stated that ELLs need exposure to "rich language experiences" to develop their conceptual knowledge and they need occasions in which they can focus on their language development. Although Pam expressed a recognition of her abilities to teach "simply but richly," at the same time, she acknowledged some of the challenges of doing so:

You do have to keep yourself challenged that, that you're not going down the slippery slope of, of, of dumbing things down, that you're simplifying but still keeping them challenged, still giving them the same opportunities... 'cause I know that's one of the things that, that they **criticize** "pull out" programs for. That when you pull out, that when you, when you do ability groups that it becomes that they are not getting the same level, the same **rich** language experiences. I, **personally**, think that you have to have both. (I4, p. 49)

Pam was also sensitive to ELLs' waning attention and fatigue at the end of the day and their difficulties staying tuned in when activities or tasks are too abstract for them (and hence, she acknowledged their need for a break). After I commented on how attentive all of her students

seemed to be and how fully they participated in activities, Pam pointed out that “What you notice at the end of the day is the ones who have been working so hard to understand what’s going on are starting to get fatigued.” Similar comments were stated by Pam later in the same interview:

But a couple of them at the end of the day, just can’t att...have a harder time attending to just to and me writing out, like, it’s, it’s a, it’s a lot more abstract. So it’s harder for them at that point of the day. So it’s, so you, you see, different parts of the routine, it’s easier to separate who’s who. (I2, p. 12)

Here, the writing Pam was referring to is a whole group writing activity in which she writes down the students’ words on a large piece of chart paper—an activity that Pam described as abstract compared to concrete, hands-on activities.

When I asked her about the rewards of working with ELLs, Pam immediately mentioned “the progress that, that is so obvious in most of them [ELLs].” In a later interview, Pam showed much enthusiasm as she talked about one ELL’s progress: “She’s so full of energy and she loves to learn, and she’s learned language really fast because she’s just, just, she is just on top of everything.” Although Pam’s overall attitude toward ELLs and all children was positive, it is important to note her acknowledgement of some of the difficulties she has faced working with them. When I asked her to talk about these challenges, Pam referred to occasions that I believe she applied to both the students and their families. (Prior to the following quote, Pam had been talking about immigrant families.) Pam stated:

The challenges are [Pam paused] how much energy it takes, how personally [Pam laughed a bit] you have to be invested...how helpless you feel sometimes because it, you can’t do it all for them. They need community resources and there aren’t that many community resources out there...when you hit those stumbling blocks and you just think, “Oh, my God...this child could do so much better if they had the right resources.” (I1, p. 16)

The community resources to which Pam was referring were tutors to help ELLs who are having academic difficulties. Pam claimed that it is very difficult to find a tutor who doesn’t “just treat everybody, anybody who needs school support as the same and it’s, and they’re not.” Moreover, as she stated, finding the “right match” can be very time consuming for her, yet “it won’t happen if they [parents] do it themselves.” In some cases too, Pam described, families may not be that

“invested” in their children (“just like you would have a Canadian family”), leaving the children with an “**extra** obstacle...working against them. So that’s very, very heartbreaking.”

Similar to the above example, I found that the challenges about which Pam spoke referred to instances related to her focus on a lack of suitable human resources to assist ELLs with their English language skills. Even before I asked her about her challenges, Pam had stated that, “the majority of parents have difficulty supporting their students’ learning because there’s a real misunderstanding [slower speech] of language...acquisition...So they [parents] try to support them [their children] in English and...they don’t have the ability to role model [in English] (I1, p. 9). Here, Pam referred to the importance of ELLs needing first language support from their parents but not receiving it. Instead, Pam claimed, parents attempt to assist their children in English because they mistakenly think that that is best but they are unable to do so. Pam asserted that because there is no ESL support for Kindergarten children at her school—support “that gives [ELLs] intense language instruction at the level they need it,”—she is the only “adult who can model the [English] language” for only “two and a half hours” daily. Indeed, on at least two occasions during interviews with her, Pam implied that the lack of ESL pullout support for her ELLs was frustrating. For Pam, ESL pullout support (based on the “language needs” of a small group of students) is much more preferable to “doing whole group instruction where you have such a variety of needs and you end up teaching to the top, or the bottom, or the middle.” As Pam said about the whole group method, “you can’t teach to everyone’s needs.”

As a result of not having any ESL services for Kindergarten, Pam related to me that she sends home “activities to help the parents help them [their children who need extra support].”

However, she asserted that it is older siblings who are helping the younger brothers and sisters

...because in a parent’s mind, those, those older siblings speak great English. But by, you know, relative standards, they, they can’t. They’re learning too so we have Grade 4 and 5 students teaching at home. So that puts the children [in her class] at a disadvantage. (I1, p. 9)

Here, I noted that while she referred to the problematic features of siblings helping their younger brothers and sisters with their schoolwork in English, I did not find any evidence of Pam speaking about the significant benefits of tutors, siblings, and community members of the same linguistic background assisting ELLs academically, using their common language.

While she acknowledged the importance of teachers accessing ELLs' knowledge, Pam claimed that she, like other teachers who come from a different background than their ELLs, find gaining such access difficult:

And, and **every** child needs to learn by building on what they know. I mean, it's called scaffolding learning, right? So, it's very challenging when you are from a different culture, from a different country, from a different language system to find out what that kid knows so you can build on it. But it's not that the child doesn't have knowledge. (11, p. 22)

In the next line, Pam then noted the need for more teachers who can "visibly connect to them [the ELLs] but also linguistically can connect to them and culturally can connect to the kids because they can pull things out and they can, they can make connections, learning connections that I can't." At this point, Pam spoke of an occasion when one of her Muslim students was shocked to see a Muslim teacher (who taught older students at the school where Pam taught) on yard duty. Pam then commented: "You're shocked by things that you never see. She [Pam's student] should never not see that."

Similar to the high regard Pam showed toward her ELLs, she revealed an admiration and empathy for many of the parents of her ELLs as well. For instance, after she gave me an extensive description of the Muslim observance of Ramadan (a 40-day fasting period) and the Eid festivities that mark the end of the fast, Pam remarked, "I've had some really open-hearted people that I've, that I've taught, whose children I've taught over the years who have taught me **a lot**."

Pam made a few references to some differences between the parents of ELLs and the parents of other students. In the third interview, I commented on my observation the day before of the parents who visited Pam's classroom. After finding out from her that none of the parents at that time were parents of the ELLs, Pam mentioned that, at the end of the morning class, one

father of an ELL came by to pick up his son. Pam described this visit in detail, indicating how the father arrived “sheepishly,” “trying to not make a scene, not interrupt.” Pam added that, “...while that’s [the father’s respectful behaviour is] lovely, it’s, it’s also counterproductive when I’m trying to, to bring them [the parents of ELLs] in.” Pam’s inference in telling this story was that many parents of ELLs are like this father which she contrasted with the attitude of some other parents who have a “sense of right.” That is, they feel it is their right to be in the classroom. This sense of right, Pam suggested, comes from the fact that many Canadian-born parents focus on holding teachers (and others) accountable for everything. On the other hand, in Pam’s opinion, immigrant families generally hold a different attitude toward teachers—one of gratitude and respect.

I have had the most gratitude from families, from immigrant families. And there’s, there’s a respect [quiet emphasis] there that, that sometimes isn’t always there with, you know, with families that have been here for generations...because the attitude towards teachers in their home country is different...we take pride in the fact that we, we...accountability, accountability, accountability to every institution, right? (I1, p. 28)

Pam’s awareness of and sensitivity to the difficulties that many families of ELLs face in Canada were brought to light on numerous occasions as well. During the first interview, Pam spoke of many who have “suffered from racism” and have been “disenfranchised in the system, and not just the school system but other systems.” When I asked her for an example, Pam gave a lengthy account of a family from Bengali who wanted services for their children (both of whom had first language and developmental delays) and had to wait a very long time to get help. As Pam explained, the paperwork was onerous (“so much paperwork” with “a lot of jargon”), especially for parents whose English reading skills were “low,” and “there was a poverty issue” for this family. In this case, as Pam noted, the father who dealt most with the situation “couldn’t advocate for himself.” Pam then stated that,

You, as a teacher, have to, have to, do something for that family that you don’t have to do for other families. And that can be difficult because I, there are so many other things that I’m trying to do too. So you’re, [Pam sighed] you sometimes have to, well, you sometimes are trying to get the family to fight the battle for themselves because you want to empower them. But then sometimes you’re aware they **can’t** fight the battle for

themselves so **you** try to fight it for them...So, that's just a case in point but it's, it's not an uncommon case in point. (I1, p. 15)

Not only did the story of this family reveal the difficulties that many immigrant families face and Pam's understanding of their plight but it also disclosed the complexities that she saw in assisting these families.

Besides hearing about families' current situations, Pam stressed the need to hear immigrant families' stories of their lives in their native countries. The following excerpt is a continuation of Pam's discussion of immigrant families and about how Pam stated she feels that families' past experiences affect their ways of dealing with present challenges.

So you have families who, who have an internal strength and, and, and solidity that, that can rise above that [racism, disenfranchisement] and others that can't. It depends, it depends on, on their story. Are they refugees, you know? Did they grow up; did their parents grow up in wartime? Like, what is their story?...you need to know that. (I1, p. 11)

An Inclination toward Oral/Aural Activities

While reviewing and organizing the data, one of the things that I noticed was that not only did Pam underscore the important role oral language in English played in her classroom program, I became increasingly aware of the fact that her own personality and teaching style were particularly inclined toward oral/aural activities. When I asked her whether she actively does things differently with ELLs, Pam first stated, "I would just talk more" but she did not elaborate on this point and I did not probe further. Certainly, though, I observed Pam's ability to use her voice effectively and her proclivity to talking to the children and to me. Pam had a strong, clear, expressive voice. Her pitch, volume, tone and speed varied according to her purpose or feeling (e.g., she stated key words more strongly; she slowed her speech for some ELLs; and she used a stronger tone when disciplining one child).

When interviewing Pam, I noted her easy, open speaking style and her enjoyment in telling me stories about her students and her experiences. Every interview, in fact, was peppered with stories, sometimes poignant and sometimes humorous. I noticed too that Pam seemed to

have a strong sense of her tendency to talk too much. Shortly after my first observation of her, for example, Pam remarked, in an aside, how she was conscious of her teaching as I observed her. I then asked Pam, during our second interview, to elaborate on her comment.

One of the things I was conscious of...[was] I can go on and on and on, I, I can talk a lot, and then, I, I was about to launch into a story with them about when we had gone out and collected the frog's eggs and then I, but, but then I pulled myself in check because I was conscious of the fact...that we needed to have a regular day...It probably was a good thing for me to, to check myself there because I, I could have just kept on going and then I would have not, then I would have robbed them of, of some of their **time**. (I 2, p. 28)

Although Pam mentioned non-verbal strategies she employs with ELLs, it was apparent to me that her preferred teaching style was oral. In fact, one of my immediate thoughts when I visited Pam's classroom and observed her was her emphasis on the spoken word. All activities centred around talking: teacher to students and students to teacher during whole class sessions (all students had an opportunity to speak in this forum); two-way conversations between Pam and individual students when working with students on a one-on-one basis; and students talking to each other in small group or paired activities. The latter activity was especially prominent in the activities I observed. While Pam worked with individual students (listening to their reading, encouraging them to talk about what they were doing etc.), the other children interacted with each other in their groups. For example, in the science group, five students sat a small table, looking at a variety of fiction and non-fiction books about frogs and enthusiastically talked to each other about what they were finding out about frogs (O1, p. 2). At another time, I observed children in a reading group: two girls sharing a book, quietly talking to each other; and two boys showing each other pictures as they talked about what they saw, and then counting together (O2, p. 1). During my four observations, though, I did not hear any children use a language other than English.

The only time I witnessed a quiet moment was during a snack break when Pam enforced the rule of a silent five-minute period when the children could focus on their eating (O3, p. 1). Any activity that did not involve oral language seemed to be de-emphasized in Pam's classroom program. Thus, according to Pam, individual computer work (there were three computers by the

back door) was only minimally used. In the following excerpt, Pam gave her thoughts about computer use:

I'm a person that thinks that sometimes you just gotta get in there and get on the real stuff, the hard copies. But they love it [the computers] and there's something to be learned there too so I give it to them but not too, too, too much. (I4, p. 46)

Similarly, Pam was not one who used teacher-prepared or commercial handouts or workbooks in her program—exercises that usually require more individual attention and less time talking.

Another clue to Pam's preference toward and valuing oral activities (combined with a lack of interest in or even mild disdain for paperwork) came from the first interview when Pam made negative references to "red tape," "paperwork," "accountability" and "documentation" whereas "dialogue," "relationship" and, in a later interview, "conversations" were stated in positive ways. Particularly telling was an instance in the first interview when Pam described an occasion when a visitor (an educator from Iran) observed her classroom:

And that turned into a solid month of videotaping, taking notes and it was an **extremely**, well, difficult [laughed] in that it was time consuming 'cause he wanted copies of everything I did and I don't really teach that way. So that was, it was an onerous task but it was **so** rewarding because of the dialogue between us as educators and what he taught me, simply about his own schooling, about the schooling that happens generally, about how they educate their teachers. (I1, p. 12)

Pam's inclination toward spoken over written words was revealed in another way when she embarrassingly admitted to not having lesson plans when I asked if I could see hers.

I'm really bad, **really** bad with that. And [Pam sighed] we're supposed to have that and so I can show you my template [Pam and I laughed], if you wish. But, I mean, I'll be really honest, I'm, I'm the kind of, like I know it's because of my personality. It's because of my teaching style. I'm, I can really think on my feet. And I work better with, with big picture ideas and then fine tune the details in the moment. (I2, p. 25)

Despite the absence of written lesson plans, Pam seemed to have a clear sense of the purpose in her lessons and familiarity with and adherence to the Kindergarten curriculum. When I asked her about the objectives in a science lesson, for instance, Pam spoke easily about what she wanted her students to be able to do:

One of the things that they have to be able to do is to, is basically show that they can move through the scientific process so that they can **make** observations. They can **talk** about their observations or report and that they can use different **sources**. (I2, p. 18)

Receptivity to Learning

There was only one occasion when Pam spoke explicitly about her role as a teacher. At this time, Pam was discussing her “tough love approach” that is, teaching children to be self-reliant and to help one another. Pam then stated that as a mother, she can be nurturing but as a teacher, “that’s not my role.” More significantly, though, there were some comments Pam made and behaviours I observed that impelled me to include this section. Furthermore, I think the data regarding Pam’s teaching role relate to my theoretical frameworks and literature review, as will be discussed in the discussion chapter.

I heard Pam report about and I observed Pam creating and enforcing classroom rules, directing and monitoring students’ behaviour and activities, scaffolding children’s learning, and carrying out myriad other responsibilities given to teachers, thus playing numerous roles in the classroom: leader/director, facilitator, transmitter of knowledge, cheerleader, and manager, to name a few. What I became increasingly aware of, through examining and thinking about the data, was the less traditional teaching role that Pam sometimes also played: the role of the learner. At various times, Pam gave examples of occasions when she was the learner with her students, her students’ parents, and others both within and beyond the classroom. In one interview, Pam talked about her students and their families teaching her (particularly during the social history interviews) about cultural and religious events they celebrate. Pam noted that her students have also taught her about “what questions to ask” during whole class discussions. At other times, Pam reported that her students have much to talk about when the whole class discusses important events coming up on the calendar. Furthermore, Pam mentioned that she sometimes puts out books about a topic on which someone in her classroom has knowledge that she does not, thereby giving students an opportunity to teach.

Related to the fact that Pam was receptive to being the learner, I noted that Pam did not seem concerned about being or appearing to be the expert. At one point in my first observation, I documented Pam's openness to the children, saying, "I don't know" when she was not able to answer a question (O3, p. 1). (Unfortunately, I did not hear what the question was). Additionally, the data also revealed that Pam seemed to be aware that she was not necessarily the expert with others as well. Pam mentioned, for instance, that when she worked at the YMCA, she was asked to do some workshops with employees there—individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds who worked with children in the daycares. Pam then related to me how the daycare workers reacted: "I find it very interesting that a white woman is workshopping us." Pam recalled her response to them:

"You know what, you are **very** right and there is, this workshop is not a top-down workshop. This is a, we're all sitting here, learning from each other"...I had certain conversations I wanted to have started but I certainly wasn't presenting myself as the know-it-all in those conversations. (I5, p. 14)

Strong Interest in Anti-Bias Education

In this section, I present data about the people, organizations, educational institutions, and books that have helped shape Pam's beliefs and practices about teaching ELLs. A significant theme here was Pam's keen interest in matters related to anti-bias education.

Inspirational Influences

Pam gave credit to a number of individuals for providing her with knowledge, resources and/or inspiration: parents and their children informing her about various cultural and religious celebrations; colleagues inspiring her to learn more about a particular culture; and the MLO providing her, as Pam stated, with "a **very** safe place to, to **ask** stupid questions" and giving her "the big picture." During her year at the Faculty of Education, Pam claimed that her associate teacher, her "mentor," a "likeminded" individual, had a significant impact on her. Specifically, it was her associate teacher who encouraged Pam to become involved with the teachers' federation's anti-racist committee. The two or three workshops per year that Pam helped to

coordinate and that she attended were organized around various topics related to the interests of teachers such as ELLs' assessment, understanding cultural and linguistic differences, the Muslim faith, celebrations, and anti-bias curriculum. Pam gave some details about the workshop on anti-bias curriculum (a workshop Pam found particularly interesting) in which workshop participants were given checklists to analyze a variety of resources and other matters in the classroom and the school. Questions such as "Do children see themselves in your school?" or "Do they see themselves reflected?" were examples given by Pam about the survey. Besides the many "**wonderful** workshop leaders," noteworthy is Pam's mention of the inspirational influence of others who attended some of the workshops—"people in the community who are also dedicated to this stuff and you **hear** some of the initiatives that they have taken on, and I mean, you can't help but be inspired by that."

Educational institutions such as the Faculty of Education where Pam earned her B.Ed. degree and the Community College where she completed her ECE diploma were also named as sources of knowledge influencing Pam's teaching beliefs and practices. Pam stated that at the Faculty of Education she focused her attention on presenting topics such as talking about homophobia to Kindergarten students. At the same Faculty of Education, Pam later took an ESL (Part 1) course which she told me was a "great learning experience." Pam claimed that the most valuable learning for her in this course came from doing "a cultural profile" on two families from Lebanon (whose children she taught)—interviews that she described as "**very** different." In Pam's view, this difference was related to the fact that she knew the one family better than the other. Indeed, Pam disclosed how one man in the family with whom she had a stronger relationship sparked contrasting feelings in her but gave her "insight into more than just him." On the one hand, Pam stated that she felt that she "really should say something" to this man who openly exposed his prejudices. On the other hand, Pam reported that she felt "almost honoured" that she was hearing his candid opinions. "I thought, 'There's, you're telling me this but there's an **awful** lot of people who think it who aren't saying it.'" Pam claimed that, as a result of listening to

various families' negative experiences with particular cultural groups, she began to understand "why some people might say, 'No, I don't want my child to do that' [such as participate in specific cultural/religious celebrations] because it might be considered favouritism of one culture over another."

It seemed that most of all, Pam spoke favorably of her earlier experiences in the ECE program at an Ontario Community College. "My ECE background has been such a remarkable well that I've drawn on." In fact, Pam stated that, overall, she learned a great deal more in ECE than at the Faculty of Education:

...one of the **wonderful** things about actually getting the [ECE] qualifications was there's **a lot** more anti-bias education in ECE than in Teacher's College. Yeah, there's a lot more of a lot of things in ECE than Teacher's College [Both Pam and I laughed.]: child development, appropriate learning styles...(I5, p. 11)

When I asked her why she thought there was such a difference between the two educational programs, Pam replied, "because ECE is focused on the child. It's focused on the development of the child and what they need. Teacher's College is focused on teaching curriculum and how to deliver it. So it takes precedent."

Not only did Pam's professional training in ECE teach about anti-racism and child development but she reported that the ECE program introduced her to "a couple of really significant books that sort of shaped the way I look at things and my sensitivity, my level of sensitivity, I would guess." Specifically, Pam underlined the importance of one teacher resource book that she identified as "pivotal" for her, a book that she claimed she has referred to "over and over again:" *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. Pam then expounded:

First of all, it was very comprehensive...it was about homophobia; it was about gender; it was about colour...it was about everything, right? So that just, it just made, expanded the **whole** issue for me. And then the other piece of it, it, it taught, it, it made me aware of how **young** children are when they are **aware** of these issues. It's not something you'd **wait** until Grade 3 to talk about because they're already noticing it in three, four years of age, **two**, three, four years of age. But it was also pract...so, it had wonderful theory that way but it also has **a lot** of practical, it, it has lots of, of, of anecdotal stories about what had happened in different classrooms and showing you what kids had said to each other to, to demonstrate the child development component of it and then it had resources galore. So what it helped me do was start talking about stuff that was important to me as

an educator that I wanted to educate kids about or, or open the door to and didn't know how. (15, p. 24)

Pam, then, recalled an example of a scenario, given in this book, which especially influenced her thinking and actions: "When a child says something like 'You're, you look so dirty. You have brown skin' and you don't say anything to that, you've said something to that." Pam remembered thinking at the time, "Wow! There are so many times that I've been uncomfortable in a situation. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to **say** the wrong thing so I said nothing. And I said something by saying nothing." Pam stated that shortly after reading about this, a child in her class said to a Jamaican boy, "Your skin's really brown" at which point Pam wondered, "Where's this going?" and started to prepare her speech. However, another child came in with, "I'm white. Well, actually, I'm a bit pinkish" and then the first child said, "I'm a bit grey" at which point Pam said that she realized, "This was just a conversation about colour." For Pam, this episode made her realize that although children may carry biases (biases they have heard from others), there are other instances when adults may make "assumptions" about "what children say" because of adults' own "baggage." My interpretation of Pam's term "baggage" here is that baggage refers to the knowledge, attitudes, and experiences that all adults hold which may skew interpretations of events.

In a follow-up email to Pam, I asked Pam if she could think of a time when she intervened on a racist episode. In Pam's reply email, Pam stated that she had never encountered any racism at the Kindergarten level, explaining that "while race can play a part in how the children interact with each other, their 'negative interactions' can rarely be described as racist b/c [because] they lack the qualities of intent, understanding, or abuse of power." Pam further elucidated, asserting that "children often respond to their peers on a number of levels, so that race cannot easily be determined as the deciding factor that resulted in rejection." At this point, Pam gave an example of a young black girl (Denise) in her class who "suffered from poverty and poor hygiene" and was "often ostracized by her peers." According to Pam, Denise "strongly defined

herself in negative terms (not smart, not likable, generally not able)” and frequently complained to Pam “that no one wanted to play with her.” Pam then stated that after finding out from Denise that she had asked no one to play with her, Pam would accompany her to someone Denise wanted to play with, “model how to invite another to play, and let the play develop.” On one occasion, Pam continued, Denise told Pam that one child (Claire) told Denise that she didn’t want to play with her “because she had yucky teeth” (“responding to the fact that most of Denise’s teeth were grossly decayed and blackened”). The following is Pam’s account of Denise’s situation and how she supported both girls:

So first I dealt with Denise’s feeling (What do you think about her words?) She was a very self-aware child in many ways which helped when it came to naming her realities to others. (That’s not very nice to say. It’s not my fault that my teeth have cavities.) (Well, then you need to talk to Claire about that.) I helped her approach Claire and facilitated a conversation between them and also tried to challenge the thinking/feelings that were behind the reactions. What I already knew about Claire told me she was not trying to be mean spirited. She was reacting from her sense of “desirable and beautiful.” I was careful not to put words in either child’s mouth, but also not to talk around the issue. (Claire, why do you not want to play with Denise?) (Because her teeth are all black.) (Is that true Denise? Are your teeth black?) Yes, but that doesn’t mean I am not nice.) (Hmmm, Claire what do you think about that? Is it possible to have cavities in your teeth but to have a kind and beautiful heart?) In the end Claire was able to acknowledge that Denise’s teeth didn’t affect what kind of a friend she was. [The parentheses and quotation marks were used in Pam’s email to me.]

Pam finished her story, stating that, as the girls played together she “inject[ed] positive comments” about their interaction, emphasizing that it looked like they were enjoying one another’s company.

This chapter described some of what I saw as the dominant features of Pam, her strengths, and her professional interests, providing a backdrop to the following two chapters that examine more closely the practices she espoused and employed as a Kindergarten teacher with students of diverse languages and cultures.

CHAPTER FIVE

USING BROAD-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES TO FACILITATE YOUNG ELLS' INCLUSION

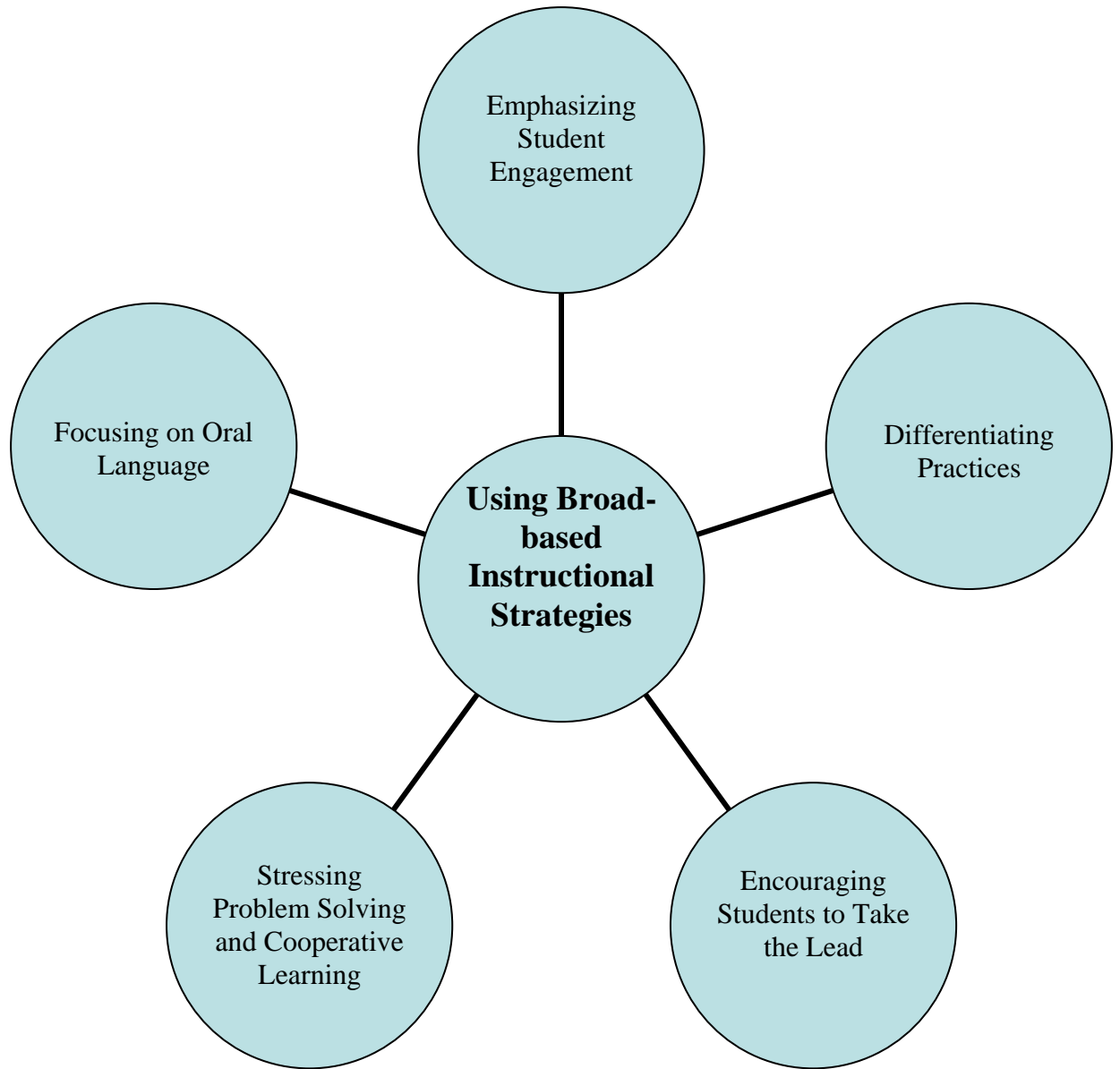
One significant finding of which I became aware while collecting and reviewing the data was the close relationship between Pam's beliefs and practices toward teaching all children and her more specific views and corresponding practices about teaching ELLs. While, as a researcher looking for patterns in the data, I found overlapping components between these general/broad-based and specific practices, it is important to note that Pam pointed out that her approach to ELLs differs from the ways in which she works with non-ELLs but it does not necessarily differ from the strategies she uses with non-ELLs who are struggling.

They [ELLs] don't need you to teach differently than any child who's not getting it. I mean if you have a child who has a language disability, who can't remember auditorally, and you need pictures in front of them. So you watch your child, you see what helps them remember, you see what, what sticks to, in their memory, what, what things they're interested in and you do that with ELL learners. So it's not really a completely different strategy. (II, p. 26)

In this chapter, I present and link data regarding Pam's global beliefs and practices about teaching children to her particular notions and approaches regarding her work with ELLs. I organize the data around five main sub-themes that I found capture the essential aspects of Pam's beliefs and practices about teaching young children: her emphasis on engaging students; her differentiated practices; her focus on oral language; the importance she placed on teaching problem solving and cooperative learning skills; and her encouraging students to take the lead. Figure one illustrates these five broad-based instructional practices.¹ It is important to add that I found that Pam used all of these practices, not seeming to value one above any of the others.

¹ I use the term, "broad-based instructional strategies" to refer to those strategies that current research has shown to be effective for all students, some of which are discussed in the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2008b) document, *Supporting English Language Learners with Limited Prior Schooling*.

Figure 1. Theme One: Employing Broad-based Instructional Strategies to Facilitate Young ELLs' Inclusion



Emphasizing Student Engagement

A significant theme in Pam’s teaching of which I made note during my observations was the value I saw her place on engaging students—“drawing their attention” (a phrase Pam used when talking about ESL strategies) to classroom happenings; constantly interacting with and observing students, making adjustments to maintain their interest; and sustaining eye contact with the children. Indeed, it appeared that the children were engaged in all of the activities I witnessed. I recalled seeing only two incidents when children seemed somewhat distracted or they were engaging in an activity that was unrelated to the immediate task: one child in the shape group seemed to be aimlessly cutting paper (O2, p. 2); and when the morning group was lining up to go home, one child did not join the line and was putting a sticker, just passed out by Pam, over his eye (O3, p. 2). In the fourth interview, Pam revealed what I noted as her relentless attention to student engagement. Here, Pam stated that sometimes there are occasions when ELLs will “start to do a bit more solitary play than they might have otherwise. So I might have to draw them in to another group’s play”—play that does not require “too much language for them.”

I observed Pam initiate and sustain her students’ engagement through various means: her emphasis on providing children with activities and materials that were meaningful and connected to their lives; her practice of affording children a variety of ways to access content or develop skills; and her predictable daily classroom procedures that seemed to give children a sense of structure and independence, enabling children to focus on the task(s) at hand.

Meaningful Activities and Materials

Two questions I asked Pam in the first interview: “What do you think are the most pressing needs of ELLs?” and “How do you think ELLs best learn English?” received similar responses. Pam replied, “a lot of hands-on learning and relevant learning” and then described how she “bring[s] it [whatever the children are learning] into the classroom.” The example she gave here was going out and collecting frog’s eggs to study life cycles. Field trips were also mentioned

a number of times and on one occasion, she portrayed such outings as “very helpful” to the children’s learning. I observed, at times, Pam’s use of meaningful, open-ended and/or higher order questions while she met individually with children and during parts of her whole class sessions. For example, Pam crouched beside students in the science activity centre asking each, “What are you finding out about?” or “Tell me about...” as the children talked with one another about their frog discoveries (O1, p. 2). In another instance, Pam and all of her students met in a circle activity to review what they had learned about shapes. To prepare the children for a more challenging question, she stated, “Your brain has to be really turned on [to answer the question]” and then asked, “How do you know this part [Pam pointed to the cone part of object] is a cone?” (O4, p. 1). As well, Pam often employed questions, using child-oriented language that seemed to evoke a high level of interest and many responses from her students. During the science lesson, she asked the children, “How many babies do you think a mommy frog has?” At this point, the children became very excited about responding with their guesses (O1 p. 1).

One approach to reading that Pam used in her science lesson on frogs also serves as an example of how she focused on purposeful activities. In interview three, Pam explained how and why she used the language experience approach (whereby the teacher writes down verbatim students’ thoughts about a topic) for recording the children’s discoveries about frogs.

We were writing down our observations ’cause that’s what scientists do. So, but they can’t do that so I have to scribe for them and, but they see that modeled and, and, and then we used the, what I wrote, we use it the next day...they were their words so they’d have an ownership of those words that if it was some other text, they don’t. It’s like, “Oh, Sarah said that! There’s the word ‘frog’ in Sarah’s!”...they just hold onto that knowledge better when it’s their own. (I2, p. 19)

In the same interview, Pam added that she also “scribe[s] word for word what people [the children] say” in student journals (which, she stated, also achieves the purpose of obtaining “a record of their spoken language”). Although I did not have an opportunity to witness Pam writing down the children’s oral findings for the whole class (reports that they practiced telling to their

smaller group), I did see the children's report entitled, "I Discovered" on a piece of large chart paper with the children's names recorded after their own sentences.

When I asked her about the kinds of material resources that she has found particularly helpful in her work with ELLs, Pam remarked,

I find anything that, that is based in everyday life so if I can get materials that make sense to them and connect to their, their experience very useful. Whenever a child says, "Hey, I have one of those!", you've got them hooked. (11, p. 23)

In fact, I observed the children bring in examples of variously shaped everyday articles from home during a classroom lesson about shapes. Pam had sent a newsletter home, informing parents about "Show and Tell" for the month of May when students were "encouraged to find **at least** one example of each 3D shape we are exploring." Some examples of home items were listed in the newsletter such as cylinder, drum, candle, piece of cake or pie but Pam added "don't be limited by my suggestions."

Within the classroom, I also noted the wide variety of items for children to manipulate and with which to play (e.g., numerous kinds of blocks of assorted materials and sizes; games, puzzles, and toys; art and stationary supplies)—items that were easily accessible on shelves within the children's reach and well organized sometimes with labels and/or pictures on shelves so that children knew where to locate and put away articles, and items that were "generally always available," according to Pam. Some materials, such as those found in the Chinese restaurant centre or the multicultural books in the book centre, were particularly relevant to students of specific cultural backgrounds. However, other than the centre signs in the three major languages (English, Arabic and Somali), I did not see examples of materials in languages other than English.

Multiple Ways of Accessing Skills and Knowledge

Closely related to her emphasis on employing meaningful, relevant materials and activities were Pam's notions about engaging students through multiple approaches to teaching and learning content or concepts. When I commented on the high level of engagement of the students in her classroom, Pam stated,

I have seen people who do a lot of pencil and paper work, they all sit down, and no, they're not necessarily all engaged, so if you have a program that children can access tactilely, kinesthetically, orally and there's more than one way **in** to the subject matter, then, then you're gonna catch more kids...it's an ELL plus thing. (I4, p. 13)

Soon after, in the same interview, she reiterated this view:

You need to state things multiple ways. You need to explain things more than once...sometimes you actually need to do hand-over-hand things to show them [ELLs] what you are talking about when you say, you know, "make circles or make a spiral" and you actually have to do it with them, not because they couldn't do it but because they don't understand what you are talking about. (I4, p. 15)

Specifically, when she spoke of employing multiple ways of accessing content, Pam seemed to be primarily referring to using hands-on materials, visuals, and gestures and movement.

Although I just mentioned that "hands-on learning" was seen by Pam as meaningful to students, I think that it is also important to note the role hands-on materials played for her in engaging all children especially ELLs, which, in my view, helped them to understand content, concepts and new vocabulary. In this excerpt, Pam gave some examples of some hands-on materials that ELLs need to manipulate in order to understand geometrical terms and concepts:

When you're doing geometry, you know, spheres and cylinders, they [ELLs] need balls in their hand. They need cans of soup. They need a party hat to understand what a cone is...they need tangible things...and they need it much longer. (I1, p. 20)

Additionally, when I asked Pam how she might help a teacher who was having some difficulties working with ELLs, in particular learners who did not seem to be included in some of the activities, she stated, "I would hazard a guess that right away it's because it's [the activities are] too abstract." Pam then further explained how especially important it is for ELLs to see or interact with concrete objects or pictures.

...we don't realize, the lack of visualization ability that a language barrier presents. If you don't understand the **word**, you can't come up with a picture in your mind. If you can't come up with a picture in your mind, you're not, you're not understanding because when we talk, we're visualizing constantly. So and it might not **be** that that child doesn't, can't, has never **seen** a frog. They just don't know what frog means in English. So if you are showing a frog in your hand or picture of them they can visualize it and they can connect it to their own language. (I5, p. 35)

Similarly, Pam pointed out the difficulty an English speaking child might have understanding what, for example, the Koran or a menorah were without seeing these. “Things for them to touch and hold and understand...the actual concrete object’s best.” Even for children beyond Kindergarten, she spoke of the value of children using manipulatives to understand concepts. Pam stated that the year she taught Grade 3, she brought the students, many of whom were ELLs, to the Kindergarten room to make use of the numerous hands-on items available in order to understand mathematical or science concepts, even though, she claimed, the process was a longer one.

Although Pam stated that “the actual concrete object’s best [to use]” when working with ELLs, pictures seemed to be a close second: “but photos if, if I don’t have that [item].” On another occasion, after talking about various strategies she uses with ELLs, Pam added “visuals, lots of visuals.” Later in the same interview, Pam proceeded to explain how visuals are “an extra support” for English-speaking children but “for a child who doesn’t have the English, visual is, is that, is even more necessary...a child who doesn’t speak any English when they walk into your room doesn’t understand anything but the picture.”

In Pam’s classroom, posters and charts of the alphabet, the calendar, the weather, the world (a map of the world), math concepts (counting, shapes), and spring theme pictures (e.g. a poster showing the stages of a butterfly) were displayed at the children’s eye level on bulletin boards, blackboards, and walls,. There were, however, some empty spaces on her bulletin boards. In terms of displays created by or related to the children, there were some children’s finger paintings exhibited on one of the bulletin boards, four canvas paintings leaning against painting easels (paintings that were to be given to mothers on “Mother’s Day”), and small individually named photographs of each Kindergarten student shown in alphabetical order on a board at the alphabet centre.

Pam also claimed to do “a lot more gesturing” when working with ELLs—another strategy I observed Pam employ to assist children in their understanding. In my observations, I made note

of Pam using gestures during whole class lessons (e.g., pointing to objects, body parts [O4, p. 1] or pictures in a book as she talked about them [O3, p. 1]; putting her hands together and moving them in a zigzag pattern to describe a “wiggling tadpole” (O1, p. 1); using her fingers for numbers to show how two numbers go together to make seven [O2, p. 1]) and sometimes students were given a pointer to point to various shapes in a big book during a shape search activity (O3, p. 1). I did not notice, though, Pam gesturing as she interacted with individual ELLs, but it was more difficult for me to record Pam’s actions while attending to her quieter words with individuals.

Furthermore, Pam asserted that she employs sign language (American Sign Language or ASL) with all students, especially ELLs.

Actually one of the things I was thinking of when you talked about what do I do, what are the strategies, I actually use sign language...just for simple things. Like for sitting [Pam used the sign for sitting], stop [used sign], talking, listening [used signs] so that there’s a visual right away. (I2, p. 13)

On one occasion, I observed Pam use the sign for “watch” when she said to an ELL, “Watch me” and then proceeded to show the young girl how to mix some paints for an art project (O4, p. 2). As well, exhibited on one of the bulletin boards in the classroom was a chart of numbers one to ten in ASL.

Related to gestures, Pam spoke about how she “physicalize[s] things for them [the ELLs]” as a strategy to support their needs. In the first interview, Pam gave an example of how, during the time when she taught in the ESL pull-out program, she would have ELLs move over and under to demonstrate the meanings of various prepositions “so that the, the vocabulary is connected to something...it’s not abstract.” I observed that both gestures and movements were incorporated into songs and rhythms that Pam performed with the children (O2, p. 2).

Routines

As an onlooker in Pam’s classroom, I was immediately struck by the orderliness yet the freedom of the children’s movement within the classroom. It appeared to me that all children

were very familiar with the rules, expectations and routines of the classroom which seemed to allow the children to engage more fully in their learning. Each day children followed the same schedule which included an hour at one of the learning centres, French, and a whole group circle activity entailing a lesson/discussion, “Show and Tell,” shared reading, guided writing or a read-aloud. Friday’s schedule consisted of a library period, read-aloud and 35 minutes of gym activities. (Regrettably, I did not observe Pam on Friday.) While Pam followed this plan, at the same time, she seemed to build into her program room for spontaneity too. During my first observation, for instance, Pam immediately responded to some children who announced that there was a change in the weather outside. (Windows, the height of the wall, spanned the width of the northern wall of the classroom.) Pam speculated that perhaps it was hail and then suggested to the children that they check on the conditions by opening the back door of the classroom that led outside and putting their hands outside. With much enthusiasm, the children scurried to the door, peered outside, and commented on the sudden change (O1 p. 2).

A variety of routine strategies were regularly used to capture the children’s attention to listen to announcements and directions or to redirect the children’s behaviours to other matters: Pam started singing a familiar song for all to sing or she clapped a rhythm for the children to imitate; she asked the student leader of the week to turn off the classroom lights (O1, p. 3); Pam and her students chanted: “Hands on top, then we stop” while they placed their hands on their heads (O1, p. 3); and she clearly reminded students of the classroom rules and procedures at various intervals (O1, p. 2).

When discussing specific strategies for ELLs, Pam mentioned (and I observed) how she directs the ELLs to move to the front during story time (O3, p. 1). In the fourth interview, Pam described how she explains to her ELLs why she wants them there: “You speak very good English when you sit at the front or you understand the story better when you’re at the front.”

Differentiating Practices

The term differentiation was frequently used by Pam to describe many of the strategies she employs in teaching, assessing and responding to children in general. Differentiation was also the term Pam used to explain how she supports and includes ELLs in particular. When examining the data, I noted that many of Pam's ideas about teaching children were expressed in the form of an opening statement such as "it depends" or that one must "deal with" a particular issue "on a case by case basis"—terms which suggested to me her overall differentiated approach to teaching.

Pam's notions of differentiated instruction seemed to be tied to her belief that children progress through various sequential stages—a belief that she claimed was based on her learning about childhood development during the time she earned her ECE diploma. Pam often referred to the importance of differentiating instruction to match each child's particular needs, starting with the child's stage of development ("where the child is at" was a phrase Pam used many times) and scaffolding the child to the next level. "They need differentiated instruction... they need to be instructed at their level of, of their level of knowledge." Language, too, was discussed by Pam in terms of stages. When talking about what ELLs need, Pam asserted the importance of observing ELLs' language to evaluate each child's (English) language stage and to determine what the child needs from her.

Differentiated Instruction²

One strategy Pam employed to differentiate instruction was to group her students according to the purpose of the activity. (For centre activities, Pam claimed she changes groups on a weekly basis.) Thus, "when they were doing their research, I made sure that there was someone who was pretty strong each time so that when I say, 'Ask a friend', there's someone who can help them." Here, Pam was referring to the science groups I observed on two occasions.

² Pam's use of the term, "differentiated instruction" is similar to that which is used in the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2006) document: "A method of instruction in which the teacher considers the needs of each child at his or her current stage of development, and then uses a learning approach with that child that responds to his or her individual needs" (p. 63).

Pam noted, however, that for a “language instruction exercise” she would not want to group together a child who can recognize “all the high frequency words with someone who doesn’t know their ABC’s yet” because “that would be an exercise in frustration for both of them.” Although she stressed “**most** often I have mixed ability groups,” at an earlier point in the same interview, Pam had stated “if I’m working on a particular skill and four of them need that skill then I’ll pull those four together.”

In the following interview excerpt, Pam gave examples of some of the differentiated instructional strategies she uses with small groups of ELLs:

I use simpler books, same content. I use small group instruction, same lesson, delivered with more simple language and I do different, I might, there might be a, a, a small group that I would pull out and give them the background knowledge they’d need to, to even lead up to the lesson...So I wouldn’t, I don’t, I don’t do everyone does the same thing ’cause they don’t all need the same thing. (I1, p. 25)

Unfortunately, I did not observe any such ELL group work.

Besides dividing children into small groups to better support the needs of children, I noted that Pam’s one-on-one work with children was another way that she differentiated instruction. One-on-one meetings were also a strategy that Pam stated she uses “to reinforce things.” During my observations of Pam, I noticed that she met with individual children on numerous occasions, spending about three to five minutes with each child (O1, p. 2). Sometimes I observed that Pam varied her strategy while she interacted with individual children; other times I saw her using approaches that differed from child to child. On one occasion, Pam worked with an ELL and asked if he could find a cylinder. When the young boy could not correctly find a cylindrical block, Pam tried another approach, acknowledging the child’s efforts and then restating the question as a statement using simpler language, “That’s a good try...We’re looking for something with a circle face.” When the child showed an item to her, Pam said, “Do these match?” (comparing the child’s item with a cylindrical item that she picked up). Pam then restated the question with the aid of the concrete object: “Look at the bottom. Are they the

same?” At this point, the child responded affirmatively and Pam exclaimed, “Excellent!” (O2, p. 2).

While I observed Pam working with individuals in a reading group on two occasions, I noted her use of various reading approaches. I heard her ask some students phonics-related questions about their reading material: “Show me all the s’s on that page” (O1, p. 2). I observed her prompting children to help them with individual words when they read aloud: “It starts with a ‘p’ sound” (O2, p. 2). As well, I noticed Pam reading along with other students (O1, p. 2).

Pam also differentiated instruction through the kind of questions she asked individual children. When I asked Pam about her decision-making process for who to ask while posing questions to the children, Pam replied, “It depends. I know who knows what, right?” Then Pam discussed a whole group calendar lesson that I observed and she stated,

I knew there were some children who could do three-column addition, right? And there were other children who didn’t recognize the numbers. So I **very** consciously chose what questions I asked...based on what I know of what they can do.... (I4, p. 25)

This explanation confirmed what I witnessed. I noticed that some children answered more challenging questions: “Who can find two teenager numbers that happened on a Saturday?” On the other hand, Pam asked less difficult questions such as, “Can you find a number bigger than ten?” to provide opportunities for other children to respond. For one child who had problems finding a number on the calendar, Pam guided her hand to the number and, in another instance, she sang a familiar song to help a student find a number (O2, p. 1).

During the fourth interview, immediately following her discussion of the calendar activity, Pam went on to talk about her whole group review of shapes, comparing the questions she asked her morning students who were chiefly non-ELLs with the questions she asked her afternoon students who were predominantly ELLs.

...it was interesting because in the afternoon I really noticed that I was asking questions **very** differently. In the morning, I was, I was saying...“What’s this?” or “What would you call **this** part of the building?” So they had to use their [English] language to name it and then in the afternoon, I did it **completely** the other way round. I would say, “There’s a **cylinder** somewhere in this page...Who can find the cylinder?” because they, I needed

to know if they, if they were getting the concept 'cause I **knew** that I wasn't going to get certain language out of them...I was giving them the language so they were **identifying** more than naming. Morning group was naming **and** identifying. (I4, p. 37)

Of course, Pam also noted that in her afternoon group there were "certain children I, I was confident I would [ask them to label], so for those children I, I would say, 'Okay, come up and touch something on the page and tell me what it is.'" Consistent with what Pam stated here, I found that during my observation of the morning lesson that her questions seemed to vary according to the needs of her students. One child (possibly an ELL), for instance, was called upon to respond to Pam's question, "Who thinks they can find a cylinder?" In this case, Pam gave the child a non-verbal option to demonstrate her knowledge (O3, p. 1).

Differentiated Assessment

Closely related to the ways in which Pam differentiated instruction were Pam's approaches to differentiating assessment. On numerous occasions during the interviews, Pam gave examples of how and when or where she assesses children's thinking/processing skills, language skills, and social skills through observing her students. In the following quote, Pam talked about observing children's general social skills and/or their more specific language skills during a time when the children freely play at whatever they want.

Everybody **has** to move through a free activity. And I'll do my observations there and see how they're interacting as a group or whatever. So sometimes there's a very specific learning purpose. Sometimes, it's, it's a more open-ended thing so that I can just observe different skills and how they're, what kind of language they're using in their play, whether there's dramatic language. Are they using the vocabulary that we've been working on, you know? (I2, p. 27)

In another interview, Pam spoke about observing not only a child's product but "see[ing] process" through asking the child questions about their thinking in creating their product.

It's not just "Let me go look at your zoo"...I need to just have a little observation, "Come out. Tell me about this and how did you do this? What shape did you use?" So I'll have these mini-conferences about what they did so I can get a sense of their process 'cause I can't observe everybody's process simultaneously. (I4, p. 28)

In particular, Pam explained the need to watch more closely and then respond to ELLs.

...often times when the language structures are more complicated than the ones they understand or speak, you lose them. They fade out. Not all...but the ones that I, that lose because they're, they're getting distracted or whatever, I, I observe **constantly** and monitor those kids and see which ones I need to pull back in, with, by making something more **concrete**, or giving them a stick to touch something or whatever. So keeping my eyeball on them for sure. (I4, p. 4)

Pam also stressed the need to find out from learners whose English language skills are minimal whether they understand concepts taught in the classroom. In this passage, Pam talked about the ways in which she differentiates assessment for ELLs:

I actually differentiate assessment too. So, I would, if, if a child can't show me something on paper or can't show me something with their words I've got to find, I've got to make sure that it's not that the knowledge isn't there [voice went up], it's that, that it's just an issue of language. So I have to make sure that I'm assessing them in a way that they can **show** me their knowledge if they have it. It's not **language** dependent and that can be **very** challenging. But there's lots of math skills, you know, that can be **demonstrated**. They don't have to be **talked** about. Obviously, **language** skills have to be talked about. But, again, you can, you can still get an under...an understanding of the child's comprehension with pictures, with you asking questions and them showing you things without them actually having to label it and talk about it. (I2, p. 16)

Pam showed caution, though, when talking about assessment for ELLs, stating, "You have to be careful about assessment too, that you're not drawing conclusions that...they can't do this or they can't do that...that you have red flags about them when you need not have red flags" (I2, p. 16).

The differentiated instructional approaches that Pam used seemed to be enmeshed with her assessments of students' needs. "You differentiate your instruction based on what you, what, what you've noticed they can do and what you've concluded [Pam laughed slightly] that they can do." Thus, my observations of Pam's varied approaches with students was in some ways a witnessing of her past and ongoing informal assessments, confirmed by her statements to me about her thought processes regarding why she chose particular approaches with specific students.

It is important to note here Pam's views on first language assessment which specifically relate to ELLs and is another component to differentiating assessment. When discussing the Family Reception Centre (a Board-operated facility) as "a great resource" for teachers and parents of ELLs, Pam stated that the children of all newcomers to Canada who do not have

English as their first language are assessed at the Centre “to see what their school readiness is in their first language.” Pam then stressed “So it’s first language assessment which is really critical.” These reports then “come with the child to the school so you can see where they’re at.”

Focusing on Oral Language

Pam’s education and background in ECE was credited for influencing her beliefs and practices about a language-oriented program:

Having started in ECE...the whole focus is teaching language then, and **everybody** is learning language, you learn a lot of strategies for teaching language. So you might be doing sensory play, you might be doing block play, you might be doing cognitive work, but the whole, the whole foundation of it is language. So I would say that I **definitely** would be a different teacher had I not started there. Guaranteed. (I4, p. 8)

Not only did Pam state that all Kindergarten students need language skills, when I asked her what ELLs specifically need, she expressed strong opinions about the importance of oral language (referring to oral language in English):

...they need **oral language**. I mean they don’t have that foundation of oral language which is, which is the basis upon what everything else is built. So, a, and that’s the other thing, like there’s a lot more oral language in Kindergarten. As soon as you start, go to Grade 1, it’s **move to the text**. Written word, written word. And they may not need that yet. They may still need to be building their oral language skills. (I1, p. 20)

Oral Language Strategies

At various times during the interviews, Pam reported approaches that I grouped as oral language strategies for all children but especially for ELLs: modeling English (when talking about a puppet activity, she mentioned how she modeled the language children could use to start a story); continually rephrasing (“saying it one way...with, the, the **jargon** and then saying it more simply”); encouraging students to rephrase what she had said (because “if you can teach something, you know it” and then Pam added that “it also gives me a chance to observe how much they’ve absorbed or not absorbed”); encouraging children to talk about what they are doing or learning (e.g., Pam reported that in the block area, the children were building a zoo “but then they have to talk about the, the 3-D shapes they use to build”); giving explicit explanations to the

children (“I’m very, very explicit with my directions”); and repeating words, phrases and instructions (“students need to hear words in context repeatedly”).

I observed Pam putting into practice all of the above, except the strategy of asking the children to rearticulate her words. For example, I noted that there were a number of times during the whole class session when Pam repeated and emphasized key words (such as various shape words) and often repeated the children’s own words. When the children described what frog’s eggs looked like, for instance, she reiterated their responses: “looks like a moon,” “looks like a circle” (O1, p. 1). Furthermore, during Pam’s interactions with students at the Shape Centre, she encouraged a child to talk about his building materials by asking, “What did you use to make the door?” (O4, p. 2).

An example of Pam’s modeling language to a child occurred while she was helping a child approach another child. After asking the child how she might do this, Pam gave the child some words to try using: “I’d like to play with you” (O1, p. 2). Throughout my observations of her, I also recorded many instances of Pam giving specific instructions to children, often explaining her reasons behind these directives. During a painting activity, for instance, Pam took the students step by step through some tasks: “When your water gets dirty, you’re going to have to get some more water” (O4, p. 2).

An oral language strategy employed by her that I observed but Pam did not discuss was her frequent practice of providing verbal clues to students to scaffold their understanding or to encourage them to take risks in guessing answers. Pam did note, however, that she encourages her students to give clues to their classmates. (When talking about her “gifted kids,” Pam realized that she uses this strategy “because that’s more challenging than giving the answer.”) During one morning observation, I noticed Pam and one of her students give clues to the class. At this time, Pam was talking about the holes in some cheese brought in by a student and she was giving the class clues to help them think of the word, “hollow.” Pam initially asked, “What do you call it when it has space inside?” Then Pam’s first clue was “Starts with ‘h’” and for several seconds,

she struggled to think of a word that rhymes with hollow: “Rhymes with... Rhymes with ...,” concluding that there was no rhyming word until one child said, “It rhymes with swallow.” “Good thinking!” exclaimed Pam (O4, p. 1).

Stressing Problem Solving and Cooperative Learning Skills

Two main features of Pam’s teaching that I noted particularly during my observations were the importance she placed on teaching students to be self reliant and to solve their own problems. Connected to this, Pam also focused on encouraging respectful, cooperative relationships. In this segment, I present data regarding Pam’s beliefs about and strategies for teaching problem solving and cooperative learning skills.

Problem Solving Strategies

Talking the problem out with a child through asking questions (how she/he might solve the problem), breaking the problem/task into smaller steps: “So what are you going to say next?” (O1, p. 2), and modeling what to say or giving children an oral script were some of the strategies Pam used to help students. On one occasion, I observed Pam giving ELLs scripts to help them ask their classmates for assistance with buttoning their paint shirts at the back. The children were making Mother’s Day paintings, using canvas boards, and I noted that some children were helping each other with their smocks. Pam said to two ELLs, “You say, ‘Can you do my buttons?’” Soon after this, one of the ELLs asked a classmate, “Jason, my friend, can you do my button?” (O4, p. 2).

As she talked about strategies she uses with ELLs, Pam began telling me about a problem solving strategy that she called, “putting the ball in their court.” As Pam began to explain this method, she realized that she uses this approach with all students. Nevertheless, similar to her focus on oral language, Pam claimed to use this practice more with ELLs.

Another one I use is, is, I call it “putting the ball in their court”. I do this with all the kids actually, but so if, if, I said, “Okay, Amy, can you go get crayons for everybody?” “Where’s crayons Miss P.?” “I don’t know, Amy. Where are the crayons? You find it. Wh...where, where do I put them? Where **might** they be?” So, like, I’m not problem

solving it for them but, but getting them to do that. “Who can you ask for help?”...There needs to be a lot of modeling [slowed speech for this word] also for them to, for them to interact...you step-by-step break it down for them what they need to do next and, and model it or give them the words ahead of time and say, “Okay. Go say this” or “Do this first.” If you want a partner say, “I need a partner, everybody” because an English language learner, when I say, “Okay, find a partner,” [non-ELLs] can turn around and go, “Will you be my partner [said very quickly]?” really fast where someone who doesn’t ha...who can’t say, “Will you be my partner?” then is left by themselves, so, when I see that’s happening I will give them the words they need and say, “Say to so and so, ‘Will you be my partner?’”...In social problems they [students] all need the words, but in **everyday** situations the English language learners need the words. (I4, p. 6)

Cooperative, Respectful Relationships

There were many instances of Pam stating her strong opinion about teaching and encouraging the children to help one another. Here is one such example:

I won’t do anybody’s buttons. “No, you need to ask a friend” and I’ll be standing right there but I’ll, and so they’ll ask me and I’ll say, “No. Turn to Shayna and say, ‘Shayna, can you do my button?’” So they get used to the fact that they’re supposed to cooperate with each other and there’s things that they can do for each other just **fine**. (I4, p. 27)

Consistent with Pam’s emphasis on cooperation within the classroom, the school also broadcasted the same philosophy over its PA system. During the second observation, after the singing of “Oh Canada” and some morning announcements, I heard the principal recite the school’s “peace pledge,” along with the children in Pam’s classroom—a promise to be a peaceful person, to not encourage others to fight and to help one another (O2, p. 1).

Pam’s practices related to her views: cooperative learning activities were noticeably promoted. Most of the activities involved small groups or pairs of children working, talking and/or playing together. For instance, at the research centre, as previously noted, children conversed together regarding their findings about frogs and Pam emphasized to her students, “Did you tell the team what you found out?” (O1, p. 2). At the art centre, children were helping one another and commenting on each other’s paintings. One ELL stated to another child, “Nice painting. I like too much” (O4, p. 2). I did not see Pam assign individual work to the children but there were occasional instances of children doing an activity on their own at the shape centre and during the free activity for a short period of time.

When conflicts arose between children, I noticed that Pam downplayed the situation. On two separate occasions, I saw Pam carefully listen and attend to the needs of the children who came to her about an incident involving another child. In one case, Pam told one child who was bumped in the nose by another child, “I’m sure it was just an accident.” (O1, p. 1) On the other occasion, a child was crying and reported what had happened. Pam then gave the child a tissue and said, “I’m pretty confident it didn’t happen on purpose.” (O2, p. 2)

Pam seemed to place a high value on respectful, fair behaviour as well. During all of my observations, I noted that Pam seemed to give all of the children an opportunity to share and respond to questions in the whole class sessions. Indeed, during a whole class lesson that involved Pam reading and asking the children questions about a big book (entitled, “Shape Search”), I heard her tell the children that she would pick everyone for something (O3, p. 1). On one occasion, Pam disciplined a child for yelling out an answer to a question that was not directed to her. At this point, Pam firmly stated, “Jessica, it’s not fair to yell the number when it’s not your turn” and then she added, “Strike one.” After two other similar occasions within this short time frame, Pam said to Jessica, “Strike three” and proceeded to direct Jessica to a space by the window, away from the group (O2, p. 1).

Encouraging Students to Take the Lead

Pam asserted the importance of her students taking the lead at times, especially during whole group sessions whereby one child “who’s not shy to say what they did and that ends up being fodder for discussion because I might not say the thing that triggers.” In the following excerpt, Pam discussed her issue with daily lesson plans (as introduced in Chapter four) and related that to her notions of encouraging students to take the lead:

...when I do lesson plans, I get, I can get right into it, and I, I get all these ideas and I fine tune them [said very quickly] and then, then I’m **driving** the learning [slower speech] because then I start to have an agenda. But when I have a general agenda, I can move with the kids. And I can and I can let them lead it more and that’s what I want to be able to do. (I2, p. 25)

The general agenda to which Pam referred is her long range plans and weekly plans, including activities “that everybody **has** to move through.” Although I did not see occasions when students took the lead, (all of the lessons were teacher controlled yet flexible), I did not recall Pam rushing through a topic (in order to turn to the next objective or activity) and cutting off any of the children’s responses. The following passage suggested to me the same kind of flexibility that I witnessed:

When I go in there [the classroom] with a lot of question marks, I, I’m, in some ways, it kind of heightens my sensitivity to what they’re saying and the way I could, “Oh, yeah that reminds me of a book” and...they get me very genuine that way too. (I 2, p. 26)

I think that it is also worthy of mention that Pam stated that there was no seating arrangement for the children during their snack time (the only time when the children were required to sit at tables)—they could sit “wherever they want.” Interestingly, Pam said that the children were not used to the idea that they didn’t have a fixed spot. “They think it’s their chair.” Nonetheless, Pam claimed that she has “the executive pass...if it’s not working out.” This example and other similar aforementioned instances suggest to me that although Pam made final decisions about matters, she provided children with ample opportunities to make their own decisions, thus preparing the way for children to take the lead. In interview four, in fact, after Pam recalled a recent puppet activity in which she helped the children continue with a story (subsequent to her stating that she took the lead of one of her students), Pam enthusiastically declared that the activity was “great because they were starting to take over the telling of story which is what you want them to do.”

I also observed that Pam seemed to give recognition to her students’ knowledge and seemed to hold a general attitude that valued children’s judgments on matters. There were at least two occasions when I observed Pam survey the children’s ideas. For example, she asked the class, “Do you think this [a book about shapes] is fiction (pretend) or non-fiction (true)?” and then after the children raised their hands, giving their opinions, Pam then said, “Okay, let’s see.” (O3, p. 1) At another time, she called upon a child (who apparently liked to help others, as I later found out

from Pam) to assist another child who claimed that she hurt her nose. Pam said to the helper, “You’re an expert at noses. Would you like to help, Jenna?” (O1, p. 3)

In this chapter, I presented data related to the beliefs and practices Pam espoused and utilized with all of her Kindergarten students which overlapped with her more particular notions and approaches about teaching her ELLs. The following email excerpt from Pam summarizes her thoughts about this interaction:

Many strategies used with ELLs are best practices for any child that needs extra support. It mostly would be a matter of *degree* than *kind*...It is also important to be aware that there are other learning/teaching options available for an English speaking child who is academically weak that are not an option for an ELL child (using peer support for example or audio resources). For an academically weak English-speaking child, they can access the language, but not always the concept. For ELL, it may be that they need to access the language before they can access the concept **OR** they have the concept but cannot demonstrate it because of the language barrier. [Italics and bold letters were used in Pam’s email to me.]

CHAPTER SIX

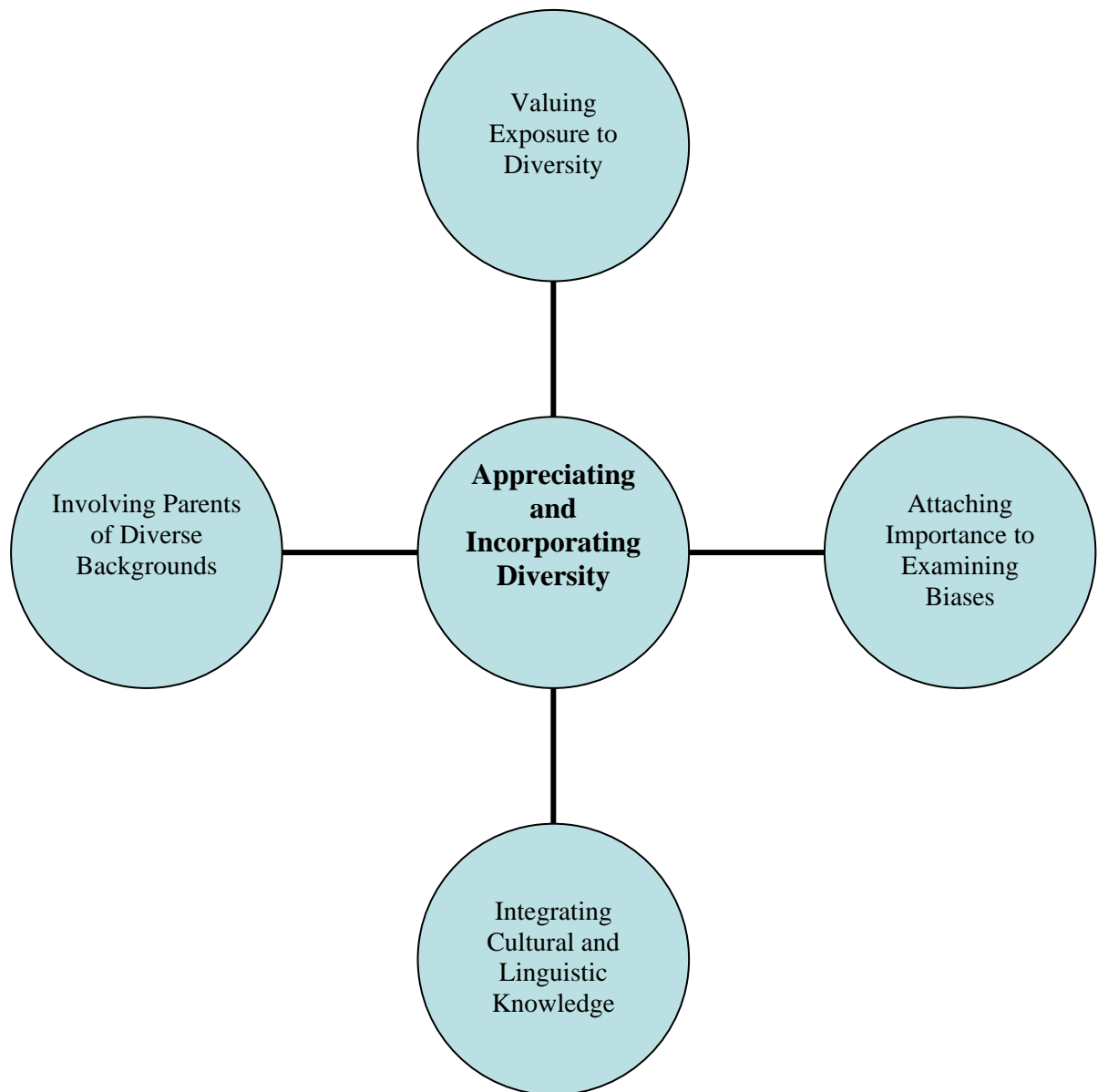
APPRECIATING AND INCORPORATING DIVERSITY TO FACILITATE YOUNG ELLS' INCLUSION

In this chapter, I present data that relates to the overall theme of Pam appreciating and incorporating diversity to facilitate ELLs' inclusion. Although diversity here refers to the cultural and linguistic features that distinguish one group of people from another, it is important to note that for Pam the inclusion of ELLs was part of a larger issue of "inclusivity of anybody who's on the outside...[those] who do not see themselves in mainstream culture." Whereas the data that formed the first theme were obtained from interviews, observations, and to a lesser degree documents or artefacts, the data presented in this chapter were primarily drawn from interviews that disclosed Pam's attitudes, beliefs, and practices on the topic of diversity. As a result, I was unable to corroborate some of these data with observations.

I begin with data connected to what I saw as Pam's strong belief in exposing children to many forms of diversity. The second section deals with data linked to Pam's belief in the value of examining her own and others' biases and the approaches she reported to use in discussing such issues with her students. The last two sub-themes relate more specifically to the practices Pam reported to employ to incorporate diversity into her classroom program: integrating knowledge from/about various cultures and languages, and involving parents of diverse cultural/linguistic backgrounds in the classroom. I conclude this chapter with a summary of the study's findings, organized around my research questions.

Figure two exhibits the second theme's components.

Figure 2. **Theme Two: Appreciating and Incorporating Diversity to Facilitate Young ELLs' Inclusion**



Valuing Exposure to Diversity

During the first interview, one thing that Pam mentioned she enjoyed about her work with ELLs was “thinking outside the box” and “do[ing] things unconventionally with them [the ELLs and their families].” One example that Pam gave of an activity that she considered as “not the norm [for teachers]” was her visiting of some families in their homes in order to build a teaching partnership and relationship with parents—relationships that Pam referred to in a later interview as “hugely rewarding.” When describing that relationship, Pam stated, “There’s a different component to it [one’s relationship with parents] once you enter their home and you have to be willing to open yourself up to that.”

Pam described many of her experiences with individuals and groups of various cultural backgrounds in terms of “broadening” her views. For example, when Pam talked about her experience working in Tanzania many years ago, she stated,

What it does for you as a teacher is it, it exposes you to just [pause] life and, and the broadness of life so that you can, you see where people are coming from. It’s a little easier to teach them...It’s [the experience is] life changing. It stays with you forever...it sticks with you. (I1, p. 28)

Related to her own interest in learning from and about others, Pam indicated the need for children to be exposed to cultural groups and languages other than their own. Exposure to individuals from other cultures can throw out some myths, for example, according to Pam. Here, she was referring to a school-wide project whereby the school is

twinned with another school in Lesotho, in South Africa. And, so we have presentations every couple of months where we go and we, we write letters back and forth. So we get news from them and it, it makes that, even though there’s no children from Lesotho, there are, there are children of African background and there are ideas of what it means to be African that are dispelled once you get to know people and know them on an individual basis and make that connection. (I2, p. 6)

In terms of exposure to other languages, Pam talked about the importance of monolingual English speaking children hearing other languages in dual language books and “realiz[ng] that English isn’t the only language out there.”

On one occasion, in the course of relating a story to me about a time when she discussed Remembrance Day with her students—an event, Pam stated, in which she “de-glorif[ies] things [voices went up] that can get glorified”—she indicated making a change to her thinking, as a result of knowing families who have experienced war.

...but again, it, it becomes so grey for me, things that used to be so black and white are not, no longer black and white because, you know, I have these children who talk about their, their **families** who were **there** and who am I to tell them...(I4, p. 17)

Commonalities among and Differences between People

At various times, Pam talked about the importance of recognizing both the similarities and the differences between various groups of people. On one occasion, Pam discussed a significant learning from her ESL Part 1 course, giving a lengthy account of a time when she interviewed two families from Lebanon. At one point during this story, Pam talked about the contrast between one Lebanese man’s expression of love for his family and the hostility he conveyed toward a particular cultural group because of his experiences. In the following excerpt, Pam articulated her desire for him to see what she was seeing: the human qualities that we all share. She also expressed here her realization of the diversity (specifically that which relates to varied personalities and backgrounds) within cultural groups.

...the **love** and the determination and the, and the **dedication** to family was **so**, so strong. And I **wish** that could have been more of a bridge between people that he had sort of built a wall against...I wish that he didn’t have the blinders that he could see those commonalities like I was seeing them and, and it also really...made it very **tangible** how just because someone’s from a **minority** group whether that be visible or cultural or linguistic, doesn’t mean that they can’t be educated, pigheaded, proud, whatever. I mean we’re all just humans. (I5, p. 7)

Pam claimed that this “awaken[ing]” to the “commonalities among all people” allowed her to not be “nervous” about “call[ing] someone to task...because they’re just a person.”

Just because they speak another language doesn’t mean I can’t say, “You know that’s not appropriate what you’re doing with your daughter” because I would have said that to someone else. So, it’s, it’s kind of leveled the, the playing field for me that way. (I5, p. 7)

Pam then went on to explain another related change in her thinking.

There’s an us and them that gets broken down...I mean it’s, there, there’s lots that

separate[s] us but there's a lot more I, I can, I connect to the parents a lot more as an us now than a them and I can see that, the, people are people in the end with all the quirks and, you know, pleasantries and annoyances [Pam and I laughed] that we all have. (15, p. 8)

During the same interview, Pam brought up the topic of acknowledging and talking about differences between people. Specifically, Pam spoke of discussions she has had with her Kindergarten students about skin colour differences:

We talk about skin colour...they notice it. They, they have that, that self identity. So it's talked about. It's not something I shy away from and we look at different eye colours and we notice that some people have light brown and some people have dark brown...And I, and, I make sure that they have access to paint if they need to and multicultural crayons and although even though those are kind of pathetic but, you know, if you can't, you can never get a box of crayons that's going to represent every skin colour. (13, p. 33)

Unfortunately, though, I did not witness any of these conversations with her students, nor did I check to see whether multicultural crayons or paints were available for the children.

Attaching Importance to Examining Biases

Related to the importance Pam placed on being exposed and exposing children to many different and shared perspectives, ways of living, and languages, she also valued exposure to ways of thinking more critically about the world. Pam frequently referred to generalizations, biases and assumptions that many teachers, including herself, have. With respect to her own biases, Pam talked about how she has learned a lot from individuals "who have called a spade a spade and called me to task for the assumptions I, I've put out. **That's** helped me grow." Indeed, the phrase I noticed Pam often used in various interviews was "tak[ing] one [referring to herself or someone else] to task" (or a variation of this), indicating the value she placed on open, honest two-way communication. Pam recalled a more specific instance of her own bias when she spoke of the Native people of Canada. Pam claimed that it was a colleague who inspired her to examine herself. According to Pam, this colleague "did so much to represent that [Inuit] child's culture in the classroom," causing Pam to question herself: "And I thought I wouldn't have done that. I wouldn't have done that and why wouldn't I have done that?" Here, Pam speculated that the reason she had not delved into learning about Native matters was related to a "block" she had or

even “racism.” For Pam, “be[ing] able to admit that you have biases” plays a significant role in making a change to one’s teaching of ELLs. “You can’t be raised [Pam laughed] in this world without them [biases]. It’s impossible. So to, to think that you’re colourblind or whatever you want to call it is, is, very misguided. The notion of being colourblind was brought up later in the same interview when Pam discussed how some teachers “refuse to open their eyes to certain things.” That is, these teachers believe that “they’re **not** seeing something,” implying they are not seeing any biases.

Pam asserted that some teachers connect ELLs with “poverty” and being “uneducated” and because the parents of ELLs “aren’t as visible” (“they don’t volunteer as much”), there are “assumptions about their valuing of education.” On this point, Pam passionately proclaimed that ELLs’ parents’ reduced presence in the classroom does not mean that they necessarily place less value on education than other parents. Instead, Pam asserted that the parents of ELLs’ reduced school involvement has

got everything to do with their own experiences of, their own comfort level in the classroom. You’re going to have some that aren’t going to be committed to their children. You’re going to have some that are going to be overly committed just like you would in any group. So, you, those kinds of generalizations can be **very** harmful when you’re **profiling** a group of people and I don’t mean a group of Somalis, I mean a group of, I mean the group ELL because profiling’s going to happen. You make generalizations and even I do. (I5, p. 10)

At one point in the first interview, Pam caught herself generalizing about ELLs and their families when she mentioned that some ELLs do not go to conservation areas. Then Pam declared,

I shouldn’t, I, I don’t want that to be a generalization because there are plenty of families who take advantage of, of what [this city] has to offer...you know, the other piece which I have to challenge myself, be mindful of a lot, is that, you know, a five year old who comes from Lebanon has five years of life experience just like a five year old who was born here in Canada. (I1, p. 28)

The assumption that ELLs have no background knowledge is a common one made by teachers, according to Pam. In the fourth interview, Pam talked about teachers complaining that

ELLs are not familiar with fairy tales and nursery rhymes and hence they do not know how to rhyme. Here, Pam gave her opinion of this attitude:

...it doesn't mean they [ELLs] don't know how to **rhyme**. They just, they might **rhyme** in a different language. So, your, that's your [the teacher's] challenge to find out where they start...so they [teachers] think that the child's disadvantaged but really [Pam laughed] they are. (I5, p. 31)

Indeed, Pam gave a particularly powerful example of "how wrong it is to say these children don't have the background knowledge." As briefly mentioned in an earlier part of this chapter, this example refers to Pam's report of a girl in her class who stated that she dreams of a time when Iraq will stop fighting. I focus here on Pam's acknowledgement of this child's experiences and Pam's reaction to what she saw as a challenge—the challenge of responding to children's background knowledge/experiences that are vastly different from others' experiences, including her own.

And I thought, "Wow!"...what she had experienced in her lifetime already is beyond me. How do I, how do I have discussions about it in the classroom? Like how do you, how do you draw on that background knowledge? Right? Because it's so discrepant from all her peers even. But by the same token she had a moment where that was, there was a place for that. (I4, p. 18)

Pam also showed an openness to others' pointing out assumptions she has made, "call[ing] someone [in this case, her] to task" (a phrase she used frequently). In this passage, Pam talked about her acceptance and even appreciation of hearing critical assessments from those she has unknowingly offended.

There are **always** people in any group who are more or less easily offended and so inevitably you meet up with people who can take it on the chin if you say it the wrong way and say, "You know what, you probably shouldn't have said that and, and here's what you need to realize you just said. Here is the, here, here are the, the assumptions in what you just asked" and I'm **okay** with that. (I4, p. 10)

One generalization that I noted Pam made but did not explicitly address occurred when Pam talked about ELLs' social adjustment. "They [ELLs] come with less readiness skills, so they, they, as a population, they are less likely to have been enrolled in a nursery school or preschool or a daycare. So this is the beginning of it for them." In another interview, Pam reiterated the same

views, when she responded to my comment about my difficulty recognizing the ELLs. After talking about how the ELLs tend to have more difficulties attending to activities at the end of the day due to fatigue, Pam then mentioned another way one can separate the ELLs from the non-ELLs: "...actually even watching our dressing routine, it's obvious too because the self-help skills [her voice went up] aren't always there. Sometimes they are, sometimes they aren't." In both instances, Pam did not state that her notion of school readiness is a Eurocentric one, relating to what our culture considers important for school (even though, Pam showed familiarity with these notions when she mentioned that "the fairy tale thing is a pretty Eurocentric thing"). However, my sense was that Pam showed some uncertainty about stating this or was concerned about my reaction to her statement, as indicated by her higher pitch. In the second example, Pam also seemed to want to change her statement (perhaps recognizing her generalization) when she added that "you know, you [an ELL] can still do all the things a four or five year old can do, just because your language isn't, isn't in the same place." Here, Pam referred to ELLs' limited English language skills but she did not acknowledge that ELLs' first language may be as developed or more developed than some non-ELLs.

The final piece of data related to Pam's views on bias entails Pam's belief that material resources such as pictures and books for children are problematic. For instance, Pam stated that "you don't see a lot of mixed race families in books...or one parent families... sometimes if I don't have the resource, I'll say [to the students], 'Now, is this always the way a family looks?'" Additionally, Pam reported the difficulty making a poster of "different representations of families": "It took me **forever** to find them [non-stereotypical images]. Or if I was looking for a native face, good luck finding one that wasn't **scowling**, right?" Pam concluded by saying, "these are the images the children are consuming...I mean, if this is my reality, it's their reality but just often times we're not conscious of it, right? So it's becoming conscious of it." This last statement seemed to sum up Pam's beliefs about bias: not only is it important to become aware of one's own assumptions and biases, it is important to recognize the biases around us.

Integrating Cultural and Linguistic Knowledge

One of the things I found in the data related to the theme of integrating cultural and linguistic knowledge was the greater emphasis Pam placed on incorporating knowledge about/from various cultures compared to the less extensive attention she paid to including languages other than English in the classroom. In this section, I put forward data that looks at the beliefs Pam held and the practices she used (and her accounts of practices she used) first, with regards to incorporating cultural knowledge and second, concerning integrating students' home languages into the classroom.

Knowledge from and about Various Cultures

Pam spoke confidently and enthusiastically about this aspect of her program. When I asked Pam how she shows respect for her students' home languages and cultures, she first commented on the visual and cultural aspects of diversity, "I'm very conscious of the books I choose and what I put on the shelf, that they're seeing themselves." This same consciousness was expressed in a later interview when Pam mentioned about being "on the lookout always for books that are inclusive visually, theme-wise and I buy them."

While observing Pam and examining the contents of her classroom, I noticed some multicultural materials. During my second observation, I saw Pam working with individual children in a reading group who were reading or looking at a multicultural book entitled, *World Family Tales*. However, at this time, Pam focused on the phonetic components of the text. (O2, p. 2). Additionally, I noticed a few multicultural books on shelves for children to access such as *Celebrating Life around the World*, *This is the Matzah* (a Yiddish book), and *Umbrella* (a Japanese folktale). Pam also brought in a variety of books from her own collection at home, books that she shares with her students. The following are some examples: tales from other cultures (*Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*; *The Hatseller and the Monkeys*, an African folktale; *Keeper of the Earth: Native Stories and Environmental Activities for Children*);

stories written from the point of view of children from diverse cultural backgrounds (*Suki's Kimono*, a story of a Japanese-Canadian girl; *Amazing Grace*, a tale of a young black girl who fights against racism and stereotypes); European fairytales/nursery rhymes illustrating people of colour (*Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Neighborhood Mother Goose*); non-fiction books with illustrations of people from different backgrounds (*J is for Jamaica*, an alphabet book featuring an assortment of Jamaican items, activities, foods; *Daddies*, showcasing various fathers from many racial backgrounds interacting with their children in non-stereotypical ways); and texts written by and for children from a variety of cultures (*The Best Part of Me*, children's writings about the best part of their bodies; *The Best Parts of Us*, written by Pam and her Kindergarten students).

Of particular interest was another class booklet that Pam cited as an exciting project, created "every second year" by all students and their families. "What's really special about it [the "Name project"] is that the parents...write the meaning of the child's name, why they were given that name, anything to do with the story of that child's name." Pam continued, stating that for families who speak "another language other than English as their first language, **naming is very, very important.**" Thus, as Pam explained, these families write "very, very powerful stories," "**reams** of information," often related to dreams and "**very** connected to religion." Pam then illustrated how she would involve each student during class discussions of the project.

I'd say, "Okay today Ahmed is leader (whoever, whoever had the book) and I'm going to read what Ahmed's Mummy and Daddy said about **his** name"...And I would read, and I mean, occasionally I would need to rephrase things because of the way they were explained. It was a bit too complicated or it was, it was written in broken English and I would **try** to honour that, as much as I could, but sometimes it would, it needed to be 'fixed'. (14, p. 23)

For the most part, when Pam spoke of incorporating children's culture into the classroom program, she was making references to introducing children to "comparative literature" and stories with illustrations of people of colour. Indeed, Pam became quite animated and excited during the third and fifth interviews when she discussed reading tales from other countries to her

students. “I’m also a **huge** lover of versions of fairy tales. They don’t just get *Gingerbread Man*, They get *The Matzah Man* and they get *The Runaway Tortilla* and...actually they **love** comparative literature.” Pam had also noted in written form some examples of stories she compares with her students (European/North American story compared with a story from another culture): *Caps for Sale* versus *The Hatseller and the Monkey* (an African tale); *Cinderella* versus *The Rough Faced Girl* (a Native legend).

According to Pam, discussions related to comparing stories might start with showing children a map of the world. Then Pam stated that she would explain to her students that “people would travel and so stories would travel but when they reach another country, they might **change**.” Pam claimed that both versions of the tales would then be read, followed by discussions about the similarities and differences between the two stories. For instance, the Persian Cinderella story (which Pam described twice as “so lovely!”) “takes the shift off being beautiful and getting married which Disney Cinderella has **become** even though that’s not really what, it’s, it’s about rising from the ashes, right?” Later, Pam elaborated on the importance of reading other fairytale versions:

I think it’s [using comparative literature is] **really**, really important, like when I did, I, I **refuse** to, to, to read Walt Disney’s Cinderella and Walt Dis..., I, I, and I’m very straightforward with the children because, because they’re, they, no matter where they come from, that’s [Disney versions are] what they’re getting and I have children who that’s all they want to borrow from the library. And I’ve had requests and I’ve said and I tell them, “No you guys, I’m not going to read that. I’ll read the Cinderella story but I’m going to, I’ll show you a **much** more interesting one” and this fall I had read the one with that, has the Black Cinderella and, at the **end**, and I had showed them the other one. And I said, and I asked them which one they preferred. We did a survey. And all my Black girls raised their hands for the, the Black, Black Cinderella. And I said, I said, “Why did you like it?” And they said, “I thought she was prettier.” And I thought, “Right on. Because if I hadn’t held that up you wouldn’t have seen that version of prettier.” And, and then I said to them, I said, some, ’cause we talk about, you know, the pictures in books and, and then I say in very Kindergarten friendly language that, that “The people who **draw**, draw from their imagination. And some people imagine that a person with white skin, and blond hair and blue eyes is the most beautiful.” I said, “But not everybody imagines that” and, and I said “A lot of books show that,” I said, “but there’s many, many, many kinds of beautiful and I want to make sure that we see many kinds of beautiful.” (I3, p.33)

Other ways of incorporating her students' home cultures into the classroom program were also discussed by Pam. For instance, one of the strategies that Pam wrote down—strategies she had forgotten to talk about during the second interview—was providing the children with “different clothing” (Pam’s e.g., Muslim “hijabs”) and “different foods” for dramatizing. Indeed, although I did not see any such clothing or foods in the classroom while I was a visitor, I did take note of the “Chinese Restaurant” which stocked and displayed a number of Chinese artefacts (as stated in Chapter Three). During interview two, Pam talked about how she follows the “skills-based” Kindergarten curriculum but she teaches in such a way that incorporates the children’s experiences and this sometimes involves parents coming into the classroom:

...if the skill happens to be listening to different points of view, you could do that by reading the book, “Three Little Pigs” and the book, “The Wolf, The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig” or you could do it by learning about different people’s family traditions. So it, from time to time, parents have come in and talked about different traditions they have at home...this year we had candle making as gifts because candles, as symbols of light, are in Christmas. They are in Eid; they are in Diwali so it’s, it’s, I try to be inclusive, I guess, with the way I approach that. (I2, p. 3)

Pam also mentioned that at the start of each month she and her students mark everybody’s special days (such as Ramadan, Eid, Diwali etc.) on the calendar. However, I did not witness this activity when I observed Pam talking about the calendar at the beginning of May. Instead, Pam did some number activities on the calendar with her students and then in the next interview, she claimed that she did not mark special days because her students had done enough calendar work at that point. (I wondered, though, if perhaps she felt more comfortable talking about numbers rather than celebrations while I was observing.)

It is important to note that Pam also talked about some positive undertakings and initiatives at the school and Board levels that were given as examples of ways in which students’ home languages and cultures are incorporated. For example, Pam mentioned about guest speakers who are brought in during Black History month to talk to the whole school and the communications with and bi-monthly school presentations about children from Lesotho, South Africa, as previously stated. Furthermore, through her connections with some School Board

initiatives, Pam spoke of changes in Board produced materials for teachers: "...things are given to the ESL co...coordinators and saying, "Will this be appropriate? Or how would this need to be modified for the ESL kids in the classroom?" Which is fantastic...so things are getting filtered already for teachers (15, p. 35).

At various points during interviews, Pam spoke of the importance of activating students' knowledge as a starting point for children's learning ("if you can, you can start with something they already know...it's that whole making connections, right? They've, they've got the foundation and they can attach the new learning so much easier."). When asked how she activates ELLs' knowledge and encourages their participation, Pam spoke of how she asks "open-ended questions" to stimulate discussion, how other children's responses can become "fodder for discussion" and how

sometimes I will request information from parents and, you know, like, "Who's in your family? Give me a list of the names in your family, who lives in your house?"...if there's plenty of families around here who, I've seen them, I know who their little siblings are and I'll say, "Oh how is Eve today? What did she do at day care?" and, and you know that's, that will make them talk...(14, p. 12)

In an earlier interview, the phrase "open-ended" had also surfaced when I asked Pam a similar question regarding how she encouraged ELLs to share their linguistic and cultural knowledge, experiences and interests. At this point, Pam responded saying, "they [ELLs] can bring that [their knowledge, experiences etc.] to the, to the 'Show and Tell' experience" because it is "open-ended enough." While I did see a "Show and Tell" event involving children showing and talking about their home items of assorted shapes, I did not observe a "Show and Tell" or any other happening that highlighted students' specific cultural or linguistic knowledge. At the same time, there was an opening during the "Show and Tell" for students to bring in something that was more related to their culture. This kind of opportunity was talked about by Pam in one of the interviews: "Rather than me with my lexicon of knowledge, telling them which, which 3-D shapes they should learn. So they bring, it's, it's from their own life."

Students' Home Languages

When I asked Pam, “How important do you think it is for ELLs to maintain their first language?” Pam answered mainly from an academic point of view, discussing several benefits of first language maintenance, rather than divulging her personal opinions:

From my understanding, it's critical. [Pam's voice went up]. The research shows that, from, from what I have done in my courses that children who have a solid, who have solid literacy skills in their first language are able to make the leap to a second language easier...Often the parents don't ever have a, a really strong ownership of the second language so their mother tongue is always the one that they're the most fluent and comfortable in speaking. So, it, it strengthens the ability for children and parents to communicate. It keeps the, the, the bond between, between, the, the country of origin and the cultural understanding is richer when you have, when you've maintained that and I, I mean, who wouldn't want more than one language? I mean the more languages you speak, the, the, the deeper your understanding of the human experience so, just on that level, it's, it's important. (I2, p. 1)

To underscore the importance of first language maintenance, Pam made reference to a statistic that she had heard from her ESL, Part 1 course: the majority of ELL school drop-outs are those who started learning English in Kindergarten. The reason given was that these ELLs “haven't learned to read and write yet in their first language...so they never get a solid foundation in, in their first language ever.”

I then raised the question, “What role do your ELLs' home languages play in your classroom?” at which point, Pam stated:

On a simple level, they're part of some of the signage, if I can acquire that. We bring it into some of the lessons where they [Pam's students], teach us how to say certain words. I'll ask them. It is part of written letters home, if, if it's a critical piece...the availability for translators is there if that's required as well...We have parents come and read in their, in their first language [according to Pam, once or twice a year on average]. We have dual language books that we use, not just for parents' reading. I have a little boy, it's part of his reading program...I have something called a reading response journal where the children are read to, then they tell their parents what they thought of the book and the parents scribe what the child says. (I2, p. 2)

Further, Pam stated, “when parents can't read English very well...I will send home first language books because it's about comprehension.” Pam also referred to ways of bringing ELLs' heritage languages into other school-related agendas. According to Pam, besides arranging for the translation of notes that are “super important and must be understood,” the MLO at Pam's school

“arrange[s] translators for parent-teacher interviews, or just any meeting you might need” and sets up translators for literacy nights geared separately to Arabic and Somali speaking families who need to understand “the jargon of the report cards” and other school related matters. Additionally, regarding school jargon, Pam gave me a copy of a nine-page handout written in English, French, Arabic, and Somali that is passed on to parents concerning various comprehension strategies that parents can use with their children (handout e.g., “making text-to-world connections: encourage your child to think, ‘This reminds me of something I heard...or something I read...’”).

During the third interview, I asked her about the signs in her classroom (activity centre signs that I noted were posted in the three dominant languages of the students)—signs of which, according to Pam, Arabic speaking parents, in particular, take favourable notice. Pam then mentioned, after I asked Pam whether the children noticed the signs, that although the children do not necessarily comprehend the signs, when she teaches left-right tracking in reading English the discussion inevitably turns to talking about scripts that have different directions such as Arabic or Chinese.

When I questioned Pam about the ways in which she incorporates the students’ home languages and cultural knowledge into her classroom program, again she indicated that she has used dual language books in the classroom “with simple things like shapes that I borrowed from the [public] library.” However, Pam stated that she, her students, and their families have never made them because she has “never been able to get the parent support for, for the making [of dual language books].” Additionally, Pam claimed that she has “put multiple language books on the shelf just for all kids to look at and that brings up discussion.” In this case, Pam elaborated and gave an example of how a book about Diwali (a Hindu holiday) stimulated much discussion with her students. After the second interview, Pam provided me with a written page outlining other methods, not mentioned in the interviews thus far, of incorporating students’ home languages and cultures into her classroom program. In particular, Pam noted two strategies related to integrating students’ first languages: learning songs or stories in other languages (e.g., when I asked Pam to

tell me about a time or an activity that ELLs found/find exciting, Pam mentioned “play[ing] music that’s in a person’s mother tongue” which the children instantly recognize and say, “That’s **my** language!”) and saying “hello” to the children in various languages such as “Arabic, Somali and Japanese.”

While observing Pam in her classroom, I did not see any dual or first language books being used or in evidence in the classroom. Additionally, I did not hear any children in her classroom speaking a language other than English; nor did I see any of the aforementioned strategies employed except the multilingual signs. During the third interview, when I asked Pam about the availability of multicultural materials, Pam stated that dual language books and multicultural books are “teacher books...so they’re not there for the kids to look through all the time...[but] in our school [we] have a commitment to buying them but they’re not **cheap**.” When I asked to see Pam’s teacher books, I took note that only one of 23 books Pam lent me was multilingual. (This book was entitled, “What is Your Language”—a story of a young boy who sets off to see the world and asks each person he encounters, “What is your language?” Each individual responds in the same way: “My language is ...” [Russian, Inuktitut, English, German, Japanese, and Arabic]. “Yes” is written in each of these languages.)

It is important to state that although she cited the aforesaid approaches as ways of valuing and integrating students’ first languages and indeed, she talked about the advantages to students and their families maintaining their first language, there were some indications that Pam was somewhat uncertain about or did not recognize the role that children’s first languages could play in her classroom. First of all, Pam mentioned that sometimes “reading buddies” (older students whom Pam stated come into her classroom once a week and read or play games with Pam’s students—an event that Pam repeatedly emphasized her students love) are put together with children of the same linguistic background in which “the older child might be reading an English book [and]...they might talk to them also about what’s happening in Arabic”. However, when I asked Pam whether she intentionally pairs children of the same linguistic background in her

classroom together so that they can help one another, Pam started to say, “I would never” then quickly changed her response:

I **have** never. I wouldn’t say I would never, I have never but I certainly have asked other children to translate for me at times, just in a moment, though, when it was necessary or to help me with the word. (I4, p. 33)

Following this, Pam proceeded to relate the following story:

One of the things I **have** faced is one particular year I had **a lot** of Arabic-speaking girls who already knew each other when they came. They were, they lived in the same building or their mums were friends and they would just sit and talk Arabic to each other **all** the time. And I wasn’t sure whether I should let that slide because they didn’t have a reason to speak English [both Pam and I laughed] because they could generally figure out what was going on, and do the work, and do it in Arabic, and so sometimes I had to say, “This is English time,” and I had, I had to compartmentalize because they just weren’t speaking English and they had no desire to and no reason to. I don’t usually discourage that, but [in that situation], I felt that it was important for some reason. Now, was that right or wrong? I don’t know, but that’s what I did at that time and they thought it was funny. "No Arabic! No! No!" (I4, p. 34)

Second, I found that Pam rarely talked about her students’ heritage languages except in instances in which I asked her. Similarly, I found that when Pam spoke of ELLs’ language skills or needs, she referred to their language skills/needs in English and consequently, these were discussed in terms of students’ limitations. For example, Pam referred to one ELL’s “vocabulary” as “weak.” Further, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, while Pam recognized the important role that ELLs’ first languages play in literacy development, she brought up instances in which she felt frustrated by the lack of human resources to help some of her ELLs in English: there was no ESL teacher to support her Kindergarten students and it was difficult to find suitable tutors (Pam implied, English speaking tutors) for those ELLs who need additional assistance. At another point in the same interview, again Pam mentioned the need for more human resources. Here, she stated, “You can’t just have parent’s involvement. It just can’t be volunteers who come because you need to know what you’re looking for... You need to have an educated adult working with them [ELLs].” Indeed, when I asked Pam to talk about ELLs’ needs in general or the most effective strategies to support and include ELLs, Pam made no mention of promoting or incorporating ELLs’ first languages into the classroom program.

Involving Parents from Diverse Backgrounds

As mentioned in both my theoretical frameworks and literature review, parents can play a significant role in facilitating the inclusion of ELLs in the classroom. The school where Pam taught expects “high parent involvement,” according to her; however, she reported that that expectation did not necessarily mean that parents actually took part in school goings-on (“sometimes it’s [parent involvement is] more of a wish for”). In this section, I report on data associated with the value Pam placed on and the strategies she stated she employs for building a partnership with families. Second, data related to Pam’s notions and practices about parents’ roles in her classroom are presented. All of the data here came from my interviews with Pam since I was not able to witness any of Pam’s interactions with parents. Even during “Education Week” (in which parents are especially encouraged to sit in their children’s classroom) when I saw four English-speaking parents and their younger children visit Pam’s classroom one morning, I only observed these parents watch Pam’s large group session (at which time, I overheard one parent say at the end of the lesson, “She’s [Pam is] such a good teacher”) and interact with some students during the activity time. At that time, Pam was busy conducting her business with students (O2, p. 1).

Relationship Building with Parents

During the first interview, when I asked Pam about the rewards of teaching ELLs, she stressed how much she “really love[s] the challenge of building relationships with their families.” In this section, I present data pertaining to Pam’s focus on the importance of developing partnerships with parents. After reviewing and reflecting upon the data, I found that this emphasis seemed to be primarily tied to Pam’s belief that cultivating good relationships with parents enables her to assist parents in better supporting their children. As well, I noted that there were some interview data that suggested to me Pam’s less confident belief (or perhaps her hope) that

developing her relationships with parents may promote ELLs' families' involvement at the school.

Helping parents help their children. It seemed that, for Pam, one of the key elements for developing relationships with parents was trust. "When...you've built that trust and they [the parents] really, really honour what you have to say and see that you are invested in their child." It was at this point that Pam spoke of how parents' experiences (past and present) with racism and disenfranchisement can affect that trust. Nonetheless, Pam claimed that she has developed "over time" a "deep, deep relationship" with some ELLs' families which has enabled her to say to those families, at "certain times," "hard things [that] need to be said," adding, "and that's for **any** student...it's got nothing to do with being an English language learner." Here, Pam was referring to the difficulties of talking to parents about children who are "really struggling" when "you don't have a relationship."

Pam reported that the starting point of "building a partnership" with parents is the mandatory social history interview with families whose children are new registrants in Kindergarten in which teachers ask questions, in a five-page document, such as who lives at home, the languages spoken, the celebrations they "honour," celebrations they "prefer not to participate in," and whether interpreters will be needed. Moreover, Pam claimed that it is during this interview that she assesses "what resources are available in our families," "how comfortable they [parents] are in the classroom, [and] how they relate to me" (i.e. whether parents "assume you know a lot more than they do"). However, because, as Pam asserted, the Board-designed questions are not always "culturally sensitive" ("there's a lot of assumptions" made such as the assumption that children participate in extracurricular activities), she and her colleague developed their own questionnaire for parents and they conduct "a different interview" to find out more specifically about the "home literacy situation." (Sample questions that Pam provided were "How often do they read to their child in whatever language? How much TV is watched? Do they sit and play with their children?")

Parent information nights (offered at the beginning of the year, presented on separate nights in Somali, Arabic and English) were also discussed by Pam as another avenue for her to get to know parents and, in particular, an opportunity for parents to hear and ask questions about the Kindergarten program, the school and its offerings. Moreover, Pam explained that this information night gives parents first-hand experience of the Kindergarten's "play-based" program. "We show them activities and we get them to do a bit of playing themselves" with their children so that parents can understand the value of children's play; that it is "meaningful" and builds a "knowledge base" for children. Then, as Pam explained, parents "can take home that knowledge and, and apply it."

An additional component to developing relationships with parents are the ongoing strategies that Pam reported she uses to communicate with parents—strategies that are applied "differently depending on the family" because "some doors are open wider than others [for home visits] and needs are different." Pam cited phone calls, letters (e.g., monthly newsletters "so they [parents] can follow up" on current or forthcoming classroom happenings), and meetings with parents at the school. Here, Pam explained that when she has an ELL who is really struggling, she needs to meet with parents to "**show**" them "how to help" their child, giving them "tangible examples."

Promoting parents' school involvement. During interview five, after Pam talked about changes she has made in her teaching, I asked Pam to comment on what she sees as her next step in teaching. At this time, Pam stated,

I'm still very focused on increasing my parent involvement...last year I had made a commitment to myself to do the social history interviews at home, in people's homes...[because] my experiences of going into people's homes have taught me that there is a guard that is lowered once you've done that. (15, p. 2)

However, as Pam explained, because of some last minute "glitch" (paperwork that arrived late), she was not able to arrange the home visits.

While Pam appeared to recognize some of the barriers to school involvement for ELLs' families (Pam noted financial challenges and transportation issues; interestingly, Pam did not talk about language barriers), she indicated that there were also some unknown barriers. "There's **barriers** there that are not obvious and the participation, just because you offer these things doesn't mean that people actually participate in them." Throughout the interviews, Pam seemed to be trying to figure out what was holding parents of ELLs back from becoming involved. During the first interview, Pam speculated that parents' limited involvement was due to their "very busy lives" dealing with large families and young children but by the last interview, she questioned this reason. In the following excerpt, Pam exposed to me her uncertainties about how to improve the participation of her ELLs' families:

How can I do that? What, what information am I missing? Why aren't those groups coming in? I don't think it so simple as they have young children at home because other parents do too and they make arrangements. So what, what are the blocks for them? I've got to figure what they are and then figure how to overcome them. So that's, right now, that's the, the, the horse I'm wrangling with. (15, p. 2)

Defining the Role of ELLs' Parents in the Classroom

Another matter that I found Pam "wrangling with" as I examined and reflected upon the data was the complexities I noticed her express when she talked around the subject of parents' roles in her classroom. I noted that Pam revealed an understanding of the importance of parents sharing their knowledge with her students. Yet, at the same time, Pam articulated some ambivalence about how the parents of ELLs can support children in the classroom. While Pam did not explicitly state her views on the specifics of parents' involvement, based on my interpretation of the data, my sense was that Pam could not identify exactly what role ELLs' parents should play because she thought it depended on the knowledge and skills of the parents. The following two sections present data related to the ways in which Pam discussed parents' participation in the classroom.

Encouraging parents to share knowledge. Pam stated that she began her teaching career with the notion that she had to learn and “teach it all” (i.e., teach about students’ various cultural and linguistic backgrounds). However, Pam asserted that she realized that she could not do this because, as she said many times, she does not “own” this knowledge, nor does she “have the same enthusiasm.” Furthermore, Pam admitted to and laughed about a number of incidents when she mispronounced words of other languages or, in one case, unknowingly put up a Chinese item upside down. Thus, as Pam explained, she became conscious of the importance of building “liaisons” with others.

On numerous occasions, Pam declared that she extends invitations for parents to come into the classroom and share their knowledge: “I invite them to make their language audible and visible. I let them know about themes that we cover in the year that are helpful, that they could, they can participate most fully in.” (I noted that, in this way, parents play a teacher-like role.) At one point when I asked how Pam taps into the cultural or any other expertise of parents and community members, Pam asserted, “Anything that is outside my realm [of expertise], I invite others to, to talk about it and share and demo and, [pause] so any of those, those topics, parents are welcome to come and, and, [pause] teach us.” I noted that when Pam discussed parents sharing their knowledge with students, she spoke of this in terms of parents talking about a topic that connects to specific knowledge/skills/concepts of the curriculum or themes she has planned. In particular, the theme of family traditions was frequently mentioned by Pam as a topic open for parents to talk about. “In the winter, we invite a lot of parents in because we usually have a holiday party [related to family traditions] and there’s a teaching component there that they can come in.” Similarly, when I asked Pam to recall a memorable time when parents shared their expertise (cultural or other) with students in the classroom, Pam talked about one parent teaching the children a song in Somali “because...one of the skills is learning and appreciating stories and songs from other cultures.” I did not hear Pam mention about times when parents came in to share their expertise on topics other than those that directly related to the curriculum.

Pam gave examples of times when “very enthusiastic” parents spoke to her students about their traditions and have “showed us things” (e.g., individuals who have explained about the Koran, the Menorah, Eid, etc.). Pam herself spoke enthusiastically and extensively on at least two occasions when she recalled presentations made about the Chinese New Year, in particular—presentations that have involved “stuff to see, things to touch” (e.g. “extraordinary” dance performances shown on DVD’s, chopsticks to try out, “lucky money,” and numerous gifts given to the classroom to use for their Chinese restaurant) and food to taste (e.g., “moon cakes,” and “little jellies”).

While Pam spoke favourably about most parental events, there were at least two occasions when I heard Pam express concerns about some parents imparting their knowledge. For instance, to continue with the Somali song story, Pam revealed that although this event was a success, Pam commented on the difficulties of finding “someone a) who’s comfortable to come in the school, b) who’s comfortable with singing” and there is

a skill to holding the attention of 20 some kids and not everybody can do that. So they get up front and they talk above them or below them because they’re, they’re just a **regular** person. And to, and it doesn’t always go well. Just because you’re the parent of a child doesn’t mean you have the skill to be up there...some need more facilitating than others. So, and then others are just **natural** born teachers and you’re just, “Ah, this was awesome.” (I3, pp. 19-20)

Language barriers, too, seemed to be an issue for Pam. Here, though, Pam talked about language as a barrier, not from the perspective of ELLs’ parents who may feel apprehensive about coming into an English speaking classroom which may, in turn, affect their interest in participating in school events but from her own perspective. At an earlier point in the same interview, when I asked Pam to specifically talk about immigrant parents’ involvement in her classroom which I believe Pam understood to mean parents whose English language skills were minimal, she had some difficulties communicating her thoughts and then stated, “you couldn’t necessarily have a translator in your classroom for them. So it’s, it’s inviting them as volunteers is, is ultimately the, the, the way they can participate the most.” Here, because Pam referred

earlier to ELLs' limited involvement in events such as field trips, I understood volunteering to mean helping out in these ways.

Encouraging parents to assist students in general ways. Pam stated that parents send a message of immediate support to their own children when they visit the classroom: "Man, do, do children invest themselves when their, when their parents are there, when their parents can see what they're doing" (e.g., Pam described a time when one of her students was "ecstatic" to have his mother come in and talk about the Chinese New Year). However, when Pam talked about parents of ELLs coming in as volunteer teaching assistants, it seemed there was some ambiguity to Pam's thinking. During the third interview, for instance, Pam recounted a story of a parent volunteer from Lebanon who came into the classroom on a weekly basis. According to Pam, despite Pam's efforts to encourage this parent to assist the children, "she just wouldn't...because **all** she was comfortable doing was being in the background cutting out things, pasting things." Although Pam related to me that this situation was "not atypical," Pam then stated that "it's the exact opposite with, with other parents. They actually sometimes want to take over your job and teach the kids."

While the above example revealed Pam's desire for parents to assist her students in general ways, she also expressed some reluctance to draw on parents' help with ELLs. During the first interview, when Pam talked about what ELLs need (e.g., "a lot of observation of their language," "small group instruction" etc.), she emphasized the necessity for "more human resources" which, for Pam, meant "an educated adult working with them." "You can't just have parents' involvement. It just can't be volunteers who come because you need to know what you're looking for." As mentioned in the last chapter, Pam claimed that most parents of ELLs erroneously think that they need to support their children's learning through attempting to explain concepts in English. Yet, while Pam implied that it would be best for parents to support their children's academic needs through their first language, I did not hear Pam talk about how parents of ELLs could similarly assist ELLs in the classroom.

Before ending this chapter, it is important to note that when I asked Pam how she involves the community in her classroom, she did not give any examples of ways in which she brings the community into the classroom. Instead, Pam spoke of a school-wide, annual event during which community members including parents are invited to talk about their jobs. Pam then proceeded to talk about taking children on field trips (usually twice a year) into the community. Excursions to such places as the library, the market, farms, and gymnastics were discussed. Pam added that she was always “trying to walk the line of representing the experiences and expanding the experiences of, of the children you have.”

A Summary of the Study’s Findings

In this section, I organize key data around the research questions I delineated in the purpose of this study. There were five research questions I explored in this study. First, and foremost, I asked, “What practices or strategies did one elementary teacher use to include ELLs in her classroom?” In order to obtain a fuller understanding of the practices my participant used, I developed four subsidiary questions. What were her teaching beliefs/understandings about ELLs and their inclusion in a mainstream classroom? How were her beliefs reflected in her teaching practices? What resources (human or other) did she use to facilitate ELLs’ inclusion? Who and what helped to shape her teaching beliefs and practices? Because I found that Pam’s teaching practices seemed to be so closely associated to her beliefs about ELLs and their inclusion in a mainstream classroom, I link my primary research query with the first two ancillary questions. I then summarize my findings for the last two enabling questions which, again, were directly connected to one another.

Pam’s Beliefs and Practices Regarding ELLs’ Inclusion

Two main themes emerged from the data regarding Pam’s beliefs and practices about supporting and including ELLs in her mainstream Kindergarten classroom: using broad-based instructional strategies to facilitate young ELLs’ inclusion and appreciating and incorporating

diversity. The findings suggested that Pam's dominant approach involved using broad-based practices. Data from interviews, observations, and document analysis regarding Pam's employment of these strategies were highly consistent, presenting an array of practices that Pam emphasized and employed with all children but especially adapted to meet their needs, especially the distinct English language needs, of ELLs. These practices were organized into five main sub-themes:

1. **Emphasizing student engagement** through meaningful, relevant materials and activities (e.g., taking children on field trips, writing language experience stories with children, affording children easy access to a wide variety of materials); multiple ways of accessing skills and knowledge (e.g., utilizing visuals, hands-on materials, gestures, movement); and routines (e.g., using rhythms and songs to obtain children's attention)
2. **Differentiating instruction and assessment** to meet the varied needs of students (e.g., individualizing or grouping students for different purposes, asking questions that match each student's English language and/or cognitive development needs)
3. **Focusing on oral language**, showing a consciousness to the language demands of lessons and activities through the use of various oral language strategies (e.g., modeling, simplifying and rephrasing language, repeating words/phrases or sentences)
4. **Stressing problem solving and cooperative learning skills** (e.g., breaking problems into smaller steps, giving children oral scripts to help them deal with situations, encouraging children to learn from and support one another).
5. **Encouraging students to take the lead** (e.g., calling upon children's expertise on matters)

Facilitating ELLs' inclusion through appreciating and incorporating diversity formed the second theme of this study. Most of the data here came from the interviews with Pam in which she recounted using practices that incorporated students' home cultures and languages into the curriculum. Because I did not observe many of these reported practices, it appeared that for Pam

incorporating diversity into her classroom program played a smaller role in facilitating ELLs' inclusion. It is important to note, though, that my observations of Pam were condensed over a short period of time and thus, this factor may have had a bearing on these findings. I grouped the data pertaining to the second theme into the following four sub-themes:

1. **Valuing exposure to diversity:** broadens perspectives, dispels myths, awakens one to the commonalities among people, and acknowledges/celebrates differences
2. **Attaching importance to examining one's own and others' biases:** brings awareness to generalizations that are made about groups of people which can be harmful, exposes the problematic aspects of books and images in which particular groups are not represented or are stereotyped
3. **Integrating cultural and linguistic knowledge** into the classroom program (e.g., reading and discussing multicultural books; encouraging children and parents to bring in various artefacts to discuss and with which to play; using dual language books; employing interpreters to translate school documents/letters or to translate during parent interviews; listening to stories and music in other languages)
4. **Involving parents from diverse backgrounds:** building relationships with parents can help them better assist their children and promote their participation at the school; parents are invited into the classroom to share their knowledge and to help students in general ways

Whereas the data indicated a direct correspondence between the beliefs Pam expressed regarding the broad-based teaching strategies she uses and the practices I observed, there was not enough observation data to assert a similar relationship between Pam's views on incorporating diversity into the classroom program and her practices. Nevertheless, because of Pam's expressions of enthusiasm and her openness in talking about various topics about diversity, I believe her beliefs and practices were closely connected. Pam's animated descriptions of ways of

using multicultural materials with students, for example, suggested that these practices were employed.

Pam's Resources and Influences

Pam claimed that it was the material resources (e.g., hands-on materials, multicultural books, pictures) that connected to students' experiences which were most helpful in her work with ELLs. She was not one who used workbooks or handouts with students. Teacher resource books, colleagues, and the MLO at her school provided Pam with ideas, suggestions, and services that she used to help her support ELLs. The data suggested that a variety of individuals, institutions, organizations, and resource books also played a strong role in shaping the kind of teacher Pam became. One common underlying thread I found amongst the human and material sources of knowledge and inspiration that Pam identified was their influence on Pam's thinking about anti-bias education. Indeed, I found that Pam spoke passionately and knowledgeably about this aspect of her work with ELLs. Based on Pam's accounts of the ways in which she helped to empower children and develop their awareness of their own biases and the biases surrounding them, it appeared that Pam put into practice much of what she had learned.

Pam's introduction to anti-bias education seemed to begin in the ECE program she attended at a Community College. It was there, too, that Pam was introduced to one book, in particular, entitled *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* that left her with a lasting impression. Pam claimed that she still refers to this book frequently. Although Pam's year at a Faculty of Education in Ontario seemed to be somewhat less memorable, it was during that time that she met one associate teacher who became a mentor to her and encouraged her involvement in her current teacher's federation's anti-racist committee. The many anti-racist workshops Pam attended seemed to be valuable sources of knowledge for her, giving her information about her students' cultures as well as providing her with ongoing professional development regarding her work with ELLs and their families.

Another significant learning experience about which Pam spoke was related to her education about oral language development for young children. Pam claimed that her initial experiences teaching preschool children and, again, the ECE program she attended provided her with numerous strategies for teaching language. In Pam's opinion, it was these early ECE experiences that set the foundation for her teaching career. As Pam stated, "I definitely would be a different teacher had I not started there."

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

In the last chapter's summary of the findings, I stated that the data suggested that utilizing broad-based teaching strategies seemed to be Pam's principal approach to supporting and including ELLs in her Kindergarten classroom. The literature, however, indicates that while these broad-based practices or "just good teaching" (JGT) practices are considered effective for all learners, it is important that teachers who work in linguistically and culturally diverse settings go beyond applying or modifying such general approaches (Commins & Miramontes, 2006; de Jong & Harper, 2005). In particular, de Jong and Harper stressed the need for teachers to address ELLs' distinct language and cultural needs.

It is my belief that while many of the broad-based strategies help ELLs to develop their English language skills which in turn promote their participation in classrooms and wider contexts, I think, similar to what Dei et al. (2000) expressed, that focusing exclusively on this aspect of inclusion may result in ELLs' either assimilating to the dominant culture, leaving their own cultures and languages behind or disengaging in, or later from, school. Thus, I see the theme of incorporating diversity into the curriculum as pivotal. Incorporating the rich resources of ELLs, their families, and their communities serves many purposes. In classrooms where many sources of knowledge are embraced and integrated into the curriculum, the cultural and linguistic barriers that many ELLs and their families experience may become bridges which invite greater opportunities for ELLs' participation in the classroom community. Further, the incorporation of a multitude of knowledge sources can only be advantageous to all—broadening all classroom members' perspectives, providing students and teachers with a more extensive understanding of the diverse world we live in.

In this chapter, I organize my discussion of the key findings around the two main themes found from the data and link these themes to the literature and the theoretical framework. I begin with a discussion of the theme I believe to be most important to ELLs' inclusion (for the reasons indicated in the previous paragraph): appreciating and incorporating diversity. In the second half of this chapter, I examine what appeared to be Pam's more dominant approach to facilitating ELLs' inclusion: applying broad-based strategies. The headings in this chapter reflect the findings' link to key studies and theoretical constructs. It is important to note that there is a section entitled, "Valuing students' identities and cognitive needs" that I felt fit under both themes; this topic corresponds to the broad-based instructional strategies found in the data and to Cummins and Schecter's (2003) paradigm which refers specifically to ELLs' cultural and linguistic identities. Figure 3 gives a visual representation of the two themes' link to the literature and theoretical models.

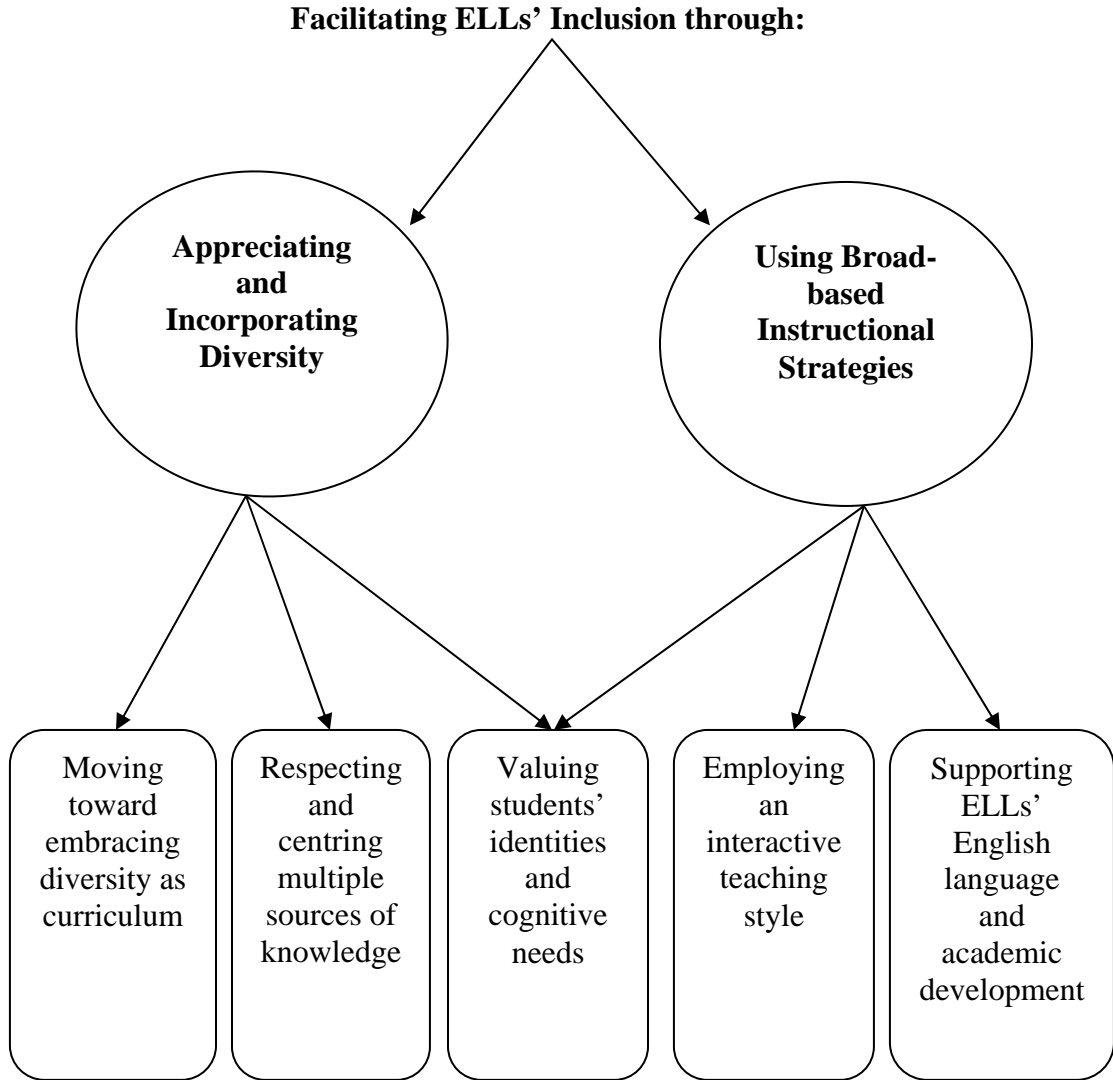
Connecting the Theme of Appreciating and Incorporating Diversity to the Literature and Theoretical Framework

Because beliefs play a strong role in teachers' teaching behaviour in the classroom (Li, 2003; Pajares, 1992), I first examine Pam's overall beliefs about and orientations regarding her work with ELLs and their families. Second, Dei et al.'s (2000) framework shapes my discussion of Pam's approaches to centring multiple sources of knowledge. Third, I discuss Pam's teaching in terms of her interactions with her ELLs, attending to their identities and cognitive needs.

Moving Toward Embracing Diversity as the Curriculum

As noted in Chapter four, there was ample evidence of Pam's respectful attitude toward ELLs, their families, communities, languages and cultures. Similar to the backgrounds of some teachers in many quantitative studies (e.g., Byrnes et al, 1996; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001), Pam's experience working with diverse groups such as her extensive work with preschool and school-aged children of various cultural/linguistic backgrounds and her

Figure 3. Connecting the Themes to the Literature and the Theoretical Framework



formal ESL education seemed to have played a role in shaping Pam's favourable attitudes toward ELLs and their inclusion in her classroom. Nevertheless, there appeared to be some hesitation on her part to fully embrace the incorporation of diversity into her classroom program/curriculum. Using Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter's (2002) study as a guide to understanding Pam's orientation about diversity, I found evidence of aspects of her beliefs spanning across these researchers' categories to varying degrees. Thus, I discuss each in turn.

Because I found that Pam seemed to genuinely enjoy having ELLs in her classroom and at no time did I sense from Pam that she saw ELLs as an inconvenience or burden, I would not place her overall beliefs and practices in Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter's (2002) first grouping. However, it seemed there were some significant elements of Pam's belief system that persisted in focusing on what ELLs do not know or know partially (namely, English), rather than giving more attention to what they do know (e.g., another language). On one occasion, Pam stated that ELLs "don't have that foundation of oral language," referring to ELLs' limited English skills but she did not acknowledge the oral language skills ELLs may have in their home language. Another instance indicative of this orientation includes an occasion when Pam described an ELL's vocabulary as "weak," again focusing on ELLs' limitations instead of their expertise. Furthermore, Pam mentioned that one of her challenges in working with ELLs and their families is the amount of energy it requires and "how personally you have to be invested." The implication here is similar to what Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter stated in their example: "teachers must sacrifice by devoting more time than considered normal to their [ELLs'] instruction in order to facilitate their access to the mainstream curriculum" (p. 406).

In my opinion, it seemed that Pam's beliefs and practices matched most closely with Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter's (2002) second and third categories. According to these researchers, the central aim of the second perspective is "to socialize parents to the agenda of mainstream schooling and to familiarize them with the protocols that professional educators endorsed and used" (p.406). One of the action research projects upon which teachers of this

orientation embarked involved creating videotapes for non-English speaking parents, designed to show parents through modeling examples of literacy strategies that they could use to assist their children with their school work. Similarly, Pam indicated her involvement in related activities. Her reading comprehension handouts, for instance, provided parents with ideas for assisting their children with reading comprehension. As well, Pam's participation in a parent information night appeared to be organized with a comparable agenda (i.e., to give parents an opportunity to understand, experience, and apply approaches used in the Kindergarten's play-based program).

In contrast, though, to what the participating teachers in Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schechter's (2002) study organized (videotapes geared to the families of ELLs only), the activities that Pam mentioned centred on helping all parents understand school matters rather than concentrating on only non-English speaking parents in need of such help. Further, both the information evening and reading comprehension handouts were offered to parents in three or four languages—accommodations not made or at least not discussed in Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schechter's study. While these ways indicate a concern for keeping all parents up to date on school practices and school jargon and supporting parents in implementing school practices, the criticism was that there was no mutual exchange of practices. In a similar way, I did not hear Pam mention that these meetings were a two-way dialogue, giving parents an opportunity to inform teachers of their home literacy practices, although Pam indicated that she found out about home literacy practices during the social history interview with parents. In fact, in the first interview, I heard Pam talk about the inadequacies of one home practice which involved older ELLs helping their younger siblings with their English. While it may be that older siblings have difficulties assisting their younger brothers and sisters in English, Pam gave no indication that these older siblings or community tutors of the same linguistic background could help her ELLs with their schoolwork, using their common language—a strategy considered effective by a number of scholars (e.g., Cummins & Miramontes, 2006; Cummins et al., 2005).

Similar to the teachers who held views in Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter's (2002) third category, Pam talked about and applied differentiated instructional and assessment approaches to individual children, particularly ELLs—approaches that seemed to take into account the children's differing learning and English language needs. Moreover, Pam demonstrated a cultural sensitivity to her students and their families, showing, for example, an awareness of families' experiences with racism and disenfranchisement and a strong interest in learning about her students' backgrounds and the ways in which issues related to families' histories affected her students.

What distinguishes this third orientation to diversity from the last grouping is, as Pacini-Ketchabaw and Schecter (2002) stated, "the absence of a reciprocal stance" (p.409). In other words, although teachers in the third category displayed a cultural sensitivity and an interest in learning about ELLs' experiences, cultures, and languages, they did not incorporate that knowledge into the curriculum whereas the teachers in the fourth group were fully committed to such an integration. Teachers of the fourth group, for instance, explicitly promoted students' speaking, reading, and writing in their first language, calling upon the expertise of families for assistance, and they viewed this classroom practice as consistent with the objectives of the standard curriculum because of their strong belief that first language literacy development supports literacy in English. While Pam, too, seemed to realize the importance of first language maintenance and she reported some examples of incorporating students' languages into the classroom, I found that she seemed somewhat reluctant to incorporate students' languages more extensively into her program. The fact that during my four 45-60 minute observations, I did not see evidence of Pam or her students using any multilingual strategies and I did not hear children speaking a language other than English also indicated that perhaps Pam was not at ease with the notion and practice of including multiple languages in the classroom.

There were several remarks Pam made that I thought related to her tentativeness toward more fully integrating children's first languages. First, Pam implied that she felt embarrassed by the fact that she did not speak another language when I asked her whether she spoke any language

other than English. In an earlier interview, too, Pam jokingly talked about her pronunciation errors when she had greeted someone in another language. Second, as Pam spoke of language strategies she uses to support ELLs in learning English, she mentioned how she has to be vigilant not to “lose them [ELLs]” because they “fade out” if the language structures become too complex. At this point, Pam described herself as a “fade-outer” when she hears another language. These comments led me to believe that Pam may have felt insecure about her own ability to learn another language which may have reduced her interest in learning another language or learning aspects of another language and, by extension, may have caused her to feel uncomfortable about promoting first language usage in her classroom.

A number of questions arose in my mind as I further pondered Pam’s apparent discomfort with supporting and integrating children’s home languages to a greater extent into her classroom. Had Pam considered the possibility of promoting children’s first languages in the classroom or did she believe, as many teachers in Lee and Oxelson’s (2006) study indicated, that home language maintenance is the responsibility of the family? Had Pam ever received any education (either in her ESL course or in the anti-racist workshops) about the value and the ways of promoting students’ languages in the classroom? Certainly, Pam did not mention this topic when she spoke of workshops or the ESL class she attended. Finally, I wondered whether Pam thought that because she was not able to communicate in her students’ languages, she was unable to support her students’ first language development. Uncovering the answers to these and related questions would have provided me with a greater understanding of Pam’s views on this vital topic.

According to Lee and Oxelson (2006), there is “a common misunderstanding among teachers that only teachers who are proficient in the students’ heritage language can support students’ heritage language maintenance” (p. 142). Nonetheless, these researchers pointed out that studies show that teachers can support students’ first languages in class through their positive attitude toward and an interest in their students’ languages, and by encouraging students to use

their home languages in class. These same researchers also found that teachers who speak another language place a greater emphasis on their role in assisting children to maintain their first language. Other researchers (Schwarzer, Haywood & Lorenzen, 2003; Van Sluys with Reinier, 2006) also addressed these same issues, emphasizing that monolingual teachers can “foster multiliteracy” (Schwarzer, Haywood & Lorenzen, p. 453) in linguistically diverse classrooms using a variety of methods, some of which I discuss in a later section.

To sum up, the data suggested that Pam had some uncertainties about promoting ELLs’ first languages in the classroom. Additionally, Pam appeared to hold some deficit notions about ELLs, focusing, for example, on their lack of English language skills. However, because Pam indicated that she incorporated ELLs’ or their families’ cultural knowledge into her program, I saw that Pam was moving toward embracing diversity as the curriculum.

Respecting and Centring Multiple Sources of Knowledge

Dei et al. (2002) discussed what they termed a “critical integrative approach to inclusive schooling” (p. 7)—an approach that integrates various groups’ knowledge into the centre of the curriculum—a departure from the commonly used practice of introducing children to, often, the superficial aspects of multicultural celebrations/events and stories that are added on to the curriculum. In this section, I examine those aspects of Pam’s beliefs and classroom practices that I found exhibited many elements of a critical integrative approach. Additionally, I point out some of the gaps I noticed in Pam’s program. I divide this section into two related parts that connect the data with the literature I reviewed and Dei et al.’s (2000) framework: curriculum and instructional strategies to integrating diversity, and incorporating diversity through involving families and the community. There were two questions I asked myself while thinking about and interpreting each piece of the data in the following first section: “Was this particular approach (used or talked about by Pam) to integrating diversity integral to Pam’s classroom program or was it an ‘add on’” (Dei, et al., 2002, p. 14)? and “How did this approach address diversity from a critical standpoint?”

Curriculum and instructional strategies. Pam indicated that she integrates students' cultures into her classroom program in a number of ways: initiating discussions about religious/cultural celebrations during their monthly whole group calendar activity; providing children with ongoing opportunities to interact with clothing, food and artefacts of varied cultures that are brought in by families; and continually attempting to make available books for children to access that are representative of the diversity in the classroom (so that children could "see themselves") and wider society. Pam's home collection of fiction and non-fiction books that she reported to share with students at various times appeared to illustrate a diversity of people, lifestyles, and perspectives. As well, some of them seemed to challenge stereotypes and raise one's awareness of social issues (e.g., *Daddies* and *Amazing Grace*).

In my view, one of the most significant ways that I found Pam centred and showed respect for the knowledge of minority groups was through her ways of reading, discussing, and showing much enthusiasm with her students for "comparative literature" and stories with illustrations of people of colour. Indeed, it seemed that Pam helped children examine texts in more critical ways, beginning with a discussion of the contexts of the stories, using a map of the world to show the origins of the tales. Dei and his colleagues (2000) noted Nieto's (1995) comments about the importance of teachers providing a larger context from which particular components of diversity (e.g., poem, art piece) come. Without presenting that context to children, those components "become mere artefacts that have no meaning in and of themselves" (p. 265). In particular, Pam stated that she reads and discusses the storylines and illustrations in multicultural tales and compares these to the Euro-North American versions. In this way, children hear and learn from more than one perspective in an integrated manner that does not value one version over another. Pam, though, made a special point of emphasizing to me her refusal to read Walt Disney adaptations of fairytales with storylines and illustrations that she believed implied many children around the world see as the norm, suggesting that these popular versions depict

only people and ideas of the dominant North American culture (e.g., in the case of the Disney version of Cinderella, Pam stated that the emphasis is on “being beautiful and getting married”).

Additionally, Pam’s reports of some of her classroom discussions of books and other material resources appeared to be examples of Pam “problematiz[ing] the status quo” (Dei et al., 2002, p. 17). I refer to her ways of encouraging children to think about how minority groups and their world views are not often represented in the material resources of the school and wider society. In this way, Pam was “asking whose voices are represented and whose voices are silenced” (Haneda, 2007, p. 341). For instance, Pam asserted that when she does not have access to a material resource that shows diversity, she asks her students questions that encourage them to think about difference and about what may not be shown in a resource. One question Pam reported she asked her students, regarding a picture of a family, was “Now, is this always the way a family looks?” The implication was that the picture showed only one kind of family, not “mixed race families...or one parent families.” In fact, she emphasized the need for all of us to develop a consciousness of the dominant cultural images that we consume.

In my opinion, the most illuminating example of Pam’s efforts to critically examine texts with her students was her narration of an occasion when she compared the dominant illustrated version of a White Cinderella with a version that featured Cinderella as Black. As part of this lesson, Pam talked to her students about some of the assumptions many illustrators make (that is, beautiful means having white skin and blond hair) in a way that introduced children to the notion that there are many perspectives on beauty, all equally legitimate. “There’s many, many, many kinds of beautiful and I want to make sure that we see many kinds of beautiful.” In this way, it seemed that Pam extended the awareness of all children and validated the identities of those whose perspectives are not usually represented. Pam claimed that she emphasized to her students that it is in these ways “the problem is with the resource.” It is in these ways, too, that Pam seemed to “[make] room for other ways of knowing and understanding the world” (Dei et al., 2002, p. 14) as well as demonstrate respect for diversity in an ongoing manner, in contrast to

teachers who only bring the more superficial aspects of diversity to the foreground on special days or weeks.

In looking at the ways Pam showed recognition and respect for difference that directly related to her students' lives, there were occasions when Pam spoke of discussions she has had with her students about skin colour and other visual differences between people. Pam claimed that because she knows that her students notice skin colour differences, she talks about it. She does not "shy away" from the topic. Pam also stated that she brought up "uncomfortable" times when children referred to an individual's skin colour or another, often visual, aspect of an individual in negative ways. Here, Pam noted how one "pivotal" book, *Anti-Bias Curriculum*, has helped her deal with these difficult moments. Rather than doing nothing (a strategy she claimed she previously employed in these situations), Pam seemed to unpack situations directly with the children involved, uncovering, what she stated were, the "thinking/feelings that were behind" the children's biased statements. In my view, the narrative Pam wrote of Denise and Claire, in particular, highlighted not only her ability to scaffold children's skills in problem solving but her competence in "chipping away at the assumptions of negative stereotypes" (Pam's words in her email to me), as exemplified by Claire's lesson that one should not base one's decisions regarding friendships on appearances. Additionally, Pam revealed her skillfulness at "empowering the children [in this case, Denise] who arrive in your care with social wounds" (Pam's email).

One gap I noted in Pam's approaches to centering multiple knowledge was, again, her limited attention to incorporating children's home languages. While Pam seemed to weave aspects of some languages into her program in integrative ways (e.g., talking about the directionality of various scripts in the context of a discussion about the left-right mode of reading English), it appeared that the inclusion of multiple languages was not an essential ingredient of Pam's classroom curriculum. No language other than English was heard in Pam's classroom which contrasted with the multiple languages used in elementary school settings discussed in some articles (e.g., Chow & Cummins, 2003; Schwarzer et al., 2003; Van Sluys with Reinier,

2006). Furthermore, the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2007b) document states that "language mixing or code-switching are common strategies used by children learning a second language" (p. 14). Yet, I did not hear instances of children using these strategies in Pam's classroom. An investigation of why this phenomenon was not observed would be needed, though, in order for me to comment further.

Except for her limited ways of promoting children's home languages in the classroom, overall, it seemed there was much evidence from my interviews with Pam to suggest that her approaches to incorporating diversity were integral to her program and they involved critically evaluating various resources with her students.

Parental and community involvement. Students' families and communities are seen as important sources and supports for integrating multiple centres of knowledge (Dei et al., 2002). Although I heard very little from Pam about the ways in which the community was involved in her classroom, it appeared that Pam had a strong sense of the central role that families can play in the school and in the classroom. With respect to the involvement of ELLs' parents, I noted, though, that there appeared to be some ambiguities in Pam's thinking. In this section, I explore some of Pam's views.

On the whole, it seemed that Pam thought highly of many of her ELLs' families and she seemed to hold some positive perspectives about the contributions that culturally and linguistically diverse parents can make to their children's education. Certainly, Pam's acknowledgement of the expertise of her students' families, the encouragement she reported to give to parents to share their knowledge in the classroom, and her stated commitment to herself to focus on "increasing parent involvement" indicated the importance Pam placed on parents' participation in the school/classroom. Pam also provided many examples of times when parents from various cultural backgrounds came in and shared their knowledge. Most notable was Pam's enthusiastic report of the participation of all parents in the creation of *The Name Book* and ELLs'

families' enthusiastic involvement in writing "very, very powerful stories" about the origins of their child's name.

Despite these instances of parental involvement, Pam called attention to the reduced levels of school participation from many ELLs' families which she indicated she had difficulties understanding. It was interesting that although Pam referred to barriers to ELLs' parents' school involvement (such as poverty or transportation), Pam did not talk about language being an obstacle. On the other hand, Dei et al. (2000) discussed at length language as an impediment to parents' involvement in the school. Besides language issues deterring many non-English speaking parents or parents who are less fluent in English from participating in school activities, other overlapping ramifications were noted by Dei and his colleagues. Most significantly, these researchers pointed out how language barriers can impair parents' communications with teachers and create difficulties for parents attempting to advocate for their children. In their research, Dei and his colleagues documented instances of parents (or individuals talking about parents) who mentioned how intimidating it can be for some parents with no or little facility in English to enter an English speaking school. The researchers called for schools to "move beyond letters home, parent-teacher meetings and other practices that are based on English facility and comfort with the system" (pp. 125-126). Integrating multiple languages "as a domain of inclusivity tries to break the language barrier that prevents some parents and students from comfortably and efficiently accessing school and succeeding in it" (p. 258). Although Pam and her school employed multilingual practices for communicating with parents such as translated school letters home and information sessions about the school in many languages, for Pam, incorporating languages other than English in the classroom seemed to be reserved for limited occasions.

In my view, connected to Pam's less extensive integration of students' languages were Pam's views about involving parents who do not speak English fluently in the classroom. When talking about this topic, Pam stated that because "you couldn't necessarily have a translator in your classroom for them," these parents could participate most by volunteering. The implication

was that they could help out at activities such as field trips but they would not be able to share their knowledge or help students in their learning. To me, this account suggested that Pam believed that the ways in which some ELLs' parents can become involved in the classroom are limited because she saw them in terms of their less developed English skills. In fact, at one point in the fourth interview, when she talked about the "Name project," Pam referred to some ELLs' parents writing "broken English" and how although she tried to "honour that," sometimes their English "needed to be 'fixed.'"

Related to this, Pam asserted at various times that ELLs need more human resources which meant an "educated adult working with them," implying an educated, English speaking adult. Besides the fact that she appeared to overlook that non-English speaking parents could be linguistic resources in the classroom who could provide students of the same language background with help, these statements suggest an attitude that may be inadvertently communicated to ELLs' parents, giving them the impression that they and their primary languages do not have a significant place in a school context. For parents who may feel they do not have anything to offer the school because their linguistic capital differs from that of the school, providing them with opportunities for meaningful classroom participation would benefit them (e.g., develop their English skills, raise their self perceptions), as well as the children whom they help.

Many academics have highlighted some classroom practices in elementary classrooms that specifically draw on the linguistic resources of minority language parents and their communities. Although there was evidence of some of these strategies in Pam's classroom, I saw openings for a broader use of these strategies. For example, Pam indicated that she acquired multilingual signs in her classroom from a colleague but Pam never mentioned the possibility of involving ELLs' families or their communities in the creation of more multilingual print such as labelling various items in the classroom, posting everyday phrases, or putting up posters of alphabets or numbers in a variety of languages. Other ideas, some of which were adapted from

Freeman and Freeman, (1993) and Schwarzer et al., (2003), include the following: have family or community members bring in and read or tell stories in students' languages and/or create audio tapes of multilingual stories/songs to be used at a listening centre; and enlist the help of families and community members to translate and collaborate on the production of monthly newsletters to encourage families to think of other ways of capitalizing on their linguistic and cultural resources. In their study, Bernhard et al. (2006) underscored the value of families and community members assisting young children in the creation of "identity texts." These are homemade books that are laminated, bound and prominently displayed in the school library; they may incorporate family stories, children's drawings, and/or photographs of children's interests and daily activities. Children then describe the photographs or drawings in their dominant language and parents scribe these details.

With respect to ways of specifically including the children's communities, teachers could look to the community's heritage language programs as a resource for supporting and incorporating children's home languages and other literacy practices in the classroom. Additionally, high school students or adults who are enrolled in ESL classes could be encouraged to help young ELLs in many of the aforementioned ways. Through recognizing and employing the parents' and communities' linguistic expertise, children's first and second language, literacy, and cognitive skills are broadened and "students feel a greater sense of belonging and emotional support and develop high self-esteem" (Cummins et al., 2006, p. 307). It was these kinds of collaborative activities to which Moll et al. (1992) referred when they discussed home-school partnerships where "teachers assume the role of the learner, and in doing so, help to establish a fundamentally new, more symmetrical relationship with the parents of the students" (p. 139).

In summary, I described numerous ways in which Pam could encourage greater involvement from parents of ELLs as well as members of the community. Many of these ways involve practices that highlight parents' linguistic knowledge.

Valuing Students' Identities and Cognitive Needs

Using Cummins and Schecter's (2003) constructs, I discuss, in this section, Pam's interactions with her ELLs in terms of the ways in which she demonstrated the importance she placed on students' identities. Cummins and Schecter emphasized that capitalizing on the distinct cultural and linguistic features of ELLs' identities maximizes their investment in learning, promoting their cognitive growth. In this section, I also discuss Pam's role as a learner in the classroom and the extent to which she encouraged her students, particularly her ELLs, to share their expert knowledge.

Perhaps most telling of Pam's manifestation of the respect she showed to her students were the occasions she reported of actively trying to change individual students' negative identities as assigned by others or themselves to more positive and empowering identities (e.g., assisting a student, labelled "bully" by others in the classroom, to play with others, under the support and guidance of Pam who attempted to derail his negative identity). In another instance, Pam told of her efforts to create a better relationship for two girls in her class who, in the end, appeared to develop new understandings about themselves and each other, and new ways of conceptualizing and forging positive relationships. It is in these ways that I saw Pam helping her students develop an "identity of empowerment" rather than an "identity of subordination" (Dei et al., 2000, p. 245). In my view, the underlying message that Pam gave to her students was "You are a valuable person who deserves respect from all members of this learning community."

In terms of specific interactions with ELLs, I noted that, on a number of occasions, Pam recounted stories and gave information about her ELLs' lives that revealed her interest in their culture and religion in particular. On the other hand, I heard Pam talk about some classroom practices that suggested to me that perhaps she sometimes communicated an unintentional, less affirming message to her ELLs about their native languages by focusing solely on ELLs' English language development. For instance, Pam stated that she tells her ELLs, "You speak very good English when you sit at the front." On one level (which I believe was the level that Pam intended

to communicate), she was praising her ELLs about their English skills, encouraging them to use English. However, because I did not find any instances of Pam giving ELLs favourable comments about their abilities to speak in their first language, nor, as the previous section documented, did I find any example of her encouraging students to use their native tongue, I wondered if, through omission, she occasionally left ELLs with the message that English was valued more than their home languages.

Other statements made by Pam seem to give support to my opinion. When I asked Pam, for example, about what she thought ELLs need, she referred to ELLs' language needs which for Pam, meant English language needs and the importance of assessing the (English) language stage of each ELL in order to determine what each child needs from her. Similar to the other example, while this instance in itself shows Pam's concern for helping ELLs and the importance she placed on shaping her instructional approach to match individual ELL's English language needs, it also indicated that her orientation to programming for ELLs stressed English language development rather than English and ELLs' home language development. Dei et al. (2000) asserted that "language is a fundamental component to identity and a sense of belonging" (p. 110). Hence, integrating children's home languages in school validates students' identities. In this way, I noted that because Pam did not include her students' languages to a large degree in the classroom, she may have inadvertently communicated a subtle, less favourable message to her ELLs about their identities.

The importance of teachers attending to ELLs' cognitive needs was a topic that Pam raised a few times. As stated in Chapter five, a major theme of Pam's teaching was the emphasis she placed on engaging all students. Indeed, during each of my observations, I noted how engaged students appeared to be, enthusiastically and actively involved in all classroom activities. I did not notice any individual left out or isolated—a phenomenon reported by Haworth (2003) in some settings and observed by Toohey (1998) in her study. It seemed that academic concepts, vocabulary, and knowledge were taught and reinforced to ELLs through a variety of approaches

to help make English and concepts more comprehensible. As well, in contrast to the teacher of Platt and Troudi's (1996) investigation who depended on her English speaking students to teach (inadequately) academic concepts to one ELL, Pam seemed to make sure that she was the primary teacher of ELLs' learning of concepts and content.

Despite the active measures that Pam took to address ELLs' academic needs, I questioned to what extent her ELLs were able to engage cognitively through English. While Pam indicated an understanding of the importance of ELLs' linking experiences heard in English to their first language, she did not appear to encourage ELLs to directly use their first language to make sense of their experiences. The weekly "reading buddies" event was the only occasion that Pam mentioned in which older students were paired with her students of the same linguistic background, allowing her ELLs to talk about many matters in their first language.

Freeman and Freeman (2007) reported that this "crossage [cross-age] tutoring" (p. 355) and other practices that make use of older students' strengths in their first language to help develop ELLs' conceptual understandings. Cross-age tutoring and other first language strategies were also outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2007) document, "Supporting English Language Learners in Kindergarten." As well, this same document mentioned that teachers can "invite ELLs to work and play with same-language partners from time to time" (p. 40)—a practice that Pam initially declared she would never do but then quickly changed her response to "I have never. I wouldn't say I would never." Following these statements, Pam shared a story of some girls in her classroom who spoke Arabic all the time. In this circumstance, Pam stated that, unlike most times, she discouraged these girls from speaking Arabic. It seemed to me, though, that these occasions could be seen as opportunities for greater cognitive engagement in which the girls could share their understandings of concepts, content, and vocabulary discussed in the classroom with each other in their first language. Indeed, Pam indicated that the girls "could generally figure out what was going on, and do the work, and do it in Arabic."

Rather than promoting the ongoing use of first languages, it appeared that Pam often relegated first language use to specific times or specific purposes (e.g., she stated that she asked students to translate “just in a moment though, when it was necessary” and singing or telling a story in another language were employed because that was an objective outlined in the Kindergarten curriculum). In contrast, Cummins et al. (2005) described cross-curricular projects in which ELLs in the Greater Toronto area participated. In particular, the authors reported that one Grade 7 ELL who had recently arrived in Canada and had fluent skills in Urdu collaborated with two Urdu speaking peers who also spoke English fluently. After sharing their ideas in their common language, the girls then wrote in English a story of their experiences coming to Canada. This serves as an example of one way teachers can validate students’ identities and engage them in cognitively challenging ways through the use of their first language.

Teachers as learners and students as experts. Connected to Cummins and Schecter’s (2003) model of teacher-student interactions (i.e., the “reciprocal relationship between cognitive engagement and identity investment,” p. 10) are the teacher’s beliefs regarding their role as a learner in the classroom. Here, the authors were referring to the value of teachers learning from and showcasing the vast linguistic, cultural, and personal knowledge of their ELLs. Studies noted in my literature review made reference to practices in which teachers encouraged culturally and linguistically diverse students to share their expertise with the classroom community (e.g., Cummins, Chow & Schecter, 2006; Sluys with Reinier, 2006). In this section, I note the ways in which I saw Pam (and Pam saw herself) as a learner and I examine her approaches to highlighting the expertise of the students in her classroom.

I saw Pam as one who has had an ongoing interest in personal and professional growth, as evidenced by the numerous examples of her participation in professional development workshops and other educational pursuits. In my opinion, it seemed that Pam’s most significant learning related to the knowledge and awareness she acquired about anti-bias education. On several occasions, Pam raised instances that revealed her strong orientation toward anti-bias

thinking and practice, her openness to talking about her own biases, and her receptiveness to hearing from others about assumptions she has made.

I also noted that Pam also conveyed a receptivity to and, at times, an excitement about her students taking the lead. Although I did not observe occasions of students imparting their knowledge in the classroom, I heard Pam talk about and I saw evidence of her providing openings for students to share their expert knowledge or to lead through show and tell events, including times when ELLs could talk about items brought from home. Additionally, I found that Pam created a learning environment in which students could make their own decisions/choices (e.g., what to do during free play time, where to sit, what materials to use, who to ask for help) and learn from one another, including assisting and supporting each other with tasks or problems such as needing help putting on their outer clothes or resolving a conflict with a peer. Moreover, I observed that Pam solicited her students' opinions about a topic, frequently referred to all students as experts, and gave favourable comments about every student's input. In each of these instances, Pam credited students' expertise on matters. It is in these ways that I made note of Pam's recognition of and confidence in her students' abilities, giving children a sense of autonomy, power, and self-confidence.

Delving into matters related specifically to ELLs, however, I wondered to what extent Pam afforded ELLs opportunities to be experts and to be seen as experts, particularly, because ELLs are often in the position of needing help in the classroom. Hite and Evans (2006) discussed this issue and commented on their concerns regarding one practice used by many of the Grade one teachers in their inquiry involving the deliberate pairing of ELLs with academically adept English proficient peers who received training about the kinds of strategies to use when assisting ELLs. Although the researchers stated that this practice is beneficial to ELLs' English language development, they found no evidence of ELLs' helping native English speaking students, suggesting that "it may position ELLs as not possessing knowledge or ability of potential benefit

to L1 [first language] English speakers” (p. 101), despite the fact that the Grade one teachers claimed that all students, even the trained tutors, were giving and receiving help.

Unlike these teachers, Pam indicated that she does not intentionally pair ELLs in this way. She stated, “I don’t have to orchestrate that. It just happens.” However, I heard Pam mention at another time that when she grouped children for one of the learning centres in which students were required to look at books and report to their group their findings, she made sure “there was someone who was pretty strong,” implying someone who was academically strong and, I surmise, proficient in English, so that “there’s someone who can help them [ELLs].” In this way, it seemed that Pam’s ELLs benefited from their interactions with English speaking classmates without being positioned, at least overtly, as needing help. Yet, I believe that even though ELLs such as those in Pam’s classroom may not have been or were less likely to be stigmatized (especially, where ELLs comprised a large percentage of the classroom population; in Pam’s classroom, approximately 32% were ELLs in the morning program and 50% were ELLs in the afternoon), it is important for teachers to draw attention to ELLs’ abilities and knowledge. Non-ELLs may continue to see ELLs as less skilled because of their less proficient English skills. While Pam expressed a strong sense of the rich knowledge her ELLs possess and indicated that she provided ELLs with occasions to share their knowledge, I sensed that Pam felt somewhat inadequate when she admitted to the challenge of building on the background knowledge of students who “are from a different culture, from a different country, from a different language system.” Here, she recognized the need for more teachers who can visually, linguistically, and culturally connect with the students.

As noted in previous sections, I did not observe or hear Pam talk about times when ELLs’ bilingual skills were highlighted to any degree which I interpreted as a missed opportunity. Researchers such as Schwarzer, Haywood, and Lorenzen (2003) pointed out some ways that teachers can showcase young ELLs’ linguistic abilities in their first languages in the context of a lesson. Teachers, for example, can encourage young ELLs who have some literacy skills in their

first language to write their names and other words in the script of their language as well as English, if possible, and teachers can invite ELLs to use words in their home language when, during a presentation or informal talk, ELLs are referring to specific items related to their interests, experiences, or culture. In addition to discussing ways of featuring students' linguistic resources, Van Suys with Reinier (2006) described approaches that underscore other talents that ELLs have acquired such as skills in technology or the arts.

Connecting the Theme of Using Broad-based Instructional Strategies to the Literature and Theoretical Framework

Many of the broad-based instructional practices that Pam stated she uses and were observed in practice with all of her students and, at times, to a greater degree with ELLs, I noted were approaches discussed in various articles or manuals that focused on providing classroom teachers with suggestions for working with ELLs in mainstream classrooms. For example, similar to the practices that Pam espoused and utilized in her classroom, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2006b) document, "Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom," emphasizes using visuals and hands-on activities to assist ELLs' understanding of concepts and vocabulary in English. Further, this document encourages teachers to provide all students with many collaborative learning opportunities to promote friendships with classmates from various cultural backgrounds and to give ELLs occasions to practice their oral English in meaningful ways. Platt and Troudi (1997) stated that because of the large number of teachers who work with ELLs in mainstream settings, it is important to look at teachers' more general views on and practices regarding classroom organization and student learning (rather than specific language learning models with which mainstream teachers may or may not be familiar) and their application to ELLs.

In this section, I first examine the broad-based teaching approaches Pam used to include and support all students and more specifically, ELLs—approaches that seem to align with what I

found the literature has endorsed, grouped as an interactive teaching style. Second, I discuss the ways in which Pam promoted ELLs' language development in English.

Employing an Interactive Teaching Style

The data suggested that Pam's overall teaching approach most closely resembled an interactive instructional style discussed in Curtin's (2005b) qualitative study. Indeed, I found Pam exhibited all of the characteristics found in the interactive teachers of Curtin's study. The following gives examples of some prominent features of Pam's interactive style: Pam continually circulated amongst her students, encouraging all students to participate in ways that appeared to be suitable to their needs, communicating a message to them that they were expected to participate and that she would support their efforts; she appeared to be highly attentive to students' activities and behaviours (e.g., keeping an eye on what students were doing and how they were responding, and stepping in when students looked as if they were losing interest or not understanding), seeing that all students were included in social and academic activities; she reflected on and adapted her instructional practices as they connected to the children's needs; she regularly employed and promoted cooperative learning, encouraging students to talk with and assist/support one another and to share resources, promoting ELLs' basic interpersonal communication skills and linguistic and conceptual understanding (Platt & Troudi, 1997); she specifically championed and utilized visuals, hands-on activities, kinaesthetic activities and differentiation—approaches considered especially helpful for making English more understandable to ELLs (Facella et al., 2005; Hite & Evans, 2006); and she demonstrated a strong interest in and enjoyment of her students and their families (e.g., her affectionate and respectful ways of talking to her students, her awareness of some of the challenges that ELLs and their families face, her knowledge of her students' and their families' backgrounds, and her use of humour).

The final characteristic explored in Curtin's study referred to a democratic approach to discipline, similar to Pam's classroom which appeared to be built on cooperative, respectful relationships in which rules and routines were explicitly stated and followed to ensure order yet

flexibility and a sense of security, allowing children to focus more fully on their learning. In contrast to the ELLs in Pam's classroom who seemed to have a great deal of freedom of movement to retrieve materials and an unlimited access to peers, the ELLs in a Grade 1 classroom in Toohey's (1998) study had restricted access to material and human resources because rules related to individual work and ownership were rigidly enforced.

Supporting ELLs' English Language and Academic Development

This final section looks at the strategies Pam used to address some of ELLs' distinct English language needs, providing them with English language support through English. In an article that discussed the challenges ELLs face in an English speaking school and the strategies teachers can employ to support ELLs' English language and academic development, one of Meyer's (2000) overriding messages was for teachers to cultivate a consciousness of language through reflecting on and adjusting their word choices, sentence structures, and the language needed to understand specific content and concepts. In the following paragraphs, I indicate that the data showed that Pam's methods revealed a considerable degree of English language consciousness that seemed to permeate most lessons and activities. Further, the data suggested that Pam appeared to provide ELLs with many opportunities to access the English language resources of their peers and teacher, thereby assisting with ELLs' language and conceptual development and integration to the classroom community.

While the previous section highlighted Pam's non-verbal means of assisting ELLs with understanding and using English, I begin this section with a discussion of her oral language strategies in English, serving similar purposes. The data indicated that Pam communicated strong beliefs about the value of developing Kindergarten children's and particularly, ELLs' oral language. Similarly, much of the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2006a) Kindergarten curriculum also focuses on the importance of creating a "rich oral language environment" (p. 1) for students. I found Pam's classroom brimming with oral language events in English whereby she and her students conversed freely with one another on a one-on-one, small group, and large

group basis. Children's play and more structured learning activities seemed to involve authentic, meaningful oral exchanges. For example, Pam reported and I observed that she encouraged children to talk to each other and to her about what they were doing, what they were learning or their problems and the ways to resolve their concerns.

Regarding social and academic language, I found that Pam seemed to be aware of both language registers and pulled from a repertoire of strategies to reinforce both. For example, Pam reported and I observed that she gives/gave ELLs words to use for "everyday situations." Pam's account of times when she groups ELLs together to give them specific vocabulary and background information on a topic unfamiliar to them was an example of her developing ELLs' academic language and explicitly scaffolding ELLs' learning. In this way, too, Pam integrated academic language and content for ELLs—an approach that de Jong and Harper (2005) and other academics (e.g., Freeman and Freeman, 2007; Short & Echevarria, 2005) in the field of English language learning have claimed is effective in supporting ELLs.

In their study, Hite and Evans (2006) found that first grade teachers with experience and/or qualifications in ESL similar to Pam's reported using a variety of oral language strategies they considered to be effective with ELLs. Watts-Taffe and Truscott (2000) described similar practices—practices to help ELLs understand English—all of which I observed Pam using or heard Pam report that she used. Some of these strategies included employing simpler terms, giving explicit instructions, repeating phrases, and emphasizing key words. Additionally, there appeared to be many occasions for Pam's ELLs to practice their developing English skills. During the students' centre time, for example, Pam encouraged students to talk, work, and play with one another. In all of my observations, I also made note of the fact that, during whole group sessions, Pam made certain everyone had a chance to speak. Unfortunately, I did not witness times when students spoke extensively such as those times that Pam recalled when students talked a lot about Eid, for example.

Although I noticed that Pam used a teacher-led approach with her large group in which she initiated class discussions through posing questions to individuals, unlike the “test-questions” asked by teachers who participated in Toohey and Day’s (1999) inquiry, I found that Pam’s questions were often open-ended inquiries of what students thought or invitations for students to share knowledge (e.g., “What did you observe?,” “What do you think...?”). No one “right” answer was expected. There was room for a variety of student responses. As well, unlike the ELLs observed in Toohey and Day’s investigation, I did not observe any students in Pam’s classroom disengaging at this time. It seemed that all students were attentive, enthusiastically responding to her questions.

Furthermore, Pam employed practices that Toohey and Day (1999) described as approaches that encouraged ELLs’ participation in the classroom activities and access to the language of the school: collaborative, small group activities (as previously mentioned) and choral work. Regarding this latter activity, I observed Pam and her students singing songs or chanting rhymes that involved movements or gestures, including a short chant used for routine changes. Pam also reported chorally reading a poem and following the words on a chart, facilitating ELLs’ aural/oral and reading skills in English. According to Toohey and Day, choral speech and singing allow all children to participate “through the support offered by their [classroom] community” (p. 43). I also noted that Pam’s whole group reading and writing practice (the language experience approach in which students’ words about a topic are recorded verbatim on a large chart paper) seems to offer benefits similar to those of choral work. Young (1996) stated that the language experience approach is considered effective for ELLs’ language and literacy development, particularly, in terms of activating ELLs’ background knowledge which in turn scaffolds the process of learning new information/concepts (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000).

On the whole, I found that Pam seemed to be conscious of the English language demands of the classroom community, employing numerous non-verbal and oral language strategies, cooperative learning activities, choral work, and language experience stories to facilitate ELLs’

language development in English and understanding of academic content which in turn, promotes ELLs' participation in the classroom. I must add, though, that my analysis of Pam's language practices is limited. Because I did not know her ELLs, their needs and their levels of English proficiency, I could not examine whether Pam's questions, for instance, seemed to match ELLs' English level. In an article that focused on addressing the necessity for mainstream teachers to use practices specific to ELLs' language needs, de Jong and Harper (2006) noted the importance of teachers choosing questions appropriate to ELLs' English language proficiency (e.g., asking an ELL with minimal English skills to respond non-verbally or with one-word answers) without "watering down the curriculum" (p.102). Similar to what de Jong and Harper (2006) said, Pam stated the need for teachers to observe ELLs' language to assess their level of English proficiency and thus, determine what each child needs from her. In addition, Pam referred to being conscious of simplifying content without "dumbing things down." Nevertheless, although I witnessed Pam differentiating her questions in ways that appeared to relate to students' needs, I was not able to evaluate the suitability of the fit. Likewise, I cannot comment on the appropriateness of the differentiated reading strategies I witnessed Pam use.

The next chapter explores some of the implications of this study as they pertain to the numerous ways Pam included ELLs in her classroom, as well as the implications related to her limited attention to capitalizing on the linguistic expertise of her students, families and the community.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I first draw attention to the study's unique features and suggest areas of research that need to be explored. Next, I consider the implications of the study's findings for educational practice and professional development. In closing, I add some personal comments about what I have learned in undertaking this study.

Uniqueness of the Study and Research Implications

This study is unique from a number of standpoints. First, as stated in Chapter one, there have been few qualitative studies to date that have examined the ways in which teachers include ELLs in mainstream classrooms, especially multilingual classrooms. Second, of the studies I reviewed, none explored, in one study, both the use of broad-based instructional strategies and the use of practices that incorporate diversity to facilitate ELLs' inclusion, despite the fact that these two significant facets of inclusion are clearly endorsed in Ontario Ministry of Education documents. Third, I did not encounter any studies that examined the inclusion of young ELLs from a critical perspective in which teachers challenge their students, as Pam reported doing, to think about texts and illustrations in terms of bias, encouraging them to consider whose images or ideas, for instance, may not be represented. Fourth, there seems to be a dearth of research that looks at the ways in which parents from diverse cultural/linguistic backgrounds can play a role in the classroom. Finally, studies that delve into matters related to the use of students' home languages in the classroom seem to be lacking.

While this study is unique in exploring a wide variety of intersecting components that relate to ELLs' inclusion, I see this study as a starting point for reflection. Further research is needed to investigate the above-mentioned topics of inclusion more deeply. In this study, I found,

in hindsight, that I missed opportunities to probe Pam's thinking about ELLs' and their families' use of their primary languages in the classroom.

The following are some questions I would like to have asked Pam:

- What role do you think teachers should play in assisting children to maintain and develop their home languages?
- What are your thoughts and concerns, if any, about children using their first languages in class?
- Tell me about the education or professional development you received, if any, that relates to the ways in which teachers can foster ELLs' first language and literacy development in the classroom?
- You did not mention that language may be a barrier for some ELLs' parents' school involvement. Please comment on this.
- What are your thoughts and concerns, if any, about parents or community members using their first languages in the classroom?

Hearing Pam's responses to these and other questions would have been helpful to uncover the reasons behind her limited inclusion of her ELLs' heritage languages in class. .

This study's findings align with many of the results found in other research, as pointed out in Chapter seven. Moreover, I believe this study adds knowledge to the existing body of literature, particularly in terms of pointing out topics concerned with ELLs' inclusion that have not been previously discussed. It appeared that Pam held beliefs and attitudes and applied practices that many researchers have considered inclusive and supportive for ELLs. There were also, however, components of Pam's beliefs and practices that indicated a less inclusive stance and approach. Here, I refer to findings that revealed Pam's tendency to see ELLs and their families in terms of what they lacked and findings that brought to light her limited attention to incorporating children's first languages into the classroom—findings that, again, corresponded

with other studies (e.g., Hite & Evans, 2006; Lee & Oxelson, 2006). These findings point to a need to design studies that focus on exploring the thinking behind why practices related to first language use in the classroom may not be employed and examining concerns teachers may have in implementing such approaches. Related to this is a need for additional research that looks more closely at teachers' thoughts and concerns about including the parents of ELLs and community members to facilitate the incorporation of many languages in the classroom.

Implications for Educational Practice and Professional Development

This case study highlighted numerous strategies that educators can implement in their mainstream classrooms with ELLs. Because my analysis entailed looking at the data through various lenses, many aspects of ELLs' inclusion became apparent. I hope that the discussion of the components I examined in this study will provide teachers with a variety of integrated perspectives on and approaches to including ELLs. Further, through reading about Pam's beliefs and practices regarding ELLs' inclusion, I hope that educators and all stakeholders will be encouraged to talk openly and honestly, as I believe Pam did, about their own perspectives and to share ideas about creating more inclusive environments.

The findings of this study seem to also have significant implications for teacher education and professional development. According to Lee and Oxelson (2006), teachers' attitudes about first language maintenance are affected by professional development and teacher education programs. This corresponds with what the results in this study suggested. Many of Pam's beliefs and practices, especially those related to anti-bias education, appeared to be influenced by her ECE education and the professional development workshops she attended. Interestingly, Pam made no reference to workshops or educational programs that dealt with examining teachers' perspectives on and approaches to the teacher's/school's role in children's first language maintenance. It was unclear whether Pam overlooked talking to me about these professional development topics or whether Pam did not attend sessions on this issue. Moreover, I wondered

whether this topic was raised by any of the education courses she attended. Pam only mentioned that her ESL course discussed the importance of first language maintenance for ELLs.

This study, similar to others on this topic (e.g., Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004) underscores the importance of teachers and teacher candidates receiving extensive preparation to effectively support and include ELLs in their classrooms, especially given the growing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students in mainstream classrooms. I would add that such an education should focus, in part, first, on raising teachers' awareness of their critical role in supporting the development of ELLs' language and literacy skills in their native language and in English and second, on offering teachers suggestions about the ways in which they can provide that support, particularly through emphasizing the ways in which they can capitalize on the rich linguistic resources of their students, their students' families and communities.

Some Closing Thoughts

Despite my longings, in the final stretch, to complete this study and move on, I have to say that I loved many aspects of being a researcher. Interviewing and observing Pam with her Kindergarten students was such a pleasure; I felt sad when it came to an end. Organizing and writing about the data and even transcribing the interviews, to some extent, were also enjoyable, perhaps because these activities brought to mind many positive and humorous memories of Pam and her students. I only wish I had had an opportunity to see more of Pam in her classroom and to observe, in particular, the ways in which she encouraged children to think critically about the world or the ways in which she initiated discussions about various multicultural tales.

My involvement in this study has benefited me in numerous ways, giving me knowledge, skills, and confidence. Most significantly, though, I find that I am excited about the possibility of working with children in a multicultural setting in which I have the opportunity to put into

practice what I have learned about supporting and including ELLs in the classroom and to pass on this knowledge and excitement to colleagues.

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APPENDIX A: AN OVERVIEW OF THE STAGES OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008)

ELLs receiving ESL programs and services

	Early beginner level (Stage 1 of Second-Language Acquisition)	Later beginner level (Late Stage 1/early Stage 2 of Second-Language Acquisition)
Listening and Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning basic vocabulary and very simple sentence structure; beginning to communicate in single words and phrases; often understanding more than they can produce themselves when they are in conversation with a partner who is speaking slowly and clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasingly able to communicate and are developing confidence in asking simple questions, initiating and responding to simple statements, and engaging in short exchanges and conversations.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning basic vocabulary and becoming familiar with the conventions of English print; initially, gaining understanding mainly from illustrations, and progressing to reading high-frequency words, simple sentences, and a variety of adapted simple texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing the ability to read adapted texts for enjoyment and information; beginning to use text organization, structural features, and comprehension strategies to locate main ideas and some details.
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to express themselves in written English; progressing from labelling and copying and or writing personal information to using images, symbols, and printed words to convey meaning; starting to write simple sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing the ability to write a series of linked sentences around a central idea supported by graphic organizers and using familiar vocabulary.
	Early intermediate level (Stage 2 of Second-Language Acquisition)	Later intermediate level (Stage 3 of Second-Language Acquisition)
Listening and Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiating social interaction independently beginning to participate in academic classroom discussions; increasingly able to understand main ideas and some details presented orally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are fluent in social communication with English-speaking peers and adults, using a variety of communicative strategies participating in academic classroom discussions with growing confidence beginning to use vocabulary and sentence structures presented in academic work comprehending more detailed information on familiar topics presented orally.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasingly able to read a variety of familiar text forms for enjoyment and information; responding to text with scaffolds provided by the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> using a variety of reading strategies to comprehend grade-level reading, with consistent support and scaffolding selecting and reading a wide variety of simply structured text forms for pleasure and academic purposes.

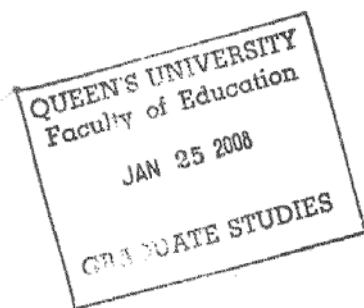
	Early Intermediate level (Stage 2 of Second-Language Acquisition)	Later Intermediate level (Stage 3 of Second-Language Acquisition)
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing the ability to write English for personal and academic purposes, using a variety of forms and a wider range of grammatical structures; beginning to revise their own work with teacher support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expanding their skills and confidence in writing; using expanded vocabulary; using a wider range of grammatical structures to express ideas and make connections.

	Early advanced level (Stages 3 - 4 of Second-Language Acquisition)	Later advanced level (Stage 4 of Second-Language Acquisition)
Listening and Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing fluency, accuracy, and confidence in using English in a wide variety of social and academic situations; able to comprehend most details and vocabulary on unfamiliar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a level of English fluency, accuracy, and confidence approximating that of English-speaking peers for most social and academic purposes; using and understanding grade-appropriate language structures and subject-specific vocabulary; understanding and responding appropriately to nuances of tone and inflection.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to comprehend a variety of grade-appropriate text forms for personal and academic purposes with increasing confidence and some support; increasingly able to recognize point of view and understand most cultural references and contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a level of reading comprehension approaching that of most English-speaking peers on a range of grade-appropriate texts; using a variety of grade-appropriate comprehension strategies and text features for personal and academic purposes; able to recognize point of view and understand most cultural references in context.
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a high level of competence in writing in English; independently using key vocabulary presented in academic classroom contexts; independently using basic age-appropriate grammatical structures to express sequence, causality, hypothesis, and connection – with minor errors; using a variety of forms for specific purposes and audiences; elaborating ideas and paraphrasing and summarizing information with increasing accuracy; self-editing with some effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a level of competence in English writing that approaches that of most English-speaking peers; using a range of grade-appropriate stylistic elements and organizational formats for a variety of personal and academic purposes; independently using a full range of age-appropriate grammatical structures to express sequence, causality, hypothesis, and connection – with few errors; writing and editing with an awareness of audience and nuance, reflecting a sense of their own writing voice; self-editing effectively.

APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM GREB

January 15, 2008

Carol A. Fox
Master's Student
Faculty of Education
Queen's University



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

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GREB Ref # GEDUC-375-08

Title: "Inclusion of ESL Learners in a Mainstream Classroom: A Case Study of the Beliefs and Practices of One Elementary Teacher"

Dear Carol Fox:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has given expedited approval to your proposal entitled "Inclusion of ESL Learners in a Mainstream Classroom: A Case Study of the Beliefs and Practices of One Elementary Teacher". In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been approved for one year contingent upon relevant school board approval. At the end of each year, GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, and the Faculty of Education unit E-REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this approval period (details available on our webpage: www.queensu.ca/vpr/greb/addforms.htm#Adverse). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be approved by the GREB. Examples of required approvals are: changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures that affect human subjects. These changes must be sent to Linda Frid at the Office of Research Services or FRIDL@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Ms. Frid will seek the approval of the GREB Chair and/or the reviewer(s) who originally assessed your application.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely

Lee Fabrigar, PhD

Associate Professor and
Member, General Research Ethics Board

LF/af

Copy: Malcolm Welch, Chair of E-REB
Lynda Colgan, Faculty Supervisor
Graduate Studies and Bureau of Research

think Research
think Queen's

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Inclusion of English Language Learners (ELLs) in a Mainstream Classroom: A Case Study of the Beliefs and Practices of One Elementary Teacher

I am writing to request your participation in research aimed at understanding about teaching ELLs in a mainstream classroom. Specifically, the purpose of my research is to learn about the ways in which ELLs are included in a mainstream classroom. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. This research has been approved by the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, the Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee, and the principal of your school.

In this study, I wish to describe your beliefs and practices regarding ESL learning and ELLs' inclusion in your mainstream classroom. To do this, I plan to interview you on five occasions (20 to 45 minutes per session) at your school (at your convenience) and observe you in your classroom four times (each approximately one hour in length). In addition to taking notes during each interview and classroom observation, I intend to audio tape all interviews. The notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file. The taped interviews will be transcribed, and then the tapes will be destroyed.

The study will be conducted over a period of two weeks. None of the data will contain your name, or the identity of your place of work. The place of work will be identified using general terms only. Data will be stored in a password protected computer in my home and paper copies of all data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. After five years of completing my thesis, all data will be destroyed. I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable, and you are assured that no information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You are free to withdraw from the study without reasons at any point. All data will then be destroyed.

This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Only my supervisor, two committee members and I will have access to the data. Your name will not be attached to any form of the data that you provide, neither will your name or the identity of your place of work be known to anyone analyzing the data, nor will these appear in any publication created as a result of this research. Although a pseudonym will replace your name on all data that you provide to protect your identity, it is possible that your colleagues may be able to deduce your identity from the thesis or any publication.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact the researcher, Carol Fox at 613-531-9562 or email fiona@kingston.net, or her supervisor, Dr. Lynda Colgan at 613-533-6000 ext. 77675 or Lynda.Colgan@queensu.ca. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Education Research Ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca, or the Chair of the Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Steve Leighton, 613- 533-6081, email chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Sincerely,

Carol Fox

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT

The information collected for this project is confidential and protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.

Researcher: Carol Fox
Study Title: Inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) in a Mainstream Classroom: A Case Study of the Beliefs and Practices of One Elementary Teacher

I agree to participate in the above named study, conducted by Carol Fox of the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.

I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that the purpose of the study is to describe the ways in which one elementary teacher includes ELLs in her mainstream classroom.

I understand that my participation will take the form of five interviews (to be audio-taped and transcribed) that will take approximately 20 to 45 minutes to complete and four classroom observations (approximately one hour each).

I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without negative consequences.

I understand that although confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible by appropriate storage and access of data and by the removal of my name from the data, it is possible that my colleagues may be able to deduce my identity from the thesis or any publication.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher, Carol Fox at 613-531-9562 or email fiona@kingston.net if I have any questions about this research study. I am also aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, 613-533-6210, or the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Steve Leighton, (613) 533-6081, email: chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____ Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

PLEASE SIGN ONE COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND RETURN TO CAROL FOX.
RETAIN THE SECOND COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview One

Background Information

1. Tell me about your past and present teaching experiences, especially those experiences that relate to teaching ELLs.
2. What professional development (course work, workshops etc.) have you received that relates to ESL learning and learners? Can you give me examples of things you have learned from these professional development sessions/courses that have been particularly helpful to you in working with ELLs?
3. Tell me about the demographics of your classroom now. (students' language/cultural/educational background, level of English etc.)
4. What do you find most rewarding about teaching ELLs?
5. What have been some of your challenges of including and teaching ELLs in your classroom?

General Information about Beliefs/Understandings Related to Teaching ELLs

6. Based on your experiences, what do you think are the most pressing needs of ELLs ?
7. How do you think ELLs best learn English?

General Information about Resources and Supports

8. What kinds of support and resources (human or other) have you found particularly helpful in your work with ELLs (e.g., parent volunteers, special materials etc.)?

General Information about Teaching Strategies

9. What strategies do you use to support and include ELLs in your classroom?
10. How did you learn about these strategies?

Interview Two

Maintenance of and Valuing Students' First/Home Languages and Cultures

1. How important do you think it is for ELLs to maintain their first language?
2. How do you show respect for and promote your students' first languages and cultures in your classroom?
3. What role do your ELLs' home languages play in your classroom?
4. How do you encourage your ELLs to share their linguistic/cultural knowledge, experiences, and interests?
5. How do you incorporate your students' home languages and cultural knowledge into your classroom program? Can you give some examples?

Interview Three

Parents and the Community

1. How do you get to know and communicate with the parents of your ELLs? Note the nature and frequency of the contact and the kind of communication (e.g., through translators, written translated notes, home visits).
What do you say to immigrant parents regarding the ways in which they can support their children's educational needs?
2. How do you encourage immigrant parents' involvement in your classroom? (How do they participate in your class?)
3. How do you involve the community in your classroom?
4. How do you tap into the cultural expertise or other expertise that parents and community members have and use this knowledge in your classroom? Can you think of a particularly memorable event when a parent or community member came into your classroom to share his/her expertise.

Interview Four

Teaching Strategies and Resources for Including ELLs

1. How do you welcome new ELLs entering your classroom?
2. What are some of the most effective strategies you use to support and include the ELLs in your classroom? Why do you think these strategies are particularly effective?
3. To what extent have your strategies/practices with ELLs changed through the years? How and why did you change?
4. How do you encourage your ELLs' participation in classroom activities? (How do you encourage your ELLs to talk about themselves – their thoughts/feelings, knowledge, experiences?)
5. Can you describe a memorable activity/project or time when your ELLs' achievements/talents were highlighted?
6. What resources (human or other) do you use to facilitate the inclusion of ELLs in your classroom? How did you learn about these resources?
7. What would you tell a new teacher at your school about ways to support and include ELLs?

APPENDIX F: A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE

Date: _____

Time: _____

Subject: _____

Lesson/Activity topic/literacy component: _____

	Description
<p>A. Classroom Context</p> <p>1. Arrangement of furniture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible/inflexible • Students' seating • Position of teacher's desk 	
<p>2. Bulletin board/wall displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of other languages • Visual representation of minority cultures 	
<p>3. Activity centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind of centres/activities • Teacher assigned/student choice • Materials/resources 	
<p>4. General resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of students' cultures (visual and written) shown in texts • Other cultural perspectives presented/achievements highlighted in texts • Teacher-prepared materials • Student products • Technology (tape recorders, computers, videos etc.) • Other 	
<p>5. Resources for ELLs</p> <p>a) Material Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual dictionaries • Pictures, picture books, magazines to cut from • Multicultural materials/artefacts 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual language books • Access to material resources <p>b) Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL services (ESL teacher, translation services, heritage language programs) • Bilingual aides/volunteer tutors/peer tutors • Access to teacher • Access to native English speakers • Access to individuals from same linguistic/cultural background • Parents and community role: teacher’s assistant, students’ tutor, guest speaker, translator/using students’ languages; sharing cultural knowledge/expertise 	
<p>6. Teacher resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books etc. related to ELLs’ teaching and learning 	
<p>B. Lesson/Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Group size (whole class, small groups, pairs, individual) • Teaching materials/ resources used • Kind of activity (hands-on, presentation, discussion, collaborative work etc.) • Activation of students’ knowledge of topic • Discussion of context of text and perspectives presented • Group formation (how are groups formed?) • Teacher’s role • Students’ roles • Ways of encouraging ELLs’ participation • Instructions (written, oral; step-by-step) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanations of new vocabulary • Teacher feedback/responses to ELLs • Specific accommodations for ELLs • Incorporation of ELLs' languages/cultural knowledge and experiences 	
<p><i>C. Other Matters</i></p> <p><i>1. Teacher's language</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind of language • Rephrasing, summarizing, repeating • Emphasis of key words 	
<p><i>2. Non-verbal communication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gestures (e.g., pointing, miming) • Facial expressions • Drawing • Use of pictures, graphic organizers, diagrams, blackboard etc. • Wait time 	
<p><i>3. Routines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations • Predictability • Involvement of ELLs in tasks 	

**APPENDIX G: SCHEDULE OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS AND
CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

Days and Time	Research Method
April 28, 2008	12:00-1:00 pm: Teacher Interview (See Appendix E Subheading: First Interview Questions)
April 30	1:30-2:30 pm: Classroom Observation 4:00-5:00 pm: Teacher Interview (See Appendix E Subheading: Second Interview Questions; additional questions were asked, arising from first interview and observations)
May 1	8:50-9:30 am: Made notes about classroom artefacts, general classroom arrangement 9:30-10:30 am: Classroom Observation 12:00-1:00 pm: Teacher Interview (See Appendix E Subheading: Third Interview Questions; additional questions were asked, arising from previous interviews and observations)
May 5	10:55-11:45 am: Classroom Observation 4:00-5:00 pm: Teacher Interview (See Appendix E Subheading: Fourth Interview Questions; additional questions were asked, arising from previous interviews and observations)
May 6	9:30-10:30 am: Classroom Observation 12:00-1:00 pm: Teacher Interview Wrap up: Teacher's additional reflections about her journey as a teacher; additional questions were asked, arising from previous interviews and observations