EGAP: What is missing? PLUS EAP teacher identity negotiation and its impact on our teaching practice AND MORE...

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Mittermeier, F. (2019). Man and mountain [Image]. Retrieved from https://pixabay. com/photos/mountains-man-landscape- view-4423621/

Calendar of Events

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Access **TESL Ontario's** webinars here.

Editor's note

Welcome to another issue of *Contact*.

Every so often when I write these welcomes, I'm baffled that it is another Summer issue, or Fall issue, or Spring issue. When one issue is published, it is time to work on another, and of course, that is not possible without the works of the authors in the issues. So I thank everyone for their contributions and for waiting sometimes half a year to be published.

In the Spotlight this summer is Lorenzo Sclocco. Lorenzo has been teaching ESL since 2009, is a language learner himself, and focuses his classes on communication skills. No stranger to the college and university worlds, Lorenzo talks about his experiences in teaching English, being a teacher trainer, and advocating for professional development. Thank you again, Lorenzo, for your contribution.

To kick off the issue, Farnaz Karimian, Amy Parker, and Xiaoming Li dive deep into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and the preparation for students in disciplinary courses. Plamen Kushkiev writes about English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teacher identity negotiation and the impact on teaching practices through an autoethnographic study. Linda Ward discusses the sensitive, yet permeating topic of hidden racism within LINC. Ricardo-Martín Marroquín looks at how to support newcomers to Canada beyond the classroom, including the community. Barbara Stasiuk narrates her expereinces as an educator in the Sultanate of Oman. Staci-Anne Nogami talks about the benefits of quiet time in the classroom. And finally, Sukhdeep Birdi, Kawaldeep Ghuman, and Harjit Chauhan explore Diwali and Ramadan in their classrooms. Thank you all for the beautfilly written pieces.

As always, if you would like to contrinbute to *Contact* magazine, we are always welcoming articles on all types of ELT-related topics. Whether it is a personal essay or a current trend in research, your ideas and knowledge help many others.

Thank you for reading. Take care.

Nicola Carozza
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Editor's Note: Andreia Arai-Rissman (Spring Issue 2023) would like to acknowledge the support that the School of English as a Second Language at George Brown provided throughout the revision phase of the article, 'Learner variability in English for Academic Purposes classes.'

CONTACT

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Spotlight — Lorenzo Sclocco

You are an advocate for professional development– how do you maintain professional development with a busy schedule and how would you encourage others to get involved and develop their skills?

Teachers are life-long learners, so I always try to develop and hone my skills. Most of the opportunities I hear about come from LinkedIn: It's thanks to LinkedIn that during the pandemic I had come in closer contact with the instructional design world and the content development field. In the last three years, I came to the realization that teachers have so many transferrable skills: research, project and time management, critical thinking, creativity, leadership (yes, leadership too!). This is the advice I would give my other colleagues—it might be an unconventional one: Create or polish your profile on LinkedIn where you can start your networking. I was surprised to see that a very small number of ESL teachers had a LinkedIn profile at that time. By networking with people, I have come across quite a few opportunities for professional development. And professional development doesn't have to be done through webinars only. I find myself reading a few magazines during the year. I sometimes post some of my lessons that I would like to share with the rest of the teacher community because I believe that by sharing we can all improve.

As my dear friend and colleague Julie Reid says, "if I go away from a workshop or a webinar with only one valuable piece of information, I'm happy".

You are currently working as a teacher trainer for TEFL Horizons. How did you get involved and what has it been like working with others in that capacity?

I had started to attend the webinars held by Shannon Felt, the founder of TEFL Horizons, during the pandemic. What drew me to her webinars was that she was able to identify the pain points of teaching online: how to teach a skill or a systems-based lesson online. After that, I was also invited to her podcast where I shared my experience in curriculum and syllabus development. After this episode, she invited me to join TEFL Horizons as a teacher trainer. It was my first time to officially train ESL teachers. The whole experience has been mind-blowing. We observe the teachers teaching a live class and then we give detailed and actionable feedback on the class, plus consultation on the upcoming class. One

Lorenzo Sclocco is an ESL teacher based in Toronto, Canada. He has been teaching English (general, EAP, and business) at language schools, universities, and colleges since 2009. Being a language learner himself, he knows the difficulties that students encounter when learning other languages. Therefore, he focuses his classes on communication skills and creates his own material. He is a two-time recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies.

of the benefits is being able to hone my skills when giving constructive feedback. For example, "Next time, you could…" instead of "you shouldn't have done this" or 'What made you choose that?" instead of "Why did you choose that?" Also, the questions that trainees have during the eight-month practicum always keep me on my toes because you have to be able to give advice and to explain the rationale behind every task.

You contributed to Café New Canadians (*Immigrants' journey to success: We speak with the LGBTQ+ community*). How does your work as an Education Specialist and Curriculum Developer connect with this?

Besides working in the education field, I also work as an Online Programming Coordinator and Content Developer for a non-profit organization named North York Community House (Toronto). In this capacity, I have been able to closely

work with settlement workers who serve newcomers. This means that I have become more and more acquainted with the issues and barriers people face when moving to Canada. The first concept that comes to mind when I think of the connection between my educational work and the non-profit sector is intersectionality: the layers of racial identity, gender identity, ability, mental health, to name a few. And this is something I try to bring into the classroom because to me it is important to represent the cultural diversity and the gender identity of my students, and that they feel comfortable enough to express who they are.

Café New Canadians is a great platform where newcomers, especially international students and internationally educated professional can gain a deeper insight into the Canadian workplace and lifestyle.

A fun fact: I came across Café New Canadians when I was developing the syllabus for Business English for George Brown College as I incorporated some of the videos into the material for the curriculum. I also contacted the executive producer, Gerard Keledjian, and we've been in touch ever since!

What takeaways have you learned with your professional experiences and what's your advice for teachers or ELT professionals just getting started in the industry?

I would say my top takeaway has been: not being afraid of the challenge and being confident in myself. Many times, we say "no" to opportunities because we think we don't have enough knowledge or experience. But how can we gain more knowledge or experience if we are holding ourselves back? One thing that used to hold me back was my perfectionism: We can't allow this to stop us from evolving.

Of course, there is always something new ahead of us, and we will never be able to keep up with the new teaching techniques, but at least we can try to welcome any opportunity that comes our way.

That's why a piece of advice for people who are just getting started in the industry would be: Put yourself out there. You can start by offering private classes (this is how I had started years ago) or, better, you can take a certificate (there are many institutions that offer teaching courses) where you can learn what the lesson frameworks are and how you can scaffold a lesson by using one of those lesson frameworks.

Going forward, where is the industry taking you and do you have any special projects coming up?

Right now, I am juggling different jobs: teaching, content developing and programming, and teacher training. Teaching has always been my passion since my university years in Germany, but teacher training is something I am becoming closer and closer to. I feel that these three jobs have one factor in common: the opportunity to be creative and develop material.

I'm always open to new challenges, not thinking whether I am good enough. If I don't try, I will never know. I didn't know if I had the skills to train teachers or the skills to publish a few lesson plans for the Swiss Journal *ETAS*.

Currently I am working on a duoethnography research study with Rebecca Schmor (PhD candidate at OISE). By contrasting our lived experiences and respective teaching beliefs, we are investigating the different plurilingual and target-language approaches we implement inside the classroom. Stay tuned!

If you would like to know more about Lorenzo, please visit his LinkedIn page: www.linkedin.com/in/lorenzo-sclocco. Email: lorenzo.sclocco@utoronto.ca

Thank you once again for your contribution, Lorenzo!

EGAP: What is missing?

By Farnaz Karimian, Amy Parker, & Xiaoming Li, Canada

The number of international students seeking enrollment in higher education in Canada has increased four times in just twenty years from 122,665 in 2000 to 621,565 in 2021 (Crossman et al., 2022). Thus, it is evident that there will continue to be a need for more EAP programs to prepare EAL (English as an Additional Language) students for their post-secondary studies. But before delving deep into this issue, it is important to first discuss the nuanced, yet meaningful distinction between *EGAP* (English for General Academic Purposes) and *ESAP* (English for Specific Academic Purposes). EGAP instructors typically focus on *general* English language proficiency required for post-secondary level education, whereas ESAP instructors center their curriculum on teaching *English for specific academic purposes,* in which they collaborate closely with other discipline-specific course instructors to recognize and define student needs and produce class materials based on discipline-specific texts (Charles & Pecorari, 2016). While EGAP programs have proven to be beneficial in certain contexts (Archibald, 2001; Issitt, 2016; Mazgutova, 2015; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011, as cited in Pearson, 2020), the question remains as to how effective EGAP programs are in preparing learners for their disciplinary courses once they have completed EGAP. Based on our own prior experiences with EAP and through a comprehensive literature review, it is apparent that the main challenges faced by learners after the completion of EGAP courses are:

1. not being able to transfer academic skills from EGAP to disciplinary courses,

2. lacking knowledge about discipline-specific, genre-specific writing, and

3. lacking discipline-specific vocabulary

Through exploring these challenges, we will also examine possible solutions to meet these unique academic needs.

Unsuccessful transfer from EGAP to discipline-based courses

Hüttner (2008) posited that the primary aim of an EGAP course should be that students acquire transferable skills, which include "developing a general understanding of the relations between communicative purpose and text, and a genre awareness that enables students to understand the workings of genres unfamiliar

to them in order to ultimately be able to produce them" (p. 150). James (2009) concurred that transfer of learning outcomes is an important goal in university writing education but acknowledges that the writing tasks students do in an EGAP course may be different from the writing tasks they are expected to do in other courses. This difference may be problematic for the transfer of learning outcomes from the EGAP course, but it is possible that certain techniques, such as providing cues for students in a task prompt, can be used to promote learning transfer. In fact, the study concluded that even if certain learning outcomes are suitable for application in different kinds of tasks in different contexts, the students themselves may not actually apply those learning outcomes. This is to say that while learning outcomes may be transferable, they are not necessarily transferred.

To illustrate this notion of lack of transfer and to understand the perspectives of EGAP students on the program's effectiveness, Dooey (2010) conducted a two-phase study that examined the perceptions of thirteen students from various cultural backgrounds who had been enrolled in an English Language Bridging Course (ELBC), which falls under the umbrella of EGAP, at a university in Western Australia. The first phase of the study focused on finding out the students' perceptions upon completion of this program, and the second phase was done after these students had completed at least one full term in their tertiary course. The findings illustrated that although the students found the ELBC program to be generally a helpful starting point, they still found themselves struggling with elements such as understanding their lecturers' and other students' accents, giving formal presentations, general listening skills, and being able to participate in in-class discussions and out-of-class activities.

Lack of discipline-specific and genre-specific knowledge in writing

Keefe and Shi (2017) found similar results in their study of students who were enrolled in an EGAP program before entering their disciplinary courses at a Canadian university. The objective of the study was to gain insight into students' experiences in their first year of university. Participants reported facing a number of challenges in their disciplinary courses in the first year, including struggling to understand lectures, completing new and more complex tasks specific to their disciplinary courses, and adjusting to new expectations of having to do more work autonomously outside of class. In addition, participants reported a disconnect between the writing they had completed in the EGAP program and the writing expected of them in their disciplinary program, despite the fact that essay writing was the most common form of assignment in the EGAP program. These findings were echoed by Counsell (2011) who reported that participants did not feel that their EGAP course influenced their ability to recognize effective writing strategies in all cases or to transfer these strategies into their discipline-specific writing tasks. The study concluded that students

must have access to discipline-specific content and the opportunity to "gain a voice within the discourse community of their chosen discipline" (p. 11). Although EGAP instructors teach many types of writing tasks (such as a five-paragraph essay or an academic summary), these types of writing tasks do not actually provide opportunities for learners to acquire, and later display, stream-specific writing skills such as an increase in vocabulary richness and complexity and understanding of writing improvement in certain genre norms and conventions (Knoch et al., 2015). This lack of genre knowledge is an alarming issue because although instructors may try to develop students' metacognitive genre awareness in an EGAP class, this is difficult to do when students do not have a shared academic trajectory or developed disciplinary knowledge. In addition, instructors are often limited in their knowledge of writing practices across *all* disciplines (Tardy et. al, 2022).

As Alexander (2019) noted, one of the main goals of EGAP programs is to help students analyze texts from given contexts so as to understand the relevant content and engage with it to show understanding or generate new ideas, but due to the nature of EGAP courses, students are not usually able to learn genre-specific writing that is specific to their own discipline which is why they struggle with writing tasks once they are enrolled in their disciplinary programs. It is evident that generally students feel unprepared and lack knowledge of discipline-specific writing genres as they feel their EGAP instructors did not, and could not, prepare them for every writing genre they would encounter in their academic career. This lack of genre knowledge may encourage students to fall back on genres and forms they have used previously but that does not apply to the specific expectations of the assignment (Johns, 2008; Miller et al., 2016 as cited in Caplan, 2019) and may result in receiving a low grade, feeling discouraged, and losing motivation. One glaring example is the medical field. León Pérez and Martín-Martín (2016) stated that in the medical field, publishing scientific papers in English is an essential step for promotion and professional advancement. However, it is evident that many EAL learners struggle to master the appropriate rhetorical conventions needed to write such papers. Despite the efforts of EAP researchers, there remains a lack of "specific practical writing courses with an explicit pedagogical approach to the teaching of academic genres" (p. 96). As such, many post-secondary institutions have increasingly been adopting a more discipline-specific and Genre-Based Pedagogy approach to their EGAP programs.

Bridging the gap: Moving toward a GBP approach within ESAP courses

Melles et al. (2005) illustrated one such approach through a case study at the University of Melbourne. A course within the Architecture Faculty was created with the intent to blend a language and communication focus with an analysis of the genres and tasks specific to architecture. It was established that the curricula

must be responsive to changes in the broader disciplinary context, and close collaboration between faculty and EAP staff is necessary. This was exemplified through ongoing discussions with faculty staff about their pedagogical practices, which included examining the roles of language and content and the importance of making disciplinary genre and discourse conventions explicit for students. Melles et al. concluded that "the EAP field needs to take up the critical challenge of engaging with the disciplines through interdisciplinary collaboration" (p. 15), and that discipline-specific credit-based EAP programs offer a way to do exactly that.

Van Viegen and Russell (2019) also recognized the importance of discipline specificity in L2 pedagogy. They found that an English for Academic Purposes Bridging Program (EBP) at an English-medium university successfully prepared students for the requirements of their undergraduate degrees. The program included both EGAP and discipline-specific courses, and students were required to complete a full-year undergraduate credit-bearing course related to their discipline. Students also completed a non-credit, discipline-specific half-course that corresponded to their admission stream and focused on the lexis, grammar, and discourse of different text genres, with the learning tasks consisting of assignments typical of what students would be expected to do in their discipline undergraduate course work. A significant number of students received final grades of adequate or higher in their discipline-specific course, which corresponded to their later CGPA (cumulative grade point average) in their undergraduate program. As such, Van Viegen and Russell concluded that students need opportunities to develop not only content knowledge within their discipline but also language knowledge and practice understanding and producing written and oral communication that adheres to the rhetorical conventions of their discipline.

Thus, to help students become more familiar with genre-specific writing in their disciplines, instructors must help develop learners' genre awareness *in combination with* genre knowledge through the examination of genre samples and increasing students' awareness of discipline-specific features in genres (Cheng, 2018, as cited in Tardy et. al, 2022). In other words, learners first need a deep understanding of the concept of genre and how it affects textual choices, language use, organization of content, etc. before they can develop the skills needed to produce text in a specific genre. The main objectives of teaching genre awareness are to help students "understand the intricate connections between contexts and forms, to perceive potential ideological effects of genres, and to discern both constraints and choices that genres make possible" (Devitt, 2004, p. 198, as cited in Tardy et. al, 2020).

As ESAP courses implement a more genre-based pedagogy (GBP) approach in writing, students are further able to overcome such genre-related writing barriers. GBP was first described by Swales (1990), who "identified task, discourse community, and genre as the foundational concepts of a new approach to teaching academic writing" (Tardy et. al, 2022, p. 2). One reason this approach has been proven successful

is that it aims to "raise students' awareness of how language is used to carry out rhetorical goals of a community through various categories of texts (genres)" (Tardy et. al, 2022, p. 2). To examine the extent of the effectiveness of genre-based approach and material in teaching writing in the ESAP context, Ellis et al. (1998) conducted a study on 34 participants who were required to take two semesters of English as part of their degree program. The courses consisted of 6 hours per week over a 3-week period (the writing component was only 2 hours per week). In this study, students were divided into two groups of genre and non-genre groups. In the genre group, participants were taught writing using genre-based teaching material, whereas, in the non-genre group, participants used more traditional, non-genre materials. The results of this study clearly showed that a teaching approach focusing on the rhetorical organization would be successful in an ESAP teaching class with fairly advanced learners.

In another study which examined the awareness of language features and generic structures of discussion genre texts, Nagao (2019) implemented a genre-based approach to text-based writing lessons during a fifteen-week EAP course. The participants of the study were 27 Japanese EFL learners at the university level with mixed low and high English proficiency. The study focused on four main stages: Stage (1): modeling and deconstruction of a text; Stage (2): writing of target texts; Stage (3): genre analysis of peers' essays; and Stage (4): writing of an analysis reflection. The results of the study indicated that following these four stages showed major improvements in the learners' genre-based writing, particularly among the low-proficiency English learners.

Lack of discipline-specific vocabulary in EGAP learners

In the same way, it is generally recognized that students' knowledge of academic vocabulary affects their writing and learning in EAP courses. However, little research has looked into how to teach and how to learn discipline-specific vocabulary. In discussing the role of specialized language in learning disciplinary knowledge, Woodward-Kron (2008) stated that a lack of discipline-specific vocabulary will cause problems when students express ideas in complex grammar and make oral presentations in content-specific courses. In his longitudinal study of how learners from one academic discipline incorporate content-specific language in their writing, Woodward-Kron (2008) concluded that students' ability to use the discipline-specific language determines their success in understanding the content knowledge and in writing accurately within that specific context.

Echoing Woodward-Kron (2008), other studies have also suggested that the acquisition of subject-specific vocabulary is one of the main language difficulties of EGAP learners. One such study is Evans' & Green's (2007) extensive study of 5000 undergraduate students from one Hong Kong university. Through analyzing data collected from questionnaires, interviews, structured focus-group discussions, and tests, the researchers

found that one of the major issues facing these 5000 students is their lack of both receptive and productive vocabulary. The researchers contended that such a lack of basic language competence could hinder students' achievement in more complex macro-linguistic tasks. It would also lead to a lack of confidence when students study in disciplinary courses within English-medium universities. Thus, the researchers called for more focus on the teaching and learning of subject-specific vocabulary.

In the same way, Flowerdew (2003) investigated a corpus of undergraduate students' problem-solution writing and analyzed a corpus of problem-solution texts written by experts. He compared the keywords used by the undergraduate students and the professionals and found that the students' restricted lexical knowledge is hindering them from using causative verbs to effectively explain problems and solutions. This lack of lexical knowledge gave rise to the repetitive use of the solution-problem pattern instead of utilizing "the lexicogrammatical pattern of implicit causative verb" (p. 507). The researcher acknowledged that "the student writing [...] investigated displayed a restricted use of the vocabulary and patterns commonly found in professional writing" (p. 508), which again proves the integral role of learning discipline-specific vocabulary. To address such lack of lexical knowledge, Flowerdew suggested that instructors need to sensitize students to different registers of causative verbs. The studies listed above are only part of a growing body of literature on the current issue of students' lack of discipline-specific vocabulary.

Data-driven learning (DDL) approach in ESAP courses

Corpus linguistics (CL) has been popular among researchers and other professionals as tools to describe language phenomena in many areas of language study. According to CL, "language use is mediated by register, which means that language teaching needs to address register awareness successfully in order for learners to use the appropriate form of language across contexts" (Friginal, 2018. p. 27). To help raise such register awareness, researchers have been focusing on using concordance skills within specialized corpora to show learners the probabilistic variation of different language features in terms of frequency and context of use (Anthony, 2019; Boulton, 2015; Chambers, et. al., 2011; Donley & Reppen, 2001; Friginal, 2013b; Gavioli & Aston, 2011, as cited in Friginal, 2018). This idea is further illustrated by Boulton's (2012) meta-synthesis of empirical evaluation of corpus studies. He stated that in the areas of ESL/EFL pedagogy and acquisition, the corpus approach can effectively help learners understand "genre and text type as well as discipline-specific language" (p. 261). Along the same line, Bennett (2010) also confirmed the affordances of the corpus approach. He pointed out that corpus linguistics can provide learners access to highly specific language and terminology in different disciplines to more accurately address learners' specific needs.

To resolve learners' lack of discipline-specific and genre-specific vocabulary, we propose the use of a Data-Driven Learning (DDL) approach: a corpus linguistics method. DDL was first coined by Johns (1991) as an

approach in which "the language learner is also, essentially, a research worker whose learning needs to be driven by access to linguistic data—hence the term data-driven learning to describe the approach" (as cited in Rees, et. al., 2014, p. 2). It is a type of learning method that addresses learners' needs by providing them with the target language database (the corpus). Learners then would use tools and search strategies, such as Key-Word-In-Context concordances, word frequency lists, word dispersion plots, collocation tables, and so on, to study different language items (Anthony, 2019).

DDL allows learners to interact with various corpora using corpus analysis software to facilitate learning. One of DDL's applications in language education is corpus-based dictionaries, which differ from traditional dictionaries in that they offer more features such as more samples used in authentic contexts, collocations and semantic prosody, and academic word lists (Friginal, 2018). Another way to effectively use DDL is for students to access a corpus of the target language (such as the British Academic Writing Essay corpus) where they can use search strategies to identify the context and frequency of how different language items are being used. For example, in DDL classrooms, instructors could introduce the *File View* tool, which is available in most corpus software and is very user-friendly. This will help learners understand how certain language items are used. These "inductive, self-directed, language-learning exercises through interaction with a corpus" can help learners hypothesize language use based on their own observation of authentic texts (Anthony, 2019, p. 179). DDL could also be used outside the classroom. For example, students can search certain corpora to confirm information or to look for "a replacement for a specialist informant during homework writing tasks" (Anthony, 2019, p. 180).

DDL has been shown to improve language learning, particularly vocabulary. One such study is Boulton and Cobb's (2017) meta-analysis of 64 papers. The researchers investigated the effectiveness of employing corpus linguistics for L2 learning. Abundant data demonstrated that DDL techniques, especially hands-on concordance, resulted in considerable overall effects on boosting learners' abilities and knowledge. In agreement with Boulton and Cobb's (2017) claim, Ackerley's study also showed that using DDL approaches enabled learners to develop their analytical noticing skills, which enhanced learners' autonomy and confidence in and out of their classroom learning. Learning how to use corpora to assist their learning is "a transferable skill that students can take with them into whatever professional field they might enter in the future" (2021, p. 93).

We echo Ackerley (2021) in that it is integral for learners to develop skills to use the vocabulary and lexico-grammatical patterns of specialized texts so that they can follow the norms of their specific discourse community. By doing so, the likelihood of the learners' writing resembling that of expert or professional writers of a specific genre will be higher. Based on the above studies, we highly believe the DDL approach

could raise learners' awareness about registers, namely how language is used differently in different contexts. By exposing learners to enormous authentic samples of language use, learners would be more capable of acquiring and applying discipline-specific vocabulary. We concur with Friginal's assertion in his book *Corpus Linguistics for English Teachers*, that learning English for various purposes "can be (best) accomplished in the classroom when students use corpora, corpus tools, and corpus-based materials to examine specific characteristics of spoken and written registers" (2018, p. 28).

Final remarks

We first want to acknowledge that there remains considerable potential in this area for future research. It would be beneficial to explore in more depth student results after finishing an ESAP course. This could look like measuring transfer by conducting a pretest immediately after students finish an ESAP class, then a posttest when they have completed their degree program, and a thorough analysis of the results to determine how successful the ESAP class was in enabling students to transfer skills and learning outcomes. This could also take the form of conducting studies that focus on students' perceptions of their learning after completing an ESAP class, and determining how the class was useful to them through questionnaires or interviews.

Furthermore, we want to affirm that while EGAP can indeed provide many benefits for some students, it is simply not enough to meet the diverse needs of many EAL learners studying at English-medium universities. Based on our extensive research in this area, we can clearly see that students struggle with various aspects of academia, most notably with transferring skills and learning outcomes from EGAP courses to discipline-specific courses and in being equipped with comprehensive genre-knowledge and discipline-specific vocabulary.

Finally, we are confident that our proposed solutions of encouraging English-medium universities to not only implement ESAP classes but to ensure that the curriculum and pedagogical practices of these classes utilize a GBP and DDL approach will provide teachers with all of the necessary tools to create fulfilling and effective classes. Most importantly, it will allow EAL students to receive the quality of education they deserve, and the opportunity to realize their full potential.

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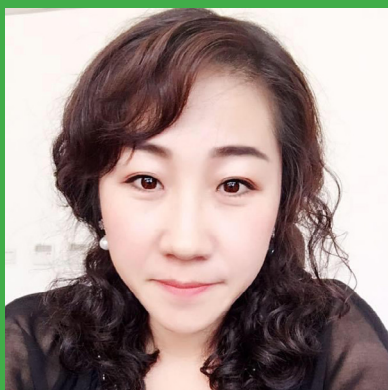
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EAP teacher identity negotiation and its impact on our teaching practice: Research insight from the public college system in Ontario

By Plamen Kushkiev, Canada

Rationale for research into EAP teacher identity

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pre-sessional/pathway classes are a popular course offering at private and public institutions in Ontario (Kushkiev, 2022) as Canada ranks amongst the most popular study destinations for English language learning (Languages Canada- Bonard Research Report, 2021). Around 40 % of Canadian ESL and EAP programs are offered by institutions in Ontario (Languages Canada, 2020). International and domestic students opt to complete an EAP program as a pathway into their college or university studies without the need to write internationally administered English language proficiency tests to meet the admissions requirements of their institution of choice.

Due to the lack of a national or provincial institutionalized accrediting body similar to the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP), EAP offerings across Canada tend to vary in program length, course structure, academic home within the institution, and teacher professional backgrounds. Both independent and bridging EAP programs (Fox et al., 2006) aim at developing learners' discursive and discourse competencies (Hyatt, 2015), transferrable skills, along with their developing language abilities to effectively navigate the Canadian higher education environment.

Despite the sudden and dramatic disruption to regular course offerings, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the growing number of newcomers to Canada have further contributed to the socio-cultural diversity of both students and teachers, particularly in Ontario (Siefker et al., 2020). Against the backdrop of the published literature on students' perceptions, needs analysis, assessment and critical pedagogy, research into Canadian EAP teachers' perceptions of their practice remains scarce and fragmented (Kushkiev, 2022). Prior research has indicated the need to explore EAP teacher identity as it informs our philosophy of teaching, principles, pedagogy, and interaction with the learners.

Research aims

The ostensible lack of a systematic focus on and research into Canadian EAP teacher identity has informed an autoethnographic study, which I conducted during the sudden pivot to emergency remote delivery in March and April 2020 and a year into online teaching in May and June 2021. I engaged with the literature on second language and EAP teacher identity to establish a research niche and stake a contribution to knowledge and professional practice of pre-service and practicing EAP teachers in Ontario and across Canada.

Using a teacher learning journal (Moon, 2006), I explored how my perceptions of reflexive, projected, recognized, and imagined identity facets (Benson et al., 2013) influenced my pedagogical realizations, adaptation of course material, use of Web 2.0 tools and LMS, as well as developing interactional competence in the virtual classroom (Moorhouse et al., 2021). I generated reflexive accounts in my learning journal in two tranches and used Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2021) reflexive thematic analysis method to configure the data into codes, which I later collated into three themes. The analysis of the data and implications I created for my own professional practice may resonate with other EAP teachers in Canada and beyond. This study's results can also serve as a provocation for teacher researchers to reflect on the need to re-conceptualize our teaching approaches from the lenses of our shifting identities which can inform an EAP specific pedagogy (Morgan, 2004).

Research results and implications

Informed both by Ellis' evocative (2004) and Anderson's (2006) analytic forms of autoethnographic and reflexive writing, I constructed a narrative of my reflections, which I generated in my teacher learning journal after teaching the daily class during both research periods. I shuttled back and forth along the narrative many times, "making the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (Little & Little, 2021, p. 2) because I had to subject many of my tacitly held assumptions, biases, principles, and philosophies to a critical scrutiny to make sense of the effect that my developing EAP teacher identity had on my teaching. I had to expose many of my teacher vulnerabilities when navigating the online classroom to arrive at theoretical and practical implications that might add theoretical and methodological value to the community.

Autoethnographic research almost always implicates others (Sikes, 2004) and thus carries a heavy ethical burden on the researcher to ensure no harm will be caused by their research results. One's identity is not just a private matter "but is also a dynamic recreation of the elusive nature of social *reality"* (Kushkiev, 2022, p. 144, emphasis in original). The analysis of the data and collation of themes was an iterative process, through which I aimed to focus on the *ethno* aspect of my research. My purpose was to present study results which would not only inform certain transformative actions to my own practice but also highlight the need for EAP teachers to engage in a systematic, honest and self-guided reflection on their pedagogical realizations.

As I was developing my analytical sensitivity (Braun & Clarke, 2013), I actively configured three main themes: A) constructing reflexive and projected identity facets through language; B) EAP teacher learning; and C) EAP teacher role

identity. Theme A indicated a reversion to a more teacher-focused classroom and deductive approach to conducting fully virtual EAP classes. I was struggling to *become* and assume an identity of an online EAP teacher who could facilitate the classes as communicatively as I could prior to the onset of the pandemic. Adopting pre-pandemic lesson frameworks and adapting them for online delivery while developing my own e-interactional competencies crystallized as a conflict between the reflexive (how I viewed myself) and projected (the image I presented to the learners) facets of my identity.

Reflecting on my own teacher learning under Theme B, the adoption of certain Web 2.0 tools to engage the learners and facilitate the online lessons resulted in deskilling of my pedagogical and technological competence, compared to my realisations in the in-person classroom. This theme also highlighted my previous disinterestedness to integrate technological tools and affordances to diversify the methods of presenting information and evaluating learners' performance before the sudden pivot to emergency remote delivery in March 2020.

Under Theme C, I decided to analyze the effect of certain socio-political values on meso and macro levels as they percolate into my own practice and influence my teaching performance. I explored my perceptions as a part-time and sessional faculty whose insecurities during the unplanned pivot only became exacerbated due to the precarious employment conditions that many other educators also had to navigate. I was constructing an image of my teacher self as a college professor who facilitates their learners' induction into the community of the institution, helps them develop their transferrable skills for success and prepares them to satisfy the learning outcomes of the EAP program to achieve success in their college studies. All three themes highlighted a conflict between the projected, reflexive, and ascribed facets of my teacher identity, obliterating the image of my imagined identity as an EAP teacher in both virtual and hybrid classrooms.

Several important implications for the professional practice of teaching EAP in Ontario and across Canada can be suggested. EAP teachers constitute a diverse body of professionals who hail from different educational and socio-cultural backgrounds. Their prior academic and pedagogical experiences, which are commonly related to ESL teaching, present a valuable source of lived experiences and perspectives that require systematic and critical research on identity roles. Conceptualizing teacher identity as pedagogy after Morgan (2004), there arises the need for future studies to centre around EAP specific pedagogy and EAP digital pedagogy. ESL teachers bring a rich variety of insight, skillsets, pedagogical repertoire, and communication skills, but these resources require careful reflection on how to be adapted to cater to the specific needs of EAP learners in Ontario.

Pre-service and in-service EAP preparation courses are largely missing as professional development opportunities for faculty who should join the teaching community as qualified EAP teachers rather than become ones after being employed by an EAP program provider. Research has indicated the need to explore the effect of EAP teachers' perceptions of their shifting and developing identities, continuously and systematically, and their influence on our teaching realisations, assessment, and interaction with the learners. Due to the lack of a professional accrediting body with an established competency framework, EAP teachers' development remains at their will and department's discretion. The precarious nature of the profession poses another challenge to teachers' commitment of time, effort, and emotional investment with their own learning while often navigating several teaching assignments simultaneously.

Final thoughts

This research study has been instrumental in understanding the need to critically analyze my philosophy, principles, beliefs and values, and specific ways in which they colour my perceptions that guide the theoretical and practical aspects of my EAP teaching. Teacher narratives can be "powerful vehicles for introspection, reflection, and transformative action" (Kushkiev, 2022, p. 155), particularly for pre-service and less experienced EAP teachers who come from an ESL teaching background. Practicing teachers bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their practice but may require a continuous and honest reflection on how to adapt their pedagogical realisations to meet the specific needs of EAP learners. More EAP teacher experiences in reflective narratives can strengthen our collective voice and suggest specific ways how to make our EAP teaching more learner-centred, humanistic, and inclusive.

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Hidden racism

By Linda Ward, Canada

Introduction

"Racism in Canada is subtle; implicit. That is racism is usually hidden…At the same time these views exist beside public beliefs which underlie assumptions that racism does not exist in Canada" (Madibbo, 2006, p. 142). Racism involves discrimination, segregation, exclusion and power imbalances and a complex mix of race, gender, religion, culture, and language. It is rooted in history and creates the *other* in society reinforcing our differences and causing fear. Racism is a social construct that is easy to define but not always easy to see.

Newcomers come to Canada expecting their new country to be multicultural with acceptance of diverse cultures, religions, languages, and experience. For many newcomers, this may not be the case. This may be especially true for learners in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, as they may not recognize the subtle ways that racism affects their new lives in Canada (Vang & Chang, 2019).

For example, over the past decades, many newcomers have enrolled in specific LINC classes to learn language for Canadian workplaces. Even with these classes, newcomers have faced many challenges finding employment in their areas of education and experience. Employers report that the barrier to employment for new immigrants and refugees is the lack of Canadian experience (Reitz, 2007). Is this hidden racism?

Racism in Canada

Current racism in Canada can be linked to past federal government language policy. The work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B & B Commission) (1963–1969) in the 1960s created a bilingual framework within which a multicultural policy was created. With the creation of the Official Languages Act (1969), English and French were made the official languages of Canada. In response to presentations to the B & B Commission from other ethnic groups, the Multicultural Act (1988) was created to recognize diverse ethnic groups in Canada. But for these other ethnic groups, this Act created a hierarchy,

where English and French languages were dominant and other languages secondary. The dominant languages—English and French—received official government status and funding for both language and culture. Other languages received only recognition and a much smaller amount of funding for cultural activities. While the Official Languages Act signalled that people lived in a bilingual country of English and French, the Multicultural Act indicated that all people in Canada could maintain their cultures, with no clear place for other languages. In addition, these two Acts imply that culture and language are separate and for most people this is not the case. Language and culture are deeply tied (Haque, 2012).

When we look at the racism in the context of the LINC program, we need to examine racism within an institution. This type of racism "includes institutional policies and practices which operate to sustain the disadvantages of racialized groups" (Madibbo, 2006, p. 30). By examining the policies and practices of the LINC program, we can begin to see the subtle racism embedded in these policies and practices.

Subtle racism in LINC policies

The objective of the LINC program as stated by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is to "help improve newcomers' official language abilities and help newcomers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate into Canadian society" (Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, 2020, p. 21). In this context what does *integration* mean? According to government documents, integration is defined as "a process of mutual adjustment by both newcomers and society. Newcomers are expected to understand and respect basic Canadian values, and Canadians are expected to understand and respect the cultural differences newcomers bring to Canada. Rather than expecting newcomers to abandon their own cultural heritage, the emphasis is on finding ways to integrate differences in a pluralistic society" (CIC, 2001, p. 4). But does Canada really respect newcomers and adjust to their needs, or is integration a unidirectional and forceful requirement where only newcomers are expected to adjust to Canadian ways?

According to a review of policy statements, immigration debates, and academic writings, Li (2003) found that instead of acceptance of differences, newcomers are expected to mould to Canadian values and expectations. In these documents, Canadian values were written as a singular set of values and implied was that Canadian values were values of the white settlers. Highlighted in these documents was that differences in values became more visible as more people from non-white, non-European countries immigrated to Canada. Concerns were raised about how these *differences* would alter Canadian values. Newcomers who continued to follow their own language, social, and cultural practices were considered detrimental to Canadian values. For all newcomers, successful integration was seen when newcomers would quickly and smoothly adopt Canadian values in both workplaces and communities. All this shows a power imbalance with newcomers expected to conform rather than collaborate on a process of *mutual adjustment* (Li, 2003).

How do LINC teachers interpret *integration* in the classroom? In Interviews with LINC teachers, they reported that curriculum documents do not specifically address integration. Because of this lack of definition, teachers had a diverse understanding of what integration means. This diverse understanding led to teachers not addressing integration consistently or not addressing it at all (Haque, 2017).

How do teachers define Canadian values and Canadian society? Research with LINC teachers, administrators, and learners found that defining one Canadian society was very difficult. They recognized that there were diverse cultures in Canadian society and that multiculturalism was a value of Canadian society, but for many teachers, highlighting diverse cultures meant only celebrations of food and festivals. Pötzsch (2017) highlights that these superficial discussions of differences put these cultures at risks for being seen as *add-ons*. Non-white immigrant groups are seen as both *different* and *additional*. This view once more reinforces that non-white immigrant groups are the *others* and raises questions for both teachers trying to explain and learners trying to understand who *belongs* in Canadian society and what it takes to belong (Pötzsch, 2017).

Subtle racism in LINC practices—Teaching and assessment tools

Canadian citizenship programs and guides

What aspects of citizenship are important for newcomers, teachers, and administrators? In an analysis of citizenship study guides, published over the last 20 years, Gulliver (2018) found no information on racism. He drew two conclusions. The first is that racism is not just hidden, but it is denied, and denial of racism is often the most important indicator of racism. The second is that newcomers' traditions and values are presented as negative and Canadian values as positive. In another study, Fleming (2010) reported a wide gap between the way newcomers to Canada and national assessment and curriculum documents conceptualize Canadian citizenship. For newcomers, Canadian citizenship means "human rights, multicultural policy, and the obligations of being citizens" (p. 589); while in the assessment guides and documents, Canadian citizenship means conforming to the Canadian standards of behavior. These definitions put Canadian culture in a higher position than the cultures of adult language learners and subtly diverges from the claims of multicultural policy statements. In further review, Fleming's (2010) analysis found that the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs), include only three language descriptors that contain the elements of Canadian citizenship. Fleming (2010) criticized curriculum and assessment documents for placing adult language learners in a deficit position where they are considered as "relatively powerless, passive, and atomized recipients of programming designed to normalize them into a dominant culture" (p. 589).

A challenge with the citizenship programs is that most citizenship tasks are postponed until learners reach a high level of language proficiency. This means that learners can only start studying for citizenship and learning about Canadian citizenship when the learners are in higher levels of language classes. Fleming (2010) interprets this as a further sign of the power imbalances in LINC classes where the institution decides when a learner is ready to prepare for citizenship and not based on the learner's knowledge or interest.

Lesson plans

In a review of lesson plans in a curriculum document, Baker (2021) found that learners were subtly identified as *the others* in Canadian society. In a series of lessons on pragmatics, lesson plans used *we* to describe teachers such as *we, in Canada…* and *you* to describe the learners. Implied in this use of *we* and *you* is that the teacher presents the correct, Canadian way of speaking and the learner's way of speaking is the *other*. The lesson plans identify a Canadian way of speaking which the learner must adapt to to be accepted in Canadian society. In reality, the ways of speaking are as individual as each of us. There are many ways to say the same thing and in many cases no one way is right. In addition, the language in the lesson plans puts the learner as responsible for negotiating, using constructive criticism, being polite, remaining calm, respecting other, and maintaining good relationships. There is no discussion that all these tasks are the responsibility of both speakers or how to respond to a speaker if they do not use these practises. Even though the lesson plans provide scenarios where the learner faces racism, it is the learner's responsibility to know how to manage these situations not the Canadian speaker. "Regardless of how other Canadian interlocutor (speakers) behave, learners of this unit are taught to remain calm, passive and maintain peaceful relationships" (Baker, 2021, p. 86).

ESL teacher training programs

In teacher training programs, there is little information on teaching about racism or support for how to teach about racism. Suraweera (2020) reviewed TESL Ontario accredited teacher training program curricula to look at how racism and antiracism were presented. She also held focus groups and interviews with TESL trainers, curriculum developers, and program coordinators to see what race, gender, and class-related problems practitioners observed and experienced. She found that curriculum material, classroom activities, and course outlines provided definitions and some information on cultural diversity, but there were no ideas on how racism could be addressed through teaching, learning, assessment, or classroom management. Suraweera felt that teaching modules on socio-cultural issues focused on culture to avoid the discomfort of race-related discussion. Although teachers shared examples of both overt and hidden racism from their personal lives and as teachers, they reported difficulties addressing racism in the classroom.

The teachers' personal experiences and awareness of racism, and not the material provided for teacher training, influenced how the teachers felt about using an anti-racism curriculum (Suraweera, 2020).

Strategies to address hidden racism

Strategies to address hidden racism in the language learning classroom need to shift the focus from a teacher/learner style to focus on language as emergent and dynamic where teacher and learner build a collaborative relationship to examine language use and power imbalances (Baker, 2021). This involves engaging the learners in dialogue, critical examination of existing materials, and multimodal teaching strategies.

Baker (2021) suggests using scenarios and case studies in current lesson plans and curriculum and to discuss racism. One case study identified in a curriculum document is:

> In a listening task, learners are presented with the story of a racialized Canadian woman who was offended when an interlocutor (speaker) questioned her fluency in English. The story is quickly dismissed as an amusing anecdote and learners are only asked to retell the story (a comprehension task) with no further discussion. (p. 86)

This specific scenario could easily be followed up by a discussion of personal experiences of racism faced by newcomers.

Baker (2021) also suggests teachers and learners critically examine case studies and scenarios to explore who is blamed for miscommunications. In one example from a curriculum document:

> In this lesson, students are asked to complete a role play in pairs, where one student plays a manager and the other plays an assistant. The assistant is required to clarify and confirm instructions—and students take turns playing the assistant role. Instructions to the student playing the assistant are worded: 'As the assistant you must use strategies to clarify and confirm the instructions.' That the assistant—and not the manager—would be responsible for miscommunication is representative of a broader theme running throughout: Those with less power are responsible for miscommunication. The 'assistant' or the language learner, rather than the 'manager' or native speaker interlocutor are responsibilized to reduce the likelihood of miscommunication. (pp. 85–86)

In this example, discussion could acknowledge that responsibility for respectful communication is the responsibility of both speakers (Baker, 2021).

As discussed earlier, teachers in TESL training programs are not given strategies or resources to examine racism; consequently, teachers may not have the resources to introduce the topic of racism in the LINC classroom. One way

to introduce this topic is to use authentic examples of both past and present incidences of racism in Canada. Using newspaper articles, radio clips, or podcasts on the marginalization of Indigenous people in Canada may challenge learners' perceptions of Canada as a tolerant and unbiased country and encourage learners to look at incidents of racism in their own lives in Canada (Pötzsch, 2017).

Multi-modal strategies to engage learners may provide an opportunity in the classroom to discuss racism. Burgess and Rowsell (2020) used artifacts, images, and collages to read, write, and listen around language and culture and to dive deeply into the lived experience of immigrant and refugee learners. Using these multi-modal strategies, teachers could pay attention to incidents of racism or deliberately use these strategies to discuss racism and how it affects the learners' lives in Canada (Burgess & Roswell, 2020).

Portillo et al. (2022) suggest being aware of cultural differences in the use of language to help identify hidden racism. They give the example of how a Latin X learner called his black friend a word in English which is an expletive, but for Spanish speaking learners means black guy. As other learners in the class started to use this word more generally for all black people, the teachers used this opportunity to discuss how this word has a different history and meaning in the context of North America (Portillo et al., 2022).

LINC administrators can address racism with policy and organizational changes. One LINC program (Pötzsch, 2017) created a policy on mandatory intercultural training for both their own staff as well as the staff in partner organizations. To support the intercultural training, a centre for intercultural education was created. Efforts were also made to hire staff with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds that reflect their learners' backgrounds (Pötzsch, 2017).

TESL Ontario teacher training programs could add antiracism strategies to their programs. Teachers, administrators, and students, in Suraweera's (2020) study, recommended adding activities to reflect on personal biases, case studies, and scenarios with hidden and overt racism. In addition, they suggested adding critical theory to the theory course and anti-racist approaches in the socio-cultural modules (Suraweera, 2020).

Conclusion

"Confronting racism and oppression requires disruptive knowledge, knowledge which resists the desire to essentialize and close one off from learning more" (Pötzsch, 2017 p. 57). Confronting hidden racism is even more challenging in that it is difficult for both teachers and learners to recognize. Although it may not be explicitly stated in CLB and PBLA documents, LINC teachers have a mandate, as outlined by the purpose of the LINC program, to help their learners integrate into Canadian society. Racism, although it may be hidden, is a part of living in Canada for many newcomers. LINC teachers can provide a safe place for

their learners to share insights into the lives they live in Canada. Together, LINC teachers and newcomers can critically examine LINC policy, curriculum, and practices to identify hidden racism and reduce the differences we see in others.

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Our Silent Journey: Supporting English language learners to adapt to the classroom

By Ricardo-Martín Marroquín, Canada

Introduction

It is evident that the number of English language learners (ELLs) has increased in the last few years. In Ontario, more than 25% of the student population are learning English as a second language (L2) (Statistics Canada, 2020). Given that numbers are increasing, it is important to know how to support ELLs in the classroom, school community, and in their own communities with the purpose of helping each student become successful. Hence, the core of this message is to provide strategies that may support newcomers to feel positive about their learning, as teachers become more aware about their practices in and outside of the classroom. For this reason, we will focus on the settlement curve and explain it, in addition to focusing specifically on the downwards slope to understand the student and provide the necessary assistance. Moreover, we will look at the importance of human contact, especially when dealing with trauma and placing the wellbeing of the child in the core of our practices as educators, suggest strategies of inclusion and wellbeing, and finally provide different resources that will help understand the newcomer's background as we continue to support them.

The numbers

It is said that a substantial chunk of Canada's population is made up of landed immigrants, or at least of people who were once a landed immigrant. In fact, around 8 of the 37 million of the total population are landed immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2022). However, before we proceed, it is important to identify what a landed immigrant is. Any newcomer who has acquired this title *landed Immigrant* is one who has held a permit to come and dwell in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2008). This group is also known as having permanent residency in Canada. In this case, the person has been granted permission to stay and live in Canada, just like any Canadian citizen, but apart from no voting rights. Nevertheless, both statuses mean that the person is on their way to become a Canadian citizen if they chose to become one. Given the fact that more than 20% of Canadians have been at one point (or are still) landed immigrants, it is important

to focus our attention on how to support them in the classroom. In Ontario, 1 out of 3 persons is/has been a landed immigrant (Statistics Canada, 2022). In cities such as Hamilton and Toronto, 1 in 4 and 1 in 2, respectively. Moreover, this data provided by Statistics Canada, can be easily found and attest to the needs of supporting our newcomers in a classroom setting. Furthermore, it is important to mention that within 2016–2021, 1.3 million newcomers settled in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022). These number are simply increasing because of the many devastations occurring in various parts of the world which would allow for more newcomers to immigrate into Canada. The question that quickly arises is: How can a teacher help an ELL adapt to the classroom? What kind of support is readily available to ELLs?

As a former classroom teacher, I understand the many challenges that any classroom teacher faces regularly. Generally, most educators endure curricula challenges, such as the amount of curriculum that must be taught by the end of the year. This often includes modification and accommodations of curricula, behavioral issues, differentiation of instruction, and providing the students a safe and welcoming environment where all learners feel included and safe to participate, along with the addition of new students, including newcomers. This, of course, would also include newcomers that do not speak English and/or may be new to the Canadian culture. It is critical to point out that not all come in with a permit to stay in Canada. Furthermore, all newcomers will enter Canada with a history, and in some cases, this may involve trauma.

The settlement curve

This curve has been used by different governments that have had an increase in immigration. For example, the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and North America, may utilize this same curve or a similar one. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to recognize the 5 main parts of the curve, which are: (1) the pre-arrival excitement, (2) the arrival, (3) the settling challenges, (4) the getting used to period, and finally (5) the sense of belonging (New Zealand Immigration, n. d.).

The prearrival excitement comprises of the emotional state that a traveler exhibits, having learned of their soon arrival into Canada. Given that Canadian soils are known as a safe haven to many, and an opportunity to better oneself by studying and working, it therefore provides the immigrant with initial excitement for a better lifestyle. For others, such as myself, it was an opportunity to see my father and be reunited with him. Knowing that once again my family would be together, meant that I would be looking forward to entering Canada. Just like my family and I, most newcomers feel the excitement of being able to consider Canada their new home. This knowledge leads all immigrants to feel a sense of excitement and joy; a positive feeling that will culminate soon after the arrival into Canadian land. It is also important to note that Canada may feel and be a safe haven due to the political turmoil, government instability, and war-torn lives that

many immigrants may have had to endure in their homelands. Take for example, Nati, a young boy who was forced to leave his country due to civil war. After months of constant suffering, his family decided to emigrate from their native land in search of a safer and welcoming home. After months of travelling and being treated like second class citizens, and possibly, having suffered the losses of family members, a sound financial life, and having witnessed the atrocities of the war, they find out that they have been given permission to come to Canada—a safe haven. Though our student has not arrived in Canada yet, he feels the excitement of being able to escape his current war-torn reality and come live in Canada. Prior to coming to Canada, I spoke with my father, who was already in Canada. He had promised us a fridge filled with ice cream upon our arrival. Though we were more thrilled to be with him, our minds were also thinking of the ice cream.

The arrival offers a firsthand experience of being in Canada. Everything is new and exciting. There is snow on the ground (if you come in during the winter season) and the roads are large. Big buildings welcome you, and from your new apartment, you can see a majestic view of Lake Ontario. You continue to be excited. The fact that your family can walk to a grocery store filled with all types of goods, fruits and vegetables, meats, and dairy products, makes you not miss anything. Additionally, you feel safe because there is no war. The family that sponsored yours provided you with a freezer filled with ice cream and other goods that they discovered are to your liking. Life is good. This is the period of introduction to the country, both linguistically and culturally. You embrace them both because you embrace your new adopted country. In fact, you are overjoyed that this country opened its doors for you and your family. All feels good. During this period, you are welcomed with open arms, and you are introduced to the culture. With no lack of excitement, you express your gratitude.

The settling challenges begin as soon as you step foot in your new country. Nevertheless, its level of difficulty increases daily and it becomes more notorious the moment that the excitement of having come to Canada dissipates. This part of the curve is when newcomers start feeling exhausted from all the change. That is, an ELL may start noticing that his home country is different than Canada; that there are less people in greater spaces and therefore less opportunities to socialize with others; that their country allows for ambulatory sales on the streets which makes it easier for purchasing household items; that their favourite sport is not being played outside in the middle of the street or a park nearby; that the beautiful snow that hangs itself on bare branches can be cold and wet the moment it falls on your bare nape. The newcomer realizes that days are short during winter months and that the inviting streaming rays strong enough to awake any deep sleeper, was not a reminder that the heat is present on a mid-February day. The student starts missing their relatives and friends, their customs and way of living, their old way of life and possibly the common hot

days. This is the part of the curve where missing someone or something is magnified. As an immigrant, I remember looking back and hoping that the situation in my home country would become better so that we, as a family, may go back. I missed everything about my country; from its exquisite food to its welcoming weather. However, the fact that I could not go back made me feel impotent and this would upset me. I would also like to say that we, as immigrants tend to leave a part of our hearts in our country. That said, we now need to live our new Canadian life with a piece of our soul missing. During this stage, we realize that the cold is not as pretty and welcoming as it was when landing on a plane. This is truly an eye-opener for many immigrants and therefore, is the period where emotions may be at its worst. And by the way, the ice cream is not gone.

For people who have struggled in their own countries due to war or instability, their mind could unintentionally be evoking their past. Therefore, their previous struggles, along with their traumatic experiences, may start to flourish in their lives. Not that they are hoping to relive these experiences, but rather, they sneak up on anyone, producing pain and social-emotional distress. There is this period of transition, of getting used to the new normal in life. There is only time to accept what is in front of one and go forward. However, missing family and extended family, along with friends and a way of life becomes inevitable. This is the part of the curve in which I would like to spend more time. That is, while the student suffers as they navigate this downward slope, the amount of support would need to increase to better support them.

The settled phase is the one where the student has a good sense of belonging. This is the part of the curve where there is integration, growth, and progress. It is also the part where the student is an active contributor to his classroom and school environment. This is the part of the curve where we as educators want our students to be. This is also the part where the student may succeed. It can also be the part of settlement where you actually feel Canadian and/or important. You also realize that there is much that you can offer to your community. You are the expert representing your country and are willing to share your knowledge with the world. You can buy your own ice cream too!

All humans require human contact

Dr. Jean Clinton (Medical Doctor) authored a book entitled *Love Builds Brains*, in which she discusses how positive relationships with children help them grow emotionally. One of her main statements is "all humans require human contact" (Clinton, 2020) which is in fact a statement that can easily be applied to newcomers and/or ELLS. Under this premise, as educators, we need to constantly seek to make connections with our students. This also becomes of greater significance for an ELL, especially when a teacher desires to make

positive connections and subsequently engage his newcomers in daily classroom activities, discussions, social games, and henceforth, learning. Therefore, the fact of making connections may be the difference for a child who has been lacking any human connection as he had to flee his country due to war. In fact, he may not have had any positive human connection that might help him learn. Imagine how much more effect this may have on his life and learning!

Not all newcomers and/or ELLs come with a difficult background. However, what we do know is that most immigrants leave their country due to political turmoil, war, a better education, a safer place, a job opportunity, to be with extended family, or a better future. In fact, in a survey that I presented to newcomers, most of them had mentioned one of the above-mentioned reasons. Moreover, my family came to Canada because of terrorism in Peru in the 80s. The same survey was given to teachers and without surprise, they also indicated similar reasons. Therefore, it is not new information that people leave their beloved country to seek a better and safer life overseas. Nevertheless, what this means is that all immigrants must sacrifice their ways of life, local land, changes in the weather they were familiar with, language, culture, and even habits. Even if a person decides to move to a part of a city in North America where they are represented, there will still be challenges that arise due to the assimilation of both cultures. Take for example the Peruvian community in Toronto. Though this is a smaller population compared to the Chinese community in Toronto, all Peruvians living in Toronto would have to get used to the rules, regulations, weather, and all changes related to Canada. This will also apply to any other subculture available in North America. In other words, as an immigrant and a Peruvian, I would have to get used to the Canadian way of life even though my family continued to carry on our cultural and moral values. Hence, all newcomers, regardless of where they choose to live in their new country, will have to undergo a process of adaptation and assimilation into their new country.

There are different third-party support groups that will help the process of adaptation for a newcomer. It is important to find them and provide their help to all newcomers. If the student and/or family has undergone any type of trauma, then any support that could be provided to the family is fundamental. Therefore, as educators, we need to find out what social-emotional support is required, in addition to being readily available for our newcomers. In 2016, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) proposed a plan to best support all learners specifically with math. Though this article does not focus on math strategies, it is critical to point out that in this plan, the HWDSB placed the well-being of the learner as the core of its plan. In other words, the HWDSB recognized (and continues to recognize) the importance of taking care of the well-being of the student when teaching academics. This is also important when teaching and welcoming newcomers into our classroom, school environment and community.

How to support newcomers

If we believe in the notion presented by Dr. Clinton that "all humans require human contact," then we, as educators, would want to seek opportunities to connect with our students, in and outside of the classroom. Additionally, considering the settlement curve, it is important therefore, to talk about the different strategies available in supporting newcomers adapt in their new Canadian identity whilst learning English. Most teachers would agree that newcomers will require support to feel welcome and included and consequently to facilitate learning. Here are some suggestions to help an ELL feel part of a classroom family, take part (depending on their social character and linguistic level), and extend their learning experience. Keeping in mind the downward slope of the settlement curve, a teacher may need to quickly implement any support to their newcomers, with the idea of helping them during the toughest moment of the curve. In fact, in his book, *12 Rules for Life – An Antidote to Chaos*, Dr. Jordan B. Peterson indicates that with love, encouragement and character intact, a person can be resilient beyond imagining (Chapter 8). Hence, with the right support during a much difficult stage in life, a newcomer might be able to rise above the waters, an ELL might be able to feel safe, included and finally, learn.

Make connections

All newcomers are hoping to make friends, especially after leaving behind their valued friends. It may not be known what kinds of friendship each person is seeking, but we can safely speculate that a loyal friend may be able to help during challenging times. No human being would like to feel alone or desolate, especially if he cannot navigate the system independently. Furthermore, a newcomer would be required to learn English, the Canadian culture and way of life, respect the rules, and satisfy the requirement of being successful. Making connections immediately may ease off the pressures that a newcomer may be feeling. There was a case of a young ELL who came to Canada after having lived in a refugee camp after leaving his homeland. This student who I will call John, was 9-years-old and was born in South Africa, but when he was 5-years-old, his mom decided to flee their country due to the corruption and violence that his mom endured. Having worked for a foreign agency that monitored the quality of medical services in her country, she was asked to use the funds in a way that would have benefited a select group which included a mafia group. After her refusal to cooperate, she started receiving death threats, which made her flee her country. At that point she only left with John and the other 3 minors, given that John's father decided to stay in their land. The family settled in a nearby country and was granted temporary asylum. After staying in this country for close to 4 years, she and her family flew to Canada where they were given permanent residence. However, prior to coming to Canada, she was served with divorce papers from her husband who sought the

opportunity to stay in South Africa with his new family that John, his siblings, and his own mother, did not know about. Additionally, a few months prior to leaving for Canada, John's older brother died in a nearby hospital. John's family did not feel that they had enough time to cope with the loss of their family member and the news of his father having another family. Furthermore, John's mom mentioned that though John attended school, he suffered many racist acts from the locally-born people. His mom also added that she learned not to question or raise any concerns while living in this nearby country, which she did not want to name. She knew that there were racist acts against any foreigners even if they all looked the same, as she pointed to her dark-pigmented skin. After arriving in Canada, John's new teacher noticed some learning issues with John and asked specific information about his academic history. Knowing all his prior familial issues, the ESL teacher told the classroom teacher that John had not been granted a good education and was taught to never question anything. She also told the homeroom teacher about all the suffering that he and his family had endured. She also added that John had never had any formal English lessons and if he was already able to carry out a conversation, it was by his own merit and using YouTube and social media as his means of learning English. After hearing this information, John's teacher left the room crying and with a new perspective about her newcomer. She then decided to connect John with other children in her room and kept an open-door policy with him, so that he may be able to approach her for any questions that the young boy might have. She encouraged him to ask whenever possible and to take part in all types of classroom discussions. Though she could not fathom losing a child or being a refugee, she tried her best to make connections with her new student.

After-school opportunities

Students can join activities that usually run after school. From baseball to soccer, and from the chess club to the student council, these are activities that any newcomer can be involved in to feel part of the school community. There are benefits for joining these co-curricular and/or extra-curricular activities, which are to help learn English outside of a regular classroom setting. Furthermore, it promotes working with a group and comradery and allows students to use other skills, encourages a greater sense of belonging, and allows for a stronger teacher-student bond extending outside the classroom. As a former volleyball coach, I would reap the benefits of coaching students, and these benefits would be seen in the day-to-day classroom operations. In fact, students would give me their best in the classroom when I coached them outside of the classroom. There was more work being done and less time wasted. Additionally, students would treat me with more respect when they realized that I genuinely cared for their wellbeing. Hence, after-school activities are a terrific way to help newcomers become part of the school community.

Providing opportunities to serve others

When I was an ESL/ELD teacher, I had the opportunity to teach a group of 10 students who lived in a refugee camp in distinct parts of the world. Some of them came from Syria, while others from Nigeria or Thailand. Though all the learners had a diverse background, they all showed an enormous potential to learn. Coincidently, my classroom was taken away from me and a new environment for teaching was provided: the school kitchen. This new educational setting could have been seen as a major disadvantage given that there were many interruptions throughout the day. However, it was also an opportunity to work on our attention and focus on the task at hand and be able to use the kitchen for cooking purposes. The school ran a healthy snack program, and most of the donated items such as cheese, eggs, bread, bananas, strawberries, and other berries, were in the kitchen. This meant that my own students could partake in the management of the food by cleaning the snack bins, separating enough food for each class, distributing the bins to the classrooms, and then collecting the empty bins at the end of the day. It also meant that we, as a class, could use the leftover food (and we did). However, for the benefit of the school, particularly our neighboring classes, we would use eggs, fresh vegetables and fruits, and wraps or breads to make smoothies, fruit shakes, and sandwiches. We would then eat what my students cooked and share the food with many different classes. It was a fantastic way to serve others. In fact, my students looked forward to the beginning and end of the day to help, and to the end of the week to create delicious and healthy foods. Much learning was experienced, which also included learning vocabulary through reading and following recipes, expanding their oral language skills, and learning how to cook. It was noted that the more the students felt useful (in the service to other children), the more they felt a sense of belonging.

Open-door policy

As an ESL and grade 8 teacher, I had the pleasure of being visited by former students. I often noted the need that these newcomers had, especially as they graduated from the elementary school where I taught. I began recognizing their needs to be heard and be given advice, and for this reason, I had student graduates come back to visit after school. Each student who decided to visit me at their former school would share their new experiences and ask for advice. I noticed that they needed to be heard. Some of them, whom I had coached in volleyball, would ask me if we could continue playing volleyball. Therefore, we established (with the principal's permission) after school volleyball games on Fridays for former students and staff. We ran this after school volleyball program for a few years, and I noticed that the group would get bigger, given that more students would have graduated and come back to play. I also noticed that the idea of having a caring adult who would provide an opportunity to being heard was enough to help these immigrant children feel

part of the community. In fact, several years after leaving this elementary school, my family and I were walking in a park close to home. We noticed that there was a volleyball tournament that extended in the flat and manicured turf with at least 4 to 5 different courts operating games. As we passed by, enjoying watching the kids play, a young adult who would have been closer to his 30s approached me and gave me a bear hug. I rapidly turned to face him and recognized his baby face, and his name came to me faster than I could have ever thought. He greeted me with a smile and yet another hug and asked me why I had left my previous teaching location, showing the fact that he missed me being a mentor and volleyball coach. I replied with "Well, you found me! And now you know where I walk every day." When I was teaching at that school, I did not notice the impact that having an open-door policy for all students had on them. I had to leave this place and find out several years later.

The settlement curve shows a roller coaster of emotions, and if an educator recognizes the important need to support an ELL, and does so promptly, then the student will benefit. It is not to say that a teacher would be able to erase the settlement challenges, but rather that the teacher may be able to understand the emotional needs and the reason the student may behave in a negative way. As a newcomer, I would have loved to have a teacher help me understand the Canadian culture, way of living, rules, in addition to learning the language, in a way where I would feel welcome and accepted.

Using culturally relevant resources

There are many novels written by immigrants that depict the challenges that newcomers have. I find it important to use these novels in the classroom to raise awareness, to incorporate other cultures, and to show the struggles that an immigrant may have to endure prior to coming to Canada. As a teacher, I would use different novels such as *A Long Walk to Water* (2011) written by Linda Sue Park, *Refugee* (2017) by Alan Gratz and my book, *Our Silent Journey* (2020), with the intention of helping my class see and understand the struggles that many of their peers had. On one specific occasion, I was reading a novel about the diaspora of the Southern Sudanese people due to attacks from a militia group from Northern Sudan. Without going into too many details, I remember reading the part of the book where many young Sudanese children walked hundreds of miles to a nearby country seeking refuge. As I was pronouncing those words from the novel, a student raised his hand asking permission to participate. I gave him the opportunity to speak, and he said: "Sir, that was me and my family." Though I understood what he was referring to, I asked him to clarify what he was saying, and he did: "Teacher, my family and village were attacked. I was a small child. My family and I had to flee the village for our lives. Then we walked hundreds of miles to Kenya seeking a refugee camp that might take us in for safety. Just like us, tons of people left our villages but many more did not make it from the horrendous attack that violently removed us from our home." I remember

shutting the book, as the entire class, including myself, sat quietly listening to every word; asking questions only when the time was right and being 100% committed to listening to this student's journey. At the end of the lesson, there was not one dry eye in the class, and my Canadian students mentioned that this peer of his was a champion and a warrior. They all commended him and never looked at him in a negative way. As for that student, he was able to share his story (whatever he wanted to share) and give thanks for being a new Canadian.

Our Silent Journey is the story of my family told from the perspective of an 11-year-old boy named Martin, who comes to Canada with his mom and sister to reunite with his father who sought out a better life for his family. His father had sacrificed his lifestyle and career in Peru for the wellbeing of his family. It is known from the beginning of that story that Peru was under attack by a terrorist group called *Sendero Luminoso* (The Shining Path). Martin's family had been targeted several times. Therefore, his father decided to travel the Americas with the idea to land in the United States of America, to provide a safe future for his family. The story takes a journey from the past to the present and takes place in both Lima, Peru and in Mississauga, Ontario in the middle of winter. Being only 11-years-old, Martin struggles to make friends. Most of the time, he is quiet and alone, often thinking about his past, his country, and his beloved relatives and friends in Peru. It seems that every time he faces an obstacle, his mind takes him back to warm memories. It is not until the arrival of his ESL teacher that Martin starts to feel understood and not criticized, included not isolated, and an active member of his school community, not a troublemaker who does not show the will to learn. It was precisely when his ESL teacher came to help him and meet him at his level, when learning finally began – when he felt safe to learn and participate. Though his pain from the past did not go away, he was able to look beyond and focus on what lied ahead.

Conclusion

It is no secret that when a person realizes that the outcome is greater than the fears associated to the goal, they will pursue that specific dream. When the individual realizes that the goal is tangible, this is when we see growth, both emotionally and academically. For this reason, it is crucial to continue supporting our newcomers while learning the language, and as they feel established in the school community, and henceforth, become a contributing member of society.

Canada continues to open its borders to thousands of newcomers. People who have endured several obstacles, crime, and have even lost a loved one. There are immigrants that are willing to come to Canada and embrace its culture and way of living. Many more stand waiting for a miracle. That is, the opportunity to come to Canada. Our school systems are trying to meet the academic and social needs of our ELLs. Moreover,

some schools are welcoming students who do not speak English for the first time, and these students are coming in large numbers. School boards are trying their best to build capacity among their educators to help newcomers feel welcome, safe, and included. Government groups and academic organizations such as East-York and Scarborough Reading are incorporating meaningful sessions to help educators learn how to support newcomers. There is no secret that in helping newcomers feel safe and integrated into the community and becoming contributing members, the entire society profits. The same goes for a school where its teachers take time to build a positive and safe environment for their newcomers. As an immigrant and former newcomer (I have been in Canada for more than 30 years), I am passionate about discussing the many ways to help all newcomers, especially as they realize that there is no more ice cream in their freezer.

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Author Bio

Ricardo Marroquin is a professor for Redeemer University in Ancaster, Ontario and the assessor for the Hamilton-Wentworth School Board. He is also an author and has written 3 novels, which include *Our Silent Journey*, *Memoirs of an Inner-City Teacher* and *El sobrino de las tías* (Spanish). Furthermore, in *Our Silent Journey*, he advocates for newcomers by sharing a common story in which immigrants might see themselves.

Teaching EFL in the Sultanate of Oman

By Barbara Stasiuk, Canada

An ESL teacher goes EFL in Salalah, Oman

In mid-December 2021, I embarked on a new odyssey—teaching EFL in a Foundations Program at Dhofar University in Salalah, Oman. The location is described as bucolic as it is cradled between the coast of the Arabian Sea and the Dhofar Mountains, and the weather is usually sunny and warm except for the unique Khareef (fall) season when the monsoon-like weather turns the desert into a verdant green with a constant cloudy drizzle. Coconuts, papayas, and bananas abound here and recently desert farming is expanding the Dhofar region's agricultural products, which have been heavily based upon camels, cattle, and goats.

Since the EAP market shrunk suddenly in Canada during the pandemic, I thought it important to keep working in an academic job even though I was apprehensive about working abroad. However, several things drew me to Oman: I wanted to improve my Arabic, one of my TESL professors from Seneca College was here, many people told me it was a friendly place, and it is not a commercialized part of the Gulf region, or The Khaleej, in Arabic الخليج. Salalah itself offers so many great nature adventures, like hiking in the wadis and waterfalls, snorkeling, and camping on the beach. Having raised my family while I was completing my post-secondary education, this was my first chance to live and work abroad. Many people had raved about Oman because of its reputation as a safe place with friendly people, coupled with its charming connection to ancient ways, such as, only having low rise buildings throughout The Sultanate.

Adjusting to life away from home

I felt a lot of my experiences here could be summed up as, it has been the best of times and the worst of times because it is wildly exciting to be able to live in an entirely different part of the world, with a distinct culture such as Salalah, yet missing my loved ones while trying to figure out how I can fit in as an expat has been discombobulating at times. Learning about Salalah ways has been so intriguing because many of my students speak Jebali or Mehri (ancient languages that pre-date Arabic) as a mother tongue and learned Arabic when they started school and the influences of African and Indian cultures, to name a few, on this part of the Arabian Peninsula. One Jebali tour guide explained to me how the cows are sent out

in the morning with the farmer appointing a leader cow for the herd; this closeness to animals reminded me of indigenous ways of knowing in Canada. The homosocial expectations of a Muslim culture were not unknown to me, having raised a Muslim family in the Toronto diaspora, yet it was hard to navigate the workplace where so many colleagues from so many cultures have different points of view. For example, is it acceptable to go to a male colleague's office to chat, or not? Often looks here communicate more than words, but it is hard to gauge exactly what a look means to an outsider.

Classroom management

We use the *Cambridge Textbook Unlock*, and it has been created with Gulf Culture in mind, so it is culturally sensitive. When I arrived in 2021, the program was transitioning from the flipped classroom approach to teaching more in the classroom and getting the students to interact in groups; many students never adjusted to online classes due to many factors: Some live in the mountains where internet is unreliable, a lack of digital literacy prior to the pandemic. and a generally agreed upon fact—the culture of Salalah is quite collectivistic so working alone online suits some but certainly not the majority. An example of a collectivistic outlook is that many students will take all their courses with their siblings and cousins throughout their degree; as an identical twin raised in Canada, Mary and I were encouraged to separate our classes since kindergarten. However, I came to realize that Omani students' desire to help each other succeed is something to be admired if *the help* came with knowing that friends need to be able to think things through by themselves—as I often try to communicate.

Work culture

Even though business culture guides about the Gulf point to the more authoritarian nature of management here, I found that teachers have quite a lot to contribute to the developing curriculum, and the dynamic has been more engaging in terms of teacher autonomy than some places I have worked in Canada. For example, when full-time teachers spoke up about wanting more flexibility in being on campus during workplace hours (8am–3pm), it was granted. I spoke up when I thought I could make a positive difference in terms of assessment and curriculum and was never shut down even if the direction went another way.

Students were generally receptive to me as a Canadian because of the favoured reputation Canada has abroad. I developed a close rapport with students in general, but it often takes a lot of emotional energy in the first few weeks because until they know you, they don't know you. These societies are tribal in nature, so one must find creative ways to make inroads of relatability. For example, telling them about my own family helps if its relatable, like having a henna party for my son's wedding in Toronto.

Take the plunge

If it were not for the upheaval of the pandemic in our industry, I probably would never have ventured outside Canada, but I am grateful for this silver lining because it put the shoe on the other foot for me after years of teaching LINC, ESL, and EAP in Canada. Learning other national stories and seeing how they function differently is always broadening. Layering on another identity by living in another country and feeling that discomfort of being *between worlds*, as Edward Said wrote about, is an expanding adventure.

Author Bio

Barbara Stasiuk (she, her) started her teaching career teaching English and Social Studies for a Muslim group in Toronto. She has taught in many contexts including University of Toronto's International Summer Academy, York University, and Central Vancouver Island's Immigrant Multicultural Society's LINC program in Nanaimo BC. She has encountered Islamophobia so participated in the Canadian Council of Muslim Women's (CCMW) campaign—**Barbara's Story**. She strives towards inclusion of every stripe and stroke that contributes to human dignity and felicity.

The benefits of having a little quiet time

By Staci-Anne Nogami, Japan

Introduction

Class time and the interaction with other students is crucial to learning and developing in any second language. But more importantly, it is important to have the time to reflect and mentally digest information you are learning, your own personal thoughts, and feelings on any given topic, as well as being able to emotionally connect with material. For these reasons, I give my ESL students ample time to simply sit and collect their thoughts because I believe that having quiet moments in class is not only necessary but can be therapeutic for students and the teacher. This paper aims to illustrate the benefits of quiet time for ESL students and how teachers can implement this into their class.

The course

Since I am an advocate for self-care and mental wellness, I designed a 15-week course for first year university students called *Action English* which aims at helping students understand the many facets of well-being, how it directly affects the self, and how it can enable us to help others in the community. Although topics such as stress, mental wellness, and emergency preparedness are covered in class, students are to present in small groups in the form of skits on sub-related topics that they are genuinely interested in and act out a scenario and possible solutions.

During this 15-week course, I am lecturing for 7 weeks, students are preparing for 4 weeks, and presenting their skits for 4 weeks out of the semester. I use 15-30 minutes out of each class for quiet time and self-reflection because it is in those quiet moments the best ideas may be born. During my years of experience teaching this class, it has always been a time of the most productivity for the students, and the fact that they are learning in a second language that quiet time helps them to filter the information.

A little experiment

A few years ago, while teaching this course, I decided to conduct a little experiment with two of my classes. I gave *class A* more quiet time and gave no quiet time to *class B*. I assigned both classes' reflections each week to gauge their progress on group work and their skit presentations. As the semester progressed, I compared both *class A* and *class B* reflections and noted their feelings and thoughts. Some students from *class A* reported:

> *"…feeling the class is a happy pace with my time;"*

> *"I can understand more easy with quiet;"*

> *"This class is fun to do my own time;"*

> *"This class is relax very good."*

Whereas in *class B*, some students reported:

> *"The class time is too short;"*

> *"I cant get everything in the class time;"*

> *"The class is good topic but my head needs time;"*

> *"I feel the stress."*

Conclusion for the students

After reading the students' reflections, and comparing and contrasting their feelings about the course, I concluded that quiet time in class helps the students to reassess the information they are receiving; it gives them time to understand, and it births new ideas, theories, and thoughts and feelings. Apart from the obvious, students reported feeling less stressed during *class A* because they had more quiet time; however, *class B* tended to have slightly more stress.

The teacher during quiet time

As a teacher, I find myself sometimes scrambling to get everything done in a very short amount time. I am sure that many teachers feel this way and can relate with a story or two of their own. I noted my own feelings during these two classes and journaled in detail what I felt before, during, and after the classes. Some of my personal thoughts during *class A* were:

Before:

"Today I have class A, I feel energized despite it being mid-week! I am looking forward to seeing the students' progress on their skits; they have been working hard on them. I feel like I've gotten so much done, and I actually have some free time to think about the final. The fact that I can do that at this point in the semester is amazing to me because I usually don't have too much time."

During:

"This class is pretty chill, the students are on task, and I can hear myself think. The students have no questions, even though I have asked and offered support to them; they seem to be processing more during the quiet time".

After:

"That was a great class. I feel energized!"

Class B:

Before:

"Why do I feel like I have been running? I feel mentally exhausted going into the class."

During:

"This class felt busy; there were a lot of questions. Despite their level, they needed a lot of direction. Such a different feeling from *class A*. I feel tired."

After:

"That was mentally exhausting for me. My brain feels busy, so I can't imagine how my students might feel."

Conclusion for myself

Class A felt very different for me in the sense that I felt more relaxed before the class started and that mood continued until I finished the class. However, there was more I had to do with *class B*. It felt busier. I was more mentally engaged during the class, and there was not a lot of time for me to stop and think. It was very clear to me that I needed that quiet time as well to reassess or restructure the class.

Overall conclusion

The benefit of having quiet time in class is not an indication of a teacher who plans poorly or does not care about their students or a teacher who is lazy. Quiet time in class is deeply mentally, physically, and emotionally therapeutic for both the teacher and the student. Based on the reported reflections from both the teacher and the student in *class A* and *B*, quiet time is necessary to collect thoughts, feelings, and to understand concepts in class, but to also birth new ideas. Every class regardless of the age of the students, and levels of English, should have quiet time to aid in mental wellness.

Author Bio

Staci-Anne has a masters in TEFL/TESL and over 15 years teaching experienc. She has enjoyed working in Japan, Italy, Canada and the United Arab Emirates, while also leisurely traveling the world. She can communicate in conversational Spanish as well as Japanese, and is keen on learning more languages. She has taught in many universities and colleges around the world allowing her to fully embody a diverse perspective on education and the multilingual environments. As a writer at heart, she aims to build success in her classes by creating unique learning experiences by fostering concepts of mental wellness in a positive learning environment. She is a creatrix who thrives to utilize a variety of media to create and enhance interactive learning.

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ELL teachers create cultural video projects

By Sukhdeep Birdi, Kawaldeep Ghuman, & Harjit Chauhan, Canada

Sukhdeep Birdi, Kawaldeep Ghuman, and Harjit Chauhan are ELL teachers in the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows school district in British Columbia. After years of teaching ELL students, they noticed one common theme when it came to celebrating calendar holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. The theme is that their students excitedly shared and made their own cultural connections related to the holidays. The ELL teachers realized that the students felt comfortable sharing their cultural celebrations, festivals, and holiday traditions during small group literacy times, but many students did not know how, or felt too shy to share with their peers. The three teachers began to explore how to create authentic resources highlighting student experiences.

What is Diwali?

Diwali is known as the festival of lights, and it is celebrated by various ethnic groups around the world, predominantly in India. Houses, shops, and public places such as temples are decorated with small oil lamps called diyas. Diyas are often placed by windows and near front entrances. They are traditionally made from clay, and they can be hand-painted, or they can be purchased pre-made with embellishments from shops. Diyas range in size, shapes, and colors. There are a variety of ways that diyas can be lit. People can fill diyas with oil and use the wick as the light, or people can insert candles or tea lights in them. Diyas are symbols of light and welcome (S. Birdi, personal communication, October 25, 2021).

Before celebrations begin, families go out to shop for new outfits and household items. People dress up in bright colors to enjoy the festivities. Families visit the Gurdwara or temple in the evening to light diyas in and around the temple. People offer prayers for loved ones, wishes for happiness, health, and prosperity. Before leaving the temple, anyone can enjoy vegetarian food in what is called the langar hall. The food is prepared in the kitchen and served by volunteers which is called seva (H. Chauhan, personal communication, October 25, 2021).

People decorate their houses with rangoli. This is a type of traditional art that is used with colored rice and flour, chalk, flowers, and divas to make designs near the door entrance as a sign of welcome. People can be

creative and make designs that are unique to them. Another type of Diwali art that is common is the use of mehndi. Mehndi or henna is applied to the hands and when it dries up, it leaves a beautiful orange/reddish stain which symbolizes good luck and happiness (K. Ghuman, personal communication, October 25, 2021).

To wrap up Diwali celebrations, families will often enjoy bhangra music and dance, light up fireworks and children enjoy sparklers. Each family celebrates Diwali in their own unique way (K. Ghuman, personal communication, October 25, 2021).

How it started—Diwali

First, the teachers decided to create more resources about a festival that they are familiar with called Diwali. The teachers searched their own schools and community libraries, investigated online resources such as Teachers Pay Teachers, and YouTube videos for inspiration. Even with the variety of resources at their disposal, they felt that they could further amplify their student voices and experiences through a video project.

At the time, with the global pandemic, the teachers had to take precautions with how to create the project, and they decided to put themselves and their families in the video to create an authentic experience. The teachers relied heavily on Zoom meetings to pool their ideas together. First, they wrote a script using simple language to explain Diwali, next they collected and took photos to provide further visual representation. Third, they found a videographer to document the project. Once the project was complete, the Diwali video was shared in District #42. To further supplement the video, the ELL teachers also created and attached a Diwali lesson plan for school teachers to use as a part of their instruction. In essence, from this Diwali video, the Indo-Canadian ELL students were excited to see the representation, and more ELL students were inspired and asked to create another video.

What is Ramadan and Eid?

For Muslims around the world, Ramadan is an important time of the year. It is celebrated in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and it begins on the first sighting of the new moon. Ramadan is a month of good deeds, charity such as sharing with those in need, and a new beginning for many Muslims (S. Abdul Ahad, personal communication, April 15, 2022).

An important part of Ramadan is fasting which is done so people can empathize with those that are less fortunate. When people fast, they are thinking about and are grateful for their own abundance. As Muslims fast, they pray five or more times a day, at home or in a mosque (S. Abdul Ahad, personal communication, April 15, 2022).

At the end of Ramadan, there is a 3-day celebration called Eid Al-Fitr which means the festival of the breaking of the fast. The morning of Eid starts with a prayer and eating dates. Some people dress up, gather to enjoy a feast, treats, and exchange gifts. It is a time for self-reflection of the past month with family and community (S. Abdul Ahad, personal communication, April 15, 2022).

Another holiday video creation—Ramadan

The following Spring, the ELL teachers released a second student- led video about Ramadan and Eid. Students were interviewed, and they were thrilled to share their personal experiences and knowledge about Ramadan and Eid. The district videographer visited the schools to put the video together. Since it took some time to compose the video, the ELL teachers were very appreciative of the final product. They also asked a colleague from the ELL department to join the video project to share her personal experiences about Ramadan and Eid. The video was shared as a resource to the school district. Families reached out to the teachers to share their gratitude, and express how they felt welcomed, celebrated, and honoured.

What's next?

Looking into the future, Birdi, Ghuman and Chauhan are excited to collaborate again and create student-led videos that celebrate the diversity found in their schools.

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Author Bios

Sukhdeep Birdi's teaching career began in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She taught many different grades within the private and public school sector for over 15 years. She began in the English language learning teaching field in 2013 and has been working as an English language learner Specialist since then. From the very beginning, she always had a strong interest in teaching English and supporting newcomer students with their personal and academic areas. Presently, she works at an Elementary school in Maple Ridge, British Columbia.
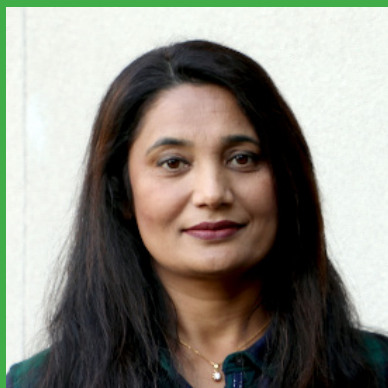
Kawaldeep Ghuman started her teaching career at a private school and worked with primary students for about five years. During maternity leave, she moved to the Maple Ridge School district and started TTOCing in both elementary and secondary schools. While TTOCing, she found herself interested in the ELL teacher's job because of the work with students and families with many different backgrounds and cultures. It was natural for her to connect with the ELL students and families because she speaks another language and had been in their shoes. It has been six years of teaching ELL and it remains her passion to continue working with English language learners.

Harjit Chauhan's teaching career began over seventeen years ago as a teacher on call in both elementary and high schools. During her time teaching overseas in South Korea, she discovered that teaching English was her passion. When she returned, she began to teach in private schools and a few years later, made the transition to the public school system, where she was also able to use her first language Punjabi to work closely with families. She returned to university to obtain a TESL certificate, where she made the exciting leap as a classroom teacher to an English language learner specialist.