

English Language Learning Magazine

CONTACT

Special Research Symposium Issue



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- **TESL Ontario at Forty: LINC Challenges**
- **Challenges and Approaches
for Low Level Literacy Learners**
- **Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching**

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CONTACT

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EDITORS' NOTE

FOREWORD

This issue offers the refereed proceedings of the thirteenth Annual Research Symposium, part of the 40th Annual TESL Ontario Conference held in Toronto in October 2012. The three themes that provided the focus of the Research Symposium were as follows:

- TESL Ontario at Forty: LINC Challenges
- Challenges and Approaches for Low Level Literacy Learners
- Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

As in previous years, the three themes covered topical issues that affect the classrooms and practice of ESL professionals in varied ways. Teachers who encounter problems and challenges related to these themes on a daily basis in their classrooms look for background information and practical ideas that will help them meet their learners' needs and the needs of their own professional development. In organizing the Research Symposium around topical themes and in publishing the proceedings, TESL Ontario offers ESL professionals relevant information on recent research and new initiatives; this information informs both classroom practice and the development of the profession.

Following past practice, the different themes were selected in consultation with members of TESL Ontario. Symposium presenters were invited to submit a written version of their oral presentation after the Research Symposium. Selected reviewers commented on the manuscripts for final inclusion in the proceedings. Those papers included here offer readers theoretical, research and practical insights on pedagogical challenges that classroom teachers, administrators, and other ESL professionals deal with on an on-going basis as they endeavour to provide learners with optimal learning conditions. We are confident that readers will find the selected papers interesting and relevant to their teaching and professional development. We hope teachers and researchers will feel inspired by the ideas presented, and that teachers will launch their own inquiries into an aspect of their teaching context, then report their insights at future TESL Ontario conferences.

On behalf of TESL Ontario, we express our thanks to the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Canada) for supporting the Research Symposium and the publication of this special refereed issue of *Contact*. Their commitment to this important event for ESL professionals has been a source of encouragement and strength for TESL Ontario and its members for over a decade. We look forward to continued cooperation and support from the different ministries involved in language, immigration, settlement, education and training issues. We also wish to thank all the presenters who participated in the different topics of the Symposium for their dedication to their work and for sharing their expertise and insights. Without them, we could not have organized the Symposium and compiled these proceedings.

Finally, we thank the many individuals who contributed in one way or another to the success of the Research Symposium. We particularly wish to thank the editor of the *Contact* newsletter, Brett Reynolds, and TESL Ontario administrative, office and conference staff for supporting us in organizing and preparing the Research Symposium and for the opportunity to assemble this refereed Research Symposium issue of *Contact*. Without their continued support, our work would have been considerably more difficult and markedly less pleasant.

Hedy McGarrell

David Wood

Co-editors

INTRODUCTION

The Research Symposium and the ensuing refereed proceedings of contributions to the symposium have become an integral part of the annual TESL Ontario conference. The symposium at the 2012 TESL Ontario conference brought together researchers and language professionals who addressed one of the three topics that had been selected for inclusion. While some of the contributions present data from individual researchers' recent studies, others summarize areas of activity in areas that have become topical in ESL learning and teaching. The contributors link theoretical insights with practical issues in pedagogy and consider the implications to classroom practice. All three themes addressed at the 2012 Research Symposium are represented in these proceedings. They are grouped according to theme and, within each theme, presented to progress from more general or background-oriented papers to more narrowly focused or data-specific studies.

Theme 1 : TESL Ontario at Forty: LINC Challenges

Diane Larsen-Freeman's paper "On the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Second Language Acquisition Research" reviews researchers' attempts at developing indicators of evolving language proficiency in English language learners. In light of the numerous unsatisfactory outcomes of such attempts, Larsen-Freeman expresses apprehension about the Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks' (CCLB) apparent success in identifying 3 stages. Larsen-Freeman indicates how previous work in this area has enabled her to understand why identification of developmental indicators has, up to now, been unsuccessful.

The second paper on the LINC theme, "Employment Experiences of Novice ESL Teachers: A Case Study in Ontario", focuses on LINC teachers in the early stages of their career. Farahnaz Faez and Antonella Valeo report on part of a larger study concerned with the teacher preparation and experiences of novice ESL teachers. Exploration of their data

suggests a number of TESL graduates face difficulties finding employment and are at risk of abandoning the anticipated career path. Faez and Valeo present data gathered through interviews with 8 ESL teachers to explore their successes and challenges in finding employment in ESL teaching.

In the third paper, “Citizenship, Literacy and ESL: Two Recent Studies,” Douglas Fleming first critiques the citizenship content in the Canadian language Benchmarks (CLB) and then reflects how selected LINC teachers treated citizenship and literacy in their classrooms. Fleming concludes that independent and informed opinions about Canadian citizenship are accessible to learners at diverse levels of literacy and argues that learners need to opportunities to explore meaningful and active civic engagement regardless of their language proficiency.

Theme 2: Challenges and Approaches for Low Level Literacy Learners

Two of the papers on this Research Symposium topic were included. The first, Alister Cumming’s paper “What can Dynamic Assessment Reveal about Language and Literacy Abilities that Conventional Assessments do not?” reports results from long-term case studies of 21 adolescents from culturally-diverse backgrounds. Dynamic assessment approaches, complemented by conventional tests of writing, reading and vocabulary development, served to track the participants’ development of academic literacies over the period of one academic year.

Robert Kohls’ paper “Distinctive, identifiable, or original? Defining, assessing, and raising awareness about a writer’s voice” reviews multiple and often conflicting ways in which the concept of voice has been defined and assessed. The paper explores the concept from the perspectives of second language researchers and policy makers, then concludes with practical suggestions intended to help teachers raise their ESL students’ awareness about voice in reading and writing assignments.

Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

The third topic of the Research Symposium explored the rapidly evolving area of corpus work in ESL language teaching and learning. The first paper included in these proceedings, Hedy McGarrell’s “ESL Classroom Practices Informed by Research in Corpus Linguistics”, discusses examples of how corpus linguistics has been exploited to support language learning and teaching. Examples included relate to informing textbook and materials development, understanding differences between native and non-native English speakers’ written texts, and authentic language to guide ESL learners’ grammar and vocabulary development. The examples show that insights from corpus linguistics have considerable potential for classroom exploitation.

The second paper turns to instructional materials, more specifically, the vocabulary required for ESL students to succeed first year courses for Business and Engineering students. David Wood and Randy Appel examine the corpus-derived multiword functional units typically referred to as *lexical bundles* in selected, widely used textbooks. Their lists of lexical bundles based on these textbooks serve to draw attention to conventions of academic discourse and offer valuable insights for ESL teachers and materials designers working with the needs of learners in English for Academic Purposes programs.

We have enjoyed preparing this Special Research Symposium Issue for readers of *Contact*. To grow, members of the TESL profession need to continue to investigate research and teaching practice; this continual striving for more sophisticated research questions and teaching techniques allows them to meet the challenges encountered in their classrooms. We hope that the stimulating contributions contained in this issue of the referred proceedings of the 2012 Research Symposium will inspire teachers to experiment with a new methodology or new techniques in their classrooms.

Hedy McGarrell

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ON THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH

Diane Larsen-Freeman, University of Michigan

Abstract

I have known about Language for Immigrants and Newcomers to Canada and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) for years. I must say that I am filled with admiration, and a little envy, for the support offered newcomers to Canada and the efforts expended on helping them to enhance their English language proficiency. At the same time, I have been more skeptical about the apparent success with which the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB, 2012a) has been able to characterize 3 stages and 12 levels of proficiency. My skepticism stems from my own efforts years earlier to establish what has been called “An Index of Development,” or, in other words, a developmental yardstick of language proficiency. Others’ quests and my own to create one ended in frustration some time ago. I think I now understand better why we were not successful.

In this report, I will review the research literature on attempts at establishing developmental yardsticks in English, and I will suggest five characteristics of learners and learning that were not fully appreciated when such attempts to establish developmental yardsticks were made: intra- and inter-individual variability among learners, the non-linearity of the learning process, the non-telic nature of language learning, and the context dependency of learning, including its social nature.

As TESL Ontario celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and Language for Immigrants and Newcomers to Canada (LINC) its 20th, it is a fitting time to stop and reflect on the Canadian Language Benchmarks. I will do so by bringing to bear a second language acquisition (SLA) research perspective on the Benchmarks.¹

Before I begin my review of the research, I offer several caveats. First of all, I have known about LINC and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) for years. I must say that I

¹ Second language acquisition is the term that is widely used to refer not only to a numerical second language, but to the acquisition of an additional language. I myself prefer the term “second language/multilingual development,” in acknowledgement of the fact that any of our students are already bilingual or trilingual.

am filled with admiration, and a little envy, for the support offered newcomers to Canada and for the efforts expended on helping them to learn English. Readers may know that adult education in the U.S. is decentralized, and in these difficult financial times, many school districts have unhappily had to cut back on their funding for adult education, in some cases eliminating it entirely. Canada is to be congratulated for maintaining its support.

The second caveat is that I know several of the design team members, and I have full confidence in their intentions and competence. The CLB (I have just read the 2012 version) represent an enormous amount of thought and work. They are multi-purpose in that they offer standards “for describing and measuring, and recognizing the language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants in both English and French. They provide a common language for the entire immigrant-serving community” ([CCLB](#), 2006).

My final caveat relates to the observation that the Benchmarks are competency-based scales, yet some of what I discuss has to do with scales that approach the calibration of language proficiency rather differently.

What I intend to do is to comment on the explicit linking of the Benchmarks to second language learning. I will do so by discussing five characteristics of SLA, discussed in the research literature. The research supports a view of learning that is variable, both inter- and intra-individually, nonlinear, non-telic, and context dependent. To my mind, these dimensions present a challenge to the assertion that the CLB is “a framework of reference for learning...” ([CCLB](#), 2006)

Indeed, the way the CLB are depicted suggests to me that the CLB are to be used as an index of development:

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) standard is a descriptive scale of language ability in English as a Second Language (ESL) written as 12 benchmarks or reference points along a continuum from basic to advanced. The CLB standard reflects the progression of the knowledge and skills that underlie basic, intermediate and advanced ability among adult ESL learners. ([CCLB](#), 2012a, p. V)

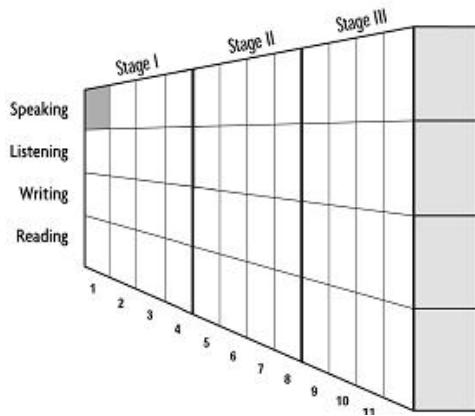


Figure 1. Stages and Skills of the Canadian Language Benchmarks ([CCLB](#), 2012b, p. 13)

However, efforts to construct such developmental indices have been fraught with difficulty.

On developmental indices

Since shortly after the birth of the field of second language acquisition (SLA), which most researchers date back to the early 1970s, there have been calls for means by which to gauge second language development, apart from the use of lengthy standardized proficiency tests, which serve other purposes. One purpose for such a developmental index would be to help adjudicate internal disputes. For example, in the early 1970s, there was disagreement among SLA researchers over how much influence a learner's native language had on the learner's process of acquiring a second language. A developmental index would have been a useful tool in order for researchers to establish and report the L2 developmental level of their research participants, beyond the customary practice of using vague terms, such as "intermediate." In this way, researchers could study comparable populations, or know when they were not.

Thus, in the 1970s, the absence of a suitable developmental yardstick was considered a serious impediment to SLA research. Its absence led to calls such as Hakuta's (1976) and Larsen-Freeman's (1976) for the construction of an SLA Index of Development. In a quest to operationalize such an index, Larsen-Freeman turned to Hunt's research (1970), which attempted to do the same for children learning to write in their native language, English. Hunt used the construct of a T-unit, or minimal terminal unit—basically an independent clause, accompanied by any associated dependent or embedded clauses. To illustrate, the following example consists of one sentence but two T-units: "She is a computer programmer who works hard all week, but she plays hard on weekends." Hunt chose T-unit length rather than sentence length because it was well known that children writing in their native language could and would write long sentences using coordination alone, stringing together independent clauses, often with the conjunction *and*. Their doing so would not be indicative of syntactic sophistication.

Following a series of studies (Larsen-Freeman & Strom, 1977; Larsen-Freeman, 1978; 1983), it was concluded that the average length of error-free T-units was an acceptable measure to distinguish among groups at different developmental levels, at least for groups of a certain size and at least for English as a second language. While adjacent groups of learners were not statistically significant one from another, non-adjacent groups were.

Many other studies, too numerous to mention here, took up the cause of constructing a developmental index. Some 15 years later, in perhaps the most comprehensive investigation (for measures of writing development), Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, and Kim (1998) concluded that for T-unit measures of fluency, the best measures appeared to be T-unit length and error-free T-unit length. The best accuracy measures were the ratio of error-free T-units to total T-units, and the number of errors per T-unit. The best measures of syntactic complexity were clauses per T-unit, the number of dependent clauses per T-unit, and the

number of verb phrases per T-unit. One of the problems with these measures, however, is that they were (for the most part) based on English, and written English at that. It was entirely conceivable that the native language of the learners would influence the outcomes, and what learners do was also likely to be affected by the nature of the task (Ortega, 2003).

Inter-individual variability

Another critical issue with such measures is that while they may work at the group level, they fail at the individual level. After all, the group level represents an average, an abstraction from the actual performance of any one learner. To this point, in a reanalysis of the Cancino, Rosansky, and Schumann's (1978) data on the developmental stages in the acquisition of English negation by six Spanish speakers of different ages, van Dijk, Verspoor, and Lowie (2011) observed that each of the six learners showed somewhat different patterns and that none of the learners followed the trajectory of the "average learner." They pointed out that

when using group averages, individual irregularities and differences get lost. In our illustration, the differences between the learners were large, both qualitatively (because the learning took place under highly dissimilar circumstances) and quantitatively (as expressed in the individual trajectories). Because of these differences, the use of a "group average development" presents a picture of development that does not characterize any of the individual learning processes. Thus, as an important first step, we have been able to show that an individual curve is quite different from a group curve. (p. 72)

Thus, even when learners are supposedly at the same level, homogeneous performance cannot be assumed.

One problem is that developmental indices often use language that is imprecise. For example, descriptors in the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2011) are worded as follows: With respect to writing, the A1 level (beginner): "Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type" (p. 110), "has a basic vocabulary repertoire or isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations" (p. 112), and "shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire, and can write simple isolated phrases and sentences" (p. 114). Such descriptors are rather subjective, and as pointed out by, for example, Jarvis, Grant, Bikowski, and Ferris (2003), not all learners of the same level behave the same. For instance, some learners may have more advanced vocabulary and others more advanced sentence construction (Verspoor, Schmid, & Xu, 2012).

Intra-individual variability

But, the variability does not only occur between and among learners. Siegler (2006) summarizes the main findings of 105 microgenetic studies which aim to analyze change by means of high density observation of learning individuals. Siegler's summary reveals that

within-subject variability in strategy use is substantial at all ages from infancy to adulthood, during all phases of learning and at every level of analysis. Such variability is acknowledged in the Benchmark documents:

Many learners may be adept at one skill but struggle in another so that progress is inconsistent across skills. (CCLB, 2012, p. X11)

Many ESL learners are at different benchmarks in the four language skills, and a learner's separate benchmarks are often in different benchmark stages. For example, an individual learner might be at Listening Benchmark 6, Speaking Benchmark 4, Reading Benchmark 7 and Writing Benchmark 5. (CCLB, 2012, p. X)

Nonlinearity: Progress and regress

A second important finding of the microgenetic studies, as reported by Siegler (2006), is that learners do not progress neatly in acquiring a skill or strategy, but may instead show periods of regress and progress. Indeed, in Larsen-Freeman's (2006a) study of five Chinese learners of English, the intra-individual variability is striking, in some cases where measures of individual learners' performance decreased over time, resulting in even lower performance scores at the end of the study than at the starting point months earlier.

To be fair, the CLB allows for intra-individuality, to some extent. The CLB documentation states that

Some learners may achieve a benchmark and then plateau indefinitely. Others may plateau for a period of time and then surge ahead. It is helpful to remember that there is ample room for lateral development and progress within a Benchmark. (CCLB, 2012, p. XII)

However, it appears that the Benchmarks do not discuss regress or variability of performance within a given skill, both of which are as much a part of the process as plateauing and progress.

On the non-telicity of the learning process

A further limitation of the Benchmarks, indeed all developmental indices to date, is that they are telic, meaning they define (or at least assume implicitly) an endpoint, typically an idealized native speaker target. The assumption underlying such a portrayal is that development is transitional and complete when learner performance is identical with native speaker competence. This assumption is, of course, fraught with problems, not the least of which is the ambiguity surrounding the construct of native speaker (Davies, 2003), the use of a monolingual target (Ortega, 2005), the idea that there exists a target at all (Larsen-Freeman, 2006b; Larsen-Freeman, forthcoming), etc.

As Herdina and Jessner (forthcoming) put it

...most researchers continue to apply monolingual norms, when conducting research on bi- and multilingualism, which means that, among other aspects, native-speaker language proficiency is still used as the yardstick for all the languages of the multilingual person and the multilingual subject and their languages can be investigated without taking all the languages in contact into consideration. (cf. e.g. de Angelis & Jessner 2012)

On contextual dependency

There is a reason for the pervasive variability of learner performance: People act differently in different situations. They behave differently depending on, among other things, how they are feeling and with whom they are interacting.

Even from moment to moment, a person performs a task differently as she or he adapts to variations in the situation, social context, or emotions of self and others. Indeed, when the data of cognitive developmental research is taken as a whole, variability in the level of psychological performance is the *norm*, not the exception. (Fischer and Bidell, 2006, p. 314)

Indeed, from the perspective of Complexity Theory, there is no norm from which individuals deviate. Learners are unendingly co-adapting to the context, including the social aspect of the context (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

However, the social dimension has been overlooked in developmental indices, despite the fact that it is well known that learners show “responsiveness to mediation” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 356). This means that what an individual is capable of with assistance at any one point in time, he or she [later] will be able to do without assistance (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Developmental indices are individually-based. They do not take into account the individual learner’s social situation and what type of assistance, if any, he or she is being offered.

On metaphors—ladders and webs

As Fischer and Bidell (2006) note, traditional static conceptions of development are closely related to the widespread cultural metaphor of a ladder.

Development is conceived as a simple linear process of moving from one formal structure to the next, like climbing the fixed steps of a ladder. It matters little whether the steps of the ladder are conceived as cross-domain stages, levels of a domain-specific competence, or points on a psychometrically based scale. In each case, the beginning point, sequence of steps, and endpoint of the developmental process are all linear and relatively fixed, forming a single ladder. With such a deterministic, reductionist metaphor, it

is difficult to represent the role of constructive activity or contextual support because there appears to be no choice of where to go from each step. (p. 319)

Fischer and Bidell (2006) suggest that a more dynamic metaphor for development, which includes variability as well as stability in development, is the constructive web.

The metaphor of a web is useful for dynamic models because it supports thinking about active skill construction in a variety of contexts and for diverse variations. Unlike the steps in a ladder, the strands in a web are not fixed in a determined order but are the *joint product* of the web builder's constructive activity and the supportive context in which it is built (like branches, leaves, or the corner of a wall, for a spider web). (p. 319)

Conclusion

In conclusion, learners chart their own individual developmental paths, complete with variability, progress, and regress. Their trajectories are non-telic and contextually/socially situated. Each path with all its variation may be quite different one from one another, even though at the group level these developmental paths may appear quite similar. One consequence of this is that generalizations about learning are elusive and not likely to hold regardless of individual differences. Some of the individual differences naturally follow from the fact that individuals tend to actively select and manipulate the contexts in which they function. In fact, it could be said that individuals not only determine what aspects of the outside world are relevant to them, but they actively construct a world around themselves and are constantly altering it. What social supports they include will affect their degree of success.

Thus, I have tried to make the case that an individual's learning is a variable, nonlinear, sometimes regressive, and context-dependent process. Learning is much more fluid and dynamic than any set of descriptors can capture. The Canadian Language Benchmarks serve many useful purposes. However, in my opinion, they do not reflect well these characteristics of the learning process. This is perhaps not important, given what they do accomplish. However, I would not want to lose sight of the learning process—nor have teachers do so. For teaching in a way that honors the characteristics of learning I have enumerated here requires a great deal of flexibility and creativity (Larsen-Freeman, forthcoming). But there is no alternative, for after all, teaching begins with learning.

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EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES OF NOVICE ESL TEACHERS

A case study in Ontario

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Abstract

The discipline of English as a second language (ESL) teaching and learning has seen numerous changes in the past decades in Ontario. These developments include the establishment of the nationally-recognized standards in teaching and programming through the Canadian Language Benchmarks and standards for accreditation of Language for Immigrants and Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and ESL instructors by TESL Ontario. While these are generally held as positive developments for both learners and teachers as well as the profession overall, there has been little examination of the experiences of ESL teachers in terms of their employment. Research suggests that despite the investment in TESL teacher education and professional development, novice accredited ESL teachers struggle to find and keep teaching positions in the discipline and some leave it entirely (Valeo & Faez, *in review*). In this paper, we explore this issue from the perspective of the novice ESL teacher in Ontario. Adopting a narrative inquiry approach, we asked eight accredited ESL teachers in their first three years of teaching to share their experiences and reflections as novice teachers navigating the job market. The findings highlighted a number of common concerns and experiences related to how well their TESL education prepared them for work and the working conditions that create barriers to novice ESL teachers looking for teaching positions.

In this paper, we report on a study concerned with the employment experiences of novice English-as-a-subsequent-language (ESL) teachers. Specifically, the goal of the study was to understand how individual teachers perceived their employment successes and challenges, and what, in their perspective, had an impact on their experiences. The study was motivated by findings from a broader research project which suggested that despite the considerable investment of time and financial resources, a number of teaching-English-as-a-subsequent-language (TESL) graduates struggled to find employment and were at risk of leaving the profession (see Valeo & Faez, 2012). While there are numerous studies

concerned with teacher attrition in K–12 (e.g., Borman & Dowling, 2008), there is far less research concerned with the attrition of language teachers in adult contexts, specifically research that addresses this issue from individual narratives. Narrative inquiry explores deeper understanding of specific aspects of individuals' life experiences (Clandinin, 2007) by using their stories or diaries (e.g., Lantolf & Genung, 2003; Norton, 2000) and hence has the potential to give voice to those individuals whose stories have been unnoticed (Creswell, 2008). In this paper, we draw attention to the issue of teacher attrition for language teachers of adults and highlight the value of the personal narrative as a way of understanding the employment experiences of novice ESL teachers. We will begin with a brief review of literature related to teacher attrition and an overview of the ESL teaching context in Ontario. We will then present the methodology and findings and discuss conclusions that may be drawn from this study and how it may contribute to furthering our understanding of the experiences of novice ESL teachers.

Novice teachers and teacher attrition

Much of the research on teacher attrition is anchored in the K-12 context. This research has shown that the early years of practice are a critical time for teachers; reports suggest that in North America 40–50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their career (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Maciejewski, 2007). The literature on attrition has highlighted several factors that may affect a teacher's decision to stay in or leave the profession. Prominent among them are teacher characteristics and qualifications, organizational characteristics and resources available at the school and student characteristics (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Language teacher attrition, particularly in the adult learner context, is poorly documented but widely acknowledged in the profession. However, the experiences and the preparation of novice teachers has been documented in language teacher education (see Faez & Valeo, 2012; Farrell, 2003, 2009, 2012) and the gap between pre-service and in-service teacher education has been noted as a main reason for teacher attrition in TESL (Farrell, 2012). In addition, well-prepared teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to succeed (Swanson, 2012). Those who do not receive sufficient support to survive their early years leave the profession altogether (Crookes 1997; Peacock, 2009). Others face working conditions that make it difficult to stay in the profession (Breshears, 2004).

Another factor that may play a role in language teacher attrition is the nature of the language teaching profession and the employment context. Across a range of second and foreign language teaching contexts internationally, language teaching has been characterized as fragmented and lacking a career structure that establishes a vocation as a profession (Maley, 1992). Unstable employment requires ESL teachers to hold multiple positions at low pay, maintain work outside the profession and change employers often, marginalizing language teachers and undermining professionalism (Breshears, 2004; Johnston, 1997). Similar conditions have been documented in the context of ESL teachers in Ontario (Sanaoui, 1997; TESL Ontario, 2011).

ESL Employment in Ontario

The literature has identified language teacher attrition as common across contexts. However, locally situated factors influence the employment prospects of language teachers and the degree to which they are likely to leave the profession in the early years. Upon graduating, newly accredited ESL teachers for adult learners in Ontario prepare to find work in a professional landscape characterized by diversity and complexity on a number of levels.

ESL programs in Ontario are offered through both the private and public sector. Private organizations charge tuition and tailor their programs to suit visiting students who spend anywhere between a couple of weeks up to a year to study English in Canada. Publicly funded programs are intended for adults immigrating to Canada and are funded by the provincial and federal governments to support settlement and integration of new immigrants. However, these distinctions are not clear-cut. Most of these institutions catering to visiting students are private language schools but some colleges and universities also offer tuition-based ESL programs and the nature of their programs is often unique to their institution. An understanding of these distinctions is important for new graduates because the two sectors also present different employment conditions. Public sector ESL teaching positions are often unionized and may offer higher salaries and benefits compared to private institutions. Government funding rather than market-driven funding may also provide for more full-time employment. However, for these reasons and others, there may be a lower rate of turnover in the public sector and therefore less opportunity for newly-accredited teachers in their first years of practice.

In addition to the public-private sector distinction, teachers need to be aware of the myriad of employers to whom they must direct their job search. Public sector adult ESL programs can be offered through a range of organizations including school boards, colleges, universities and other settlement institutions serving immigrants. Aside from different types of employers, there also exists a range of program types that may require teachers to adapt to specific learner needs and program requirements or simply different terminology. The largest program, which is funded by the federal government is Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) while provincially-funded programs are often known by the generic term ESL. Both levels of government also fund programs with more specific mandates, for example, Enhanced Language Training (ELT), designed for more proficient immigrants, and Occupation-Specific Language Training (OSLT), intended to support the integration of immigrants into the workforce. The same organization may offer one or more of these programs and working conditions, such as contract and pay, may differ within the institution. It is not surprising, then, that teachers find themselves having to learn how to navigate this landscape and being unable to do so has serious implications for their professional lives.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected through an online survey and follow-up interviews that had been designed for a broader study investigating the self-efficacy of novice ESL teachers in Ontario (see Faez & Valeo, 2012). Participants were recruited with the support of TESL Ontario by inviting members to respond to the survey. Participants were asked to self-identify as novice teachers by indicating that they had no more than three years of teaching experience since completing their TESL certificates and becoming accredited. A total of 147 teachers participated in the survey 66 volunteered for follow-up interviews. They were asked to respond to questions asking for demographic information and also to rate the degree to which they felt prepared to teach upon graduating from their TESL programs. On the basis of their responses to the question of preparedness, eight participants were selected for interviews. They represented teachers who responded along a range of preparedness on a scale of one to ten, from the most prepared to the least prepared. In the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to identify their major challenges as novice teachers, the kinds of support they received or would have liked to receive, how they wanted to further develop their teaching and how TESL programs could better address their needs as ESL teachers. Our intention was to follow up on the focus on teaching effectiveness and teacher development. Yet, a concern about employment was raised by teachers as they responded to the questions. In this paper, we explore the employment experiences of novice ESL teachers in Ontario through the personal narratives of eight ESL teachers who shared their experiences of looking for employment in the profession.

Findings

The demographic data provided a snapshot of the teachers who participated in the study. Table 1 includes aspects of their backgrounds and employment and following is a more detailed summary of the stories they shared in the interviews. The teachers are identified by pseudonyms.

Kate

Kate had completed a TESL certificate program three years prior to the study and immediately began working in a LINC centre. She recalled her surprise at being asked to start the day following her interview and being assigned immediately to teach an ESL literacy class. Expecting to job-shadow, she felt unprepared to step into a class and described her experience as follows:

So, I was called and asked to start the following day and I said but “I’m not starting teaching right? I’m not starting in on a class?” And they said, “No, no, you’ll shadow a teacher for the first week or this and that.” Well, I showed up and it was- “Here’s your class.” And it was literacy which I think... is probably the hardest level to teach. Yes, you have less students and in a way it’s less prep, but really it isn’t. Anyway, so I was thrown into this class and I had no idea what I was doing basically.

Table 1: Teachers' background information

Participant	Kate	Farin	Karen	Katrina	Elizabeth	Rita	Zack	Jack
Age	31-40	31-40	21-30	41-50	31-40	21-30	41-50	Over 50
Education	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in TESL (International)	Master's in Second Language Education (in progress)	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in Linguistics (International)	Master's degree
Employment Status	Full time ESL /LINC teacher 10 months a year; ESL teacher to visiting students in summer	Not employed; master's student obtaining masters of teaching (M.T) degree	Full time Master's student and part time ESL teacher at a College	Not employed but will start full time employment as a project manager	Part time ESL teacher	Not employed	Employed part time as a simultaneous interpreter	Not employed

She recalled that there was no support available to her whatsoever. Half a year later, the school closed and Kate started teaching LINC at a community centre. At the time of the interview Kate was still working at the same community centre and doing some part-time teaching at a college teaching ESL international students. She explained that the support available at the community centre was “totally different” from her initial experience. At this centre they had collaborative planning meetings in which “teachers shared resources and ideas” and laid out their monthly plan. Kate was pleased with the level of support and collegiality at this centre and stated that, “that’s why I know how to teach now.”

Farin

Farin had obtained a Master's degree in TESL/TEFL and a TESL Certificate in Iran before immigrating to Canada in 2009. With over ten years of experience teaching ESL/EFL to adults in Iran, Farin was confident about her teaching abilities. She felt that even though “what is expected from a teacher in Canada” and roles and responsibilities of a teacher were quite different from her past experience, her prior experience was an asset and that she had certain strengths as a non-native English speaking teacher. She felt that she could anticipate student needs and tailor her teaching to suit them.

I had no idea about this. I discovered that it [non-native speaking status] could be my strength...I'm not a native speaker, so being a non-native speaker, I found it very easy to, let's say, anticipate what my learners needs are...so whenever I'm planning a lesson, or even when I'm not planning a lesson, then things happen in the class, I can tell you that, 95% my anticipation is right. So I can relate my teaching to their needs.

After becoming accredited to teach in Ontario, she began her job search by applying to numerous institutions in search of a position teaching ESL specifically in a publicly funded ESL or LINC program. Unable to find the position she wanted, Farin accepted short assignments in private language schools before deciding to pursue a Master's of Teaching (MT) program to broaden her job prospects, prepared however, to leave the MT program if "I could secure myself a full-time position [in ESL]." Farin noted that there was little support available to new teachers who were expected to be fully prepared to teach in adult ESL classrooms. When asked about the support available to new teachers, Farin replied:

That's a good question to ask. Teaching English, this is my personal experience, teaching English here in Canada, as a professional, you are expected to do everything from day first [one]. So you would not get much support or no support at all. You should know [everything]. That's why you're there to be paid. So if you don't know, then maybe you're not the best person. It's very competitive.

Farin would have liked to have been able to observe more classrooms and learn from observing effective teachers. She also felt that she wanted to work with a mentor with whom she could exchange ideas and discuss her lesson plans. She felt that TESL programs had a responsibility to prepare teachers for the reality of the job market and provide a comprehensive overview of job prospects that would face new graduates, including a familiarization with the variety of teaching contexts available, such as LINC, ESL, occupation specific language programs and other programs.

Karen

After completing a TESL certificate program, Karen began teaching ESL at a college part-time and, at the same time, enrolled in a Master's program in second language education. She believed that she had been successful in finding employment teaching ESL after graduation because she had taught abroad for two years before she started her TESL certificate program. She felt she was able to "relate to a lot of the classroom theories and everything that teachers were talking about where people who hadn't taught previous to the TESL program couldn't really relate to a lot of things". She was actively involved in and taking advantage of professional development opportunities available to her. She described how she constantly tried to improve her teaching:

I continue to look for feedback and I always talk to my coworkers, if I can get anyone to observe me once in a while. I always talk to my coworkers and run by my more experienced coworkers, run by my lesson plans with them. And that's the great support because they know what works or what doesn't work or if you are missing something...They always suggest more things you

can do and they'll provide you with the resources too, a lot of times, which is wonderful.

Karen related how she was open to trying new approaches to teaching and to suggestions from her co-workers, peers and students. She shared teaching resources and ideas with colleagues which she referred to as the “meeting of minds”. She also varied her teaching style and approaches so that she and her students would not get bored.

I always try to be more adaptable and open to trying new things. So I always learn from my coworkers, I learn from my peers. I always find about what they're doing. And they always tell me too. They always ask me about what I'm doing. And yeah it's great it's really about that meeting of minds. It's just being open and being adaptable, visiting workshops and looking online for resources, looking in libraries for books. I ask the students actually, I do that a lot too, I ask students what's it that they need and then I try to combine that with what I have to achieve them. And I always tend to do things differently because I also get bored with doing the same thing. So I guess I'm always open to professional workshops, learning new things, learning from my coworkers.

Katrina

Katrina obtained her TESL certificate six months prior to the study as part of a “mid-life career” change for her. She had previously worked in project management and corporate training and was not employed at the time of the study but volunteering one night a week in a conversation class. Once she had obtained her TESL certificate she realized that it is difficult to keep up with the “time commitment” required to prepare for each class and became frustrated that “salaries are quite low”, even in positions considered to be higher paying than others. She also realized that ESL teachers in Ontario need to hold a number of part-time positions and that she would have to find a second job in order to survive financially. She describes her first experience as follows:

It was a LINC position at a college. And because of the relationship with my manager and the hiring manager, they were willing to waive the two-year experience [required for teaching at a college] but it [the salary] was only \$50,000 a year. That's a pretty good salary in the ESL world. I think it was 5.5 or 6 hours a day so 30 hours a week. But again, in order for me to have done that I would have had to have gotten a second job.

Katrina had decided to go back to her previous occupation and take up a position as a project manager at a financial institution a month following the study. She commented that since the TESL certificate was designed for adult education, it helped her obtain a position as a corporate trainer.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth had completed her TESL certificate program a year prior to the study. At the time of the study she was employed part time at a community centre serving newcomers and had spent some time supply teaching in a school board adult ESL program. She had also volunteered as part of a welcome team for immigrant students prior to obtaining her part time ESL teaching position. She believed she had particular strengths as a teacher that had helped her find her first position. She was confident about her teaching abilities, able to identify and meet student needs, organized, and very patient. She also felt she was extremely sensitive to issues that newcomers face and felt that she could address their needs well. She described how these qualities might have contributed to her employment success.

I thrive in the lower level literacy. People who have just come off the airplane, who are new to Canada, who are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, who are depressed, who are lonely and who can't speak the language...Give them to me because I know how to be with them. I know how to interact with them, I know how to encourage them and I know how to communicate with them even though communication is very limited.

She also felt that novice teachers can benefit from more workshops focusing on real classroom experiences, more volunteering experiences and help with teaching students in multilevel classrooms.

Rita

Rita had completed her TESL certificate program on a part time basis two years prior to the study. She had looked for positions teaching ESL but since her graduation in 2009, her experience had been limited to "very little supply work. I supplied a couple of times". She stated that her greatest challenge as a novice teacher was "finding places to go to, finding work, finding centres". She stated that even finding volunteer positions was difficult. Also, the variety of organizations and funding sources that offered ESL and LINC programs were confusing to her. She believed that since she completed her TESL program on a part time basis she had less opportunity to network in the field and get to know various placement opportunities. In fact, she mentioned that in her particular TESL program, she had to find her own practicum placement, which she "was very disappointed about". In terms of support for novice teachers, she would welcome the opportunity to network in the field and find out about the myriad of ESL programs which seemed quite overwhelming to her.

It would be nice, I think, if there were more opportunities to network and meet people and actually speak with them and be able to actually talk to them about opportunities that are coming up in their centres.

At the time of the interview, she had moved to British Columbia to start a new career. She was not planning to pursue teaching ESL anymore and was seeking new job prospects.

Zak

Zak was internationally educated with a Master's degree in linguistics from Iraq before completing a full time TESL Certificate program at one of Ontario's colleges a year prior to the study. He had been seeking employment for over a year at the time of the study and described how the major challenge facing him as a novice teacher was to "find an appropriate job that suits his potentials and education". He summarized his situation as follows:

I don't have linguistic challenges, I don't have training challenges, and I don't have, like, the enthusiasm challenge, or the devotion for teaching [challenge] because it's already there. I just needed someone to believe in me and give me a chance.

There was extreme frustration in his voice when he explained how he had applied to numerous positions and in the end he had no success in finding any form of employment teaching ESL:

When you keep on applying and tweaking your resume for every job, and then you should write a separate cover letter for every job that you apply for and then nobody answers you or they give you negative answers and the worst is when you get interviewed and then they say, 'sorry' for some reason, either the government is not funding, or they're cutting money, they're cutting jobs or the worst when they have someone specific in mind and they want that person in particular, and this entire thing is a hoax. That's what kills you from inside.

Zak stated that only four of the eighteen candidates in his cohort had found some form of employment teaching ESL and all four were part-time positions. He was pessimistic about opportunities finding a suitable position in the field and indicated that he regretted investing time and money completing a TESL certificate program:

Frankly, I started regretting doing the TESL course, I started regretting paying all this money, because it went out of my pocket. And I paid...over 4 thousand, almost 5 thousand for the tuition fees and I did it full time, so for 5 months I was going to school and I was paying rent. My rent is \$1,000 and I had to pay for the books and everything. It cost me over \$15,000 to \$20,000. What for? I paid it out of my pocket and this lost money is not coming back. I started regretting, frankly speaking, and I am opening my heart to you right now.

In terms of support for novice teachers, Zak believed that TESL programs should provide an orientation to the job market in ESL. He referred to this form of support as "after sale services." He indicated that once the TESL program is complete novice teachers are left on their own to navigate the various employment pathways. If given the opportunity to teach

as an ESL teacher, he would welcome the support of a mentor who could provide him with “professional guidance.”

Jack

Jack held a master’s degree completed in Canada and had obtained a TESL certificate three years prior to the study. Other than limited opportunity to tutor students in his own home during the three years after his graduation, he had not been able to find any type of ESL teaching position. When asked about his major challenge as a novice teacher, he indicated that, “getting the opportunity to teach was the first and major thing.” He indicated that he realized only after completing his TESL program that there was very limited opportunity to find positions within the Toronto area but that there were perhaps more opportunities, if he were mobile and willing to move to more remote areas, a move he could not make:

There was limited opportunity in the GTA [Greater Toronto Area] because of the large number of graduates from previous years of this course and other courses. There were a lot more extended opportunities if you travelled, like, if you went off to the Maritimes or the west you’d be fine. [But] I was not in the position to move or to travel. So I did put out resumes to various faculties of education and to various organizations. I was involved at the time with an employment program but nothing turned up at all. Not a lick of response so my experience with working, after that period [obtaining TESL certificate], in terms of teaching, I did tutor a high school student, a Korean, two years in a row.

Jack was a relatively older teacher and his education experience had been at a time when more traditional approaches were prevalent. He felt that he appreciated a structured approach to teaching ESL in which he could systematically go through a standard curriculum. He also felt ill-equipped to navigate the internet and “access and identify resources” so he felt that he would rather use ESL text books to compensate for the lack of a standard curriculum available.

I’m more oriented to a more classical approach to schooling so that would give me a far more sense of confidence moving forward. [I would prefer if] I knew where I stood and where I was going with them...I would probably try to systematically go through a certain publisher to compensate for that lack of standard curriculum.

Jack also felt that he lacked the required cultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills needed to teach ESL in Ontario. He stated that, “I would probably like to develop a little more understanding in going across cultures, with the students, understanding where they’re coming from, their outlook.”

Discussion

The teachers who shared their experiences came from a range of backgrounds. They ranged in age from mid-twenties to over 50 years old. Half had earned graduate degrees, two of whom had done so before immigrating to Canada. At the time of the study, only one of the eight had acquired full-time work, two had part-time positions, two were pursuing a graduate degree, two were unemployed and two were employed outside the profession. Despite this diversity, they voiced similar concerns and described common experiences with regards to their employment prospects and employment-related support.

The findings in this study confirmed what has been noted before in the literature in terms of the impact of working conditions (Breshears, 2004). Kate was the only graduate who had obtained full-time employment, yet as a full time LINC teacher she was teaching five hours a day for 25 hours a week, which constitutes full-time work but the pay is only for those hours she teaches, unlike other professions in which full-time work is compensated for 35–40 hours per week. Farin's lack of success in finding employment in ESL, had led her to pursue a second professional graduate degree to teach in elementary and secondary schools, in hopes of better job prospects and more stable positions. Karen was also pursuing a graduate degree in second language education but she was employed part time as an ESL teacher at a college. Karen believed that her two-year experience teaching ESL abroad had contributed to her success in finding employment after graduation, while Farin's 10-year experience as an ESL teacher in Iran, had not helped her in the same way. Elizabeth seemed to be content with her part time ESL position and believed that her confidence and skills had helped her obtain her position. She shared her passion for working with newcomers. Realizing that ESL positions in Ontario are mostly part time and salaries are relatively low compared to other professions, Katrina was about to accept a position outside the field of ESL. Rita, Zak, and Jack had not been able to obtain any form of employment in ESL despite their strong desire to do so. Rita moved to British Columbia in the hopes of changing careers in a new context. Zack continued working part time as a simultaneous interpreter, a part-time position he held prior to obtaining his TESL certificate. Jack was tutoring occasionally.

The support provided to novice ESL teachers was raised as an issue by the participants in this study, consistent with previous research and literature (e.g., Farrell, 2012). The voices of participants showed similarities with regards to the support available to them. Kate who was teaching full time in a LINC classroom found it difficult to transition from the role of teacher candidate to classroom teacher with full responsibility. She had expected scaffolding and support rather than immediately taking on a class. She had not expected to teach a literacy class, which she believed required special skills to teach and for which she had no experience. Despite her more extensive teaching experience, Farin also described how little support was offered to new teachers, including a chance to work with a mentor to exchange ideas and lesson plans, to observe more classes and learn from models. Like Farin, Karen described how she valued the input of others, yet it appeared that Karen

had learnt how to be proactive about the support she required, constantly seeking input from colleagues and approaching them to observe their classrooms and share resources. Karen had access to this kind of support and exchange of ideas after being employed where Farin valued it but did not have access to move forward. It seemed that the first position was the key to further success—the chance to try it out. Kate was the only teacher who had benefitted from the support and collegiality in one of her teaching assignments at a community centre. The regular collaborative planning that ESL teachers had to participate in frequently had contributed to her ongoing professional development as an ESL teacher.

Some of the teachers also commented on the mismatch or inadequacy of their TESL preparation to meet the demands of specific classroom contexts and the impact it had on their employment prospects. Kate found she was not prepared for her first assignment, teaching ESL literacy. Elizabeth, who had found two part-time positions, also talked about the benefits of exposure to different types of classrooms as the variability in the range of ESL offerings (ESL, LINC, ESL literacy, ELT, OSLT) can be quite overwhelming to new teachers.

Another common frustration was related to the nature of the employment landscape in Ontario. The teachers confirmed the issues discussed by Johnston (1997) in EFL and Breshears (2004) in ESL contexts. Teachers need to understand the complexity of the professional context in order to navigate the market, find and maintain their place in it. Elizabeth found part-time work with two different employers, and volunteered occasionally. She described how teachers might benefit from a practicum that helps them connect with the field. Rita, in her twenties, completed her program part time and found little work, not knowing where to find the work, lacking knowledge of the network, and frustrated by having to find her own placement during the program. Like others, she called for more opportunity to liaise with others and eventually left the field. Zak too noted the lack of support in terms of knowing how to navigate employment and hoped for a mentor, which he would only have access to when employed.

Conclusion and Implications

In this paper, we examined the personal stories of eight novice ESL teachers to learn how individual teachers perceived their employment challenges and successes. The findings drew attention to a number of issues. The teachers in this study found themselves confronted by a varied and complex employment landscape and, whether successful or not in their job search, appeared unprepared for the realities they would face looking for work in the profession. Although prepared with basic teaching skills, it appeared that their TESL program had not adequately prepared them to become employed teachers. The teachers expressed a need for more information about what to expect and how to conduct an effective job search. In addition, their experiences suggested that support in the transition from pre-service to in-service and the early years of teaching is crucial. These findings have implications for TESL program providers who bear some responsibility for the success of their graduates and the ways in which they contribute to the profession of ESL teacher

preparation. Rather than playing a role in the production of ESL teachers, they are in a position to contribute to the profession by supporting the success of their graduates.

The stories of the participants in this study also highlighted the human cost that can be neglected in discussions of employment that may focus on market driven statistics. It is apparent that finding appropriate employment is a crucial factor contributing to individuals' social, financial, physical and emotional well-being. While the teachers in this study entered their programs excited and eager to teach, some found themselves faced with a job market that appeared to undervalue their skills. The lack of opportunity did not connect with their professional hopes and aspirations. The findings point to a responsibility on the part of program developers and researchers to draw on the voices of teachers when examining ESL teacher education to raise visibility of the more complex issues that play a role in the success of novice teachers.

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CITIZENSHIP, LITERACY, AND ESL

Two Recent Studies

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Abstract

This article reports two studies. The first is a critique of the citizenship content found within the 2000 and 2012 versions of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)*. The second is an examination of how a sample of veteran LINC teachers in Ontario and British Columbia treated citizenship and literacy. Through an examination of how these teachers developed an emphasis on justice-orientated citizenship and critical literacy over the course of their careers, I make the case that second language educators should avoid the temptation to automatically link citizenship education to higher levels of English language proficiency. Despite what I believe is implied within both versions of the *CLB*, these teachers demonstrate that it is possible to assist learners at any level of English language proficiency in the development of independent and informed opinions about Canadian citizenship that utilise critical notions of literacy. I argue that to deny opportunities to explore meaningful and active civic engagement on the basis of language proficiency is to do great disservice not only to our learners, but also to Canada as a whole.

Too often, in my opinion, curricular documents pertaining to English as a Second Language (ESL) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) do not treat the topic of citizenship at the basic levels of English language and literacy proficiency. A prime example of this is the *Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)*.

Not long ago, I reported a qualitative case study that shed light on how a sample of adult ESL learners within a LINC program were constructing new national identities in the context of the challenges associated with immigration (Fleming, 2010). Specifically, this study examined the conceptions of Canadian citizenship expressed by working-class Punjabi-speakers living in a Vancouver suburb and attending evening ESL classes provided by the local public school district. Based on results from an earlier questionnaire study of a broader sampling of 114 ESL learners at the site, a set of preliminary questions were created and used in in-depth interviews with 25 participants. After preliminary questions focusing on the context of their immigrant experiences, the participants were polled on the way in which they defined citizenship. Space here does not allow a more detailed overview of the

data pertaining to this earlier study in which I traced how the common threads among their conceptions of citizenship compared to those embedded within official, national assessment and curriculum documents related to the CLB. My research revealed significant gaps between the experiences of these immigrants and what is implied in these documents. While these students conceptualized citizenship in terms of multiculturalism, civic rights, and a respect for legal responsibilities, I argued that the CLB constructed what might be considered infantilised conceptions of second language learners. As noted below, with the exception of a couple of trivial examples, citizenship was treated, if at all, only at the very highest levels of English language proficiency. I made this argument on the basis of an analysis of the 2000 version of the CLB (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000). As briefly outlined below, although the 2012 version of the CLB (Hajer & Kaskens, 2012) is an improvement, it seems that this fundamental weaknesses in regards to citizenship still exists in the new document.

In this article, I look more closely at what I consider to be positive alternatives by reporting a second study I recently conducted that asked veteran LINC teachers in Ontario and BC whether or not their treatment of citizenship and literacy changed over the course of their careers. Although I do draw below upon my earlier study in order to highlight some of the needs learners have in terms of citizenship education, what needs to be emphasized here is that the findings from this second study indicate how concrete classroom methods can link the skill-based literacy needs of learners to a justice orientation towards citizenship as outlined below. I argue that second language educators should avoid the temptation to automatically link citizenship education too closely to higher levels of English language proficiency.

This paper first reiterates my critique of the 2000 version of the CLB (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000) from my first study, and adds a few remarks in reference to the 2012 version (Hajer & Kaskens, 2012). It then presents a summary of the theoretical frameworks for the second study: the notions of justice-orientated citizenship and critical literacy. This is followed by an outline of the methodology and findings related to this second study. I conclude with a discussion of the implications for teaching practice.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000

The Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Adults (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000) was an attempt to define English language proficiency, arranged in 12 levels, from beginner to full fluency. As Norton Pierce and Stewart (1997) noted, the policy initiatives that gave rise to this document were framed around the need to develop a systematic and seamless set of English language training opportunities out of the myriad of federal and provincial programs that existed previously.

The bulk of the content found in both the 2000 and 2012 versions of the CLB was arranged for each level in a series of matrixes that correspond to the four language skills. Each benchmark (or level) contains a general overview of the tasks to be performed upon

completion of the level, the conditions under which this performance should take place, a more specific description of what a learner is expected to do, and examples and criteria that indicate that the task performance has been successful. These are complex matrixes, as one might expect from a document attempting to describe how an English language learner's abilities evolve from basic competency to high proficiency.

In the entire 2000 document there were only three references to tasks or competencies that could be said to be broadly associated with citizenship. These were "understand rights and responsibilities of client, customer, patient and student" (p. 95); "indicate knowledge of laws, rights, etc." (p. 116); and "write a letter to express an opinion as a citizen" (p. 176). Unfortunately, these competencies are not elaborated upon further, and so remain rather vague and incomplete. It was disappointing to see such a small number of references to citizenship in such an important document. In many ways, in fact, it was very revealing to note what was missing, especially in terms of how language is connected to exercising citizenship. For example, the word *vote* did not appear in the document.

In addition, the document represented (through admission and omission) good citizens as obedient workers. This can be seen in the fact that issues related to trade unions and collective agreements were given next to no attention in the document. References to labour rights, such as filing grievances or recognizing and reporting dangerous working conditions, were nonexistent. Employment standards legislation is covered in a singular vague reference to knowing about the existence of minimum wage legislation. The 2000 CLB had no references to other aspects of standards of employment legislation, workers compensation, employment insurance, or safety in the workplace. At the same time, however, a lot of space in the document was devoted to participating in job performance reviews, giving polite and respectful feedback to one's employer, and participating in meetings about trivial issues, such as lunchroom cleanliness.

The document did represent language learners as having rights and responsibilities. However, these were almost exclusively related to being good consumers. Learners were to understand their rights and responsibilities as a "client, customer, patient and student" (p. 95), but not as a worker, family member, participant in community activities, or advocate. As I have discussed elsewhere on the basis of empirical evidence taken from a LINC site (Fleming, 2010), adult English language learners enrolled in programs informed by the CLB often complain about consistently having been denied overtime pay, access to benefits, being forced to work statutory holidays, or being fired without cause. It was also disconcerting to note the limitations placed on the few references to citizenship noted above and the manner in which they were often couched. Only one of the three instances noted above (writing a letter) provided a view of citizenship as active engagement (albeit fairly limited). The other two were decidedly individualistic, vague, passive and abstract. No content linked citizenship to collective action or group identity.

What was even more significant was the way in which forms of exercising citizenship were connected to levels of English language proficiency. All three of the above competencies

that referred to citizenship occurred at the very highest benchmark levels, at the point at which one is writing research papers at universities. In this way, the document implied that opinions not expressed in English had little value and that voting not informed by a high level of proficiency is an activity that did not warrant much engagement. Quite frankly, one is reminded of the ways in which voting rights have been denied in other jurisdictions on the basis of low levels of education.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks 2012

The new version of the CLB (Hajer & Kaskens, 2012) is the result of an extensive series of processes designed to establish the validity and reliability of descriptors included within the document. Comparisons were first made with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2011), the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012), and the *L'Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français des personnes immigrantes adultes* (Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, 2006). The document was then subjected to field validation and checked against the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Education Research Association, 1999).

In contrast to the introduction found within the 2000 version, the new version is more forthright about claims that it is designed to be “a national standard for planning curricula for language instruction in a variety of contexts” (Hajer & Kaskens, 2012, p.v). However, the document still claims not to endorse a specific instructional method. In my estimation, this is somewhat disingenuous since the new version, like the previous one, exhibits many hallmarks of the communicative approach, including task-based exemplars and an explicit endorsement of Bachman’s model of communicative language ability (1990). In my estimation, much of my critique of the 2000 version of the document from a language-testing standpoint (Fleming, 2008) still holds.

I have argued elsewhere (Fleming, 2010) that exemplar tasks within assessment and curriculum documents in this context should be scrutinized carefully since they contain and represent privileged orientations that influence how teachers approach the treatment of curriculum content. Content that is held up as exemplars in such documents is privileged in the sense that it encourages particular orientations towards themes and discourages others. My purpose here is to outline a critique specifically of the citizenship content found with the new version of the CLB. The exemplar tasks that deal with citizenship represent privileged content that a teacher or curriculum writer is encouraged to reproduce and elaborate upon. These tasks are not devoid of ideology.

Although the focus on consumer rights is as dominant within the new version of the CLB as it was in the old, there has been the significant addition of content that refers to labour rights. Benchmark 5, for example, contains an exemplary task that requires an understanding of employment standards legislation (Hajer & Kaskens, 2012, p.89). Within benchmark 7 there is reference to pedagogical tasks in which one “participate[s] in a union meeting to

discuss workload, wages and working conditions” (p.57). These are marked improvements for which the authors should be commended. As I argued previously, this aspect of civil rights was central to the concerns of the ESL learners I interviewed in my 2010 study.

However, it appears there are still problems within the new version of the CLB in terms of citizenship rights. By way of illustration, it is helpful to examine the use of the word *vote*, which is of pivotal importance when discussing notions of citizenship. As mentioned above, the word did not occur in the 2000 version, but voting is mentioned twice in the new document. One of these references is within the exemplar task in which a learner is expected to “listen to an all-candidates’ debate during an election campaign to analyze and evaluate arguments presented by each candidate and determine which candidate to vote for” (Hajer & Kaskens, 2012, p.35). The other reference to voting is almost identical in content and appears on the same page. This is an improvement over the previous version of the CLB, which contained (as mentioned above) no reference to voting at all. Unfortunately, both of these references in the new version of the CLB are found in the listening framework at benchmark 12, the highest in the document. In my estimation, my previously expressed complaint that the document links citizenship rights to high levels of English language proficiency still holds. This is a disappointment to me, since this implies that citizenship rights are tasks that can only be fully realized once one is at the level of writing graduate level assignments, another exemplar task found within level 12. In the following, I turn to a discussion of the second of my two studies by outlining the first of my two theoretical frameworks.

Justice-Orientated Citizenship

As I have argued elsewhere (Fleming, 2008), citizenship has historically been a common component in Canadian ESL programming. As Crick (2007) makes clear, debates about how to define citizenship are still central in the academic literature. These debates have also found a central place in the research literature pertaining to Canadian English as a Second Language (ESL) provision (Derwing, 1992; Derwing & Thomson, 2005). They are increasingly marked by nuanced treatment of how being a citizen can be actively taken up as a participatory role, rather than as a passive status simply conferred by a nation state (Kennedy, 2007). In fact, Lankshear and Knobel (1997) make the case that meaningful citizenship education can only take place within second language and literacy education when teachers deliberately adopt justice-orientated paradigms. This leads to the question of what such an orientation would look like.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have argued that education for citizenship should encourage students to become critical citizens who explore the causes of social problems in order to work for substantial societal change. Within their framework, three different types of roles are possible as part of one’s civic identity: the *personally responsible citizen*, the *participatory citizen* and the *justice-orientated citizen*. The personally responsible citizen is honest, self-disciplined and hard working. A citizen with this type of orientation may contribute time or money to charitable causes and do such things as volunteering at a food bank over a

holiday period. Voting is the quintessential activity that this form of citizenship takes. The second form of citizenship, the participatory citizen, is distinguished by the attributes of the first type, but is more involved and has a greater understanding of the inner workings of government and civic institutions. This citizen organizes charitable activities such as food banks and develops relationships that feature common understandings and commitments. A citizen with this type of orientation might seek political office for the purposes of making a contribution to existing institutions and traditions in uncritical ways. The third form of citizenship, the justice-orientated citizen, has the attributes of the other two, but has also developed a critical understanding of civic institutions and overall societal contexts. This type of citizen seeks fundamental change that addresses social inequality and redress in the context of pressing current issues but does not limit his or her activities to voting. Instead, citizens of this sort work to connect a critical analysis of pressing social issues to collective social action. As Westheimer and Kahne (2004) put it, justice-orientated citizens “critically assess social, political and economic structures and explore strategies for change that address root causes of problems” (p. 29).

Critical Literacy

Street (1984) points out that literacy is more than a simple set of skills centred on coding and decoding text. Rather, it is a form of social practice in which multiple forms of text are negotiated and critically examined through explorations of the relationships between language practice, power relations and identity. In general, Papen (2005) has noted that it is important to understand how literacy is practiced within everyday life beyond the institutional restraints of school and work. Literacy practice takes place at the personal level in the home, family, and community. In addition, a critical examination of contemporary literacy practice must also take into account the enormous change and variability exhibited by the emerging globalized and digital age (New London Group, 1996). At the level of concrete practice, Dionne (2010) recommends that teachers follow a set of guidelines originally formulated by the literacy theorist Lenski (2008):

- examine the representation of various groups in the text,
- understand that texts offer a particular view of the world,
- analyze the methods used to transmit the message,
- take into consideration the power of the language used by the author,
- read the text from different perspectives,
- encourage students to take a stand on the author’s statements,
- provide students with the opportunity to consider and clarify their own points of view, and
- provide students with the opportunity to take social action.

In recent years, the influence of critical literacy theory has been felt within second language education literature. Morgan and Ramanathan (2005), for example, recommend that ESL

teachers should adopt a critical orientation towards literacy and “advocate a pluralized notion of literacies and multiliteracies [in order] to help students negotiate a broader range of text-types and modes of persuasion, not only via print, but also sound, images, gestures, spaces, and their multimodal integration” (p. 152). Others within this literature note that pluralized notions of literacy should be viewed as being “socially and historically constructed within particular relations of power” (Norton, 2008, p. 49) and that the ultimate goal of looking at literacy in this way is to enhance learner empowerment (Pennycook, 2007).

Methodology

The research question guiding the overall study was “how do veteran ESL and literacy teachers understand the purposes of ESL and literacy education”. The University of Ottawa’s Ethical Review Board approved the ethical protocols for the study. The eight participants were recommended to me by the supervising managers of two large public-school continuing-education departments in Canada. One was in Ontario, the other in British Columbia. Each administrator was asked to identify four long-serving instructors who were or had recently been employed in both ESL and literacy adult programs in their respective departments. In the interests of clarity, I have outlined each participant’s work experience in my findings section below. Participants’ experience and attitude towards citizenship education are summarized in appendices 1 and 2.

Semi-structured interviews were the only method of data collection. Each participant was interviewed once, for an average of an hour to an hour and a half, at a place and a time of their convenience. Informed consent prior to these interviews was obtained from participants after they had been supplied with a statement that outlined the purposes of the research and contained a copy of the interview prompts that were to be used. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face (in the case of the Ontarian participants), or over the telephone (in the case of the participants in British Columbia).

Although an initial start list of questions was utilized (see below), the interviews were conducted informally. The participants were first asked to describe the highlights of their careers and then encouraged to provide definitions of ESL and literacy. The interviews then focused on what the participants believed to be the overall purposes of these forms of education. Finally, the participants were asked about how their understandings changed over time and encouraged to provide concrete examples from their teaching, particularly in how their instructional experiences were shaped by their conceptions of citizenship. The start questions were:

- Please tell me about your career path.
- Why did you go into continuing education?
- How did you get your training?
- Can you tell me about some of your most memorable moments teaching?
- What kind of challenges have you had as a teacher?

- How would you define ESL acquisition?
- How would define literacy acquisition?
- What, in your opinion, are the purposes of ESL instruction?
- How would you define citizenship?
- What role does citizenship play in your instruction?
- What, in your opinion, are the purposes of literacy instruction?

The interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. Coding was subsequently conducted through the use of NVivo Qualitative Research (QSR, 2012) software. Coding was conducted in terms of identifying emerging themes and patterns that were related to demographic information, training, teaching experiences, career paths, opinions as to the purposes of ESL and literacy instruction and conceptualizations of citizenship.

Findings

In the subsections below, I provide quotes from the interviews for each of the eight respondents to support the claims I make in regards to my findings.

First Participant

My first interview was with a long-time literacy practitioner who at the time of this study was serving in an executive capacity for one of the largest provincial literacy organizations in the country. This practitioner had been involved in ESL and literacy education for over 15 years as a teacher, program director and curriculum writer.

This participant noted that a recently published research report (Ontario Literacy Coalition, 2007) identified serious confusion and overlap in the knowledge base related to the fields of ESL and literacy education around definitions and terminology. As the participant stressed, the confusion associated with this overlap is not new. She, in fact, remembered discussing these issues at the beginning of her career. She stressed the need to make distinctions between these types of programs.

This respondent noted that the confusion related to the overlap between ESL and literacy has had serious practical implications in terms of how citizenship is treated. Although “citizenship is extremely important” in both ESL and literacy education, she felt that one should tailor-make curriculum and programming appropriately for the two fields. Learners born in Canada and immersed in the predominant culture have different citizenship education needs than those born elsewhere. She argued that clear definitions could streamline how citizenship is treated in both fields, stressing “we have to make a lot more connections between different kinds of programs and citizenship”.

For this participant, justice-orientated citizenship lay at the core of literacy education. As she put it:

This is what the value of literacy is. It is about citizenship. It is about how you get involved, how you understand what your community is, what it is as a citizen, what you are entitled to, what you should be giving back and the whole concept of citizenship at large.

Moreover, according to this participant, learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds need to be shown that their desires for social change were “legitimate”. In terms of Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) framework, this teacher strongly endorsed a justice-orientated notion of citizenship and a critical orientation towards literacy as a form of social practice along the lines recommended by Street (1984).

Second Participant

The second participant taught elementary school for six years before entering adult ESL and literacy education. She then taught employability skills at the community-college level before taking on a supervisory role in literacy programs at the school board. She had several decades’ worth of experience in literacy programs. At the time of our interview she was concluding her fifth year in a program designed to assist foreign trained professions gain the credentials needed to access the Canadian labour market.

This participant corroborated many of the things my first respondent noted, especially in terms of the importance of making a differentiation between the needs of ESL and literacy learners. She mentioned that when she was first employed at the school district, “we were fortunate because there was a distinction between literacy and ESL.” This meant that literacy students could be streamed into classes that more effectively met their needs.

In connection to this, this participant had specific ideas about the links between literacy and citizenship. She noted that for many students who lack literacy skills, issues related to citizenship are “really foreign to their personal lives. [Citizenship] is something they haven’t considered because they are in a day-to-day struggle, so they don’t see things from other perspectives and what their role or responsibility is as a Canadian.” This participant thus noted that the economic pressures on these learners and their limited access to more sophisticated forms of media give them a restricted sense of the overall forces at play in society. By implication, then, she noted that limits to literacy are limitations on citizenship.

The participant stressed that literacy education must not be limited to reading and writing skills, but must also engage learners in an awareness of what happens in society. As she put it, “it’s a consciousness raising kind of thing.” The participant stressed that this would mean, for example, that teachers must find specific ways to discuss voting rights in the classroom through the context of the concrete issues affecting one’s learners and their community. This participant thus closely linked critical forms of literacy to justice-orientated forms of citizenship. Similarly to the first participant in this study, then, this teacher strongly endorsed a justice-orientated notion of citizenship and a critical orientation towards literacy (Street, 1984) in terms of Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) framework.

Third Participant

Although the third respondent had been trained as an ESL teacher, most of her twenty years of work experience in programs was as a supervisor of joint ESL/literacy programs. As part of her duties, she was conducting a multitude of training workshops for instructors. She noted that in her estimation second language literacy learners do not simply lack graphic language skills. They also quite commonly have limited vocabulary and an incomplete command of syntax in the target language. In addition, these learners lack an understanding of the culture of the surrounding social environment. Literacy learners whose first language is English, on the other hand, usually possess a command of common vocabulary and have few problems understanding anything that an interlocutor says to them. Significantly, these other learners identify themselves as belonging to the surrounding culture. For these reasons, this participant believed that it was important to cover citizenship explicitly for the foreign-born learners in her classes.

Although this participant conceptualized literacy as being more than a set of decoding skills, she did not stress critical notions related to the interrogation of the underlying assumptions inherent within texts. Significantly, in terms of my focus here, she did not emphasize justice-orientated forms of citizenship.

Fourth Participant

The fourth participant in this study had over ten years teaching experience in both ESL and literacy education. In addition, at the time of the interview she had worked for five years as an editor of a national magazine that focused on literacy. This participant started her career as a volunteer tutor in the school district's ESL program and only gradually moved into literacy education through a pilot program designed to strengthen the writing skills of second language learners. Her employment became permanent when that pilot was expanded into a full-scale literacy program.

This participant told me that many beginning ESL classes typically focused on broadly-based notions of literacy because of the needs of particular learners, noting that many immigrants from poorer backgrounds or warzones often have had limited experience in formal classroom situations. Literacy could not be conceptualized in these circumstances simply in terms of skills. She provided me with an example, from the start of her teaching career, of a class that was designed to develop the oral English skills of Gambian immigrants. As their teacher, she found that her students lacked the ability to attend to classroom tasks, goals setting, cognitive restructuring and self-evaluation. This participant felt that she could turn to skill-based instruction only after her students had "learned how to learn" in a classroom setting.

The participant made the link between literacy and citizenship explicit by noting that literacy helps one clarify

how you feel about yourself as a part of this community and a part of this place, it is about the stuff that happens around the learning to read. As people learn to read, they start to analyze class and privilege. One of the things that people do in literacy programs is they start to make connections.

In ways that were similar to the first and second participants, this fourth participant strongly endorsed a justice-orientated notion of citizenship and a critical orientation towards literacy.

Fifth Participant

The fifth participant had taught extensively in both the ESL and literary components of her school district's Continuing Education Program before becoming its administrator. She had earned a Master in Curriculum Studies and was working on her doctorate at the time of the interview. She emphasized that an ESL classroom is "a very complex classroom environment to teach in" because one is not only dealing with the nuts and bolts of the English language [but also with the] very really needs the students have in terms of settlement, day to day life, frustrations and struggles." Given the diversity of needs of the learners in these classrooms, covering literacy involves helping them with such basic skills as the physical mechanics of writing as well as deciphering the messages contained within advanced technological media.

For this participant, dealing with citizenship meant helping learners make an "inquiry into the culture being of Canadian and what it means to be a Canadian." In her program, as she expressed it, "we most certainly do not limit ourselves to teaching to a citizenship test that focuses on such objective facts as the names of provincial capitals or the date of Confederation." Rather, teachers should interweave principles related to "participatory citizenship into everything they do," so as to help students who are becoming Canadian and "attempting to navigate in our culture and sort of juggling their own culture at the same time." In terms of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework, this teacher endorsed a participatory notion of citizenship. Although it might not be termed fully critical in the way in which Street (1984) uses the term, this teacher showed an orientation that went beyond a skill-based notion of literacy.

Sixth Participant

The sixth participant started her career 34 years prior to the interview as a high school teacher in Kuwait where she taught grades 11 and 12 English. At the time of the interview, she had lived and taught adult ESL in Canada for eleven years. One thing that this respondent stressed was the extreme variability of the learners that the teachers in her setting faced in their classes. There were "a lot of challenges [because] the needs [of these students] were quite different." This meant that teachers in this context have "to have different preparations for different students." For some students, "holding a pen or pencil was pretty challenging." Others "could read perfectly well but needed conversation skills."

Literacy programs, like the one in which this participant taught, were designed for students who “didn’t really get the kind of education they needed.” As a result, these students needed a “place where they could come and have a safe learning environment.” Thus, literacy teachers had to spend considerable time paying attention to the special needs of these learners and avoid developing curricula in which language was rigidly defined or linear. Such classes had to be flexible both in terms of content and delivery.

Part of this participant’s mandate was to prepare students for the multiple choice citizenship tests that featured the set of normative “facts” that the fifth participant described. However, in a similar fashion, this sixth participant stressed the need to go beyond these tests in order to develop students’ own thinking about what it means to be Canadian. This participant gave a multitude of examples from her classrooms in which she organized debates and mock elections.

Just prior to the interview, this participant and her colleagues delivered a month-long unit plan that involved the entire school, from the lowest to the highest levels in terms of English language proficiency. In preparation, these teachers had to select and adapt material that was suitable linguistically and thematically. They had to design activities that, while providing citizenship information didactically, also allowed for the maximum amount of discussion and debate around the issues that the learners wanted to engage in. In addition, these teachers invited local candidates for a forthcoming provincial election to speak to the student body and then organized an election for the school’s student council that featured debates on local issues of real pertinence. Most of the learners who participated in this activity were at the very basic levels of English language proficiency. These activities used mock election material supplied by Elections Canada, involved a multitude of local civic leaders from various points of view, and explored issues of real and burning concern within the local community. Issues included the need for expanded health services, the lack of workplace safety inspections, and the importance of addressing domestic and drug-related violence.

As this teacher explained, the overall purpose of this unit was to help students make independent and informed judgments about issues related to the local community and to Canada as a whole. In essence, these learners were exploring the meaning of:

Being a good person, being a good citizen, and being a role model for others and bringing in the compassion and the generosity to help others, the vision for future... You need to have basic knowledge of what it is you are looking into, what the country needs... a good citizen would be a person who is doing his or her best for the betterment of humanity.

In terms of Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) framework, this teacher appears to endorse a participatory notion of citizenship that is close to being justice-orientated. Again, although it might not be termed critical in Street’s (1984) definition, this teacher had an orientation that clearly went beyond skill-based notions of literacy.

Seventh Participant

The seventh participant had been teaching full time in an ESL program for about four years at the time of the interview. Previously she had taught part-time in a literacy program for the same school district and been a teachers' aide in a local elementary school for about eight years. When asked whether there is a skill component to literacy, this teacher strongly emphasized that "it is more than that." She indicated that literacy instruction does have a skill-based dimension, but that there is a second level that "is like trying to invent a third language" in which students learn self-confidence and autonomy. As this teacher expressed it, "confidence, yes, because if learners feel they are less competent... they cannot articulate their rights and needs". This teacher showed an orientation that went beyond a skill-based notion of literacy and clearly linked this to a justice-orientated notion of citizenship.

Eighth Participant

My eighth participant had been teaching in literacy and ESL programs for 21 years at the time of the interview. The class that she taught was specifically designed to meet the needs of learners who were at the basic levels of English language proficiency and/or literacy skills. Most of her students had no prior knowledge of English. Some spoke English as their first language but were not proficient in the mechanics of writing; others had very few literacy skills in their first or second languages.

This teacher noted that the multiple needs of her particular students led her to focus her class content on writing skills. As she put it, she was "making [her] lessons more towards formal practicable skills that they can immediately use: life skills". This is because the literacy students in her class either had not or would not "do well in the regular school system or have dropped out for one reason or another" and needed more practical and less abstract content in their classes.

It is important to note that this teacher also took her class to the school's computer lab once a week for the express purpose of exposing her students to different modes of writing. She assigned basic readings and writing tasks that made systematic use of Internet and word processing technology. Thus, although it could be argued that she had a skill-based notion of literacy, she encouraged the development of these skills in multimodal directions.

This teacher placed considerable emphasis on teaching the factual content of the Canadian citizenship test discussed above by the fifth participant and, in fact, taught a special half-hour class most mornings that focused on memorizing the answers to the multiple-choice questions that constituted that test. Nonetheless, this teacher participated fully in the activities described above by the sixth respondent, activities that were designed to inculcate a participatory orientation towards citizenship.

Given the needs of her particular students, this teacher had adopted what she felt by necessity was a skill-based definition of literacy. However, her classroom practice included activities that were designed to expand the skills of her students into technologically based

modes of expression. In addition, her classroom practice, by virtue of her involvement in the school activities around elections described above, also emphasized a participatory orientation towards citizenship. At first glance, this teacher could be characterized as having imposed limits to how both literacy and citizenship were treated in her classroom. However, I think it important to emphasize that this teacher believed that these limits were a function of the basic proficiency and skill levels of her students. She did not believe that these were universal or static limits.

Conclusion: Implications for Practice

To summarize, half of the participants in this study (1, 2, 4, 7) endorsed justice-orientated versions of citizenship and critical orientations towards literacy. They also made strong links between the two. Two respondents (5, 6) endorsed participatory notions of citizenship and adopted positions that went well beyond skill-based orientations towards literacy. One respondent (3), while conceiving of literacy as being more than a set of decoding skills, did not emphasize participatory or justice-orientated forms of citizenship. Another participant (8) had a skill-based definition of literacy and a “fact-based” notion of citizenship. Nonetheless, this teacher conducted multimodal literacy activities and was involved in school participatory citizenship education projects.

As I have noted above, citizenship has been a common programming component historically in ESL education. The majority of the veteran teachers who participated in this study believe that justice-orientated citizenship and critical notions of literacy can be utilized even at the most basic levels of English-language proficiency. Although the teachers in this study might not have explicitly referred to the theoretical models espoused by such theorists as Westheimer and Kahne (2004), the majority adopted very similar curricular orientations to the ones these academics recommend. There is no need, as the two versions of the CLB do, to link citizenship to high levels of English language proficiency. As the veteran teachers in this study understood, citizenship education does not have to consist of rote learning of a static set of facts in preparation for a test.

In the concrete example given by the sixth participant above, citizenship education can be treated at a very basic level of English language proficiency. The issues that were dealt with in the activities this teacher and her colleagues led, as noted above, were important and concrete to the learners in the program under study. As this teacher explained, this collaborative activity involved elaborate and creative planning, especially in terms of language scaffolding and the adaptation of teaching material. However, despite this extra work, these activities were highly rewarding because they assisted learners in the development of independent and informed opinions about concrete issues that were at once local, provincial and national. This was accomplished regardless of the level of English language proficiency of the learners in question.

To deny learners opportunities to explore meaningful and active civic engagement on the basis of their English language proficiency is to do great disservice not only to them,

but also to Canada. Most of the second-language adult learners will not reach the point at which they will write graduate papers, as is described in level 12 of the CLB. Instead, learners have been engaged with notions of active citizenship and a commiserate treatment of critical literacy skills long before they leave their classrooms. Quite frankly, I believe that Canada does not need immigrant learners whose understanding of citizenship is confined to the rote memorization of provincial capitals or blind obedience to local power structures. Canada needs newcomers who utilize critical literacy skills (both traditional and digital) to engage in justice-orientated forms of citizenship. In this way, the nation moves forward.

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Appendices

Table 1: Ontario-based Participants

Participant	1	2	3	4
Experience	15yrs+ as a teacher, program supervisor, curriculum writer and director of a literacy organization.	6yrs elementary teaching experience; 20yrs+ adult literacy, ESL teaching and supervisory experience.	20yrs+ years as teacher, professional development trainer and supervisor in joint ESL/literacy programs.	10yrs+ experience in both ESL and literacy education; 5yrs+ as editor of a national literacy magazine; 5yrs+ as volunteer community tutor.
Attitude towards citizenship education	Explicitly stated justice-oriented notion of citizenship that was linked to a critical orientation towards literacy.	An implicit justice-oriented notion of citizenship and a critical orientation towards literacy.	Although conceived of literacy as more than a set of decoding skills, did not stress critical notions or justice-oriented forms of citizenship.	Explicitly stated justice-oriented notion of citizenship that was linked to a critical orientation towards literacy.

Table 2: British Columbia-based Participants

Participant	5	6	7	8
Experience	10yrs+ ESL and literary teaching experience; 6yrs+ in a supervisory role.	21yrs teaching high school and 11yrs+ in adult ESL and literacy.	8yrs+ as ESL and literacy teacher's aide and 4yrs+ as an ESL teacher.	21yrs+ in adult ESL and literacy.
Attitude towards citizenship education	Endorsed a participatory notion of citizenship and an orientation that went beyond skill-based definitions of literacy.	Participatory notion of citizenship that came very close to being justice-oriented; a definition of literacy that went clearly beyond skill-based notions.	An orientation towards literacy that went beyond skill-based notions; clearly linked this to a justice-oriented notion of citizenship.	Although defined literacy as skills and citizenship as factual knowledge, engaged in activities that stressed participatory citizenship and multimodal forms of literacy.

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WHAT CAN DYNAMIC ASSESSMENTS AND CONVENTIONAL TESTS REVEAL ABOUT LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ABILITIES?

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Abstract

Dynamic assessment proposes that students' developmental trajectories appear when they are exercised through interactions with teachers or tutors who build appropriately on and extend individuals' learning potentials in ways that are not possible in conventional, individually-administered tests of reading and writing skills or questionnaires. I describe results from long-term case studies of 21 adolescents from culturally diverse backgrounds who participated in an after-school, community-based tutoring program at an economically impoverished housing complex in downtown Toronto. The approaches to dynamic assessment adopted for the tutoring revealed crucial factors, contexts, and challenges that either promoted or constrained the development of the adolescents' academic literacies in this distinctly multicultural context: support from educators, community groups, families, and peers; approaches to pedagogy that engaged learners' zones of proximal development in humanistic and purposeful ways; promoting students' strategies for self-regulation of their vocabulary, reading, writing, and learning practices; and fostering attitudes and orientations to literacy that engage students in epistemic purposes for using literacy to expand their knowledge, capitalize on multi-media resources, and bolster their self-confidence. The findings from dynamic assessments complemented and amplified results from conventional tests of reading, writing, and vocabulary administered at the beginning and end of the 2008–2009 school year.

Assessments can take many forms and serve various purposes. Standardized tests can provide useful information for purposes of certifying people's abilities, for example, for high-stakes decisions within educational or societal systems—such as completion of secondary school, admissions to university programs, or immigration—by identifying how one person's abilities in a language and/or literacy compares normatively to the proficiency

of other learners of a language (Cumming, 2008). But many researchers have demonstrated that an over-emphasis in educational activities on tasks from standardized tests can lead teachers and students alike to reduce the complexity and diversity of language and literacy abilities to simple, rehearsed performances on minimal, routine tasks (Hillocks, 2002; McCarthey, 2008). This tendency can be especially problematic for populations of learners whose language and literacy experiences and skills are limited: Excessive emphasis on practicing for standardized tests denies such students the opportunities to practice and acquire not only a broad range of language and literacy skills but also to focus on those abilities that are most directly related to their individual learning needs and trajectories.

Dynamic assessment proposes for educational purposes a wholly different conceptualization of assessment (from normative, standardized tests)—based on the present performance of individual students, anticipation of their future potential for development, and the fundamental, ongoing integration of teaching, learning, and communication experiences. Adopting Feuerstein, Rand, and Tynders' (1988) principles for dynamic assessment, numerous language educators have recently argued that dynamic assessment unifies teaching and learning practices together to promote individual students' development in a second language effectively, systematically, and with justification from sociocultural theories of language learning (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008; Leung, 2007; Poehner, 2008; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). Various case studies have analyzed teachers interacting with students to promote their individual development of language and literacy abilities progressively by pitching assessments directly at students' "zones of proximal development" or their immediate and sequential needs for support, scaffolding, and learning of literacy tasks following from their current performance and knowledge as well as prospects for future development and independent functioning (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000; Moll, 1989; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Smagorinsky, 1977).

Purpose, Context, and Approach

The purpose of the present article is to show how both approaches—dynamic assessment and standardized tests—complemented each other to provide fundamental but different insights into the language and literacy development of 21 adolescent learners from culturally-diverse, economically-poor backgrounds struggling with their literacy achievement. The context of the research was an after-school tutoring and mentoring program, Pathways to Education Canada, whose successes in increasing school achievement in Regent Park, a housing project in central Toronto, Rowen (2012) and Rowen and Gosine (2006) have documented in detail. The research described in the present article involved one year of inquiry with 21 students in grades 9 and 10 who were judged (by the coordinator of the after-school tutoring program) to be "at risk" for their literacy achievement. The students came from exceptionally diverse cultural backgrounds, including various parts of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, and ranging from recent to long-term immigrants as well as second or third generation Canadians.

Theme 2: Challenges and Approaches for Low Level Literacy Learners

As documented in detail in Cumming (2012), the aim of the research was to identify the factors, challenges, and contexts that contributed to and constrained these students' achievements of English language and literacy abilities over the school year. We conducted the research in conjunction with parallel projects in similar, culturally diverse school settings in the socio-economically comparable cities of Amsterdam and Geneva. Our rationale was that understanding was limited about which educational policies make a difference in literacy development among low-achieving adolescent students, particularly in culturally diverse urban settings internationally, compared to the bulk of prior research on literacy that had focused on young children or adults or had surveyed secondary school students nationally or province-wide rather than locally. Results from prior studies convinced us that we had to conceptualize and assess adolescent students' literacy broadly to include not only individual skills but also community, family, educational, socio-economic, identity, and developmental factors and processes (Dressman, Wilder, & Connor, 2005; Franzak, 2006; Harklau, 2007; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Johannessen & McCann, 2009; Jun, Ramirez, & Cumming, 2010; Yi, 2010).

Together with colleagues in Amsterdam and Geneva we developed and validated standardized tests of reading and writing (across the three languages, English, Dutch, and French) and of English vocabulary and morphology. Items in the tests of reading followed the model of retrieving, interpreting, and reflecting from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys (as documented by our colleagues in Amsterdam in Steensel, Gelderen, & Oostdam, 2012). The tests of writing involved argumentative and narrative-completion tasks rated with uniquely designed, primary-trait scoring methods (i.e., specifying criteria for rating the fulfillment of the writing tasks, unique to each task and topic, cf. Lloyd-Jones, 1977). The tests of English vocabulary were adopted from tests of age-appropriate, normative vocabularies among school-age students in southern Ontario by Biemiller (2005) and Biemiller and Slonim (2001). The tests of English morphology were adopted from Singson, Mahony, and Mann (2000) and Ramirez (2009). These assessments were administered, in counterbalanced sequences, near the start of the 2008 school year then again about six months later near the end of the same school year in 2009.

Over the same six-month period of the 2008–2009 school year, seven PhD students from OISE, all experienced language and literacy educators from culturally diverse backgrounds internationally (Mohammed Al-Alawi, Won Seung Jun, Robert Kohls, Mario López-Gopar, Gloria Ramirez, Yuko Watanabe, and Jennifer Shade Wilson), met either individually or in small groups with the 21 adolescents at least one evening per week for tutoring at Pathways to Education in Regent Park. The tutoring focused on the development of literacy skills related to the perceived needs of individual students and tutors as established jointly by them—rather than the tutors assisting with homework tasks ad hoc, as was usually the

practice at Pathways, nor following any specified pedagogical approach to tutoring. Instead, the tutoring followed principles of dynamic assessment, based on establishing common needs and goals for individual literacy development then practicing reading, writing, and/or vocabulary tasks sequenced to be personally relevant to each student's development and to their achieving these goals progressively. Each tutor kept weekly logs of their activities, compared and discussed these together at biweekly meetings of the research team, and then composed detailed case studies of one student each who they considered they knew best. Abbreviated versions of these case studies appear in Cumming (2012, pp. 151–203) and were analyzed in Cumming (2012, pp. 87-101 & 118-132).

Findings from Standardized Tests

Overall, the 21 students made improvements of about 10% in their scores on each of the formal tests between the start and end of the school year. This rate of achievement is what might be expected from adolescents participating in ordinary school activities. For the reading tests, achievements related to but did not correspond neatly to the comprehension skills of retrieving, interpreting, and reflecting defined by PISA (as shown by Steensel, Gelderen, & Oostdam, 2012, for the larger cohort of students in the Netherlands). For the writing assessments, improvements were particularly evident in the traits of format, persuasion, and voice in the argumentative writing task, perhaps because of instruction on these elements during tutoring or school activities. The grade 9 and 10 students' knowledge of English vocabulary proved to be remarkably low (mainly at levels appropriate to grades 2, 4, and 6) at the start of the school year. Their scores on the vocabulary tests improved over the school year, notably as they acquired the more frequent words at lower grade levels first, verifying the normative, age-appropriate levels, and incremental sequences of vocabulary knowledge proposed by Biemiller and Slobin, (2001). The students' vocabulary knowledge likewise correlated directly to their reading comprehension. One student who had been tutored extensively on English morphology (e.g., word analyses, affixes) made distinct improvements on the morphology test over the school year.

Findings from Dynamic Assessments

We analyzed the findings from the seven detailed case studies (each composed by an OISE student who had tutored an individual student) involving dynamic assessments in two ways. The first approach involved charting the developmental trajectories of individual students, documenting their usual practices for reading and writing, their family, school, and mentoring situations, and the pedagogical tasks and learning activities that most effectively served as a basis for their literacy development during tutoring over the school year. Like much prior research, these case studies revealed great differences between individuals but also demonstrated how tutors had modeled, jointly constructed, scaffolded, negotiated, practiced, and then faded out for independent performance various strategies for writing, reading, and vocabulary acquisition (Gibbons, 2002; Graham & Perin, 2007; Olson & Land, 2007).

Theme 2: Challenges and Approaches for Low Level Literacy Learners

The second approach to analysis involved identifying common factors across the case studies that facilitated or constrained the students' development of English language and literacy abilities. The first set of these factors involved the students' ongoing processes of socialization. The students experienced ongoing tensions between individual self-development, peer pressures, and group solidarity. Most (but not all) students came from multilingual homes, but their reading and writing practices were predominantly in English, evidencing a lack of practice using multilingual literacies as resources or to develop for future purposes. Immediate and extended family—particularly parents, siblings, and aunts or uncles—were mostly supportive but also posed challenges for some students whose family life was less than optimal. Participation in community groups—such as Kiwanas, YMCA, religious groups, or sports clubs—were supportive for most students. All of the students articulated distinct future career aspirations, which may guide their academic “resilience” to overcome systemic challenges (cf. Kirsch et al., 2002). Racial or intercultural conflicts marginalized some students but also provided them self-awareness and group membership.

The second set of factors concerned the students' literacy and learning. The students had exceptionally high self-regard and confidence about their academic potential but also low to medium expectations about their literacy abilities. They rated themselves as competent in reading and writing for school purposes, but at the same time they were all individually aware of weaknesses in and needs to improve their academic literacy, particularly knowledge of academic vocabulary, reading demanding texts, and composing formal papers. As the tutoring progressed, the students all adopted strategic approaches to learning and analyzing unknown vocabulary, to monitoring their comprehension while reading, and to planning, drafting, and checking their writing tasks. A striking individual difference among the students was in their interests and engagement in reading and writing. All of the students read and wrote daily to maintain social relations (e.g., text messaging friends and family) and to find information from school assignments, short newspaper or magazine articles about popular culture, or TV or movie schedules. In contrast, only a few of the students engaged in reading and writing purposefully and extensively to acquire and extend their knowledge of the world (cf., Bereiter, 2002 or Guthrie, 2004; e.g., one student who read and wrote concertedly about airlines, planes, and aeronautics in preparation for a career in the airline industry).

The third set of factors concerned the students' educational and tutoring experiences. The students had differing perceptions of and prior experiences with teachers. Some students could point toward a teacher or two that had assisted them individually, but most had surprisingly few, limited experiences of interacting intently with teachers or other adults that took a direct interest in their literacy development. Accordingly, all tutors found during the first two months of tutoring that the adolescent students visibly resisted their well-intended efforts to guide and coach them in literacy tasks. The students seemed initially

more intent on interacting with their teen peers in the tutoring site than in trying to learn from experienced, older educators trying to assist them. Over time, each tutor documented how they gradually built trust, rapport, and productive relationships with their students, establishing a necessary, intersubjective foundation for learning and teaching. Likewise, over time, each tutor asserted that they found it vital to progressively model, scaffold, practice, and then provide increased autonomy and self-control for students to perform literate tasks.

Discussion and Implications

Particular approaches to assessment can serve different but complementary purposes, as demonstrated in the distinct purposes served by standardized tests and dynamic assessments in the present research. The value of formal tests was to document general trends in key dimensions of the students' literacy achievement overall according to conventional, theoretically justified and empirically based measures. The tests provided evidence about literacy achievements that we could trust, that others should find credible, and that are comparable to those appearing among similar student populations in two cities in Europe.

In contrast, the dynamic assessments not only helped individual students improve their literacy abilities progressively over time but also documented the means by and conditions under which tutoring and learning occurred to realize these developments, individually and collectively. The dynamic assessments addressed multiple dimensions of literacy learning, including cognitive and affective aspects of learning, strategic skills and literacy practices, as well as cultural factors in orientations and attitudes to literacy, instruction, and learning. Pedagogically, we were able to synthesize these findings to produce a handbook (Cumming et al., 2009) to guide other tutors working with students at Pathways or similar contexts. We concluded, to answer our main research aim, that educational initiatives, policies, and inquiry for at-risk adolescents need: (a) to promote students' vocabulary knowledge; strategies for reading, writing, and learning; self-confidence; and engagement in literacy for knowledge-building; (b) to provide extensive support from educators, community groups, families, and peers; (c) to adopt approaches to pedagogy that engage, model, and scaffold learners' zones of proximal development humanistically and for sustained periods of mutual reciprocity; and (d) to expand community-based, inclusive programs supplementary to public education, in the manner of Pathways to Education Canada, to improve educational participation and career success for disadvantaged youth.

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DISTINCTIVE, IDENTIFIABLE, OR ORIGINAL?

Defining, assessing, and raising awareness about a writer's voice

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Abstract

A theoretical and pedagogical resurgence in voice in second language (L2) writing research invites high school and college English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, writing centre coordinators and tutors, and raters of L2 writing to be better informed about the concept of voice in writing theory and practice. This paper explores voice from the perspectives of both L2 researchers and educational policy makers, presenting the multiple and often conflicting ways it has been defined and assessed. This paper concludes with ways teachers can raise students' awareness about voice in reading and writing assignments.

High school and college English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers are often unsure about how to introduce the concept of a writer's voice to English Language Learners (ELLs). Many may find it too difficult a concept to grasp for students with low levels of English; others may avoid talking about it as they find it too culturally infused. Some L2 writing teachers may even find it unnecessary for their students to develop voice in their writing before first mastering grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

When ESL teachers in Ontario turn to the language arts curriculum for K–12 students to learn about teaching voice to their students, they will discover that guidance about the topic is limited to brief definitions written exclusively for monolingual writers. Moreover, many will be surprised to discover how opaque those definitions of a writer's voice are (see Tables 1–3 below). Notwithstanding certain teachers' reluctance to teach voice or obscure curricular generalizations about voice, students are expected to write with voice in high stakes exams as well as in essays, response papers, critical summaries, and research papers that they write in high school, college, and university. The Ontario Ministry of Education's (2010) criteria for student success encourages K–12 students to take an active role in becoming skilled at giving feedback on their peers' writing. For example, students need to be able not only to communicate their impressions of their classmates' writing in

a positive and constructive way, but also be able to provide suggestions on how their peers can improve their ideas, clarify descriptions, and use stronger examples as well as improve grammar, word choice, and punctuation—suggestions that influence a writer’s voice.

Encouraging struggling writers to write about how they feel or what they think is not always welcomed or seen as important to developing critical thinking skills, however. Tyre (2012) reported on the effect of the *Common Core of State Standards*, a new educational initiative in the U.S., and its formulaic approach to teaching writing to low-level literacy learners that leaves no room for developing a writer’s voice. David Coleman, principal author of the *Common Core of State Standards*, was quoted as having said, “As you grow up in this world, you realize that people don’t give a shit about what you feel or what you think” (Tyre, 2012, p. 28). Tyre presented the two opposing sides of the writing research debate in first language (L1) composition: Formulaic writing for communication and writing for creative purposes. Those who see writing as formulaic see the need to teach grammar, punctuation, and style before writing about feelings or thoughts about a topic. Tyre cited the work of Judith Hochman, a proponent of the formulaic approach and author of a manual for teaching writing in high school. “Give them a formula,” Hochman said, “when they can understand the rules of good writing, they can figure out how to break them” (p.100). Tyre contrasted Hochman with literacy scholar Lucy Calkins who found that formulaic writing squashed creativity, arguing, “kids need to see their work reach other readers... they need to have choices in the questions they write about, and the way to find their voice” (p.101).

For L1 and L2 writing teachers, Tyre’s article captured how the teaching of writing and voice has become a hot topic in language arts classrooms today, especially with respect to learners who struggle with academic writing. As readers will note, voice has no one simple definition and has meant different things to different scholars, teachers, and policy makers. As an L2 writing teacher, my own understanding of voice has evolved from my years of teaching writing, researching writing development, and reflecting on my own writing process. Broadly speaking, I understand a writer’s voice both as emergent in the forms and use of language, vocabulary, and style (print and media-based) that writers draw on to create a story, essay, report, or poem, and as something that changes over the life of the writer. I also believe that voice is not just about the writer; voice is also about the reader who draws on his or her own experience, knowledge, and beliefs to interpret, challenge, and respond to writers’ ideas, language, and images. Lastly, I believe that attending to voice in classroom discussions, activities, and assignments not only develops the writing, but also contributes to shaping the writer.

Given the theoretical and pedagogical resurgence in voice in L2 writing research (Hyland & Sancho Guinda, 2012), its current use as a criterion for success in provincial writing assessments, and its integration into L1 and L2 writing textbooks, L2 writing instructors need to become better informed about voice and its connection to developing the writer and improving writing skills. This paper is neither intended to provide an exhaustive discussion of the concept of voice nor to provide ways to assess voice in classroom writing

rubrics, but rather to provide high school and college English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, writing-centre coordinators and tutors, and raters of L2 writing at the high-school and college levels with an overview of how a writer's voice has been conceptualized in L2 writing theory and assessed in L1 and L2 writing contexts. Lastly, I provide suggestions for L2 writing teachers on raising ELLs awareness about writing with voice.

What does L2 writing research say about voice?

Elbow (1981) argued that a writer's voice "implies words that capture the individual on the page" (p. 287). He believed that voice communicates power and resonance in writing and that writing with voice, especially a *real* voice, makes for engaging and enjoyable reading. Although most of his scholarship is grounded in L1 composition theory, Elbow has acknowledged the growing need to explore voice in L2 writing contexts and in the work of multilingual writers the world over: "The growing discussion of World Englishes and nonmainstream versions of English cries out for more attention to voice" (Elbow, 2007, p. 171).

The idea that voice foregrounds the individual writer and promotes beliefs in individualism as a social practice may not be easy for some L2 writers to grasp or accept. Recounting his experience of learning about voice when he came to the U.S. from China, Shen (1989) wrote, "I had to put aside an ideology of collectivism and adopt the values of individualism" (p. 461). Shen struggled to write with a unique individual voice—to refer to himself and his own beliefs using the singular pronoun *I* rather than using the plural *we* seemed out of place, contrasting sharply with his Chinese identity. "Rule number one in English composition is: Be yourself. (More than one composition instructor has told me, 'Just write what you think.')" (p.460). In many writing classrooms voice has often been taught as something to be discovered from within the individual, rather than something that is imposed on the individual from outside, by the academy, for example. L2 writing scholars Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) claimed that voice and other characteristics of a progressive approach to writing education such as peer feedback, critical thinking, and textual ownership may not be well suited for many ELLs and urged L2 writing scholars and teachers not to impose social practices common in L1 writing classrooms such as voice onto their students.

In 2001, the *Journal of Second Language Writing* devoted an entire issue to exploring voice. Scholars sought to understand voice from the perspective of students who were writing and discovering themselves as writers of academic English. Looking at the way voice emerges in student writing, Matsuda (2001) advanced a new definition of voice taking into account the perspective of the reader, rather than just the writer: "Voice is the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise from socially available, yet ever changing repertoires" (p. 40). Here, voice can be interpreted as a discursive construct that is neither completely grounded in the individual nor the sole product imposed by society or by a discipline—it develops in the interaction between the two.

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Ten years after the *Journal of Second Language Writing*'s special issue on voice, Hyland and Sanch Guinda (2012) edited the first comprehensive book to address how voice and stance have been conceptualized in L1 and L2 writing. Voice can be understood again as dialogical, something that emerges between the writer and the reader and something some scholars argue is unique to the discourse of a discipline. This differs from stance, which is defined largely by author position on and knowledge of a topic. Hyland and Sanch Guinda's book introduces readers to the current work on developing a writer's voice and stance in largely academic and professional discourses. Their discussion is particularly insightful for teachers of advanced academic English.

Unfortunately, L2 writing research has yet to look in any depth at how children and adolescents or newly arrived immigrants or professionals learn to write with voice, or how voice emerges through the process of multiple revisions or surfaces from feedback received from teachers and peers.

How does the Ontario Language Arts Curriculum Define Voice?

The Ontario language arts curriculum defines voice for monolingual students in grades 9–12 as:

The style or character of a piece of writing conveyed through the author's use of vocabulary, sentence structure, imagery, rhythm, and other elements that contribute to the mood of the piece as a whole. (Ontario Ministry of Education: Ontario Curriculum for Grades 9 and 10, 2007, p. 120)

This rather sweeping definition is operationalized in different and often puzzling ways in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 (see Tables 1–3). Depending on their grade, academic track, and future academic plans, students are expected to use various linguistic and rhetorical conventions to achieve an *identifiable*, *distinctive*, or *original* voice (the differences are not made explicit) in their writing. In grade 9, all students (whether taking applied or academic English courses) are asked to "establish an identifiable voice in their writing, modifying language and tone to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing" (p.49). In grade 10, however, students taking academic English courses are expected to "establish a *distinctive* [emphasis added] voice in their writing, modifying language and tone *skilfully* [emphasis added] to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing" (p. 77), whereas students taking applied English courses (like grade 9 students) are expected to "establish an identifiable voice in their writing, modifying language and tone to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing" (p. 92).

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Table 1: Writing with Voice Grades 9 and 10

	Voice		Language use		
	Identifiable	Distinctive	Original	Skillful	Effective
Grade 9 Academic and Applied English courses	✓				
Grade 10 Academic English courses		✓		✓	
Grade 10 Applied English courses	✓				

In grades 11 and 12 the expectations for writing with voice vary depending on whether the student is university bound, heading to college, or preparing for the work place (Ontario Ministry of Education: Ontario Curriculum for Grades 11 and 12, 2007). In grade 11, students preparing for university are asked to “establish a distinctive voice in their writing, modifying language and tone skilfully *and effectively* [emphasis added] to suit form, audience, and purpose for writing” (p.51), while their peers planning on attending college are simply asked to “establish a distinctive voice in their writing, modifying language and tone skilfully to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing” (p.68), like their grade 10 academic English counterparts. Grade 11 students preparing for the work place, however, are encouraged to “establish an identifiable voice in their writing, modifying language and tone to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing” (p.85). In grade 12, students planning on attending university are asked to “establish a distinctive *and original* [emphasis added] voice in their writing, modifying language and tone skilfully and effectively to suit the form, audience, and purpose for the writing” (p. 101). Grade 12 college bound students, however, are asked to “establish a distinctive voice in their writing, modifying language and tone skilfully and effectively to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing” (p. 119). Lastly, grade 12 students preparing for the workplace (like their grade 11 peers preparing for college) are expected to “establish a distinctive voice in their writing, modifying language and tone skilfully to suit the form, audience, and purpose for writing” (p. 136).

Table 2: Writing with Voice Grade 11

	Voice		Language use		
	Identifiable	Distinctive	Original	Skillful	Effective
Grade 11 University preparation		✓		✓	✓
Grade 11 College preparation		✓		✓	
Grade 11 Workplace preparation	✓				

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Table 3: Writing with Voice Grade 12

	Voice		Language use		
	Identifiable	Distinctive	Original	Skillful	Effective
Grade 12 University preparation		✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade 12 College preparation		✓		✓	✓
Grade 12 Workplace preparation		✓		✓	

Clearly, how to teach and assess voice proves complex when policy makers produce broad, overlapping, and obscure definitions. Although the ELL curriculum provides the same definition of voice in its glossary, voice is not included in the writing expectations or specifications for L2 writers at any level. With no guidelines or recommendations for teaching or assessing voice in ESL classes, multilingual students in Ontario, who often possess literacy skills in more than one language, appear altogether voiceless. L2 writing teachers outside of Ontario may wish to consult their own provincial guidelines for teaching writing and assessing voice to L1 and L2 writers.

How has voice been assessed?

L2 writing teachers who are interested in teaching voice may wonder how they can assess it. Among Elbow's many metaphorical descriptions of voice, he included "juice," "magic potion," "mother's milk," and "electricity" (1981, p. 286). If it is possible to teach "mother's milk" as Elbow and others would lead us to believe, then how do we assess it? Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) reported that to date there are very few empirical studies that attempt to assess voice. They questioned the notion that successful writing actually requires individual voice, especially for second language writers. Interestingly, the use of the first person pronoun has become the de facto criterion for detecting authorial presence in second language writing research (see Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hyland 2002; Tang & John, 1999). Ivanić and Camps (2001) claimed that by using pronouns in their writing, authors are exercising agency, just as they recognize the agency of other authors through attribution.

The following five studies examined voice in student writing. Two have attempted to identify authorial identity in L2 student writing (Tang & John, 1999; Hyland, 2002), while three have attempted to assess voice in L2 (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003) and L1 (Zhao & Llosa, 2008; Jeffers, 2010) student writing. Researchers have drawn on both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess voice. Tang and John (1999) attempted to identify authorial voice by reviewing the essays of 27 first-year undergraduates at a university in Singapore. Authorial identity was traced by observing the frequency of the first person singular pronoun (i.e., *I*) in the students' essays. They generated a continuum of writer identity ranging from a complete absence of individuality (no use of the first person pronoun) to

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a strongly present almost palpable one (frequent use of the first person pronoun). They discovered that in a 1,000-word essay, 81% of the students used some (albeit limited) form of first person pronoun. On average they reported that there were around three personal pronouns per essay. The most commonly used form of the first person (accounting for 42% of total number of first person pronouns) was the same form that had the least authorial presence—the generic first person plural form, *we* (e.g., “...what *we* now call English,” p. 30). Conversely, the form that had the most authorial presence—the first person singular (e.g., “Part of the impetus here, is, as I see it,” p. 37)—was the least commonly used, accounting for just under 6% of first person pronouns. Tang and John claimed that the difference in authorial presence is likely linked to students’ reluctance to take more responsibility for their opinions, preferring to hide them in a generic, collective *we*.

In a similar study, Hyland (2002) also examined use of first person singular in 64 undergraduate papers written in English by Cantonese speakers from various disciplines at the University of Hong Kong. He compared the frequency of first person singular from the students’ data to first person use in different research journals from the students’ fields of study. Also, he conducted group interviews with the participants and held individual interviews with eight faculty supervisors, one from each of the students’ disciplines.

Hyland found that the student participants overwhelmingly avoided using first person to make or maintain claims (only 16% used first person singular), even though the refereed literature within the students’ discipline was almost double that figure (at 25%). Also, he compared students’ limited use of first person singular in making claims to the high frequency of first person use in their personal acknowledgements to faculty, family, and friends (at 30%). From his interview with the students, Hyland concluded that students are reluctant to see themselves as legitimate purveyors of knowledge, despite repeated requests from their faculty advisors to use more first person singular in their writing. He suggested that students were reluctant to commit to their opinions and take ownership of their interpretations for a number of reasons ranging from directives from style manuals and lack of familiarity with western academic conventions to differing (and conflicting) cultural views on the role of authorial voice and personal choice.

In an attempt to identify the degree to which individualized voice affects quality of writing, Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) looked for the presence of individual voice in L2 writers’ compositions. The participants were 63 international undergraduates in a freshman composition course at a Canadian university. The writing task required the students to respond to a controversial essay prompt designed to provoke a response in the students, encouraging them to take a position that would demonstrate individual voice. The authors attempted to assess voice by developing a *Voice Intensity Rating Scale* that broke voice down into four components: assertiveness (e.g., fewer hedges more intensifiers), self-identification (e.g., use of first person singular and active voice), reiteration of the central point (e.g., main point is frequently mentioned), and authorial presence and autonomy of thought (e.g., author expresses opinion, distinguishing it from the opinions of others). The

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authors found there was no correlation between quality of writing and individualized voice. In other words, the success or failure of the writing had nothing to do with the presence of an individualized voice. Helms-Park and Stapleton suggested that perhaps their *Voice Intensity Rating Scale* could not capture what Elbow described as “sound, rhythm, energy, and individuality” (Elbow, 1981, p. 299 in Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003, p. 252).

Zhao and Llosa (2008) replicated Helms-Park and Stapleton’s (2003) study, using their *Voice Intensity Rating Scale* to rate 42 L1 writing samples from the New York State Regents Exam. Whereas Helms-Park and Stapleton found no correlation between quality of writing and voice determined by their rating scale among L2 writers, Zhao and Llosa found a high correlation between quality of writing and voice, specifically in reiteration of the central point in an argumentative essay, among L1 writers. Given that many L2 writers are evaluated by the same assessment rubrics as L1 writers in high school, college, and university classes, as well as on high stakes exams, the authors argue that introducing L2 writers to voice in writing classrooms is desirable and beneficial.

Most recently, Jeffers (2010) examined how 19 language-arts teachers evaluated voice in L1 student compositions. Among her findings, Jeffers reported the English teachers she interviewed largely found the students’ academic voice to be somewhat contrived and cliché. Instead, teachers valued the conventions of “literary realism” (p. 114) such as “sensory description, affective expression, judgment, and reflection” (p.114). Jeffers asked, if the academic conventions high school teachers teach appear manufactured, then what impact does this have on high stakes literacy and language exams that ask students to write academically and that ask raters to assess voice? Jeffers rightly encouraged teachers to discuss with their students that readers often interpret a piece of writing differently from what the writer originally intended and that they need to be aware that the choices they make as writers often impact how they are read.

These studies provide teachers and researchers with an opportunity to see how both seasoned and novice writers express various degrees of voice in their writing. Among these studies, Hyland (2002) and Jeffers (2010) are of particular import as they included participant interviews, giving a better sense of the institutional and cultural context as well as reader and writer expectations. Studies that set out to explore voice need to include participant response through interviews, think aloud protocols, and stimulated recalls. Limiting voice to just counting the frequency of pronouns fails to illustrate other ways in which voice may be conveyed in academic writing. Goffman (1986) argued that so-called laminating verbs (e.g., *claim, argue, suggest, purport*) are used by authors to indicate principalship (or authority, ownership) over the text. Academic writing often does not contain first person pronouns, but the author’s opinion or presence is felt in the verbs that are used. This is perhaps a more subtle form of voice, but one well worth exploring with students.

Raising student awareness about voice

If recent research in writing assessment encourages us to introduce voice into our lessons, what is the best way to talk to our students about developing a writer's voice in classroom discussions and writing activities? Dean (2000; 2006) has published workbooks on developing voice for middle and high school students. In her two volumes series, *Voice lessons* and *Discovering voice*, Dean gives students a way to look at voice from the perspective of vocabulary. She invites them to consider word choice, imagery, metaphor and syntax, and tone. Her activities encourage pair and classroom discussions around word choice, inviting students to play with language to determine how meaning changes to reflect an author's preference.

Leading class discussions on audience needs and expectations and on the linguistic and rhetorical choices authors make to meet those needs help students to develop a sense of their own voice. These discussions can lead to fruitful analysis and extended conversations about grammar, lexical choice, metaphor, and punctuation. Taken from my experience as L2-writing teacher and from my reflections on the writing process, I have included six ways teachers can introduce their students to voice:

1. Create activities that first generate students' awareness of voice in what they are reading relative to the subject matter, genre, or discipline. Invite students to examine the point of view of the author and what rhetorical, lexical, or stylistic decisions were made to meet the expectations of the audience. For instance, why did the author choose to use one type of verb and not another? Or, why did the author choose to use a particular metaphor to represent his or her ideas? Invite your students to consider how the piece would have been written had the author written for a different audience. Do all students have the same impression of the author's words, ideas, and images?
2. Invite your students to compare writing style and rhetorical conventions used from different fields (e.g., science or humanities) or compare the writing style of different authors. For example, teachers may ask students to look at passages from different authors (e.g., Ondaatje, Munro, and Atwood) describing a similar scene, emotion, or experience. Ask students to contrast word choice, sentence length, and use of examples and metaphors. Adjustments and special considerations will need to be made based on the students' language level, age, and life experience.
3. Encourage journal writing around current events, family issues, poetry, class readings, and discussions. Journals help give novice writers an opportunity to explore language and delimit ideas without worrying about grammaticality or orthography. Journals allow new writers the opportunity to reflect on readings and to discover what they believe about a particular issue they might be expected to discuss or a position they might be expected to support. The process of reading, writing, and reflecting allows a student the opportunity to develop a deeper more authoritative voice. The Ontario Curriculum (2007) reminds teachers that journals are meant for students to explore ideas and for teachers to encourage thought (should the teacher wish to read and respond to journals). Journals should not

be used as opportunities to supply corrective feedback on grammar, spelling or punctuation (see Ontario Curriculum 9–12: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2007).

4. Ask students to describe a situation, concept, event, or experience to different audiences (e.g., a parent, grandparent, child, boss, or friend). For example, they might explain going on a date, the birth of a child, a holiday, vacation, or religious or cultural celebration. Ask them to consider what language they draw on to explain the situation to an audience who is familiar with the event as well as those who are not and how their vocabulary choices are reflected in those decisions.
5. Ask students to write a short story without including their names on the paper. Collect and redistribute the stories. Ask the peers to identify who they think wrote the story based on the position the author took, vocabulary used, and examples provided. What features about the identity of the author did they construct?
6. Familiarize your high school students, for example, with the writing rubrics that colleagues in language arts classes use to assess writing. Invite colleagues to speak to your class about a writer's voice and how they assess voice in L1 student writing.

Concluding Remarks

A writer's voice is something readers appear to value in a good piece of writing. As readers, we notice when voice seems absent. We dislike voice when it appears manufactured, affected, or artificial. But, we savour the flavour, texture, and resonance of authors' voices when these elements surface in the words they choose, the sentences they craft, and the images they create. The point is that voice is as important to building the *writer* as teaching grammar, spelling, and punctuation is to building the *writing*. Addressing voice in our writing classrooms especially among struggling writers promotes analytical writing as it invites writers to consider how readers perceive their message and encourages them to revise, reflect, and to consider more deeply the grammatical, lexical, and stylistic choices they make. As L2 writing teachers, not only can we help our students' write to reach the eyes and ears of their readers, but we can help them develop an interest in writing and the writing process. As Elbow (1981) wrote, teaching students to write with voice gets them "to feel a greater connection between their writing and themselves" (p. 284).

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CLASSROOM PRACTICES INFORMED BY CORPUS LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

This paper discusses briefly recent work in corpus linguistics (CL) to illustrate how CL is relevant to classroom learning and teaching in English as a Subsequent Language (ESL). Three different research directions are highlighted in this paper. They illustrate how tools of corpus linguistics serve to support classroom activities in concrete, practical ways. The first direction reflects how corpus linguistics provides a tool for the selection of grammatical structures, verb forms and vocabulary to include in teaching materials to meet learner needs. The second direction shows how texts from even advanced ESL learners differ from those written by native speakers of English. These differences tend to be subtle and difficult or impossible to explain on the basis of traditional grammar rules. Tools from corpus linguistics serve to identify these differences and raise learners' awareness of native-like usage. The third research direction highlights how ESL learners and their teachers might draw on tools from corpus linguistics to support vocabulary development. The three research directions included suggest that corpus linguistics has become a valuable additional resource for language learners and teachers.

This paper focuses on three specific areas in which recent work in corpus linguistics supports learning and teaching in English as a Subsequent Language (ESL). The first one explores how accurately published teaching materials reflect native speaker language use. A second area described shows how insights from corpus linguistics help teachers and learners understand differences between native speaker language and learner texts. The third area discussed indicates how readily available corpus-based resources serve to foster data-driven learning among learners, either in or outside the classroom.

To illustrate the value of work from corpus linguistics for ESL learning and teaching, a short definition of corpus linguistics and its major tools seems appropriate. Corpus linguistics involves the study of language based on evidence from naturally occurring language in use.

By comparison, most traditional ESL teaching materials reflect language selected, typically out of context, to illustrate a particular teaching point. Such teaching points may be at one or several levels of language use such as pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, functions, tasks, and they may illustrate formal or informal contexts. To illustrate a desired teaching point, materials designers typically relied on their intuitions about and knowledge of the language as well as on conventions established in similar materials. Although evidence of the existence of natural acquisition sequences in first (L1) and subsequent (L2) language learning is available, and Ellis (2012:17) confirms that "...language acquisition is essentially sequence learning", such acquisition sequences are rarely reflected in pedagogical materials. Given the absence of both authentic language use and acquisition sequences in ESL teaching materials, these materials have often been criticized for their lack of reflection of actual language use. The naturally occurring language available for study through tools and techniques in corpus linguistics adds valuable new information to existing descriptions of language by providing "an empirical basis for checking our intuitions about language" (O'Keefe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007, 21).

A key component of corpus linguistics is a corpus (or corpora for plural), a collection of oral or written texts of formal or informal language, collected purposefully and stored electronically. A purposefully collected corpus means that the corpus contains written or spoken language from a targeted source. For example, a corpus might consist of spoken language from native speakers of English in North America, from spoken English used in academic settings, from written academic English, or from learner English. The larger a corpus is, the more authoritatively it illustrates language use within the targeted source. Davies (2008–) created a corpus of American English that includes over 450 million words and is freely available on the web. Another freely available website was created by Cobb (2013) and includes numerous smaller corpora as well as valuable teaching and learning tools. As these corpora are stored electronically, they lend themselves to searching and analysing regardless of size. Queried in different ways, they reflect how a given feature of language is typically used in the real life contexts contained in the corpus.

The output of a corpus is typically a concordance, a list of words of all the words that occur in the texts included in a corpus. The words are typically listed alphabetically, with line numbers. Corpora can also be searched for a specific word or word string to produce a *Key Word in Context* (KWIC) list. In this type of list, the word appears in the middle of the screen, with text that immediately precedes and follows each word on either side. Preceding or following text can be sorted alphabetically. Figure 1 illustrates the general appearance of a KWIC list generated from the Brown Corpus on the *Lextutor* website (Cobb, 2013), a one million word corpus of written academic texts.

001. inomial distribution uniquely, and different choices always [PRODUCE](#) different distributions (except when **f; then the n
002. rode with Vernon on the box, would break open a hamper and [PRODUCE](#) filets of smoked bass or sturgeon, sandwiches, pickl
003. available which can split foam to any desired thickness and [PRODUCE](#) sine, triangle, trapezoid, and other profiles in var
004. ecoming acquainted with the contadini families that brought [PRODUCE](#) into Rome. On Sundays he would walk miles into the c
005. picture of your dog that the skillful use of your aids can [PRODUCE](#). Aids sounds more like a Pony Club, or horsemanship
006. remains to be seen if the new frontier now taking form can [PRODUCE](#) the leadership and wisdom necessary to understand th
007. iquid helium. However, the surface temperature gradient can [PRODUCE](#) erroneous vapor-pressure measurements for the bulk 1
008. It has been truly said that anything man can imagine he can [PRODUCE](#) or create by projecting this inner image into its co
009. not which shots were bull's-eyes. A binomial experiment can [PRODUCE](#) random variables other than the number of successes.
010. ve of good. But it is a clumsy and wasteful process: it can [PRODUCE](#) negative results but not much that is positive. Deba
011. United States has triggered experimentally- would certainly [PRODUCE](#) a bigger bang, and, just for kicks, Khrushchev might
012. y subject, more especially from Aristotle's works. He could [PRODUCE](#) carefully constructed orations, set and formal speec
013. judge, and the four Republican members, could and often did [PRODUCE](#) a 6-6 deadlock that blocked far-out, Democratic-spon
014. p respectively. The several trials of a binomial experiment [PRODUCE](#) a new random variable X, the total number of success
015. dispose inconspicuously of 100 million tons of surplus farm [PRODUCE](#). In this same society, the plain citizen can with an

Figure 1. Key word in context (KWIC) concordance for *produce*, generated from the Brown Corpus on the Lextutor website (Cobb, 2013).

The first fifteen lines of a search of *produce*, with text before the key word sorted in alphabetical order, are reproduced in the figure. The length of a concordance depends on the size of the corpus and the frequency of the word or word string being searched. The number of words provided before and after the key word can often be adjusted to provide more or less context. Cobb's (2013) site offers the key word hyperlinked to the passage in which the word appears, to enable study of the broader context in actual language use. Depending on the frequency of the key word being searched and the size of a corpus, concordances vary in length.

Unprecedented advancements and availability in computer technology have led to rapid developments in Corpus Linguistics over the last few decades. In the 1960s and 1970s, such work focused primarily on areas such as dialectology, lexicology, and sociolinguistics. Few researchers targeted their work to meet the needs of ESL teachers and learners. More recently, researchers have focused increasingly on questions relevant to ESL teaching and learning and their work is beginning to influence teaching materials as well as teaching and learning practices. The rest of this paper will now describe three specific areas in which corpus linguistics is influencing SL teaching and learning.

Selecting language for teaching materials

Materials developers and teachers regularly make choices about the material to select for inclusion at a given stage of the learning process. For example, materials reflect conscious or subconscious choices about the grammar items included, the sequence in which they are presented and the vocabulary chosen to express them. As pointed out already, such decisions have typically been made on the basis of experience, intuition, or convention. The resulting textbooks and teaching materials have frequently been criticized (e.g., Biber & Reppen, 2002) for their inadequate reflection of the language native speakers' use in their real-life interactions.

The selection of the actual language use is facilitated through findings from corpus linguistics, findings that inform the type and sequence of grammar structures as well

as the vocabulary used to present these grammar structures. Biber and Reppen (2002) investigated the relationship between language choices reflected in six widely used ESL texts and corpus data from actual language use. They were interested in how the language choices made for the grammar texts compared to frequencies in naturally occurring data as reported in the corpus-based *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (*LGSW*; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan, 1999¹). The ESL grammar texts included were at the basic to intermediate levels to avoid the often more specialized information included at higher levels. Through three case studies, Biber and Reppen (2002) examined the previously mentioned three specific selection issues faced by materials developers by asking a) what grammar items to include or exclude in a grammar text, b) what sequence to follow for the presentation of specific grammar items and c) what vocabulary items to include for the presentation and practice of the grammar items included.

To answer the first question, Biber and Reppen (2002) selected adjectives as the grammar item to sample. Adjectives are widely used in English and typically introduced during the early stages of ESL. Adjectives are used to describe nouns and occur in the form of common adjectives (e.g., *the small dog*; *a cloudy sky*), as participial adjectives (e.g., *the interested visitor*; *the interesting visitor*) as well as nouns that serve as nominal premodifiers (e.g., *the book cover*, *the flight attendant*). Indeed, Biber and Reppen (2002) encountered a relevant section on adjectives in five out of the six textbooks; four of them included sections on participial adjectives. Coverage of adjectives in the different textbooks examined varied but focused on the common adjective and on participial adjectives. Only one of the six textbooks examined in Biber and Reppen (2002) included material on nominal premodifiers.

According to Biber and Reppen (2002), the *LGSWE* reflects that common adjectives are the most frequent modifier in NPs in oral conversations. In written registers, however, especially in news items and in academic writing, nouns are considerably more frequent as premodifiers in NP structures than common adjectives: they are the most frequent premodifier in all four registers, (i.e., conversation, fiction, news, and academic). In all four registers, participial adjectives are comparatively rare. Biber and Reppen (2002) acknowledge that a focus on common adjectives is justifiable in textbooks aimed at lower levels of ability and conversational English. However, they note that the textbooks examined over-emphasize the less frequent participial adjectives while they under-represent nouns functioning as nominal premodifiers, especially at intermediate and advanced levels. Overall, the distribution of adjective coverage in the six textbooks does not represent real-life usage as shown in the corpus.

The second question Biber and Reppen (2002) investigated relates to the choices textbook authors and materials designers make about the order in which their material should be presented. Although orders of acquisition identified through research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) may inform such choices, acquisition sequences are tentative and

1. Approximately 20 million words from conversations, fiction, newspaper articles and academic prose; for more details, see Biber et al., 1999.

limited to a relatively small number of items (for a review and discussion of the relevant research, see e.g., Ellis, 1994) compared to the number of items typically included in an ESL grammar textbook. The research on acquisition sequences for tense and aspect, for example, shows variability and is inconclusive. Biber and Reppen (2002) suggest that, based on many language professionals' intuitions, progressive aspect, a frequently used form in oral interactions, is the unmarked choice in conversation and should therefore be taught first. This priority is reflected in four of the six textbooks included in Biber and Reppen's (2002) study. These textbooks introduce progressive aspect in the first chapter, while two others introduce the progressive aspect and simple present at the same time.

Actual language use data reported in the *LGSWE* confirms Biber and Reppen's perspective: the simple form is more common in English, and thus should be considered the unmarked form and presented first to learners. Simple aspect is reported to be particularly widely used in conversations, making it a primary choice for materials aimed at lower level learners.. Biber and Reppen's (2002) study thus shows a mismatch between the sequences of material included in the textbooks analysed and the actual language use reflected in the *LGSWE* for the second question they addressed.

The third question Biber and Reppen (2002) addressed in their study relates to the vocabulary that is included in grammar texts. Vocabulary choices are invariably difficult as they depend on different learner levels, needs, learning contexts and registers. Biber and Reppen selected the twelve most frequently occurring lexical verbs², which occur over 1,000 times per million words in the *LGSWE*. These verbs represent close to 45% of all the lexical verbs used in conversations and 11% in academic language. Their high frequency would suggest that they might be important vocabulary items to be included in a grammar text at beginner and intermediate levels. However, Biber and Reppen (2002) report that seven out of the twelve lexical verbs were not present in the lessons sampled for their case study.

Biber and Reppen's (2002) study thus confirms the perceived gap between language included in ESL teaching materials, grammar texts in this particular case, and actual language use by native speakers of English. Lee and McGarrell (2011) replicated Biber and Reppen's study with more recent, corpus-informed or corpus-based textbooks. Where possible, Lee and McGarrell selected more recent revised editions of texts included in Biber and Reppen as well as three additional comparable texts that indicate that they are corpus informed or corpus-based. Lee and McGarrell's findings show that on all three areas examined (sequence, constructions and vocabulary to be included in ESL materials), the corpus informed or corpus-based textbooks reflect actual language use more closely than the texts examined in Biber and Reppen. Their findings suggest that textbook authors are increasingly drawing on corpus material to inform the decisions necessary in textbook preparation, and that corpus data are increasingly influencing ESL teaching and learning materials.

2. Come, get, give, go, know, make, mean, think, say, see, take, & want

The *LGSWE* has been available for over a decade and materials developers have had opportunities to avail themselves of the resource, as well as similar ones, to support the development of newer grammar texts. Although the growth of impact of corpus linguistics on ESL materials seems to have been somewhat slow, Lee and McGarrell (2011)'s work demonstrates that, increasingly, textbook designers take into consideration information available through corpus work and reflect language in use. As corpus data become increasingly available and textbook authors have had opportunities to familiarize themselves with these resources, ESL materials can be expected to reflect actual language use more consistently as well as more noticeably. Grammar textbook descriptions based on corpus data, for example, show underlying patterns of use as well as variations of forms and functions. Although such underlying patterns point to certain regularities, they also highlight the fact that language forms and functions are more varied than suggested in most ESL grammar texts (see e.g., Newbrook, 1998 on the variability of relative clauses in different varieties of English). Language learners are ill-served by material that suggests that English is non-varied and can be captured simply by neat-looking tables and charts. Instead, material needs to be adjusted to reflect on variability in real language use. The number of specialized corpora being developed, differentiating language use in different registers as well as in different contexts, should enable ESL professionals, teachers and learners to select material that is directly relevant to and reflects the kinds of language learners need to master.

Identifying register-specific language

The preceding described how a research focus of corpus linguistics serves to inform ESL textbooks and other learning and teaching materials. Another research focus in which corpus linguistics research has recently impacted ESL classrooms is in identifying textual conventions characteristics in specific registers. ESL teachers and learners often comment on the fact that although a learners' text may contain no obvious grammar or vocabulary errors, the text sounds "wrong" or non-native like. In many such cases, the issue is likely at the discourse level, that is, beyond the confines of individual sentences typically covered by the grammar rules presented in conventional ESL classes. The use of word combinations that occur more frequently than chance would predict, variously referred to as *bundles*, *clusters*, *chunks*, *sequences*, or *strings*, often with somewhat different meanings, is another currently active area of investigation based on corpus linguistics, especially in relation to English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The study of word combinations goes back to the nineteenth century but has seen increased attention over the past two decades thanks to advances in technology. Researchers have associated the use of frequent word combinations with the development of pragmatic competence (Granger, 1998), that is, rules of pragmatic use that may differ from lexical meaning. The research focus in corpus linguistics that sheds light on such issues compares texts from experienced, inexperienced/developing, and non-native English writers. This type of research explores textual differences as they occur in actual texts, to study both frequencies and distribution patterns.

To examine different questions on textual differences, several researchers have collected and compiled specific corpora. One such researcher, Cortes (2004), collected an approximately two-million-word corpus of published academic papers in history and biology journals, then identified the most frequently occurring four-word sequences (e.g., *at the beginning of, from the perspective of, the extent to which*) and their functional and structural properties in these written texts. The resulting list served to examine whether biology and history students at a US university at different levels used the sequences. Findings from the study show that students in biology and history rarely or never use typical four-word sequences in their discipline. When they do use four-word sequences, they tend to use primarily those that are also used in oral language, language that is not academic or discipline specific. Although texts from writers at more advanced levels of study in biology tended to include more of the four-word sequences in questions, especially sequences that signal organization (e.g., *on the other hand, in addition to*), a similar trend was not observed in history students. Cortes' study leaves open the question of whether the student texts contained different four word sequences that were not identified in the published texts included in the corpus. Should this be the case, such sequences would, however, unlikely be typical of the writing conventions established for biology and history as *typical* likely means *frequent* in this situation.

In her brief discussion of pedagogical implications, Cortes (2004) points out that discipline-specific word sequences are an important characteristic of writing in each discipline. The undergraduate students whose written texts were included in the study were likely exposed through academic reading assignments to the four-word sequences identified in Cortes' study. Yet these students' texts suggest that the students did not acquire the sequences in question based on mere exposure to them. Research on incidental vocabulary learning (e.g., Eckerth & Tavakoli, 2012) confirms that the successful acquisition and retention of new words requires both frequency of occurrence and learner engagement with these words. In their study of 30 EAP students in a UK university program, they found that a high task-induced involvement load combined with frequency of occurrence provided the most beneficial learning conditions. Students' attention needs to be drawn to the relevant sequences through explicit teaching to encourage noticing (Schmidt, 1990), then engaged through tasks that require their focus. As Haswell (1991) pointed out, expert writers' texts reflect certain preferred word sequences typical of the register. One of developing writers' tasks is to become sensitive to these preferences and use them in their own writing. Teaching could not be limited to memorization of a list of word sequences but would need to include consideration of the broader context to illustrate the function of each sequence and its meaning, as discussed in more detail in Granger, 2011. It is not clear from Cortes' (2004) study how many, if any, of the texts were written by non-native speakers of English. The finding that all texts, regardless of seniority of the writers in their respective program, contained few or none of the frequent four-word sequences used in expert writing suggests that both native and non-native writers need to be guided to discover the writing conventions in their academic discipline.

Hyland (2008) provides further evidence that word sequences offer an important means of differentiating text types as well as different levels of academic writing proficiency. Working with a 3.5 million word corpus compiled from four disciplines and comprising texts from published journal articles, doctoral dissertations and master's theses, the latter two written by native speakers of Cantonese at five different Hong Kong universities, Hyland studied four-word sequences. Hyland reports that writers of published journal articles used word sequences that were syntactically and pragmatically different compared to those written by the native speakers of Cantonese who wrote the doctoral dissertations and master's theses. Analyses of the different word sequences used by each group of writers indicate that writers at the different levels of expertise and language ability used qualitatively and quantitatively different four word sequences, likely at least in part reflecting different degrees of academic writing experience and command of written English. For example, Hyland's findings indicate that the *least* confident or proficient students at Master's level relied most on word strings that were formulaic while the expert writers represented in the published papers used the fewest of such sequences. While some of the four-word sequences occurred in texts from all four disciplines included in the Hyland study, others appeared to be specific to one of the four of the disciplines covered, suggesting the possibility of a common core of frequent four word sequences as well as discipline specific ones. Given the different databases and sample sizes used in emerging methodologies, findings should be considered tentative. At the same time, a clear indication of the importance of initiating learners into the textual conventions of different text types and registers is emerging.

Despite the tentative nature of the findings from studies such as the above, the implications for ESL teachers and learners are that some frequent word sequences are widely used across registers, others belong to preferred patterns used in specific text types. Research such as Cortes (2004) and Hyland (2008) suggests that ESL teachers take note of frequent word sequences in the texts their learners are expected to master and guide learners to discovering and internalizing such sequences to develop pragmatic competence in different registers and text types. Insights from researchers' analyses of specialist corpora draw attention to the type of language encountered in specific communities of users (Hyland, 2008) and inform teachers and learners on usage patterns.

Using corpora in the ESL classroom

A third research direction in corpus linguistics is in the development of tools for use in ESL classrooms, a direction that has received limited attention. Biber and colleagues have produced a body of work involving grammar that has uncovered new patterns of language use, patterns that have escaped more traditional descriptions and analyses of grammar. Much of that work is available to teachers and their learners in reference grammars, classroom texts and similar materials. Corpora have, however, had little direct application in ESL classrooms. Yet, many teachers and their students have likely used corpus-based dictionaries, grammars and textbooks without knowing what a corpus is (Frankenberg-Garcia, 2012).

Corpora are likely particularly appealing for direct access in the classroom when studying words and their use. Research increasingly shows the importance of individual words, their use in context and how they typically fit into a phrase or a sentence. A number of wordlists are available to guide teachers' and learners' choices. Most of these word lists are based on or inspired by West's (1953) General Service List (GSL). The GSL reflects the most frequently used words in English according to headwords, words that reflect an entire family of words but exclude related forms such as plurals, verb forms, affixes. According to Neufeld and Billuroğlu's (2005) review of the GSL, the headwords included still reflect current English, although Neufeld and Billuroğlu recommend that a small number of words no longer used frequently be removed and replaced with words that have become widely used (e.g., *plastic*, *television*, *battery*, *okay*, *victim*, and *drug*). A copy of West's GSL, with frequency information for each item, is available at Bauman's (n.d) website at <http://jbauman.com/gsl.html>. A quick glance at the list shows that the first few dozen words represent primarily function words, highlighting their importance but also their repetitive nature. Teachers likely find the list a valuable reference guide when selecting words to focus on for various classroom activities. Instead of using potentially less frequent verbs and nouns, the guide directs teachers and learners towards those words that are frequently encountered in general English usage.

More recent developments offer various adaptations of the GSL to include not only headwords but frequently used related forms, (e.g., the headword *back*, is followed by *backed*, *background*, *backing*, *backs*, *backbone*, *backgrounds*, *backwards*, *backward*; Cobb, 2012) and descriptions of each word. Gillet (2013) created a GSL version that includes hyperlinks to the *Cambridge Dictionary Online* and added headwords, and related words, as well as different frequent verb forms, names of days of the week, months and numbers, extending the list to close to 5,000 words. Another example of the GSL enhanced with features of recent technology is available through the English Language Centre's Centre for Independent Learning (2009) website at <http://www2.elc.polyu.edu.hk/cill/generalServiceList.htm>. The interactive list offers hyperlinks that give users access to definitions, model pronunciation and multiple contextualized examples in a corpus.

For more advanced learners likely to engage in academic or professional interactions, Coxhead (2000, 2011) makes available information and links to the Academic Word List (AWL) which builds on the GSL and assumes mastery of the words included therein. Although Browne, Cullen and Philips (2013) indicate that the GSL still covers approximately 80% (Browne, Cullen & Philips, 2013) of English usage, inconsistencies around the definition of *word* and related terms result in variations in what is included in such lists. Clearly, ESL learners planning on tertiary education in an English language environment need to master more words than those included on even extended GSls. With close to 80% coverage, about one in every five words would be unknown. Research in reading has shown that such a ratio of known to unknown words would not allow readers to successfully read and comprehend a text. Laufer (1989) suggests that readers who know 95% of the words in a text should have reasonable comprehension of a text. The lower frequency of many of the words included

in that top 15%, which increase the learning challenge. ESL learners thus face what Folse (2011, 362) considers a “...debilitating lexical gap between the words they know and the words they need to know.” Narrowing the gap requires extensive and repeated exposure to words and their contexts through different activities and tools. Corpus-informed word lists likely provide one of a number of tools to support the learners’ task.

As indicated above, researchers and classroom practitioners recognize that lists alone are unsatisfactory in developing vocabulary abilities in their learners. Some recent corpus work has focused on exploring how native speakers of English use words in combination with other words, typically referred to as collocations, word or lexical strings in the literature. Words combine to form “preferred” patterns and express specific meaning or connotations. These preferred patterns relate to either grammar or meaning relationships and include the following:

- Verb + adjective + noun - *make good progress/give clear directions*
- Adjective + noun - *great adventure/square meal*
- Adjective + preposition - *popular with/enthusiastic about*
- Noun + noun (noun + of + noun) - *house party/light years*
- Adverb + adjective - *completely soaked/severely hampered*

For example, Kennedy (2003) shows that the twenty-four adverbs of degree investigated collocate “most strongly with particular words having particular grammatical and semantic characteristics” (p. 467). Within this broader category, amplifiers such as *very*, *really* and *terribly* occur before *useful* and *interesting*, where they appear to be synonymous and interchangeable. Yet such combinations do not hold for other intensifiers such as *clearly* and *badly*. Intensifiers are unlikely to occur with specific adjectives (e.g., *completely easier*, *fully classical*, *badly dead*, *heavily unique*) as the following questionable combinations illustrate:

?*The program for the concert was fully classical*

?*The batteries in the flashlight were badly dead.*

?*Picasso’s style of painting is heavily unique.*

In his analyses of amplifiers, Kennedy (2003) discovered valuable generalizations about some of the most frequently used lexical forms. For example, he notes that

Very is associated with words having generally positive associations (e.g., *fond*, *clever*, *nice*, *tasty*), but some adjectives have negative associations (e.g., *distressed*, *difficult*, *sad*); 23% end in *-ing*; 13% have a *-y* suffix; only two end in *-ed* (p. 480).

This type of information would seem helpful for ESL teachers and their learners in trying to grasp generalizations in word usage as well as frequently used combinations.

One other classroom application of corpus linguistics to mention here is that of consulting online corpora directly. ESL teachers and their students have access to numerous corpora free online, ready to be queried. Although corpora have not typically been designed for classroom use and may not appear as user-friendly as one might like, some initial training (most corpus sites offer short training pages) and practice will lead to a wealth of information. In addition, this type of data-driven (Boulton, 2010; Johns 1986; 1989) exploration of actual language data prepares learners to pursue their own questions in increasingly autonomous ways.

Two examples will serve to illustrate the potential of such explorations. The first example draws on Cobb's (2013) *Lextutor* site, which allows users to select from several different corpora, including one limited to the most frequent 2,000 words in English, to suggest a search that yields at least four different types of activities that teachers can prepare ahead of time. Depending on the level of the learners, the number of lines included in this activity might be reduced for low level learners. In other words, the learners work from a hard copy handout or an overhead to discover one or several of four options: a) the difference between *bring* and *brings*, (i.e., first or second person singular compared to third person singular), b) the types of nouns, pronouns and prepositions that frequently follow the verb *bring* and c) differences between direct object and indirect object after. Item a) leads learners to discover how the subject of the verb determines whether the present tense verb ends in -s. Item b) is an exploration of words (prepositions, nouns, pronouns) that collocate with *bring(s)*, while c) is somewhat more challenging in that it focuses attention on the strings with direct and indirect object attachment. The printout shown in the Appendix is limited to 120 words across and the first 23 lines. On the *Lextutor* screen, the key word in the middle is hyperlinked, allowing users access to the larger context in which the word occurs. The corpus used for this example is at the basic 2,000 word (GSL) level but the task could be further simplified if the teacher selected the 1,000 basic word corpus on the *Lextutor* site. Alternately, activities become more challenging with larger corpora such as the Brown corpus, a one million word corpus of published English texts collected from the press, journalism, and academia (see example for *bring* in Appendix). Similarly, the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* with its 450 million word data base includes more diverse vocabulary than the corpora suggested in the examples offered here, which makes it more suitable for more advanced learners familiar with corpus activities.

The second example draws attention to Someya's (2013) Business Letter Corpus, a one million word corpus that contains various types of English business correspondence. One task that ESL learners might engage in with this corpus relates to level of formality for different text types, here specifically as appropriate for business letters. Learners might brainstorm different ways in which letters in English typically end, and then order them based on different levels of formality. The pre-task discussion should result in a short ranked list of salutations, followed by a preliminary assessment of which ones are likely appropriate for business letters. The pre-task is then followed by searching the corpus for the short-listed salutations in the corpus, that is, learners, in turn, enter each of the salutations

into the corpus search window. Learners will discover that, *sincerely*, for instance, figures in over 1,600 instances, *truly* results in 600 hits while the more informal *regards* occurs just over 50 times. The corpus output is limited to 50 characters across, which should help avoid learners being overwhelmed with unfamiliar words. Alternately, teachers might run the relevant searches ahead of time and provide learners with more limited examples as part of a handout. Someya suggests several classroom activities, including a comparison of *think of* and *think about*, an often troublesome difference for learners (see Appendix for illustration of some findings).

The limited examples offered above help illustrate how corpus queries allow data-driven learner activities without overwhelming either teachers or students with complex technical details. Publications such as Reppen (2010) offer a broad selection of corpus activities designed to train ESL learners for initial corpus explorations to build confidence for independent corpus consultations that meet individual learners' needs. The activities are intended to guide ESL students to notice characteristics that foster the development of their target-language sensibilities. Comparisons with their own work, lexical enrichment activities, collocation, concordance, completion tasks, and revision or proof-reading activities raise learners' awareness of target language features that are not yet part of their own internalized language system. This awareness, in turn, is argued to lead to acquisition of the features in question (Dörnyei, 2009). Inclusion of corpus-based activities in ESL classrooms thus engages learners in active exploration of target language.

Conclusion

Despite early recognition of the value of tools from corpus linguistics for ESL learning (e.g., Johns 1986, 1989, Tribble & Jones, 1997), Frankenstein-Garcia (2012) states that few classroom teachers have accessed corpora directly. A number of reasons are likely at play, including the rapidly evolving technology, which makes earlier materials often incompatible with newer hardware. A shortage of classroom practitioners able and willing to adopt new techniques appears to be another reason. Many teacher-education institutions have been slow in adjusting to new educational needs and providing student teachers with relevant skills (Frankenberg-Garcia, 2012) while teacher development is typically left to individual teachers' initiatives. The examples presented in the preceding show that corpus linguistics, combined with teachers prepared to use corpora and introduce their learners to materials or corpora themselves, bring valuable additional learning tools to ESL learning.

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Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

Appendix

Partial Concordance of *Bring*

Home > Concordancers > English input [[Back \(keep settings\)](#)]

sorted 1 wds left of key Get Eng_Eng Dictionary

[Extract >>](#) All @Any[10|20|30|50] [Change >>](#) **Key** equals bring **in** 2k Graded (920k) sorted 1 wd left +assoc on left side

Concordance for equals **BRING**

Bottom summary info

227 hits (normalized to 247 per million for comparison)

Click Keyword for more context

001. And she opened the door with an annoyed look on her face. 'BRING him in, Captain Butler,' she called. 'I suppose you've
002. 'I'll go downstairs and see him then,' replied Catherine. 'BRING the tea up, Ellen, while I'm away.' She left the room.
003. Biko's face. 'Good,' said Biko, in the same sleepy manner. 'BRING it to the window over there and I'll read it.' And he
004. ex my letter. She read it slowly, then gave it back to me. 'BRING in your men,' she said, in a voice which had no expres-
005. ger, taking a piece of paper and writing an address on it. 'BRING her to me at this place and in secret.' Mr Bumble look-
006. guards. 'We are almost there, sir.' "Good," said Commodus. "BRING me my horse." Under his warm travelling coat Comindus
007. hem in cap and gown graduating and they sing a song called 'BRING On Tomorrow', which is an incredible affirmation, of c-
008. ome meat you can have, too.' 'All right.' I smiled at her. 'BRING the kid down to the paddock and eat with us.' 'Oh, no,
009. ovely, isn't it?' she said. He waved a finger at a waiter. 'BRING me a large whisky.' Then he turned to Miss Moss. 'What
010. us. Nobody ever made their own if they could buy Godber's.' 'BRING them in and put them on the table, my girl,' ordered c-
011. ed. 'Are you all right? We all heard what happened. Shall I BRING you some breakfast?' 'Yes, I'm all right. I'm fine. Bu-
012. ttlez,' she called. 'I suppose you've got him drunk again. BRING him in.' The Yankee captain spoke from outside. 'I'm so
013. ink she's English.' The voice came again. 'Leave her alone. BRING her here. Are you mad?' The Greek took his hand from
014. e, whose novels she detested. She hoped the film would also BRING in plenty of money, which it didn't. After the America-
015. lways intended to marry. Although marriage might not always BRING happiness, it was the only honourable way in which a w-
016. me in. 'Joseph, take Mr Lockwood's horse!' he called. 'And BRING up some wine from the cellar!' Joseph was a very old s-
017. old, but who was to meet the new brother at the station and BRING him home, to Latchett's? Ruth and Jane thought that eve-
018. d selling. I can ride him to the hunt for you tomorrow, and BRING you back the money. But you must decide. You lent me to
019. be. 'Now, Bill, you go and get my hammer,' he shouted. 'And BRING me a ruler, Tom. And Jim, I need a ladder - and a kitc-
020. ble, but who was to meet the new brother at the station and BRING him home, to Latchett's? Ruth and Jane thought that eve-
021. d selling. I can ride him to the hunt for you tomorrow, and BRING you back the money. But you must decide. You lent me to
022. decide quickly! I must have him near me!' 'Ellen, you go and BRING him up,' said Mr Edgar. 'And Catherine, try not to b-
023. end,' said Monks. 'How dare you kidnap me in the street and BRING me here.' 'Yes, I was your father's oldest friend,' sa-

Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

Partial Concordance of *Brings*

Home > Concordancers > English input [<Back [keep settings]] Concordance for equals **BRINGS**

sorted 1 wds left of key Get Eng_Eng ▾ Dictionary

Extract >> All | May10/20/30/50 Change >> Key equals ▾ brings in 2k Graded (920k) sorted 1 wd ▾ left ▾ +assoc on left ▾ side

29 hits (normalized to 32 per million for comparison)

001. impossible. But I will make sure that someone meets them and **BRINGS** them safely here.' It was raining heavily at Telle Br
002. t disguise the protracted nature of the play, Walters' cast **BRINGS** a biting exuberance to its bureaucratic shenanigans.
003. rly spring. Then at his mother's prodding, the convalescent **BRINGS** a thank-you bouquet to the impoverished flat of his
004. wealthy. It was hard to realize my new situation. A fortune **BRINGS** serious worries and responsibilities with it, which I
005. e telling stories about the dangers they have known, George **BRINGS** out his hat. He shows it to his friends. Then he tell
006. has a new idea about saving mankind. But none of the ideas **BRINGS** results.' 'But doesn't it drive you crazy - just goin
007. special talent. Because it's a magnet school in New York it **BRINGS** together a real mixture, a real rainbow of ethnic gro
008. e enjoyed little love and little of the happiness that love **BRINGS**. I have managed to live without the great pleasure th
009. Well, if we're to believe those who practise it, Mercerism **BRINGS** men and women on every planet together. And how is th
010. ng the cycle from recognition to denunciation. Every period **BRINGS** its characteristic enthusiasms, the wisdoms that dumb
011. at the newsagents and tidy up the office. When the postman **BRINGS** the day's mail, I deliver the letters and parcels to
012. Far From the Madding Crowd. As I told Lisa, the book really **BRINGS** the English countryside to life, and Pete loves the c
013. om if I could prove Grafaik had ordered his death? Revenge **BRINGS** only limited pleasure. The one thing I might be able
014. e in with the new visual clichés. But every 18 months or so **BRINGS** a crop, travelling the cycle from recognition to den
015. . 'It may already be in the post.' 'No,' said Royer. 'A spy **BRINGS** home his information personally and he collects his p
016. eason why a marriage breaks down. It's really an event that **BRINGS** out the reasons why a marriage has already broken dow
017. he Chief Warden. Put him in the observation cell, sir. That **BRINGS** out any madness very quickly, even in a man who seems
018. n his diary. Yes, April rd was the day in the Museum - that **BRINGS** me to July 23rd. Now, Harrington, I would very much l
019. oston to work on two more degrees - and giving up work that **BRINGS** in \$130,000 a year. Mr. Volkman, 38, plans to study pu
020. d to me. 'Watson, I want you to send this telegram. If this **BRINGS** the answer I hope for, we will soon know the meaning
021. ed the same question again. Jim in love, and in danger This **BRINGS** me to the story of his love. Remember the unspeakably
022. knife. Jim shot him in the Jim in love, and in danger This **BRINGS** me to the story of his love. Remember the unspeakably
023. ter soup. Happily, you have something strong to drink. This **BRINGS** back your interest in life until it is time to go to

Click keyword for more context

Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

Questions for learners:

- Look at the forms *bring* and *brings* in the two lists. When does the form *bring* occur; when does the form *brings* occur?
- Look at the types of words that follow the forms *bring/brings*. Make a list for each of the two most common types.

Partial Concordance of *bring* from Brown Corpus

001. t her out of there"! Jones yelled, "or she'll kill 'em all. BRING me the firecrackers". For such an emergency he had inc
002. a day will keep the sheriff away". That, however, may also BRING the police, if the thinking does not meet with social
003. ng was a book he had read before, and the Navy would always BRING him there again, some day. At Yokosuka he was restrict
004. I don't come out within half an hour ride back to town and BRING out a posse". Leaving his rifle in the wagon, Tilghman
005. provided the living with a way to control the spirits, and BRING their powers directly to bear on the everyday affairs
006. that I didn't, she said she would borrow her brother's and BRING it to me later that evening. "You do not know me", she
007. cook onion in oil until soft. Add remaining ingredients and BRING to a boil. Simmer about 10 minutes, and keep warm for
008. e horses. There isn't much time. I'll saddle the horses and BRING them round. You get ready". He burst from the hot conf
009. ed Blackman, try to keep him from drinking a great deal and BRING him back in good health. As they stood at the first-cl
010. ld gather up Connor and the foursome on the third floor and BRING us those of them who would voluntarily submit to finge
011. ulted things [things we must think symbolically about] and BRING us back to the ineffable beauty and richness of the ae
012. cooting into its best months in California as crisp breezes BRING out craft of every size on every kind of water-ocean,
013. ishes are as vital to the success of the frank as are buns. BRING along the conventional ones- catsup, pickle relish, mu
014. This is where I get my information from", he confided. "But BRING it right back. It's the only copy I've got". The size
015. overloud: "I shall call your father! Go back where you can BRING no harm, or I will go and get the old man from his bed
016. risk not savored by Pentagon planners. But if anything can BRING home to Mr. Khrushchev the idea that he will not reali
017. threshold of the transition into modernity, the decide can BRING significant progress in launching the slow process of
018. e target. Full knowledge of the science of oceanography can BRING the environment to our side, resulting in an increase
019. erious and marvelous alchemy by which a great conductor can BRING soloist, orchestra and music to ultimate fusion. So we
020. nt has enormous possibilities. The benefits electronics can BRING to bio-medicine may be greater by far than any previou
021. sion of her own sainthood: it is she, he tells her, who can BRING the truth to Russia and convert the heretics. As if in
022. hts of psychology to improve his impaired vision but cannot BRING to his work the distinctive vision that should be a no
023. shment can only threaten to use its nuclear arms; it cannot BRING them into actual play. A more dangerous formula for na

Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

Partial Concordance of *think of*

Online BLC KWIC Concordancer Search Result
 Search String: contain "think of"
 Search Corpus: 01. Business Letter Corpus (BLC2000)
 No. of Hit(s): 57

- 1 [BLC2:01:01159] Please let me know what you think of (name of topic) .
- 2 [BLC2:23:02658] Can you think of a better gift for your entire family?
- 3 one together over the years; personally, I can't think of a relationship I have enjoyed more.
- 4 ink of us as Mirabelle's Added Attractions... and think of a showcase for sensational ladieswear.
- 5 [BLC2:05:01234] " I can't think of an organization that makes more of an actual diff
- 6 C2:32:00893] However, as things stand, he can not think of any studio suitable for your purpose.
- 7 [BLC2:02:03410] I can't think of anyone I'd rather have a letter from on my promot
- 8 [BLC2:09:05051] I can't think of anyone in the department who has done more to lif
- 9 [BLC2:25:03562] I can not think of anyone more deserving of the honour, for you have
- 10 t. wishes for a very enjoyable occasion. I can not think of anyone who more richly deserves the tribute being
- 11 [BLC2:12:03194] If you think of anything that any of you need, please let me know
- 12 [BLC2:13:01230] If you think of anything that any of you need, please let me know
- 13 [BLC2:09:03684] If you can think of anything we can do as far as notifying other coll
- 14 erything is under control and I don't want you to think of coming back until you are your old self again.
- 15 And one of the first things he did on the job was think of his neighbors!
- 16 [BLC2:25:07451] Just think of it -- if it hadn't been for this illness you never
- 17 [BLC2:13:02561] I am only sorry we didn't think of it sooner.
- 18 and, if you have a free minute, tell us what you think of it, using the self-addressed postcard attached to
- 19 [BLC2:05:04419] I hope you'll think of me again.

Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

Partial Concordance of *think about*

Online BLC KWIC Concordancer Search Result

Search String: contain "think about"

Search Corpus: 01. Business Letter Corpus (BLC2000)

No. of Hit(s): 30

- 1 [BLC2:04:00612] Please think about a way to use my talents, and call me in the next
- 2 on comfortable clothes, relax on your patio, and think about all the work we're saving you.
- 3 [BLC2:37:00467] In the meantime why don't you think about all this and let me know.
- 4 ts to your house in the last year, you'll need to think about an additional increase to the policy amount.
- 5 [BLC2:08:00218] Now I'll be able to think about business instead of worrying about what to say in
- 6 2:10:06225] of course, the last thing you want to think about during a move is sickness, but it's nice to know
- 7 [BLC2:04:03874] Please take a few minutes and think about friends, or customers, or problems where my talen
- 8 [BLC2:06:04045] But you might want to think about giving yourself some breathing space by using Sna
- 9 are, as you know, big clients, and I suggest you think about how you might manage, in the first place, to give
- 10 [BLC2:02:01820] I'd rather not think about it.
- 11 nton, but you don't have time, as you suggest, to think about it.
- 12 [BLC2:06:03007] Please think about it.
- 13 after investigation on your part, what would you think about our cooperative preparation of a concrete plan to
- 14 [BLC2:04:00639] Please take a few minutes and think about possible needs among your associates and friends
- 15 [BLC2:04:04070] Please take a few minutes to think about possible needs among your friends and associates
- 16 ather will be here soon and it's not too early to think about preparing for the drop in temperatures.
- 17 [BLC2:15:00541] often, people think about recommending a business, but just don't get aroun
- 18 area TESOL(MATESOL) organization, asking them to think about suitable applicants.
- 19 [BLC2:12:03435] Do you ever think about the history those structures have witnessed?

Theme 3: Corpora for Language Learning and Teaching

Appendix – Concordance (first x lines)

168 tokens (running words): [print/save]

001. kson, the launching of the film was on December of the year 2001. The movie is about a power ring that belongs to an evi
 002. n and war movies, I recommend it because you can find on it A entertaining history and a moving scenes that generates a
 003. nd it because you can find on it a entertaining history and a moving scenes that generates a
 004. t a entertaining history and a moving scenes that generates A lot types of feelings. *
 005. This is an action and A fantastic movie about a mysterious ring and his evil owner.
 006. This is an action and a fantastic movie about A mysterious ring and his evil owner. This movie was directe
 007. human race. Some people met take the ring to Mordor that is A place with a volcano, and the ring can be destroyed there.
 008. e film was on December of the year 2001. The movie is about A power ring that belongs to an evil and powerful owner. He
 009. ng travels to Mordor with Sam, his friend This movie is for A public that likes action and war movies, I recommend it be
 010. one people met take the ring to Mordor that is a place with A volcano, and the ring can be destroyed there. Finally the
 011. This is an action and a fantastic movie ABOUT a mysterious ring and his evil owner. This movie was d
 012. of the film was on December of the year 2001. The movie is ABOUT a power ring that belongs to an evil and powerful owne
 013. This is an ACTION and a fantastic movie about a mysterious ring and his
 014. with Sam, his friend This movie is for a public that likes ACTION and war movies, I recommend it because you can find o
 015. This is AN action and a fantastic movie about a mysterious ring and
 016. year 2001. The movie is about a power ring that belongs to AN evil and powerful owner. He tries to recuperate it but it
 017. This is an action AND a fantastic movie about a mysterious ring and his evil o
 018. command it because you can find on it a entertaining history AND a moving scenes that generates a lot types of feelings.
 019. ng can be destroyed there. Finally the fellowship separates AND Frodo that is the man that carries the ring travels to M
 020. is an action and a fantastic movie about a mysterious ring AND his evil owner. This movie was directed by Peter Jackson
 021. 01. The movie is about a power ring that belongs to an evil AND powerful owner. He tries to recuperate it but it is in h
 022. met take the ring to Mordor that is a place with a volcano, AND the ring can be destroyed there. Finally the fellowship
 023. am, his friend This movie is for a public that likes action AND war movies, I recommend it because you can find on it a
 024. to Mordor that is a place with a volcano, and the ring can BE destroyed there. Finally the fellowship separates and Fro
 025. r a public that likes action and war movies, I recommend it BECAUSE you can find on it a entertaining history and a movi
 026. mber of the year 2001. The movie is about a power ring that BELONGS to an evil and powerful owner. He tries to recuperat
 027. gs to an evil and powerful owner. He tries to recuperate it BUT it is in hands of the good people of that time. When the
 028. mysterious ring and his evil owner. This movie was directed BY Peter Jackson, the launching of the film was on December
 029. ones try to take the ring to destroy it, the owner that is CALLED Sauron, declares war on human race. Some people met t
 030. ring to Mordor that is a place with a volcano, and the ring CAN be destroyed there. Finally the fellowship separates and
 031. hat likes action and war movies, I recommend it because you CAN find on it a entertaining history and a moving scenes th
 032. lly the fellowship separates and Frodo that is the man that CARRIES the ring travels to Mordor with Sam, his friend This
 033. directed by Peter Jackson, the launching of the film was on DECEMBER of the year 2001. The movie is about a power ring t
 ke the ring to destroy it, the owner that is called Sauron, DECLARES war on human race. Some people met take the ring to

Appendix – Ngram

150 total 3-wd strings: (repeats are underlined)

Appendix

Classroom procedures:

1. talk informally about a recently viewed movie
 - what was it about?
 - would you recommend it and why?
2. discussion of key points of a movie review for a newspaper aimed at the general population (examples from the Globe and Mail, The ???)
3. write a movie review
4. vocabulary analysis
5. examination of collocations in published reviews
6. third and final version of reviewFigure 1 (check to make sure text has not been changed in final version)

001. tely precedes or follows each word as illustrated in Figure 1. * _____ A concordance is an alphabetical list of all the words that
002. _____ 1 list of all the words that occur in the texts included in A corpus. The words are either listed alphabetically, with n
003. umbers that indicate how many times each word occurs, or as A Key Word in Context list in which the alphabetical list is
004. _____ A concordance is an alphabetical list of ALL the words that occur in the texts included in a corpus.
005. word occurs, or as a Key Word in Context list in which the ALPHABETICAL list is in the middle of the list, with text th
006. _____ A concordance is an ALPHABETICAL list of all the words that occur in the texts i
007. the texts included in a corpus. The words are either listed ALPHABETICALLY, with numbers that indicate how many times ea
008. _____ A concordance is AN alphabetical list of all the words that occur in the text
009. rds that occur in the texts included in a corpus. The words ARE either listed alphabetically, with numbers that indicate
010. h numbers that indicate how many times each word occurs, or AS a Key Word in Context list in which the alphabetical list
011. t, with text that immediately precedes or follows each word AS illustrated in Figure 1. * _____
012. _____ A CONCORDANCE is an alphabetical list of all the words that oc
013. dicate how many times each word occurs, or as a Key Word in CONTEXT list in which the alphabetical list is in the middle
014. list of all the words that occur in the texts included in a CORPUS. The words are either listed alphabetically, with num
015.

FORMULAIC SEQUENCES IN FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY BUSINESS AND ENGINEERING TEXTBOOKS

A resource for EAP

David Wood, Carleton University and Randy Appel, Concordia University

Abstract

The body of research into lexical bundles, corpus-derived multiword functional units, has shed light on their role in academic discourse. Some studies have examined which bundles might be of greatest utility for teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP), dealing with corpora of academic language. The reality of most EAP programs is a focus on preparing students for first year university courses, in which textbooks play the key role. The present study addresses a key issue for EAP professionals: What lexical bundles exist in first year textbooks used in the most popular EAP student majors in university? First year textbooks in Engineering and Business, the most popular major subjects for EAP students, were scanned for lexical bundles. The resulting list has utility for the teaching of academic discourse in EAP and pedagogical implications for EAP practitioners and materials developers.

It has been taken as something of a given that formulaic language, multiword phenomena with particular meanings and functions, makes up a large proportion of written discourse (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Oft-cited evidence for this is the finding by Erman and Warren (2000) that 52.6 per cent of a corpus of writing was comprised of word combinations. In fact, use of recurring word combinations has been linked to good writing ability since at least the early 1980s (e.g. Bamber, 1983; McCully, 1985).

From as long ago as Xue and Nation's (1984) work on the University Word List, researchers have attempted to determine what lexical items are of the most utility for teaching and testing. Motivated by the pedagogical needs of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs, studies have examined academic discourse with an eye to elaborating lists of the most frequent words or word combinations, the idea being that high frequency equates to high value in teaching and learning.

Advances in corpus analysis have paved the way for efficient large-scale research of this type. Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) has been influential, compiled based on the

analysis of a corpus of academic writing, using frequency and range across disciplines as criteria. For word combinations, work on lexical bundles, multiword sequences identified by frequency and range in a corpus (e.g., Biber & Conrad, 1999; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004) has uncovered previously unnoticed types of frequent word combinations. Lexical bundles have a primarily functional role, essential to the workings of academic discourse.

Lexical bundles are generally characterized by function. Biber et. al. (2004) proposed three categories of functions: *stance*, expressing epistemic certainty, attitude, or modality toward subsequent propositions; *discourse*, marking relationships among parts of discourse such as introducing topics or elaborating and extrapolating from topics at hand; *referential*, referring directly to temporal, spatial, physical context.

Lexical bundle research on academic articles from various disciplines (Cortes, 2004; Hyland, 2008) shows that bundles play key roles in particular norms for communication, in which writers establish relationships between readers and authors, present propositional content, show evaluation of ideas, engage readers, explain facts, and organize discourse. Hyland (2008) remarks that writing in electrical engineering and biology employs large numbers of directive stance bundles, addressing the reader directly (e.g., *we can see that*, *it is important that*), and a high proportion of referential bundles to describe research procedures. Cortes (2004) notes that published research in biology employs referential bundles to indicate timing and location (e.g., *at the beginning of*), and to describe physical attributes (*the depth of*) and quantities (*a large number of*), and that non-EAP university students generally tend not to use the bundles which are common in their fields.

Clearly, non-native-speaker students encounter obstacles to reading and writing competently in university. Many need to take EAP courses before or concurrent with taking introductory university courses. An important resource for EAP programs is the Academic Formulas List (AFL; Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010), compiled from a corpus of 2.1 million words each of academic speech and writing. The texts comprising the corpus were taken from the four academic disciplines of humanities, social sciences, physical/biological/medical sciences, and technology/engineering, and compared to a non-academic corpus. The corpora were scanned for bundles at a frequency cut-off of 10 occurrences per million words, and a range of three out of the four academic disciplines. A statistical measure, mutual information (MI), was used as a measure of strength of collocation. A team of EAP instructors and testers rated the usefulness of the list if bundles and these ratings were combined with the MI and the frequency scores, to produce a composite score which determined the final lists. To date, this AFL is seen by researchers as the standard list of formulaic items found in academic discourse. While it was compiled using frequency as a key determinant of formulaicity, and it classifies formulaic sequences by function, the AFL is not strictly a list of lexical bundles. Lexical bundles are identified by means of frequency alone, and the AFL's use of the MI measure makes it a list of formulaic sequences rather than lexical bundles. In the present study, the term formulaic sequence is used as a label for the units of analysis, since a combination of frequency and MI was used to identify them.

Although the AFL has moved the discipline toward a standard for EAP, an important area which has been subsumed under the label of “academic” is language use in introductory textbooks. Textbooks represent a major source of language input and content for novices, and provide the basis for most of the lectures and activities, such as tests and assignments, in introductory courses (Olson, 1989; Carson, 2001). Textbooks generally represent a specific subset of academic discourse with features different from research articles or monographs, representing a blend of pedagogic and disciplinary discourse. Hyland (2005), examining textbooks, identified higher levels of bundles with a textual function in textbooks than in other academic registers. Similarly, Biber (2006) found that natural and social sciences textbooks contained a greater number of lexical bundles than humanities textbooks, and that, while discourse-organizing bundles are present at a fairly even proportion in textbooks across disciplines, stance bundles vary greatly in type and frequency according to discipline.

Although the particular discourse of introductory textbooks is important to novice university students and EAP students, there are no studies investigating the lexical bundles or formulaic sequences they contain. The present study is an examination of formulaic sequences in first year university textbooks in business and engineering. The resulting list represents a starting point for more comprehensive studies of multiword units in teaching materials of all types across university disciplines.

Methodology

Textbook Corpus

The textbook corpus in this study consists of nearly 1.6 million words of academic text taken from textbooks used in first year Business and Engineering, the most popular disciplines for EAP students at a large Canadian university, based on declared majors. Ten textbooks were used, divided equally between required/recommended textbooks from first year classes in the programs. Since textbook language or running text was the focus of this study, instructional language (i.e., end of chapter problem sets, instructional exercises/activities/etc.) was removed from the corpus. Detailed composition of the corpus can be found in Appendix 1 and Table 1 below.

Table 1: Word counts by Academic Program

Engineering Textbooks	Word Count	Commerce Textbooks	Word Count
Engineering Mechanics	66,741	Macroeconomics	167,217
Chemistry	225,805	Managerial Accounting	183,791
Problem Solving and Computers	93,672	Linear Algebra	100,855
Physics	244,727	Business Information and Communication Technologies	174,339
Calculus	173,126	Financial Accounting	147,840
Total	804,071	Total	774,042

Identification of Formulaic Sequences

Previous lexical bundle research has tended to use 4-word lexical bundles as units of analysis (see Chen 2010; Cortes 2004; Underwood, Schmitt, & Galpin, 2004). Arguments for the use of 4-word bundles include the fact that these constructions contain 3-word bundles within their structures and that 5-word bundles are comparatively rare. Four-word sequences were thus identified as a starting point in the present study, at a minimum frequency cut-off point of 40 occurrences. This equates to a frequency cut-off of 25 bundles per million words in the corpus, well within the generally accepted frequency cut-off of 20–40 per million words in other such studies. In terms of range, any identified sequence also needed to appear in at least one textbook from each academic program.

The resulting sequences were analyzed to determine which were true 4-word sequences and which should be considered 3-word unit sequences with variable slots (i.e. *as a result [the/of]*). Two methods of analyzing the original list of 4-word sequences were implemented. First, each 4-word unit was split into its two constituent 3-word units and frequency figures for each of these 3-word units were analyzed. If either one of the two component 3-word units was at least twice as frequently occurring as the other, this 3-word unit was classified as the “root” or base structure of the longer 4-word sequence. For example, the 4-word unit *in other words the* was split into *in other words* and *other words the*. Looking at frequency, the data show that *in other words* appears 248 times in the corpus, while *other words the* appears only 76 times, suggesting that *the* is a variable slot at the end of a 3-word formulaic sequence. In any situation where frequency discrepancies of this nature occurred, the root/base was written in standard form, with the fourth word, or variable slot, placed in parentheses, for example (*is*) *the sum of* or *the fact that (the)*. Additionally, all 4-word sequences were checked for overlap with other 4-word sequences. If two 4-word sequences contained identical 3-word structures within them, the 3-word string common to each sequence was classified as the root and the variable slots on each end of this root

were listed in parentheses. For example, *is the same as* and *the same as the* were combined to create the condensed listing *(is) the same as (the)*¹. This method of condensing overlapping structures helps to reveal standard word combinations more clearly. The table below contains the revised list of formulaic sequences identified in the textbook corpus.

Table 2: Formulaic sequences identified in the first year university textbooks

Sequence	Frequency as 3-word	Frequency as 4-word
<i>(shown/as/illustrated) in figure #</i>	769	304, 98, 50
<i>(is/to) the number of</i>	740	66, 42
<i>(discussed) in section #</i>	610	63
<i>(as) in example #</i>	531	57
<i>(discussed) in chapter # (we)</i>	417	54, 66
<i>the cost of (the)</i>	413	73
<i>in this case (the)</i>	393	148
<i>in terms of (the)</i>	391	134
<i>the amount of (the)</i>	375	45
<i>(in) the united states (and)</i>	369	172, 57
<i>(that) there is a</i>	351	51
<i>(in) the direction of (the)</i>	326	102, 167
<i>(is) the sum of (the)</i>	326	87, 211
<i>the fact that (the)</i>	309	97
<i>(is/as) shown in figure</i>	304	97, 92
<i>as a result (of/the)</i>	298	100, 66
<i>the graph of (f/the)</i>	275	107, 49
<i>with respect to (the)</i>	266	56
<i># percent of (the)</i>	265	103
<i>is given by (the)</i>	261	65
<i>in other words (the)</i>	248	74
<i>the rate of (change)</i>	244	72
<i>as well as (the)</i>	244	66
<i>(at) the end of (the)</i>	340	241, 165
<i>(#) we see that (the)</i>	225	98, 85
<i>the price of (the)</i>	224	41
<i>A and B (are)</i>	223	45
<i>(is) the same as (the)</i>	198	92, 93
<i>(as/is) a function of</i>	195	88, 59
<i>the center of (mass/the)</i>	170	59, 53
<i>in the next (section)</i>	159	43
<i>the volume of (a)</i>	157	44
<i>it can be (shown)</i>	157	41

¹ An exception to this is found in the two 4-word sequences *is one of the* and *one of the most*. Although both sequences contain the 3-word structure *one of the*, each four word sequence carries a separate meaning and was therefore not combined.

(to) be able to	155	44
the values of (f)	153	45
we can use (the)	151	56
the value of the		149
on the other hand		143
(in) the presence of	141	61
(is) the set of (all)	139	40, 80
in this section we		138
is equal to the		132
the magnitude of the		129
(in) this chapter we (will)	129	115, 53
if and only if		121
in addition to (the)	121	48
(is) referred to as	119	45
can be used to		108
in the form of		105
can be determined (by)	105	40
the area of the		102
the size of the		100
as long as (the)	95	45
rate of change of		86
at the same time		85
(at) the beginning of (the)	85	63, 54
is proportional to the		84
on the basis of		84
the slope of the		84
in the case of		83
(is) a linear combination (of)	83	47, 77
one of the most		82
in the long run		81
the rest of the		77
it is important to		75
(is) a measure of (the)	75	46, 42
is said to be		73
is one of the		70
the length of the		66
it is possible to		61
(is) an example of (a)	109	58, 48
the difference between the		56
can be written as		55
the product of the		55
as we will see		54

the total number of		53
an increase in the		50
this means that the		50
from left to right		49
keep in mind that		49
the weight of the		49
# shows that the		48
the rate at which		47
the top of the		47
we say that the		47
in the following example		45
is based on the		45
it is easy to		44
the bottom of the		43
(on) the right side (of)	77	40,42
is determined by the		41
it is necessary to		40

In addition to this core list, some of the most commonly occurring entries for the variable slots at the boundaries of these sequences are also listed.

Analysis & Results

Focusing specifically on university textbooks in two popular EAP target disciplines, this study provides a list of formulaic sequences of particular importance to reading in EAP. Our list supports past research which indicates that specific academic disciplines and genres of academic text manage information differently. Comparing the AFL and the first year textbook corpus, we see both similarities and differences, which is logical, given that the AFL corpus contained both spoken and written registers, and a range of genres and disciplines. Of the 92 root formulaic sequences identified in the present study, slightly less than half (43) also appear in the AFL, leaving 49 sequences unique to first year business and engineering textbooks.

Of the sequences appearing exclusively in the present study, 62% can be classified as serving referential functions, no doubt due to the nature of the language used in textbooks, involving pointing out and explaining ideas. The remaining two categories (stance and discourse organizing) make up 14% and 24% respectively, a finding similar to Hyland's (2005) claims that textual (discourse) functions tend to be relatively common in textbook language. In order to categorize the sequences by function, the primary or most common functional role of each sequence was used in our classifications.

Table 3: Referential Sequences

Sequence	Root Frequency	Sequence	Root Frequency
(shown/as/illustrated) in figure #	769	(at) the end of (the)	340
(is/to) the number of	740	the price of (the)	224
(discussed) in section #	610	A and B are	223
(as) in example #	531	in the form of	105
(discussed) in chapter # (we)	417	the area of the	102
the cost of (the)	413	the size of the	100
in this case (the)	393	rate of change of	86
in terms of (the)	391	(at) the beginning of (the)	85
the amount of (the)	375	is proportional to the	84
(in) the united states (and)	369	the slope of the	84
(that) there is a	351	in the case of	83
(in) the direction of (the)	326	(is) a linear combination (of)	83
(is) the sum of (the)	326	the rest of the	77
(is/as) shown in figure	304	(is) a measure of (the)	75
the graph of (f/the)	275	the length of the	66
with respect to (the)	266	(is) an example of (a)	109
# percent of (the)	265	the difference between the	56
the rate of (change)	244	the product of the	55
(as/is) a function of	195	the total number of	53
the center of (mass/the)	170	an increase in the	50
in the next (section)	159	the weight of the	49
the volume of (a)	157	the rate at which	47
the values of (f)	153	the top of the	47
the value of the	149	in the following example	45
(in) the presence of	141	is based on the	45
(is) the set of (all)	139	the bottom of the	43
in this section we	138	(on) the right side (of)	42
is equal to the	132	is determined by the	41
the magnitude of the	129		

Table 4: Stance Sequences

Sequence	Root Frequency	Sequence	Root Frequency
it can be (shown)	157	it is possible to	61
(to) be able to	155	can be written as	55
we can use (the)	151	keep in mind that	49
if and only if	121	it is easy to	44
can be used to	108	it is necessary to	40
can be determined (by)	105	one of the most	82
it is important to	75		

Table 5: Discourse Organizing Sequences

Sequence	Root Frequency	Sequence	Root Frequency
the fact that (the)	309	as long as (the)	95
as a result (of/the)	298	at the same time	85
is given by (the)	261	on the basis of	84
in other words (the)	248	in the long run	81
as well as (the)	244	is said to be	73
on the other hand	143	as we will see	54
(in) this chapter we (will)	129	this means that the	50
(#) we see that (the)	225	from left to right	49
(is) the same as (the)	198	# shows that the	48
in addition to (the)	121	we say that the	47
(is) referred to as	119	is one of the	70

Pedagogical Implications

An awareness of the formulaic sequences commonly used in first year university textbooks in specific disciplines can serve as a valuable resource for EAP teachers and course and materials developers. It has been common in EAP to assume that exposure to academic text from across the disciplines is a powerful tool in helping students to acquire academic language. At the same time, EAP practitioners have tended to rely heavily on top-down reading and writing pedagogy—that is, use of context and scaffolding and a focus on meaning—and exposure to copious textual input to further acquisition. In other words, many EAP programs spend a great deal of energy having students process a broad range of academic texts with a focus on reading strategies and meaning from context. While these are quite plausible EAP classroom endeavours, an awareness of the nature of the actual academic content which EAP students are exposed to outside of the EAP class can help to expand and refine EAP teaching repertoires.

Simply exposing students to general academic text may not give them the help they need. The present study shows that first year textbook discourse has particular qualities and that the discourse is constructed in part by means of particular formulaic sequences. Therefore, it logically follows that if EAP practitioners are to meet the needs of novice students, some attention to actual first-year course material is important. Similarly, EAP students at other levels such as graduate students or those transferring into bachelor-level programs with advanced standing may need exposure to text specific to their fields and their academic levels.

Exposing students to text may not, in itself, be a guarantee that they will acquire the use of formulaic sequences in target disciplines. Studies have shown that even non-EAP students often fail to use lexical bundles in their own writing, despite years of exposure to them (e.g., Cortes, 2004). It stands to reason, therefore, that incorporating lexical bundles or

formulaic sequences into pedagogical materials could help increase students' awareness of and facility with them. Using appropriate sources of text, such as first year textbooks from relevant disciplines, is one way to incorporate formulaic sequences into pedagogy. Using samples of lexical bundles and formulaic sequences from such texts is another way to help students to learn how they are used to explain, illustrate, connect, and situate ideas in discourse. Specific classroom techniques and details of methodological approaches to dealing with lexical bundles are a focus of future work by the authors of the present study.

Conclusion

The formulaic sequences identified in this textbook corpus highlight important differences between academic texts of different genres. While the creation of the AFL has provided a list of formulas that may appear in a variety of academic genres, this textbook corpus utilizes a highly specialized corpus along with alternative research methodology to create a list of formulaic sequences of particular benefit to first year university students. In fact, based on the frequency with which these sequences appear in the corpus used in this study, first year students are likely to encounter many of these sequences dozens of times during the course of their first semester alone, and they need to be made aware of their roles in certain registers or see their use modelled. While many of these sequences are exclusive to university textbooks, a comparison to the AFL reveals that a substantial number of them are more broadly associated with academic written texts in general. The results of this study may prove to be particularly valuable to students in EAP programs. Since students in these programs need to cope with the sequences identified in the corpus developed for this study to fully comprehend the texts they will be reading in first year university classes, the study of these sequences is essential to their understanding of academic textbook language.

There are, however, limitations associated with this study. While the corpus is relatively large, it is also highly specialized, containing textbooks from only two disciplines. Further study involving a broader range of textbooks and is needed, as well as work focusing on the spoken language which novice EAP learners encounter, and written texts other than textbooks.

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Appendix 1: Textbooks used in compiling the corpus

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