The Assessment of English Language Learners: Saskatchewan School Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

English Language Learners (ELLs) are becoming increasingly present in Saskatchewan Schools. School divisions are providing English as an Additional Language (EAL) instruction in order to meet the language, cultural and academic needs of students. Research from the United States and Australia has indicated the need for good induction procedures to assess the needs of individual students while similar research has not been done extensively in Canada, and in Saskatchewan in particular. ELLs represent a heterogeneous group, requiring support for their cultural and linguistic needs, and often face psychological, situational, and institutional barriers. An effective assessment procedure to determine the needs of these students is necessary to inform instruction and specialized services. Current documents from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education indicate that assessment procedures to determine programming are left to individual school divisions, schools or teachers to manage, and best practices have not yet been evaluated. This modified basic qualitative interpretive inquiry research sought out the insights of two teachers, two EAL program administrators, and a community settlement worker representing the two major urban centres in Saskatchewan to discuss: (1) the identification process and intake procedures of ELLs in Saskatchewan; (2) the services provided to ELLs; and (3) the identification of exceptionality in ELL students. The resulting data revealed themes in relation to school induction, EAL programming, and further needs from outside sources to provide for the holistic needs of CLD students. Practical implications of the findings, the limitations of the current study, and areas for future research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my students:

M., M., L., A., J., and little monkey.

Your strength, bravery, and resilience has inspired me,

and taught me far more then I could ever impart.

This is all for you guys.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CALP: Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1984). The language ability beyond Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) that allows for understanding and use of language for learning, in decontextualized academic settings.

CLD: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Term used in psychology to describe practice working populations with diverse cultures and languages.

EAL: English as an Additional Language. Term used in Saskatchewan to describe the teaching of English language to non-origin language speakers.

ELL: English Language Learner. Anyone who is actively in the process of acquiring English language skills.

ESL: English as a Second Language or English as a Sequential Language. Term used to describe the teaching of English language to non-origin language speaks.

L1:   Term referring to one's first language, mother tongue, or language of origin. The natural language one speaks.

L2:   Term referring to the learning of an additional language other than L1. Does not refer only to the second language learned, but any language a person has acquired beyond L1.

RCT: Relational-Cultural Theory. Born from the feminist movement, RCT emphasizes the role of power as it affects relationship building capacity.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Research Context

Canada was the first country to adopt a multiculturalism policy (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC; 2008a), which indicates the importance of multiculturalism to the population of Canada and the formation of Canada's identity. The nation of Canada consists of native peoples of its land, and those who come from far off lands. As the world seemingly becomes smaller through advances in transportation, communication, and technology, Canada, and Saskatchewan in particular, is seeing a significant influx in migration (CIC, 2008b). Statistical data reported by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Immigration Services Division (SMAEELISD; 2008) indicated that while there is a decline in immigration to larger urban centres (i.e., Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver), there is overall growth in Canadian immigration, indicating an increase of immigration to medium sized urban centres. Smaller provinces have been receiving more immigrants proportionally, in contrast to Quebec, British Columbia, and Ontario that historically receive the greater immigration numbers overall. Saskatchewan saw an immigration increase of 78% since 2006, which represented an increase from 1% of the total Canadian Immigration, to 2%. (SMAEELISD, 2008).

The Saskatchewan Government implemented an immigration strategy in order to address its economic needs by attracting skilled workers to Saskatchewan (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009). This strategy is multifaceted and collaborates with industry, educational institutions, and the community, primarily through the Saskatchewan Immigration Nominee Program (SINP). The SINP is responsible for 94% of the additional immigration to Saskatchewan since 2006 (SMAEELISD, 2008). In this program, skilled immigrants (i.e., those with university or other significant post-secondary training) can be sponsored by family members or employers that are in Saskatchewan, which effectively streamlines the immigration process. The skilled workers bring their spouses, and dependent children, adding 1.3 more people per skilled immigrant (SMAEELISD, 2008).

In 2008, 27% of the immigrants who landed in Saskatchewan were between the ages of 5 and 19. This number represents 1335 school-aged children who are new to Saskatchewan (SMAEELISD, 2008). Of the immigrants that come to Saskatchewan, 59% claim *Official Language Ability* in English (although, the government document does not clearly define this

term), and only 13% report English as their first language (SMAEELISD, 2008). The SINP uses self-reports to determine *Official Language Ability,* and as such may not be a reliable measure of language proficiency as it is without corroboration from another test or source. Based on these statistics, it is reasonable to expect Saskatchewan schools to welcome over 1300 newcomer children annually, with potentially over 1100 (86%) students requiring language services in Saskatchewan schools. Saskatchewan's increasing population is resulting in a greater diversity in culture and language within its borders. As a result, the government and school system are responding to the needs of this increasingly diverse population.

Communication is fundamental to a person's participation in society. Schools should provide Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students with the tools of language in one of Canada's official languages. The Ministry of Education mandates the provision of English as an Additional Language (EAL) supports to English Language Learners (ELLs) present in Saskatchewan schools. Support through EAL instruction includes the use of progressive benchmarks of language development across five strands of literacy: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and cultural orientation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). Through this systemic instruction, students progress from initially learning Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), to broadening their application of language to Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP; Cummins, 1984).

The literature describing the provision of services to English Language Learners (ELLs) has largely come from the United States as they have had a significant immigration, particularly from Spanish-speaking countries (Ortiz, 1997; Schon, Markham, & Shaftel, 2008; Zehr, 2010). The US has developed their own intake and assessment procedures based on their particular needs and legislations. The situation differs in Canada. No one single cultural group represents the majority of the immigrant population (CIC, 2008b), and the provision of educational services is a provincial (rather than federal) mandate (Bravaoco, Sarlati, & Coelho, 2002; MacKay & Tavares, 2005). In Saskatchewan, the situation becomes even more particular with a significant and recent influx, requiring a response from the Ministry of Education and individual school divisions (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.).

The needs of ELLs are significant. They are both cultural (e.g., needs relating behaviours and customs of both the new and receiving cultures; Magro, 2007; Matthews, 2008; Stevenson & Willott, 2007) and linguistic (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing of English; Case &

Taylor, 2005; Magro, 2007; Roessingh & Elgie, 2009; Sarroub, 2007). In order for schools to program effectively for students, good induction procedures (e.g., needs assessment) are critical (Case & Taylor, 2005; Schon, Shaftel& Markham, 2008). Schools could better meet the needs of students and families more efficaciously by knowing and collecting pertinent data through systemic assessment procedures.

There are a number of barriers that ELLs face when interacting with new school environments. These barriers can be dispositional/psychological (e.g., personality, emotions, disposition), situational (e.g., family cohesion, separation or displacement) or institutional (e.g., schools, school systems, government; Magro, 2007; Sarroub, 2007; Stevenson & Willott, 2007; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Assessment, through systemic and effective intake procedures, is a way to identify barriers and creatively strategize and tailor instruction to student needs so that they can more readily access targeted language and culture (Matthews, 2008).

Currently, assessment practices are primarily based on language assessments (Bravaoco, Sarlati, & Coelho, 2002; Schrank, Wendling, Alvarado, & Woodcock, 2010). A complete assessment requires not only standardized test measures, but also contextual measures through observation, interview, and informal assessment (Sattler, 2009). Current practices in Saskatchewan do not appear to focus on these other domains of assessment, even though the need and barriers are clear and present. Current assessments focus on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (Pawliksowka-Smith, 2002), language acquisition models (Terrell, 1977), and CALP (Cummins, 1984). The Response To Intervention model (RTI) is another significant trend in assessment and instruction, which would encourage school practitioners to use good induction procedures that would benefit all students in classrooms (Case & Taylor, 2005; Schon, Shaftel, & Markham, 2007; Wagner, Francis & Morris, 2005).

This research explored the current practices in a variety of school divisions in Saskatchewan in an effort to determine (1) the tools and methodologies that are being used for the assessment of ELLs when they register for school, (2) what schools are doing with the assessment information in their programming for their language and cultural needs, and (3) how exceptionalities are identified in students who are ELLs. Five representatives, including teachers, administrators, and immigrants, participated in an interview process to provide Saskatchewan perspectives to answer the research questions. The resulting data represents a snapshot in time, as this is a recognized area of need within Saskatchewan school divisions, and changes are

occurring rapidly. The discussion identifies areas of strength in Saskatchewan, implications for practitioners, and future directions towards the development of a comprehensive assessment program.

Statement of Purpose

This research explored assessment as it relates to programming and induction procedures when working with English Language Learners (ELL) in Saskatchewan in a modified basic interpretive inquiry. To do this, targeted school personnel participated in interviews which helped to broaden our understanding of intake procedures and programming in Saskatchewan. This research sought to answer the questions:

1) How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct English Language Learners who require services?

2) What services are currently being provided for English Language Learners in Saskatchewan?

3) How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptional learning needs in English Language Learner Populations?

My Story

When I was completing my undergraduate degree in Music Education, I had the unique opportunity to attend a flytningerskule, a school for refugees, in Norway. I had received a scholarship to study Norwegian language and culture, and I was eager to learn so I could meet new friends. My first morning, the teacher at the front asked us to tell our partner about our greatest dream. I remember turning to my friend from Slovakia as she told me she dreamed to be an actress. I dreamed to travel more and be a teacher. We both agreed we wanted to meet a spouse and raise children. After the sharing, the teacher asked us each to say one dream. We were first. "Jeg vil bli en lære!" (I will be a teacher!) I said with enthusiasm in my nearly understandable Norwegian. Then, the quiet man behind us, dark hair, eyes and skin said soberly "My dream is that I will no longer fear that my children will be killed as they walk to school."

Reality hit me. When I walked into the classroom that day, I had assumed that everyone was like me: young, naive, excited to be in a new country, making new friends, and learning new things. For this man, coming to Norway was simply survival. I got to meet him, his new classmates, and hear their stories. That day I realized that my dream truly was to become a teacher.

My journey continued as I became an English Language teacher in Saskatoon, working primarily with refugee students. My first year teaching was the year that the province of Saskatchewan recognized the increased number of ELL students, and staffing and resources increased, seemingly daily. The progress was so quick and reactive, that it left me wondering if we were being as efficient as we could be in our service delivery.

My current research into the needs of English Language Learners in Saskatchewan has inspired my course work as I work towards a career in School Psychology. I bring energy, and passion to this subject, as well as the stories of my students and friends who face numerous struggles as they make a new home in Saskatchewan.

Terms and Definitions

There are an abundance of terms used within the research to describe English Language Learner (ELL) issues within the field of English language instruction. Research, scholarly discussion, and workplace jargon utilizes the following terms.

English Language Learner (ELL). This term describes one who is in the process of developing English Language Skills across the four strands of literacy (Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing) and is the preferred term when presenting research in this field, and will be used in this research (Schon et al, 2008).

English as a Second Language (ESL). This term is the most commonly referred to term when describing the pedagogy and curriculum for ELLs (Schon et al, 2008). This term creates controversy in the field as many ELLs have multiple languages.

English as an Additional Language (EAL). This is the replacement term for ESL and currently used in Manitoba and Saskatchewan educational documents (Mackay & Tavares, 2005; Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.), which better respects the multiple languages spoken by many ELLs.

English as a Sequential Language (ESL). This is another replacement term for ESL and used by organizations to avoid changing the acronym to avoid confusion by many international providers of *ESL* services while still respecting the plurality of languages present in a language classroom (TESL Saskatchewan, 2010).

First Language (L1). This term refers to one's native language learned from birth, which forms the basis of all future language development (Schon et al, 2008).

Second Language (L2). Is the term which refers to one target language which they wish

to acquire. A person can have many L2s, and it does not refer to number of languages known to a person (Schon et al, 2008).

Second Language Learner (SLL) and Limited English Proficient (LEP). These two terms present in the literature to describe ELLs; however, with the recognition of a student's multiple languages, and a movement to utilize language that focuses on strengths rather than deficits, ELL is a preferred term (Schon et al, 2008).

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD). This is the term used in psychological research and provision of services. Practitioners, who work with CLD clients, work with clients who present for psychological services with different cultural assumptions, varying degrees of language abilities, and use of dialects of English (Schon et al, 2008).

Chapter Organization

This thesis document is organized into five chapters. This chapter provides a purpose and general orientation to the project of research. Chapter two reviews past research in a literature review. Chapter three outlines the research questions and the methodology used to answer the research questions. Chapter four presents the research findings and themes. In conclusion, chapter five discusses the results and implications for practitioners and research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

This chapter outlines the basic principles that underlie the assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) populations, and the perspectives on its uses in the education of English Language Learners (ELLs). While reviewing the current literature, the research questions were formed and identified within the Saskatchewan context. The review begins with an overview of Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) which is the theoretical framework upon which the questions were developed. The review goes to critically review: (1) the identification process of ELLs by schools and school divisions; (2) the unique needs, features, and conditions of ELLs and the services provided to ELLs in English as an Additional language (EAL) classrooms and programs; and (3) current practices in assessment of CLD populations in educational and psychological settings presenting with exceptionality. The review concludes with the presentation of the research questions.

Relational-Cultural Theory

Relational-Cultural Theory informed the development of this study. RCT identifies the effect that power has over a vulnerable population and can be used to study cross-cultural education, or the education of the vulnerable. This section outlines the major tenets of RCT scholars and research, and makes a case for its application in the study of English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming in Saskatchewan.

Major tenets of RCT. Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) is a theory which originates from feminist theory and research, and has applications to research, therapy and education. The theory takes into account how a person is affected by their sex role socialization, power influences, dominance, marginalization and subordination, in their mental health and relational development (Comstock et al, 2008). RCT asserts that an individual develops in relationship with others across his/her lifespan, and how a person develops his/her relational skills is facilitated or hindered in his/her relationship to power (Comstock et al, 2008).

Power is the ability to enact change upon another (Walker, 2008). In other words, those who have power are typically the ones who can assert change over another. In this model, *power over* relationships are relationships where there is an imbalance between the ability to change or influence the other (e.g., parent-child, employer-employee, teacher-student, receiving culture-immigrating culture; Comstock et al, 2008). In the context of this research, the teacher would be the one in the position of *power over* the ELL since they enact change (e.g., behaviour, new

language). ELLs conversely have limited power, and have little opportunity to directly influence the teacher, classroom, or school. Since teachers hold the power, they must recognize their role in affecting a student's relational capacities as they are related to language and cultural development.

The perspective of RCT is that everything occurs within relationships. A defining feature in a positive relationship is that it is *growth fostering* (West, 2005). A growth-fostering relationship includes *five good things*: "(1) a sense of zest; (2) clarity about oneself, the other and the relationship; (3) a sense of personal worth; (4) the capacity to be creative and productive; (5) the desire for more connection." (Jordan, 2008, p. 2). The same could be said for a positive active relationship between the ELL and the school environment. School assessment can be used as a tool to foster the growth relationship.

At times though, the relationship is bound to be marred with misunderstandings, miscommunications, and failure, in what RCT refers to as *disconnection* (Jordan, 2008). Disconnections are expected to happen, and RCT asserts that in repairing disconnections, the growth-fostering relationship is strengthened (Jordan, 2008). In other words, the more the two parties can grow together and understand one another, the better the relationship. *Growth-fostering relationships* can be further strengthened in relationships where both parties take opportunities to learn as well as to teach (Comstock et al., 2008).

In contrast, if the disconnection is ignored, dismissed, or blamed on the one with less power, *five bad things* can happen to indicate a negative relationship: "(1) a drop in energy; (2) decreased sense of worth; (3) less clarity and more confusion; (4) less productivity; (5) withdrawal from all relationships" (Jordan, 2008, p. 3). Unresolved *disconnection* can potentially have a negative impact in a school condition, leading to symptoms of culture shock, lowered resilience, and trauma within the school.

RCT defines resilience as "the ability to connect, reconnect, and resist disconnection in response to hardships, adversities, trauma, and alienating social/cultural practices." (Hartling, 2008, p. 56).   This definition would indicate that beyond the ELL's need for language and culture skill acquisition, there is a further need to develop relational skills, particularly when working within power-over relationships (i.e., teacher's *power over* ELL students; West, 2005). Teachers need to listen to the input of the marginalized and disadvantaged, moving from a social support to an authentic connection (Hartling 2008), in other words, moving from a one-

directional model of helping, to a relationship that has mutual empathy, mutual empowerment, and responsiveness (Comstock et al. 2008; Hartling, 2008; Jordan 2008). West (2005) believed that examining RCT approaches within *power over* structures can be one of the most promising areas of RCT research.

Summary. RCT is a theory which focuses on connecting with students, building growth fostering relationships through mutual learning and teaching. This theory is recommended for educational research, but research has not been conducted to apply this theory to school contexts. This research believes that the nature of EAL instruction is more transactional in nature since both language and cultural teaching involves relationship. RCT was considered in the development of questions, and the generation of solutions and directions of future EAL program development. Next, the identification of English Language Learners, and their eligibility for EAL services is reviewed.

Identification of English Language Learners

This section discusses the identification of ELLs in terms of eligibility for specialized programming, beginning with American trends and then focusing on Canadian and Saskatchewan policy. Current practices for the intake assessment will be explored. The differences experienced across jurisdictions, underlining the need for specific research in Saskatchewan, will be underscored, leading to the first research question.

American identification. Schon, Shaftel, and Markham (2008) outlined the legislation regarding the identification of ELLs in the United States, who are referred to as *Limited English Proficient* (LEP) within American legislation. The United States develops their own tools to determine eligibility for services under federal legislation (Schon, et al., 2008). A majority of the American ELL population are Spanish-speaking with the proximity of Mexico to the United States, and as a result, much of the research has focused on services for Spanish-speaking ELLs (Ortiz, 1997; Schon et al, 2008). Standardized and informal tools have been used in the identification process; however, there is not a clear answer for which tools are best for determining language proficiency. There is incomplete research into the usage of standardized assessment tools for determining language proficiency (Zehr, 2010).

It is recommended that achievement testing be done in a student's first language (Schon et al, 2008) to eliminate test bias, however it is expensive and difficult to do, and tests may lose their context and purpose through translation (Zetlin, Beltran, Salcido, Gonzalez, & Reyes,

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2011). The situation in the United States varies significantly from the Canadian situation as Canada does not have a majority language group. Much of the research of bilingual education and assessment is not practical in Canadian contexts, as Canada includes a multitude of language groups, (CIC, 2008b; SMAEELISD, 2008).

        Canadian Identification. CIC outlines the requirements to become a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen, which includes the citizenship test (CIC, 2010). The test assesses two areas of competency: Knowledge of Canada, and Language Abilities. An interaction with a CIC official determines a candidate's language abilities as to their ability to:

> understand basic spoken statements and questions….to communicate basic information or respond to questions [by] simple questions on familiar topics using short sentences;… know[ing] enough words for basic everyday communication;… speak[ing] about something you [done] in the past;… giv[ing] simple everyday instructions and directions; and express[ing] satisfaction or dissatisfaction.(CIC, 2010, para.2)

This informal measure of language proficiency identifies social language competency, but is not adequate for full participation in work and academic settings in Canada that require a higher level of language (Cummins, 1984). The CIC test may not report the actual language capacity of the many permanent residents and new citizens, and as such, there is a need for these immigrants to receive language instruction, support and services.

        Unlike the United States where education is federally mandated, in Canada, the responsibility of education is primarily a provincial mandate. Provinces are currently developing protocols for identifying and determining best supports for ELLs in their jurisdictions (Bravaoco, Sarlati, & Coelho, 2002; MacKay & Tavares, 2005). For example, the Educational Resource Group of Ontario (ERGO) has developed assessment materials to correspond with curriculum documents (Bravoco, Sarlati, & Coelho, 2002). Manitoba has developed best practice guidelines and intake procedures in government policy documents; however these best practices appear to be underused (MacKay & Tavares, 2005). Each province is in varying states of preparedness as it comes to the influx of newcomers to Canada.

        The Ontario Ministry of Education (2007,) has developed a comprehensive curriculum in order to assist in the assessment and programming for ELLs. The program outlines two streams, one for learners who have had regular age appropriate education in their home countries compared to Canadian standards, and the other for students who have had interrupted school

experiences, or who have limited literacy in any language. The curriculum describes four stages of language/literacy progression across five domains: comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural orientation. The program provides benchmarks indicating performance attributes students can achieve at the different stages, within each domain. The curriculum forms the basis of their language program, and general intake assessment (Bravaoco, Sarlati, & Coelho, 2002). The curriculum is broad and comprehensive, and could serve as a model for developing a similar document in Saskatchewan.

Government of Alberta Education curriculum (1997) is similar to the Ontario program, but the curriculum document focuses on functional language (i.e., the uses of language to interpret, express, build relationships, etc.) rather than skill development (i.e., the strands of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, writing). The curriculum outlines four general outcomes from the ESL program, with five levels of skill development across functional areas. The Alberta curriculum is dated, and has been reviewed with new recommendations made to promote better learning outcomes (Howard Research & Management Consulting, Inc., 2006). Saskatchewan does not have a similar document, and can take the Ontario route (i.e., based on literacy skills and cultural orientation), the Alberta route (i.e., based on functional capacity of language), or its own route.

This research explored at the level of preparedness Saskatchewan is for their portion of the immigrant influx. Current practices and government policy are explored in the following section.

Saskatchewan Identification. For the purposes of this research, the definition used to describe English Language Learners (ELLs) in schools are those that:

> may speak, understand, or be literate in more than one language and may have some experience of English, but will require support to acquire fluency in English and to access the curriculum. The languages or dialects a person already speaks may influence their English language learning (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.)

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (n.d.) outlined the types of ELLs that present in Saskatchewan schools. There are two main categories: those who are born in Canada and those who are from abroad. From Canada there are: (1) students who come from First Nations or Métis communities where the community language is not English; (2) students who come from francophone communities; (3) Hutterian students whose first language is a dialect of German;

and (4) Canadian-born children of immigrants who speak origin languages in the home. In the second category are students who were born abroad, which include: (1) fee-paying international students who are visiting Canada for cultural and language experiences; (2) recently arrived economic immigrants; and (3) refugees. ELLs represent a diverse and heterogeneous group, and thus, the objectives and content of prescribed curriculum vary between each of these groups varies greatly (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.).

There was no literature available for review to determine eligibility for EAL services, nor standards for graduation from an EAL program in Saskatchewan. School divisions, individual schools, or individual teachers make admission and graduation decisions in and out of EAL programming in Saskatchewan. There was no literature to review to identify the evidence these groups use to determine their decisions for eligibility of services and graduation from services. There is no standardized intake procedure in Saskatchewan. This could be problematic as ELL students: (1) may be not receiving the services they require; (2) may be graduating from EAL programs prematurely; or (3) receiving services they do not require. Further discussion on the methods of assessing language proficiency as an indicator for eligibility in EAL programming follows.

Current intake assessment practices. Language ability is the main indicator for admission into EAL programs and services (Schon et al., 2008). This identification uses linguistic theories to create benchmarks of language function. The following is a review of the current measures and levels of language used in determining the eligibility of ELLs for services in public school settings, discussing Terrell's (1977) theory of language acquisition, Cummins' (1984) theory of Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency, and the development of the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

Levels of language. Terrell (1977) discussed the theory of language acquisition that is fundamental when working with ELLs. She asserted that the acquisition of language initially is not a cognitive process, but rather an affective process which naturally occurs, much like an infant learning language. At stake first is that ELLs feel comfortable within the new cultural and linguistic environment prior to "picking up" language.

The stages of language learning are sequential (Terrell, 1977). The first stage is pre-production, which can last from 3-6 months, where the learner is focused on comprehension, and may not even speak (Schon, Shaftel, & Markham, 2008). This is commonly referred to as the

'silent period.' When the student begins 'yes' or 'no' utterances, this heralds the period of early production (Terrell, 1977), where the learner begins to utter one word and short expressions. This stage is developed generally within 3-6 months (Schon, et al., 2008). The next phase is Speech Emergence (Terrell, 1977). This is where phrases are developed with significant experimentation with grammatical forms, which is developed within 6-24 months (Schon, et al., 2008). Finally, in the fourth stage, intermediate fluency is obtained (Terrell, 1977), where errors are reduced and vocabulary is expanded, which occurs within 2-3 years of exposure to the new language and culture (Schon, et al., 2008). These levels were regarded as normal language learning trajectories, however, failed to account for the effects of individual differences (e.g., barriers; Magro, 2007) and how these differences would either shorten or lengthen time needed to acquire language. This was the working theory of language acquisition which informed assessment and instruction prior to Cummins' (1984) work with Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency.

Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency. Adding to the theory of language acquisition is the construction of Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1984). In this model, the first type of language that is learned is social in nature, primarily focused on basic interaction between receptive language in the environment (listening, reading), and manipulating the immediate environment through expressive language (speaking, writing). The first type of language developed by an ELL is Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS; Cummins, 1984). Further to this is the construction of the Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency (CALP) which measures an ELLs ability to utilize language to meet academic, non-contextualized demands (Cummins, 1984).

The discussion around the construct of CALP is ongoing. While conversational English can be developed in 2-3 years, academic language is developed in 7-9 years, and this can be prolonged indefinitely if the ELL does not have literacy in their first language (Bansberg, 2003). Rosseingh (2010) who has done significant research with Cummins has also stated that she does not believe that CALP is even obtainable by ELLs and that attaining CALP is no longer a reasonable expectation as there will always be gaps in vocabulary. CALP has been operationalized so that it can be measured by standardized assessments (Shrank, Wendling, Alvarado & Woodcock, 2010). Tools that measure CALP appear to be the standard in EAL intake assessments in the United States and Canada (Howard Research & Management

Consulting, Inc., 2006; Schon et al., 2008). There has also been a movement towards curriculum based benchmark assessments in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001).

Benchmarks. The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) is responsible for setting up the benchmarks used in adult EAL programming in Canada. The benchmarks are a descriptive scale of communicative competency in English, based on 12 points or benchmarks within four literacy domains (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2002). The literacy domains measured are speaking, listening, writing and reading. As a learner progresses in their language acquisition, they move along the benchmarks. The benchmarks are grouped in fours, to make three stages. For example, Stage 1 speaking would involve benchmarks 1-4. EAL programming often groups students by using the stages and goals instruction are based on the benchmarks within each stage. A strength of this document is that it effective for grouping alike learners, however, it does not take into account learning or cognitive factors. It is also designed for adult learners who are assumed to have CALP capacities in their L1, and has limited value for those who are also learning literacy in conjunction with language. At this time, the CCLB has not developed language benchmarks for children, leaving individual provinces up to developing their own standards (MacKay & Tavares, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001).

Summary. A bulk of the research has come from the United States which advocates for intake, assessment, and programming to be done in a bilingual context utilizing the ELL student's L1. The Canadian situation represents a wide variety of linguistic groups which makes this solution expensive and difficult logistically. Provinces are in varying states of preparedness for the significant influx of new Canadians and the provision of EAL services. In Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Education has acknowledged the need to provide EAL programing; however there is a significant gap in the literature to determine best practice when admitting and graduating students from EAL programming. Current assessment practice has focused on linguistic indicators, utilizing language levels, CALP, and benchmarks to determine eligibility (Schon et al., 2008). Procedures are needed in order to insure ELLs are properly inducted into Canadian and Saskatchewan communities, and this research explored EAL intake procedures in Saskatchewan. Further to intake, the type and quality of service provided to ELLs was explored.

Identified Needs and Services

It is important to consider the needs of ELLs in order to identify required areas of assessment at intake and during programming, as well as the services that schools can provide to

ELLs. This next section reviews: (1) the cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs; (2) the service models described in the research; and (3) the barriers to providing effective services. This section will conclude with the second research question.

Identified needs. ELLs lose two very important functional tools when coming to Canada: their culture, and their language (Roessingh, 2010). As a result, every interaction they have in their new society puts them at a cultural and linguistic deficit (Roessingh, 2010). Difficulties can present themselves in social exchanges while doing day-to-day chores (e.g., going to the grocery store, crossing the street, greeting a neighbour). The deficit can complicate an ELLs experience in school both linguistically (i.e., academic demands) and culturally (i.e., hidden curriculum in schools) and can potentially inhibit future opportunities (e.g., jobs, post secondary education). Schools can provide support for student needs both linguistically and culturally. In order to accomplish this, it is important to review the current research on the unique needs of ELLs when considering the induction and programming procedures in Saskatchewan.

Cultural. A cultural deficit can hamper an ELL's participation in a new society (Magro, 2007; Roessingh, 2010; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). New Canadians want to find employment, build positive relationships, receive educational opportunities, reunite with family, and receive acknowledgement for their competency in their new host culture (Magro, 2007). They need support and instruction on the cultural norms of the receiving culture in order for these needs to be met.

The receiving culture should be sensitive to an ELL's cultural vulnerability. Teachers can support ELLs through cultural education or cultural brokering. This process involves a cultural education of the self, interactions outside of the classroom, and discussion the immediate peer group (Ilieva, 2001). The literature review outlined three main areas of need: individual, social, and community.

Individually, ELL students are culturally vulnerable to isolation and should be provided individual supports and safe classroom settings (Matthews, 2008). Schools have the capacity to socialize, acculturate, accommodate, integrate, involve, and care (Matthews, 2008). Classrooms should to be a safe place for students (Magro, 2007). Students can receive individual supports through pastoral and emotional care (Stevenson & Willott, 2007), and by having teachers who demonstrate qualities of empathy, patience, optimism, and unconditional positive regard towards

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their students (Magro, 2007). With these factors in place, students can begin to become more culturally self-aware.

To further build this self-awareness, teachers can become familiar with the symptoms of stress and their impact on learning (Magro, 2007). Teachers can focus on students' strengths and resilience (Matthews, 2008). Individual strengths of refugee students in particular could be recognized (Magro, 2007). Through forming a relationship between the ELL and cultural broker, the ELL can build a sense of acceptance, new identity formation, and a more positive self concept (Jordan, 2008). Teachers are advocates, guides, resource people, literacy experts and facilitators for their students (Magro, 2007), and are instrumental in developing an ELL's self concept within a new culture.

Socially, ELLs can integrate into peer groups to build their cultural skills.   Newcomer students may not understand group norms for socially acceptable or unacceptable behaviours (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Often times, ELL students may not have role models (Stevenson & Willott, 2007) from whom they can learn culturally appropriate behaviour. Students may become isolated from peers, either by feeling offended by the behaviours of the new culture, and unaware if they may have offended their own peers if they lack appropriate cultural skills (Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Teachers can take opportunities during group activities to utilize peer mentors to foster peer relationships (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008).

The cultural needs go beyond the classroom walls and into their home communities. Newcomer students are often poor, and require access to community and government resources (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Teachers may have an increased responsibility to advocate for students, as parents may have a limited understanding of schools, and opportunities for their children (Matthews, 2008; Stevenson & Willott, 2007). School can be the great stabilizer for refugee students providing for: language instruction, links to community services, mentoring, counselling, job training, placement, citizenship education, and teachers can build bridges to integrate ELL students into Canadian society (Magro, 2007).

Teachers may be the first people that a newcomer may encounter, and as such, they should have the skills, training and knowledge to meet diverse cultural needs, unfortunately, some professionals who work with EAL students lack these skills (Spinelli, 2009). This research explored the experiences those who work with ELLs in Saskatchewan, and their perceptions of the impact on culture on their linguistic and academic achievement. It also inquired to the

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support given to students during cultural adaptation process. Further to the demonstrated cultural needs, ELL students have significant linguistic needs and features that are important to acknowledge.

Linguistic. Equally, the other expressed needs of ELLs in the literature are linguistic. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education provides English as an Additional Language (EAL) support for students (Ministry of Education, n.d.). EAL support seeks to provide L2 instruction (i.e., target language instruction, in this case English) to speakers coming from a variety of L1 languages (i.e., mother tongue). Educators should be designing effective language and literacy supports to address the needs of ELL students. Literacy (the ability to effectively use language) is key to career and occupational opportunities (Magro, 2007).

There are a number of different aspects to literacy beyond language. In addition to reading, writing and speaking, it is important for teachers to consider numeracy and problem solving languages (Magro, 2007). There are also emotional and social literacies (i.e., the pragmatic uses of language) that need to be developed, such as: interpersonal skills, critical thinking, and cultural awareness (Magro, 2007). These skills are dynamic and developed over one's lifetime, and as such lifelong learning skills are vital for ELL learners.

Case and Taylor (2005) outlined a number of features of spoken language that present difficulties for ELL students. Pronunciation can be affected by errors such as omissions (leaving out of certain sounds), substitutions (replacing sounds with other sounds), or additions (adding sounds). These types of errors can make an ELLs speech difficult to understand. They can also have syntactical errors (i.e., errors in grammatical structure), particularly when using negation, confusing word order, or different mood. The third most common type of error is the use of semantics (i.e., word meaning); ELLs can have particular difficulty with the use of figurative language (i.e., proverbs, metaphors, similes, and idiomatic expressions). Language Teachers provide explicit instruction and intervention to support these students.

There is a significant difference between being able to use social, conversational language, and decontextualized academic language (Cummins, 1984). If an ELL is conversationally proficient, that does not necessarily mean that they are linguistically capable. For example, often teachers may assume that if a student can adequately speak, they have enough language to effectively complete their school work, which may not be the case. There will surely be holes in one's lexicon (i.e., the words that they know; Roessingh, 2010). Through

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building vocabulary, in particular the development of low-incidence vocabulary, teachers can best support these students (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009). It is important for ELLs to learn to read to increase their exposure to low-incidence vocabulary. It can be a challenge to teach literacy skills, as students may be reluctant to read, bored with repetitiveness, and can be easily distracted (Sarroub, 2007).

The linguistic needs of ELL students can be three fold: development of literacy and numeracy for cultural transactions (Magro, 2007), development of communicative competency (Case & Taylor, 2005), and the development of vocabulary (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009). This research explored the tools that are used to measure an ELLs current level of functioning, and the subsequent services that they will be provided with to help meet their linguistic and cultural needs.

Service models. In Saskatchewan, the needs of ELL students are met through the school's English as an Additional Language (EAL) program (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.). This program is left to the discretion of the individual divisions, schools, and teachers to effectively determine what kind of service delivery they will provide. Once a student has been identified as an ELL, and is eligible for services there are many available recommendations and interventions for practitioners. As the previous discussion indicates, the instruction must go beyond language, to also be culturally responsive. The following will review the tenets of service delivery models in schools, and focuses for positive outcomes with English language learners.

When working with ELLs, good pedagogy includes: (1) joint productive activity, (2) language and literacy development, (3) contextualization, (4) challenging activities, and (5) instructional conversation (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). More student talk than teacher talk is recommended in EAL classrooms (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). Instruction must be differentiated for ELLs in terms of content (i.e., what is being learned), process (i.e., how it is being taught), and product (i.e., how the student displays their learning) in order to meet their specific needs (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008).

One of the main models of EAL instruction is the pullout/push in model. This model supposes that ELL students require short, intensive language sessions in order to participate in general classroom settings. Students are *pulled out* of general classrooms in order to receive individual or small group intensive language instruction from a qualified EAL teacher. The *push*

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in element occurs as the child progressively receives less *pullout* and participates more actively in the general classroom. This model is controversial, with research stating that it is not empirically supported and is not effective (Abraham & Chumley, 2000; DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007), while other research cites evidence that shows promise when provided by good, experienced, and qualified teachers (DeCapua et al, 2007).

Another model is the sheltered class, where students receive content instruction and language instruction in a congregated class of ELLs. This model has mixed support being criticized for its slow pace, it's lowered expectation of ELL students, and lack of academic rigour to meet graduation requirements (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, &Fisco, 2009); however, is supported as having the best outcomes when combined with bilingual instruction and collaborative learning tasks (DeCapua et al, 2007).

While each of these models displays both positive and negative features, they do meet some of the diverse needs presented by ELL students. However, often times despite best programming efforts, some students continue to struggle. The discussion follows to discuss the barriers experienced by ELLs in their schools.

Barriers to Providing Services. In order to program for ELL students, schools and classrooms should provide: appropriate personnel training, intentionality of practice, standards based instruction, a whole child approach, and full administrative support (DeCapua, Smathers, &Trang, 2007). Three barriers that refugee students experience in educational settings are: dispositional/psychological, situational, and institutional (Magro, 2007). The more barriers experienced by a vulnerable group, the less potential for positive educational outcomes (Magro, 2007). The following three themes are discussed below along with relevant corroborating research.

Dispositional/Psychological. Dispositional and psychological barriers are intrinsic motivators that can affect one's attitude towards the new culture, and openness to new learnings. Psychological barriers are most resistant to change (Magro, 2007). A student needs to buy into the new culture and language before they will begin to integrate and interact in the new culture. Teachers might be ineffective in this domain, as ELL students may be fearful of authority, even those who are trying to help (Stevenson & Willott, 2007). This suggests that there is room in a student's case management for mental health, counselling or psychological services.

Situational. ELL students comprise a widely varied, heterogeneous group. As this group

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becomes increasingly diverse, representing many different languages, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for organizations that support ELLs to keep up with their many needs (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). These needs can include family supports, translated materials, translators, and research. Each individual student and family unit is different, which underscores the need for teachers to get a good sense of the needs of the student, and which programs can best assist.

Working with student's families can also be a complicated situational factor. Teachers can find it difficult to get to know their students' parents (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Not all parents are alike either, parents can be ambitious for their children (Stevenson & Willott, 2007), and may be seen as their only hope for the future. Contrastingly, parents can be preoccupied, depressed, anxious, in mourning, and as a result may be unable to care for children (Magro, 2007). In both cases, the school must have an idea of the family dynamic, and be knowledgeable on how it can affect a student's educational outcome.

Institutional. Institutionally, there are some significant systemic barriers to effective instruction for ELLs. The teaching can often be difficult, cumbersome, and challenging (Sarroub, 2007).   Teachers tend to come from a homogeneous background: white, middleclass, little or modest international experience, and are monolingual (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Teachers tend to have low expectations for ELL students, refugees in particular, because of language issues (Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Generally, the research reports that teachers are ill-prepared to meet the needs of refugee students (Matthews, 2008; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008), and that there is a shortage of teachers with competency to teach language to ELLs (Matthews, 2008, Stevenson & Willott, 2007).

At the programming level, there are also barriers to effective learning. The current practices of immersion and mainstreaming programs have not been shown to be effective, as ELL students cannot keep up with the demands of language; alternatively, modified programs can be perceived as punitive (Matthews, 2008). Matthews (2008) stated that staples of quality ELL programming include: language support (specialized English as an Additional Language training), integrated community development, peer mentoring, community partnerships, youth support, whole school support. In order to do so, there must be a welcoming school environment, good induction procedures, home liaison workers, community links, pastoral care (Matthews, 2008).

Summary. This section reviewed the cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs, the services

provided to ELLs, and the barriers to providing effective services. Culturally, ELLs require cultural brokering, social, community and individual support to learn the norms of Canadian culture (Ilieva, 2001). Linguistically, they will arrive to Canada with a number of languages of origin that can affect their language development, and may affect specific language features in phonology, syntax, and semantics (Case & Taylor, 2005), they will require vocabulary support (Roessingh & Elgie, 2009), and need to be supported across the many strands of linguistic, academic, and cultural literacies (Magro, 2007). Good intake and assessment procedures can improve student experience and outcomes (Matthews, 2008), by acknowledging the student's individual needs, providing appropriate programming, and eliminating barriers as they present.

The following section seeks to explore current assessment practices to determine the specific needs of specific students, and the use of this information to inform programming to meet the identified needs in the case of exceptionality.

Identifying Exceptionality in CLD Populations

The previous sections have discussed the need for recognition of ELLs, determination of specific needs of ELLs, and the importance of having good induction and assessment procedures to eliminate potential barriers. Despite many journals discussing research with ELL students and EAL programming, there is a significant lack of published research in the assessment, intervention, and professional training of those who work with ELLs with exceptionality (Albers, Hoffman, &Lundahl, 2009). This section seeks to identify common practice and theory in the assessment of ELLs for purposes of identification for special education services.

Assessment Procedures. It is first important to ascertain a student's functioning within English. A tool used by teachers in the field is the Woodcock Munoz Language Survey Revised (Schrank, Wendling, Alvarado, & Woodcock, 2010) which can calculate a six-point CALP score. This information is valuable to the psychologist as it may allow the interpretation of some scores. This tool is widely used in EAL programs in Canada, as well as the United States (Schon et al., 2008). This tool was formulated through the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement-III (WJ-III-ACH) standardization study (Schrank et al., 2010). Subtests from the WJ-III-ACH which had marked language acquisition implications for Spanish-English speakers where selected to form the battery of tests in the WMLS-R. The standardization for the WMLS-R tool was pulled from the overall WJ-III-ACH sample, using only the selected subtests that were administered on Spanish-English speakers. While this test does have solid psychometric properties in its parent

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test, it's usage in the current context in Saskatchewan is questionable due to a lack of representation in the overall sample (Sattler, 2009).

A number of considerations must be taken to account when working with interpreters in assessment settings (e.g., level of proficiency of the translator, confidentiality, translation changing test questions, etc.; Sattler, 2009). Other research has created computer programs which account for language differences, particularly in Cross-Battery Assessment protocols (XBA; Flanagan, Ortiz & Alfonso, 2007).

There is a need for teachers to have a solid awareness of linguistic features of EAL students (Case & Taylor, 2005). Each L1 is different, and its features will affect student's ability in learning L2 (Case & Taylor, 2005). An important point to underscore is that to differentiate between a Learning Disability (LD) and language deficit is that an LD will occur in the learning of both L1 and L2. Foundationally, if phonological skills in L1 are good, then they should be good in L2, and if this is not the case, it is likely that it is poor instruction rather than a disability. In the domain of phonology, if a student has difficulties in L1 and L2, that can be one of the first indicators of the presence of an LD (Case & Taylor, 2005).

When an exceptionality is suspected, a number of factors must be discussed to determine whether or not an exceptionality is present. Ideally, this should be done in a team format (Sullivan, 2011), including speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, classroom teachers, special education teachers, EAL teachers, administrators, etc. It is the responsibility of the school psychologist to ascertain: (1) that the school's curriculum is appropriate; (2) the child's problems are documented across settings and personnel, not only in school, but also at home; (3) difficulties are present both in the native language or dialect and in English; (4) the child has been taught but has not made satisfactory progress; (5) the teacher has the qualifications and experience to effectively teach the student; (6) instruction has been continuous and appropriately sequenced and has included teaching of skills prerequisite to success (Ortiz, 1997). An appropriate assessment and diagnosis of exceptionality can be obtained if the above factors are accounted for.

Pulling the research together, there are some processes that can help collect data to determine disabilities within CLD populations (Schon et al., 2008). The first step for school psychologists is to determine a pre-referral process (i.e., Ortiz, 1997) to eliminate a number of factors that would rule out a learning disability. Further to this, the first domain of assessment

should determine language functioning in both L1 and L2, and that assessments themselves be assessed for their linguistic load to determine reliability and validity (Schon, et al., 2008). Being language limited is not cause for a diagnosis of a disability. Teachers need to have adequate skill, training and experience (competency) before a diagnosis can be determined.

The research explored the processes that schools utilize determine the language difference of an ELL from a disability. There concern is that learning disabilities, and language difference often present in similar fashions. The following discussion explores the features of learning disabilities versus language differences.

Learning disability criteria. Many linguistic features are common between ELLs and those who have a learning disability (LD), as such, the discussion to distinguish whether an ELL also has a LD is required (Case & Taylor, 2005) . The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition Revised (DSM-IV-TR; APA, 2000) outlines leaning disorders as: (1) low reading, writing, mathematics scores on standardized tests below expectation given age, intelligence and educational experience; (2) the resulting effect interferes with activities of daily living; and (3) no sensory deficit, or other disorder explains the low ability. The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (2002) expands this definition to also include that a cognitive process that affects learning (i.e., phonological awareness, memory, recall, etc.) must also be identified. The distinguishing feature then of the ELL student with a LD, is that the linguistic features will present not only in English, but in the student's first language (L1) as well. The difficulty lies in determining a significant (i.e., different from the normal population) language deficiency in an ELL's L1.

Within CLD populations there is also diversity in the domain of language ability. Just as within the general Canadian population, there are incidences of Learning Disabilities (LDs) within the ELL population. Further to this, there are also cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), speech and language Disabilities, anxiety, or depression within CLD populations (Strekalova& Hoot, 2008). This can result in school or other psychologists to come in and perform further behavioural, achievement, or intelligence testing.

Students with disabilities provided accommodations to support their learning, including students from other language background regardless of immigration status, (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2011). The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, in turn, attempts to identify ELL

students who may require additional special education supports. There is a significant gap in the literature when it comes to the indicators of mental disorders, such as LD, in CLD populations, and effective interventions to support these students (McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, & Leos, 2005). It is then difficult to know how Saskatchewan teachers are rising to meet this need. One way to identify exceptionality in complex cases is the Response to Intervention framework.

Response to intervention. Response to intervention is another framework that emerges from the research (Case & Taylor, 2005; Elizalde-Utnick, 2008; Schon, Shaftel& Markham, 2007; Wagner, Francis & Morris, 2005). This model, which has been popularized by American legislation to identify and diagnose learning disabilities, emphasizes the need to have good teaching practices for all students. "Learning disabilities are better viewed as a result of an interaction between an individual's characteristics and demands of the educational environment that interact to determine the specific manifestation" (Wagner, Francis, & Morris, 2005, p. 8.) When students do not respond to effective teaching, then intentional and evidenced based interventions are put into place. Through the continued processes of data collection and consultation, individualized programming is developed. This model could also be utilized for determining LDs in EAL populations in Saskatchewan, but a major stumbling block is a lack of trained teachers, and a lack of best practice guidelines when working with ELLs. Another concern is to determine best support to the EAL student population, and being able to identify LDs would only be useful if there were specific program recommendations to follow it (McCardle, Mele-McCarthy & Leos, 2005).

Another approach demonstrated in the research is the use of Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA; Spinelli, 2009). In a CBA, student output is compared to curriculum standards and objectives, rather than to a normative sample. While standardized assessment is wrought with issues surrounding sampling, representative populations, and test bias (Zetlin, Beltran, Salcido, Gonzalez & Reyes, 2011), CBA has the potential to allow the student to display what they know under optimal and responsive conditions (Spinelli, 2009) providing a more authentic evaluation of a student's areas of need and strength. This could help inform specific teaching interventions as part of an overall RTI approach.

Finally, at the level of intervention, there is a gap in the literature as to how to differentiate instruction for ELLs with LDs. Some suggestions have included differentiating in terms of content (what is being learned), process (how it is being taught), and product (how the

student displays their learning) in order to meet their specific needs in the classroom (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). Many of the interventions offered are just general ideas for directions of intervention for language already provided in EAL instruction. Interventions could be based on developing phonological memory and sensitivity as well (Wagner et al., 2005). Articles cite a need for further research, and perhaps the first phase in that research is to identify the population that is struggling (McCardle, et al., 2005). Using RTI as part of an assessment procedure might help to better identify the struggling population.

Summary. In the realm of assessment, research has demonstrated the need for the use of best practice when teaching, as well as the need for assessments in language of origin. There are continued questions to the normative development (i.e., learning trajectories) of language (Roessingh, 2010), making it difficult to determine if a student is in a phase of their learning (i.e., Terrell's (1977) stages of language acquisition) or may have a weakness compared to a normative sample. The research wondered if schools are adequately identifying disabilities when found in concert with language differences, and which tools or procedures are they using to sort it causes for student frustration. Further to this, the research explored the services that are provided and asked if students are being adequately served.

Conclusion

This literature review examined four main areas: (1) Relational-Cultural Theory as it informs this project of research; (2) the eligibility processes used to identify English Language Learners; (3) the needs and services provided to English Language Learners; and (4) the identification process for ELL students with exceptionalities. The review found that a significant amount of research has come from the United States, which largely influences the Canadian situation. Further to this, provinces are in differing levels of preparedness when it comes to the influx of newcomer Canadian students into public school systems.

This literature review was able then to identify areas where research is needed to inform our current programming for ELLs through EAL programming. This research sought to answer the following research questions:

1) How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct English Language Learners who require services?

2) What services are currently being provided for English Language Learners in Saskatchewan?

3) How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptional learning needs in English Language Learner Populations?

The following chapter will outline the methodology that was used in order to answer the research questions, in concert with the principles of RCT. Following that, chapter four will present the data collected in response to the research questions, and the final chapter will discuss the implications of this new data.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Nature of the Study

This modified basic interpretive inquiry study used individual interviews with teachers, administrative experts, and settlement agency representatives from the two main urban centres of Saskatchewan to explore the research questions:

1) How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct English Language Learners who require services?

2) What services are currently being provided for English Language Learners in Saskatchewan?

3) How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptional learning needs in English Language Learner populations?

Educational research often uses interviews and questionnaires to learn about phenomena that are not clearly observable (i.e., experiences, opinions, values, perspectives; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Assessment is a tool used by educators and school officials, and as such, it was the opinions, experiences and values of educators and school officials that are of interest to this research project. In contrast, a community settlement worker, who was also an immigrant to Canada, was included to include the immigrant voice and perspective. Individual interviews, lasting 30-60 minutes, were conducted in order to collect rich data that may be usable to other school divisions currently developing programming for increasing numbers of ELL students in their schools.

Interviews were conducted in April to May, 2011. This research purposefully collected a snapshot in time of the perspectives of school workers and immigrants as to the induction, programming and assessment procedures when working with English Language Learners (ELLs). The timeframe was important, as it is during spring that schools are actively reporting on their successes during the school year, and planning for the next school year. The practice of assessment and instruction of ELLs is constantly changing, and the nature of this research is time specific.

This research explored current perspectives of intake, assessment and programming for ELLs in urban Saskatchewan schools. The goal for this research was to gather the perspectives if school staff in the methods used to identify, and address the needs of EAL students. The perspectives of the school officials were also contrasted with the perspective of the immigrant

community settlement worker to identify areas of agreement and disagreement. The interviews were scheduled for 30-60 minutes, followed a question guide but were semi structured, allowing for exploration of topics that were important to the interviewees from their own perspectives. These perspectives were also shared in the research data.

Participants

The research sought data specifically from schools and school divisions within Saskatchewan. As education is a provincial mandate (SMAEELISD, 2008), it is not within the parameters of this research to include data from out of country or out of province. Saskatchewan includes 28 school divisions, located in both rural and urban settings. However, since 69.8 % of immigrant migration is to only two major urban centres in Saskatchewan (SMAEELISD, 2008), interviewees were selected from only these two regions. The interviewees were selected from school divisions where the ELL population was such to require a formalized EAL program with intake, programming, and continued assessment. The research selected respondents that varied in their perspectives and opinions, while still under the same provincial mandates and restraints to allow the results to be applicable to smaller urban centres who are beginning to see the second wave of immigrants. Small urban centres were not included as they have limited ELL students, spread over larger geographic distances, resulting in fewer formalized EAL programs and teachers and more individual program plans. .

Upon ethics approval (Appendix A), purposive sampling (Charles & Mertler, 2002) was used to select the interviewees. A matrix was created in order to target six interviewees. For each urban centre the research targeted: (1) an EAL teacher (i.e., a current EAL teacher with significant work experience in EAL); (2) an EAL expert (i.e., a current EAL program leader, consultant, or coordinator currently employed by a school division for the purpose of leading or managing the division EAL program); and (3) an immigrant community settlement worker (i.e., an immigrant currently working for an agency that supports families in their transitions into schools). The respondents were not asked to comment on their own school division work specifically, but rather on the work being done provincially. These respondents were targeted through network sampling (Charles & Mertler, 2002), and through the researcher's work with a number of committees, organizations, and school divisions that service ELL populations.

The prospective interviewees were contacted regarding the research project, asking for their participation through email (Appendix B). Six prospective interviewees were contacted,

Table 3.1: Participant selection matrix

	Teacher	*EAL Expert*	*Immigrant*
Urban Centre A	Yes	Yes	Yes
Urban Centre B	Yes	Yes	No Response

and five responded to the request. As a result, only one immigrant perspective was shared in the sample and cannot fully represent a complete immigrant perspective. Additional ethics applications were completed and approved as required by the interviewee's work places (e.g., procedures to gain approval from school divisions where the interviewee was an employee), and all were given permission to participate in the research.

Participants were given gift certificates for $40 for a retailer who specializes in educational materials to purchase resources for their classrooms. The gift certificates were not used as solicitation for participation, but were given during the transcript review. This was done to show appreciation for their participation. As the gift certificates for teacher resources do not directly benefit the participants but rather their students, it was not believed to have altered the resulting data.

Participants completed an informed consent document (Appendix C) where confidentiality of their data was promised. Specific schools and school divisions were not disclosed in the reporting of the data findings, nor was information reported where an interviewee may be identified. There are a limited number of professionals who work in the EAL community, and as such, particular attention was given to this matter.

Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. The interviewees at that time were given the opportunity to read over the transcripts. They were invited to edit, delete, or add to their responses if they felt it was needed. The member check was done to ensure that the answers they gave were as accurate and as representative of their current perspective and situation. The member checks also increased the reliability and rigour of the study by insuring that the answers they provided truthfully represented their viewpoint and allowed them to elaborate on responses. The respondents have also requested a brief executive summary of the study results, and will be provided with copies of the finished thesis, and any published work that utilizes the data collected.

Interview Questions

Interview questions were complied through a review of the literature and, in consultation with the research supervisor and committee. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing for flexibility and probing for clarity from the respondents. The questions provided a basic outline but the interviews did flow in directions that were important to the interviewees within the research context (e.g., the relationship between EAL and Special Education, working collaboratively with other teachers, informal assessment tools).

The interviews asked demographic questions from the respondents, including job title, years of experience, years of experience of EAL, and primary student group (elementary, middle years, secondary). Demographic data was collected in order to explore trends along demographic lines to help draw conclusions or confirm trends. The questionnaire intended to ask questions specific to the induction, servicing, and assessment needs of ELLs. The questions are provided in Appendix D.

Theoretical Perspective

Relational-Cultural Theory (Comstock et al, 2008; Hartling, 2008; Jordan, 2008; Walker, 2008; West, 2005) emphasizes the need for two-directional relationships and the development of relational skills in order to build resilience and growth in students. This theory, while traditionally employed in individual therapeutic contexts, does show usefulness in institution or school based research, who in essence demonstrate a *power-over* style of relationship to their students. Using RCT in the field of education is new; however, it is a recommended research direction by RCT scholars (West, 2005).

Power, the ability to influence change on an individual (Walker, 2008), is traditionally kept by teachers. This research asks where the student fits in the context of assessment and programming decisions and at which point does the student begin to influence the system. RCT theory seeks the development of growth fostering relationships, which embody mutual empathy, empowerment, and responsiveness (Comstock et al. 2008; Hartling, 2008; Jordan 2008).   One needs to consider whether schools, in their power role, are fostering this mutual relationship.

Trustworthiness

When performing qualitative research, it is important that not only that the data be credible and genuine on face value, but that it also meet qualitative research standards (Charles & Mertler, 2002). The research did consider these three constructs in order to best answer the research questions.

Aspects of Trustworthiness. Carlson (2010) outlines a number of techniques that increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research. *Audit Trails* were used in order that future examiners can look at and evaluate the data for five years after the conclusion of the study. The transcripts, audio files, and charts used for the analysis are available for review from the research supervisor by the research committee. *Reflexivity* is present in the current document in that the researcher expresses his biases, experiences, and voice within the research, and the data. *Triangulation* occurred through comparing the different voices through the use of vertical (i.e., the different respondents answering the same question) and horizontal (i.e., the same respondent answering consistently across the same question) analyses. The responses were also compared to previous research literature. Finally the study utilized *member checking* to allow for the participants to confirm, retract, or expand on their original answers.

Through purposive sampling, each of the participants were targeted based on their saliency (i.e., their stake, influence and experience). Each of the respondents were active in their fields. All have either volunteered with settlement agencies, or pursued further academic training in order to better support ELLs. Through targeting research participants with high saliency, the research data has increased trustworthiness.

Credibility. Credibility is the extent that the data collected through this research is consistent. The research was authenticated by the member checking of the transcripts, thus insuring that the answers provided were true and authenticated on two occasions (the interview and the transcript review stage). Each of the interviewees reviewed the transcripts and approved them to be submitted for the analysis, or have their responses withdrawn from the study sample (the respondents also had the right to withdraw their data from the study up to July 1, 2011). The semi-structured interviews also allowed for responses to be clarified, challenged, or reviewed. Further to this, the data that was repeated across respondents was considered to be the most reliable, and reported as trends in the data.

Further, the questionnaire needed to have evidence of reliability. The literature review guided the construction of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was circulated to the research supervisor and committee and application approved by the Research Ethics Board (Appendix D). The format allowed the interviewer to probe responses that were unclear. Further to this, the respondents were allowed to change, edit, or omit responses through the member checking process. The respondents also responded candidly and honestly as their confidentiality was

assured, avoiding any concerns of repercussions for their responses, allowing their authentic voices in response to the research questions. Through these measures, the interviews, the questionnaire, and the responses created data that can be considered reliable responses to the research questions.

Rigour. Another component of quality qualitative research is rigour. Rigour is the extent to which the research methodology is consistent with the theoretical lens and that informs the research (Oliver, 2011). Using RCT in school research is a new direction recommended for further exploration (West, 2005). In relation to RCT, semi-structured interviews can be an appropriate method of gathering data for research. RCT emphasizes the importance of growth fostering relationships between individuals (Comstock et al, 2008; Hartling, 2008; Jordan, 2008; Walker, 2008; West, 2005). Through participating in the interview, the interviewer and the interviewee interact and relate on a topic that is of mutual interest and passion. Within this context the five good things (Jordan, 2008) can occur: (1) a sense of zest (e.g., demonstrated by the enthusiasm by the interviewer and interviewee in the process); (2) clarity about oneself, the other, and the relationship (e.g., the opportunity to share, ask questions, and mutual support given within the interview dialogue); (3) a sense of personal worth (e.g., through the affirmative feelings expressed between the participants, affirming each other in their role in EAL instruction); (5) the desire for more connection (e.g., continued contact after the interview process, and desire to know the results and future work together).

Summary. This research considered trustworthiness and credibility in its methodology, design, and data collection. The trustworthiness was assured through the design elements (e.g., audit trails, reflexivity, saliency, triangulation, and member checking). The credibility was demonstrated by the transcription review process and semi-structured interview style. Also, rigour was proposed through the elements of five good things (Jordan, 2008) evident in the semi-structured, one-on-one interview format. The answers to the research questions given are credible through the consideration of these elements of qualitative research. Once these elements were considered, the process of data collection, analysis and reporting began.

Research Process

This section outlines the sequence of events and processes that occurred during this research study. The process went in three phases: (1) data collection; (2) data analysis; and (3) reporting. In the data collection phase the research targeted the research participants, and

completed the interviews, transcripts, and member checking process. The data analysis phase utilized basic interpretive qualitative study (Merriam, 2002) and meaning reduction techniques (Kvale, 1996) to identify the themes and trends. The reporting phase was done by creating a narrative where the researcher could co-author the data set (Kvale, 1996). The details of this process are discussed below.

Data collection. The research began with the proposal defence and ethics approval completed in March, 2011. At that time the respondents were identified and contacted through personal email in the first week of April 2011, requesting their participation in the study. Participants were targeted using the participant selection matrix. Six people were targeted, and five out of the six respondents agreed to the interview. One respondent requested further ethics review from his/her school division, which was completed and approved. The interviews were conducted from April-May, 2011, and were digitally recorded. The recordings were transcribed and organized into a table format, printed, and given to the respondents to complete any edits, additions, or retractions. All of respondents replied in June 2011, and the data was analysed.

Data analysis. This modified basic interpretive inquiry study (Merriam, 2002) was conducted to increase our understanding on how the research participants perceive the given phenomenon (i.e., ELL assessment and programming in Saskatchewan). Responses from the interviews were inductively analyzed to identify the recurring themes and patterns that cut across the data (Merriam, 2002). This analysis used a meaning condensation technique, where by statements made by the respondents that directly answered the research questions were paraphrased and condensed into a table format, identifying the central theme in the response to the question (Kvale, 1996). The individual responses could then be compared between participants in a number of ways (e.g., teacher versus teacher, urban centre A versus urban centre B, school voice versus immigrant voice). This analysis could also be compared to references in the literature that was used to inform the study.

A table format was used to review the data. The columns were categorized by respondent, each given a code (e.g., expert A, expert B, teacher A, teacher B, Immigrant A). The rows were categorized by research questions (1, 2, 3), as well as *topics of interest* (i.e., items discussed that were not directly related to the research questions), and RCT (i.e., direct quotations or stories which relate to RCT present in EAL programming).

In the first phase of the analysis, the member-checked transcripts were reviewed (all

transcripts, including the immigrant perspective). The researcher read through the responses, highlighting any strongly worded direct quotations in response to the research questions. These quotations were copied to the master table format, under the headings of the research questions. A second reading was done looking for specific answers to the research questions using the meaning condensation technique (Kvale, 1996). In this technique, statements made by the respondents that answer directly to the research questions were paraphrased and condensed and entered into the table format, identifying the central theme in the response to the question (Kvale, 1996). A third reading was done to explore the topics of interest that occurred during the interview that were not directly related to the research questions, and placed in the *topics of interest* heading. This analysis was done through *meaning finding through the narrative* where topics of conversation were identified as a larger category (e.g., informal assessments, working with special education programs, working collaboratively with community agencies, etc.; Kvale, 1996) The third reading was done so the voices that call for change, or concern were represented in the research. A fourth reading was done to find stories/quotations related to RCT and placed in the *RCT* heading. In the immigrant transcript, sections were highlighted that were not in agreement with the school perspectives.

Using the master table format, the central themes were reviewed across the respondents to remark any trends or discrepancies between: (1) each urban centre; (2) between teachers/administrators; and (3) between immigrant voice and school perspective. The central themes were categorized (Kvale, 1996) to develop the snapshot in time to describe the intake, assessment, and programming for ELLs in Saskatchewan. Any central themes related to RCT were noted to see if in fact teachers and administrators were effectively navigating the balance of relationship and power when working with this particularly vulnerable population. Solutions from RCT were then developed and presented as ways to move forward in furthering and improving current assessment practices with ELLs.

Reporting. The final phase after the data analysis was to report the findings. The reporting proved to be complicated by the promises made for confidentiality and anonymity. The field of EAL in Saskatchewan is a small one, and even though the sample was taken across school divisions and cities, it would be possible to identify certain interviewees given some of the perspectives they shared. The researcher, himself being a part of the EAL teaching community, was sensitive to this issue. As a result, due care and attention in identifying

information was paramount in the reporting of the research findings.

The decision was made to present the data from one perspective (i.e., create a narrative of the composite data from each of the interviewees). The trends and discrepancies were reported as a narrative coming from a Saskatchewan perspective. This process allowed for the interpretation of the data to come as a form of co-authorship (Kvale, 1996). The perspectives of the researcher, and the learnings that occurred as a result of the interaction during the interview process was then also included in the data set.

The report of the data and discussion may also be disseminated through publication in academic journals, shared in presentations to school divisions and government, and this document will be sent to school divisions who participated in the study.

Upon completion of the study, the recordings were deleted off the researcher's hard drive, and given to the supervisor for safe-keeping on DVD format as indicated in the ethics approval. All correspondence, forms, transcripts, and other sensitive or identifying data was given to the supervisor, to be destroyed beyond recovery in August, 2016.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology and process that occurred in order to answer the research questions. This research is informed by RCT, which emphasizes dialogue and relationship as foundational to working with vulnerable populations. The methodology, data collection and analysis and reporting adhere to strong tenants of validity, reliability and rigour, indicating credible data results. The next chapter will explore the data that was collected through this research project. At the conclusion, the final chapter will discuss the implications, and recommended future directions of research.

CHAPTER 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the intake, programming, and identification of exceptionality of ELL students in Saskatchewan. The research obtained a snapshot of current practices and directions towards future improvements by interviewing a purposive sample of administrators and teachers of EAL programming in the two major centres in Saskatchewan (Saskatoon and Regina). The study also included the perspective of a community settlement worker and immigrant, to acknowledge their role in the relationship (i.e., the relationships between students and teachers, families and schools). This chapter describes the context of the interviews, the participants, and the perspective and experience of the interviewer/researcher. The results are combined to provide a narrative (i.e., a Saskatchewan perspective) in order to answer the research questions, and protect the confidentiality of the respondents.

Context

Saskatchewan is a province of approximately 1 million residents (Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The province supports 28 individual school divisions, including public, separate, and francophone schools, with an enrolment of 159,465 students in 2010 (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010). A majority of the students attend school divisions located in two major urban centres of Saskatchewan. These two urban centres also welcome a majority of immigrants to Saskatchewan (SMAEELISD, 2008) and are considered to have the most developed EAL programming in the province because of their numbers.

The Saskatchewan Government has committed to providing school divisions with additional resources in order to accommodate the growing numbers of ELL students in Saskatchewan Schools. There is a need to increase capacity and provide EAL programming; providing specialized services for immigrant families, children, and youth; creating educational policies inclusive of the needs of immigrant students; and partnering with community and government to provide settlement and support services (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011). This research asked the respondents to describe the current assessment practices, and explored opportunities for future growth through the application of RCT principles, and evidence based practice research when working with ELL students, both in regular and exceptional settings.

The Participants

An EAL administrator and EAL teacher were selected from each urban centre to provide information on their programming and perspective on the Saskatchewan situation. In addition to school personnel, a community settlement worker was contacted to provide another informed perspective from both the community settlement agency perspective, and the immigrant perspective (the participant was also an immigrant). The interviews were semi-structured, following the general research questions, but allowed for flexibility and professional conversations on the current state of affairs in EAL programming.

The participants had a variety of experiences which led them to working in EAL programming and support. The interviewees came from general classroom, special education, administration, foreign language teaching, individual migration experiences, travel experiences, and community organizations which inspired their current work in EAL in Saskatchewan. Interestingly, while the respondents had professional school experience averaging 13 years, each of the participants had been in their role in EAL between two to five years, indicating the young nature of this kind of programming in Saskatchewan. The respondents also represented direct specialist experience from each of the three age brackets of students: primary, middle years, and secondary. The respondents represented public, separate, and private school systems. In each of the interviews, the respondents presented themselves as professionals who spoke candidly, and who personally care for their work, and their students.

Researcher's Background

My first foreign language experience was as a Norwegian language teacher for the Saskatoon Norwegian Language School, and subsequent teaching in French Immersion classrooms. I had completed my undergraduate training with additional course work in special education. I performed my internship at an international school in France where I taught both English and French to foreign students. When I returned to Canada, I completed EAL certification and began my first teaching assignment in the EAL program in Saskatoon. It was the first year of the program, and we seemed to make it up as we went.

I often tell people, that teaching EAL is the best teaching assignment you can get. The first reason is that it is rare that students appreciate daily what you teach them. As a student learns language, they become more functional in their school environment. Another reason would be the witnessing to the inspirational stories of hardship, bravery, resilience, and triumph over adversity. Teachers of newcomer students truly hold the stories, and I found myself often

saying "you just can't make this stuff up." And the final reason is the humour. There is much laughter in the learning of language, and while it may not always be an easy process, there are an abundant number of reasons to laugh.

I believe that it is because of these three reasons that EAL teachers are a truly special bunch of people. English as an Additional Langauge teachers and those who work in the settlement of newcomers, experience the joys and sorrows along with their students. They hear the stories, and they keep the stories. They know that relationships can transcend language. The nature of the work is collaborative, and as such, EAL professionals are naturally social creatures. They enjoy working together, and learning from one another. English as an Additional Language teachers have given up the notion that they know everything, or even anything, and approach their work humbly, and truly embody the spirit of lifelong learning. As such, this research did not find difficulty in finding participants, nor a shortage on stories and opportunities for shared learning. I am personally honoured to be able to work with the fine people I had a chance to interview through this project.

Along with my love of EAL, I must not forget my first love of special education. As I complete my master's degree in school and counselling psychology, I recognize the duality of these two teaching professions, and the need for an overlap and sharing between these two disciplines. Through this research and my future work, I hope to help build the bridge between these two fields, identifying the role of EAL instruction and services for students with exceptionalities, and supporting general and special education teachers in including ELL students in their classrooms.

The Interviews

The interviews were arranged in April and May of 2011, and were conducted face-to-face. The interviews were semi-structured, ensuring that the research questions could be answered, but also so that the participants could bring their own current issues to the project. The interviews ran from 30 to 90 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and reviewed by the interviewees, and returned for analysis in June, 2011. The results of this chapter give their perspectives to represent the current programming needs, and the directions for the future given the significant attention given by government to support these programs in Saskatchewan.

Results

The resulting data from the interview transcripts was analysed for meaning, placed into themes, and are reported as one Saskatchewan perspective. The reporting was done keeping the promise to the respondents of confidentiality and anonymity, which allowed the participants to speak candidly during the interviews. EAL is a new and emerging field in Saskatchewan, and there are relatively few teachers and administrators who are qualified to participate in the project. Therefore, to avoid a member of the EAL community identifying a particular perspective, the individual perspectives are combined.

Additionally, the present results represent a moment in time. The responses contained in this research, may not be the same a year from now, or even next fall. With new research, new programming initiatives, and new professionals entering the field, change occurs consistently. Further to this, the nature and needs of the ELL students are continuously fluctuating. These results represent a stage in the progression of EAL programming in Saskatchewan.

I must also acknowledge that my perspective is present in the reporting of the data (Carlson, 2010). I bring to the conversation my own experiences, observations, and rephrasing of the responses. As Kvale (1996) acknowledged, interview research cannot be reported, rather, it is co-authored. Through this co-authorship, I hope to maintain the authentic perspective of Saskatchewan, celebrating the successes and acknowledging the challenges.

In order to minimize the effect of researcher bias in the reporting of the data, some steps were taken. The themes are outlined at the beginning of each of the research questions, with direct quotations from the research participants. Direct quotations from the interviews are used whenever possible to give the reader some of the colour from the transcripts, and also to provide more credibility. The researcher's own interpretations, implications, and responses to the other perspectives were reserved for the discussion in chapter five. The following results are presented as they reflected on the research questions.

Research question 1. The first research question asked: *How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct ELLs who require services?*

The respondents described how children are inducted to schools in a variety of ways. If a child first comes into a Saskatchewan school, they will be initially welcomed by the frontline staff, which is generally the secretary or school principal. At this time there is often paperwork to be filled in. It's disputed whether or not this is the most appropriate time to have them fill it in, as it can be long

Table 4.1. Response themes to research question 1.

Research Question:	How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct ELLs who require services?
Themes	*Direct Quotations*
School and centralized intake	*"Administration would send them to go to the [intake centre]…to be assessed…they would let us as the EAL teachers know that we needed to follow through."*
	"I'm usually pulled out of class and I cancel class and I go and have a meeting with the family immediately, as soon as they come to the building"
Formal language measures	*"Assessment is a bit of an art as well as a science"*
	"Reading, writing, speaking listening are the main areas that we look at and then within that we look at our focus is assessing the cognitive academic language proficiency which is why we chose the Woodcock Munoz"
Need for qualitative data	*"that's part of the assessment process too, getting to know the student a little bit"*

and confusing ("...sometimes we found out that is very difficult and is not practical because there are many questions, and when you meet with the family, a family, first time, it is too much for them"). Others believe it is the best that can be done when students arrive unannounced. One teacher noted "sometimes I'm called down, depending on whether the family speaks English...and I cancel class and I go have a meeting with the family immediately, as soon as they come to the building." If it is indicated that the student does not speak English primarily in the home, the parents are asked if they would like to receive EAL services. If so, the EAL teacher is called in, and an assessment or intake procedure will begin.

The participants stated that the intake system is not always ideal, and sometimes parents, especially newcomers who have limited language skills themselves require more of an orientation to the school and school system. The federal government began the Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS) program in schools to help meet this need. The SWIS program is managed by local community groups, like the Open Door Society or YWCA, to support students and families in schools. The SWIS worker will bring a family to the school, and explain the EAL program to them. The SWIS worker can also provide for interpreters, and interagency support to make sure the students are settled in their new home school. As the services of SWIS are holistic, often times they may have information that they can share with the school, and they can also assist with any issues that may come up later. They can also advocate for students, if they seem to fall between the cracks (e.g., mental health concerns, lack of family support, needs

unmet by schools, etc.).

Once the student has been identified as requiring EAL services there are different ways the research participants described the initial intake assessment. If there is an EAL teacher assigned to the school, they will meet the child and do an assessment to place the child in an appropriate learning group. The intake assessment can be quite extensive, and would need to measure the four strands of literacy (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing). This can take close to two hours per student, and may need to be repeated three times a year per student to track progress. Group assessments may be administered to save time. These assessment procedures can give the teacher a good idea of students' language proficiency.

A newer method that is being piloted and expanded is to send the EAL student to a centralized intake centre. Upon registration into the EAL program, the students are booked for a formal assessment at the intake centre, which does the assessment intake for one or more school divisions. This appointment occurs two to three weeks after initial arrival. School divisions see a need to move towards a standardized assessment system or tool that can work across the kindergarten to grade twelve system. This intake centre is useful; however, communication can be complicated by some teachers not reading the reports or not following the recommendations in general classroom settings.

When asked about assessment, a respondent stated "assessment is a bit of an art as well as a science." There are a number of tools that are used to determine the language proficiency of ELL students. There are formalized measures such as the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey – Revised (WMLS-R) (the most prominent in the province), San Diego Quick, Secondary Level English Proficiency Exam, Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT). There are also curriculum based assessments from the ERGO (Educational Resource Group of Ontario) series, PWIM model, Fountas and Pinnell, and Test of Written Spelling. Teachers also create their own assessments that deal with spontaneous language, articulation, and letter and sound identification. Some teachers get frustrated using standardized assessment tools, "I find it [...] a waste of time looking around for assessments when I know exactly what I want to know."

Many other views on assessment were shared by the participants. The inclusion of self-assessment is particularly important. In addition, math skills should be assessed, particularly at the high school level. Some school divisions have developed their own language benchmarks and assessments for their division, and are in the process of piloting these.

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Beyond the language component of the assessment, qualitative data should be collected from the students. A teacher reports,

> I ask a lot of questions about their family, and just how long they've been in Canada, and how do they feel about being in Canada... most of the time they have a little bit of English and they might say 'Bad, I feel bad.'

Items such as educational history, family situation, first language competency, family cohesion, previous learning difficulties, current physical health, and a sensory (hearing/vision) assessment may impact a student's experience in a new school. Collecting this additional data is important for teachers, "You get a feeling for the student and how their personality and background can affect language learning." Through the use of enrolment forms or standardized interviews, teachers and school divisions realize that each of their students comes from a particular context. Teachers and administrators believe its an opportunity to begin a conversation, "That's part of the assessment process too, getting to know the student a little bit."

At times, a student may be missed at the initial arrival. Students can be missed when a student displays a good use of social language (BICS), particularly at the primary grades where the language capacity may be the same as their peers. As they progress, particularly to grade four, they begin to experience some difficulties. At this time the classroom teacher may identify difficulties in language, and will network with the EAL teacher assigned to the school. Typically this instigates a file review, and assessment procedure to determine where the gaps in language development are.

The system currently in place is not perfect, "its a little bit hit and miss, but probably better than a couple years ago." There is a challenge between being efficient and collecting sufficient detail through assessment processes. Through the use of curriculum based materials that give a grade-based equivalency score, teachers remark that often the result is a false positive (i.e., the grade achieved on the assessment is higher than the students' actual working capacity). Cultural bias in assessment is also a problem, in that the questions that are asked in many of the formalized tools are developed out of knowledge that is culturally, or socially derived, impossible to answer for newcomers. Teachers generally do well at collecting academic assessments. There is often a long wait to have a full assessment done as teachers are very busy. Some students struggle in the mean time in general classroom settings.

Research question 2. The research question asked: *What services are currently being*

Table 4.2. Response themes to research question 2.

Research Question:	What services are currently being provided for ELLs?
Themes	*Direct Quotations*
Pullout instruction	*"EAL teachers are providing pullout support and that is ideally based on the needs of the students, but there are so many other factors that play into that"*
Combining content and language	*"I make goals and objectives related to content area, but with a focus on language…language acquisition and the curriculum"*
	"One of the goals is to tie their support not what the students need in the classroom. So it just provides that more focused support in addition to the support they receive in the classroom for learning content and language at the same time"
Need for more government resources	*"The ideal program would have money falling from the sky"*
	"I think there should be first of all, more EAL teachers for the program to work with the students more…they don't have time to take care of all of the students.…we need more programs for EAL, more resources, more attention"
	"Well, because we are lacking in an EAL curriculum in Saskatchewan I would often, I went to both the Ontario and Alberta curriculum"
Supports beyond the classroom	*"I think I'm the safe person, being the EAL teacher. They don't…they would never consider going to a counsellor at this point in their stay in Canada."*

provided for ELLs?

"The teachers are wonderful and work with many students, and the programs offered are very good" was the sentiment of the community settlement worker, and the sentiment was shared by the program administrators. Programming for ELLs looks different between the elementary and the high schools. Elementary schools primarily make use of itinerate teachers who are based in schools where there is a high need, and travel to schools where there are fewer students. There are two main tasks of the primary EAL teacher, direct language instruction and classroom supports in general classrooms.

First, instruction is done in a *pull out* model, that is, ELL students are taken out of their general classroom to receive specific EAL instruction. The time of the pull out is negotiated between the general and EAL teacher, however some school divisions advise against pullout during English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Math class as these are language rich classes for ELLs, and math is not a subject taught by EAL teachers, "we don't teach math so they can't be missing math". The students are grouped according to their age and language level, with beginner students receiving 500 minutes a week of instruction, and intermediate students

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receiving 150-200 minutes a week of instruction. The pullout model's advantages include: having small group instruction, having the instruction be targeted, and the intensity of the language input. Drawbacks include the isolating/labelling nature of pullout through the removal from their peers in the regular classroom, as well as logistical concerns of time (e.g., teacher/student/subject timetables) and space (e.g., classrooms to work in) at the school, but this is not unique to EAL, "the EAL teacher needs a place to work, other people need places to work".

The other role for the primary EAL teacher is to provide in-class, or general classroom teacher support. In some schools, this is done better than at others. The teachers stressed that the classroom teacher still has the responsibility to teach curriculum and read with ELL students in their general classroom. The use of the adaptive dimension is encouraged for general classroom teachers. Teachers of EAL focus on language, not curriculum. Teachers can be collaborators in providing in-class language support, and adding language components to a content area lesson. This can be a transitional piece, as the goal is to move towards a full integration of ELL students into general classroom settings.   At times this can also include a cultural bridging component, one teacher reported:

> part of it too was educating, helping to calm, or help mainstream classroom teachers who had little awareness or background or know how to deal with a student who (1) can't communicate with you fluently in your classroom, (2) is just showing these negative or on the surface level rude signs towards the teacher and then sometimes teachers without understanding their student's background would really respond negatively to the student rather than approaching it with a state of understanding and compassion.

Time is a major factor in effective co-teaching, and meeting the needs of many students in many classrooms.

At the high school level, there are both pull-out and sheltered EAL classes. In the sheltered EAL classes, language instruction is combined with content (e.g., math, science, social studies) in order to prepare students to enter a regular section, giving them the basic vocabulary and preparatory content so they can access curriculum. Through this sheltered class they can receive differentiated instruction, and have the same learning outcomes as a regular classroom, at times for academic credit. The drawback from these classes is that often high school students are eager to graduate and move on, when they are not quite ready. These students become frustrated

and disengaged with the sheltered class format.   Pull out still occurs at the high school level, giving high school students a period of specific EAL language training. Some teachers enjoy this time, believing it to be truly beneficial to the students to have specific language instruction. Administrators recognize the many factors that go into creating programs and the difficulty to have a *one size fits all* division strategy, "[Programming] is very much dependent on the initiative of the teachers at the school, the size of the school, and how many sections they are able to have."

Another approach specific to the high schools is the provision of tutoring for regular classroom subjects. EAL teachers expressed frustration with secondary classroom teachers, "Secondary teachers have been used to teaching their curriculum rather than their students." Providing tutoring to EAL student is necessary as it takes long for them to complete their tasks as they are learning language and content at the same time. The settlement agencies provide a youth study program to assist with homework, recruiting university students to work one-on-one with ELL students. Language and content must be taught together; however the job of the ELL teacher is not to simply be a tutor.

When asked if Saskatchewan was meeting the needs of ELL students, a response was "I feel like it's an inadequate answer to the question because I think there was inadequate support." The immigrant voice echoed this saying, "The EAL program is very good, teachers are wonderful, but it is not enough. We need more support. We need more attention." One of the challenges in Saskatchewan, is that there is no provincial curriculum, leaving teachers and divisions borrowing curriculum documents from Ontario and Alberta. There are not enough teachers to meet the needs of every student, and as a result not all students receive the support they need for best outcomes. Teachers of EAL are also stretched between needs of different schools, needs of particular classrooms, and individual needs of their students, and there are only so many hours in the school week including travel. The frustration, and the desire to do more was shared across the voices, "The ideal program would have money falling from the sky."

Beyond teaching language, EAL teachers work closely with families. Teachers, particularly if they are women, can get close to the mothers who might feel isolated. One remarked, "I'm the safe person, being the EAL teacher... they would never consider going to a counsellor at this point in their stay in Canada." Through the relationships built with the family, sometimes there are further opportunities for cultural bridging. In one case the school needed to

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play an intermediary role in communicating between a mother and a son (father had passed away) who did not speak a common language, and neither spoke English. Through the support of SWIS and translators, the school helped with home issues, which in turn improved academic performance. Beyond the need to teach language to students, there was the view that "there needs to be support for parents who are overwhelmed and stressed" as this does impact a student's ability to engage in language learning. .

Research question 3. The third research question asked, *How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptionalities in ELL populations?*

Sometimes there are ELL students who present with exceptionalities, both in deficits and in giftedness. Ideally, this would be something that is identified in the initial intake. Parents are asked if their students have had any difficulties in school before coming to Canada, but sometimes parents often hope for a fresh start and may not acknowledge the learning needs of their children. There is no formalized approach to identifying an exceptionality, however there are a number of indicators that might begin a process of identification. Initial indicators may include: a parental disclosure of learning difficulties, rapid/slow progress as compared to peers, articulation problems, and reading comprehension (may be the best indicator for some). A discussion to determine the best course of action is had if the indicators are present. It is difficult to distinguish between a language difference and a disability.

When a student has difficulty, the EAL teacher connects with the local Special Education teacher and classroom teacher to come up with interventions which may assist the student. There is movement towards integrating EAL services into the student service umbrella along with special education. There is a lot that can be learned from working together, and collaborating. Special education teachers are quite helpful, because prior to EAL programming they had these students on their caseloads, and they truly care and desire to help them, "The special ed teachers were my greatest ally in the school because we kind of understood each other."

Data needs to be collected in order to make program decisions. One method of collecting data is through the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach. Students who continue to struggle despite intervention are likely to have some sort of exceptionality. These interventions need to come from the front-line staff who work directly with the student, and have relationships between the student and their families. The idea is to try and intervene first before bringing in the specialists (e.g., consultants, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists). At this

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Table 4.3. Response themes to research question 3.

Research Question:	*How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptionalities in ELL populations?*
Themes	*Direct Quotations*
Identification procedures	*"My ideal world is that students receive the help they need whether it be EAL and special Ed, or EAL only, or special ed only."*
	"you try to compare them to their peers who are students who are receiving EAL support, are at ta similar language level, and you see how they are responding to instruction compared to how that student is responding to instruction"
Collaboration with special education	*"The special ed teachers were my greatest ally in the school because we kind of understood each other"*
	"We have lots to learn from special ed, we are so new we're probably going through the same growing pains special ed did years ago... there is still work to do in how we can work together with special ed."
Mental health & family shame	*"I dealt with a couple of cases where students were really depressed and showed signs of suicide and just really a negative – like their mental state was blocking further success too."*
	"Its kind of a barrier for families. They don't want other people in their community see some of their children they are under a spcial program...because some other people from the community will see that and that is kind of... because of the difference of culture...is kind of shameful. They feel like that"

phase data collection occurs. The data is reviewed in team meetings involving the appropriate support team members. The data is triangulated, and compared to teacher observation. The use of standardized assessment tools is not recommended due to cultural bias, reliability, and validity concerns (e.g., item bias, level of language required to answer items, cultural misunderstandings). Assessments need to be detailed and professional. There is work towards developing guidelines along identification but the system does work the way as it is, on a case-by-case basis.

The settlement worker believed that, "if there [was] enough support for students, a good connection at the schools...most of the students would be interested to attend." Beyond learning difficulties there are also concerns around mental health. At the high school level, the EAL teacher often works very closely with guidance counsellors to support any arising issues, as they are a vulnerable population. Mental health and trauma are considerable concerns for immigrants and refugees, and more support needs to be given in this area. One teacher discussed his/her experience working with mental health in the EAL class, "I dealt with a couple of cases where

students were really depressed and showed signs of suicide and just a really negative...mental state, [it] was blocking further success."

When a student has been identified, services should be available. At the time of data collection, the Special Education teachers would work with all kids with special needs. Sometimes inclusion in special programs is necessary. Special education is the same as *any other student*.

> The old special education model where the kid needs to be fixed, and allowed to go back into the regular classroom when they're fixed, and we know that language doesn't work like that. You don't get *fixed*, you grow.

In fact, some EAL teachers have been quite inventive in how to instruct an ELL student with an exceptionality. One teacher spoke of a student with an intellectual disability:

> So what I started to do then was to have her work with some of my younger students, but I would call her my helper. And so she would come in and she would actually... once she did learn her colours, I would have her work with grade one students or grade two students that were just new and she would try to help them learn their colours. So she felt like she was doing something good and feeling responsible. But at the same time she was having her skills reinforced because that was the real main purpose.

The process to identify ELL students with exceptionalities is criticized for not being as culturally responsive as it could be.

> It's kind of a barrier for families. They don't want other people in their community to see some of their children are under a special program, because some other people from the community will see that, and that is kind of... because of the difference of culture, is kind of shameful. They feel like that.

The process lacks a clear process for identification, and frustrates teachers, administrators, and community support workers. There is a call for more knowledgeable and culturally responsive professional staff doing these assessments. Immigrants feel lost often in assessment procedures, "sometimes, to me, [assessment] is a little bit complicated. I don't get it." Teacher attitudes can also have negative effects "Well, she is just always going to struggle, she has always been special needs." In the meantime, cases of exceptionality are reviewed and programmed on a case-by-case basis.

Summary

The interviews with two teachers, two administrators, and a community settlement worker expressed in the narrative represent the current perspecitve of urban Saskatchewan EAL programming. The narrative discussed the identification process, the services provided, and the considerations for students with exceptionalities. The processes, successes and challenges were explored, along with the stories of the students that they encounter daily. The next chapter discusses the implications of the data, its relation to the current literature, and the future directions of growth in this program.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

Introduction

This modified basic interpretive inquiry study explored the induction and assessment procedures in Saskatchewan EAL programs. Interviews were conducted with five research participants: two administrators, two teachers, and one community settlement worker, from the two major urban centres of Saskatchewan who work directly with ELLs and their families. Their perspectives were combined to represent the perspective of Saskatchewan to answer the research questions:

1) How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct English Language Learners who require services?

2) What services are currently being provided for English Language Learners in Saskatchewan?

3) How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptionalities in English Language Learner populations?

This chapter presents an overview of the study's findings, and discussion on the emerging themes as they answer the research questions. Participants' responses are discussed in terms of their relationship to past research, successes of the Saskatchewan approach, and opportunities for future improvement and development. The chapter concludes with discussion of the limitations of the study, future research directions, and practical implications for teachers and helping professionals.

Theoretical Perspective

Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT; Comstock et al, 2008; Hartling, 2008; Jordan, 2008; Walker, 2008; West, 2005) explores the relationship that vulnerable persons have with institutions of power. Power, the ability to influence change on an individual (Walker, 2008) is often held by those who work in schools. This power structure (i.e., *power-over* institutions) is an area of research interest for RCT scholars (West, 2005) and is explored in the following discussion of themes derived from the responses to the research questions.

This discussion will explore the connection (i.e., growth fostering relationships) between ELLs and their schools, as well as the disconnections (Jordan, 2008). Recommendations and implications will be informed as to build the *five good things* of growth fostering relationships: "(1) a sense of zest; (2) clarity about oneself, the other, and the relationship; (3) a sense of

personal worth; (4) the capacity to be creative and productive; and (5) the desire for more connection." (Jordan, 2008, p. 2).

Discussion

The discussion of the themes that arose from the interview transcripts will be informed by the relevant literature presented in chapter two, and contrasted with RCT in relation to each of the research questions.

Research question 1. The first research question posed was, *How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct English Language Learners who require services?*

This question explored the current intake and assessment procedures present in Saskatchewan schools. The responses were categorized under three main themes: (1) School and centralized intake; (2) formal language measures; and (3) need for qualitative data. The respondents described an intake procedure that began with the identification of need upon arrival to a school (e.g., parental referral), and procedures involving teacher based or centralized assessment (i.e., intake occurring at the school where the student registers, or at a centralized intake centre). Some of the assessment tools were described in terms of standardized instruments (e.g., Woodcock Munoz Language Survey – Revised; WMLS-R; Schrank, Wendling, Alvarado,& Woodcock, 2010), curriculum based assessments (e.g., ERGO Series; Bravoco, Sarlati, & Coelho, 2002), and informal instruments (e.g., those created by classroom teachers). There was also need for qualitative data, through standardized interview or use of a long form questionnaire. The respondents believed there was room for improvement (e.g., developing best practice, benchmarks, and selecting proper tools). Each of these themes will be discussed, in terms of their connection to previous literature, and the implications for practice and future research.

School and centralized intake. The data juxtaposed two different models of ELL student assessment: home-school teacher assessment, or centralized assessment procedures involving either an intake centre or an itinerate teacher-assessor. The home-teacher model had some benefits in that the intake could happen sooner and in the child's school environment. The teacher who is leading the assessment is also the teacher who will end up teaching the child. The relationship with the student can be formed on the onset of the ELL student's arrival, and a relationship with the parents can begin. Drawbacks could include timing, as the arrival of ELL students to a school environment do not adhere to traditional intake times (e.g., school opening,

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Table 5.1. Themes, Learnings, and RCT perspectives for research question 1:

Research Question:	How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct ELLs who require services?	
Theme	*Learnings*	*RCT perspectives*
School and centralized intake	- Saskatchewan is moving towards a centralized intake procedure	- Schools should focus on building reciprocal relationships between students and teachers, centralized intake may limit this potential
Formal language measures	- Saskatchewan is using the WMLS-R as a primary indicator of language proficiency - Teachers are developing their own CBAs - School divisions are developing language benchmarks - Finding difficulty with formal test measures and cultural bias - Saskatchewan is still developing best practice	- CBAs allow for more reciprocity to instruction and relationship - Many forms of data should be used in intake assessments, including standardized assessment, informal assessment, interviews and observations
Need for qualitative data	- Saskatchewan is moving towards a more paper/pencil style of qualitative data collection - Teachers agree that building growth-fostering relationships is important - SWIS workers are appreciated in the intake process	- Family and background data should be collected within a relationship - SWIS workers can help build skills through cultural bridging

between semesters). In addition, assessments take a great deal of time (upwards of two hours per student), and take the teacher away from classroom and teaching responsibilities. There are also issues with consistency (e.g., teachers performing different kinds of assessments) and thoroughness (e.g., teacher/professional level of training to administer instruments).A lack of clear guidelines further complicate this model as there is not a common language spoken between professionals.

There are also benefits to the centralized intake centre model. In this model, expert teachers and assessors can focus on the assessment process, and collect relevant data (e.g., language level, current level of family support) for teachers, schools, school divisions, and

community support workers. The data collection can be an area of expertise for the expert teacher, and can be done more efficiently and with sufficient detail. A major advantage of this model is the opportunity to connect with the community settlement agencies that also work out of the centres. A drawback can be the two to three week wait to get into the centre, and the reliability of an assessment done in a foreign environment as the results may not be the same in the home or school environments due to factors such as test anxiety for example.   School staff also complain of long and complicated reports from the intake centres, and some teachers may not take the time to read the reports.

When compared to relevant research, it should be noted that there is no standardized intake protocol in Saskatchewan, no agreed upon provincial standards, and many school divisions are either developing their own assessment intake protocol, or borrowing from other provinces such as Alberta and Ontario. As Alberta basis its model on language function, and Ontario basis its model on language skill, Saskatchewan should decide which way it wants to go to give its teachers direction. The dilemma in choosing which path (i.e., functional or skill-based curriculum) is not unique to Saskatchewan, in fact, there is incomplete research in this area for best practice across Canada and the United States (Zehr, 2010). Induction procedures begin when the child walks into the school for the first time, being welcomed and provided with an appropriate academic program (Matthews, 2008), and would imply that best practice includes responsive, school based intake procedures. There is no support or evidence to the contrary for a centralized assessment protocol performed outside of the community school in the research literature.

Participants reported Saskatchewan is currently moving towards a centralized intake model for the newcomer ELL students. However, participants did not provide produce any evidence, for or against, moving away from home-school assessment procedures. RCT would advocate for stronger relationships between families and schools, and perhaps the movement towards centralized intake centres would not be conducive to building these growth-fostering relationships. Currently, Saskatchewan teachers are building relationships with their students through school based intake procedures. Future research is warranted in this area in Saskatchewan at the new intake centres, examining the advantages as well as accommodating for the need to build relationships between families and schools. Further to this theme, the need for language measures was explored.

Formal language measures. Each of the participants discussed the different assessment tools with which they were familiar. There was a consensus that the use of formalized and standardized assessments were not applicable to ELLs. They cited issues around validity (i.e., norms based on English-speaking students, not representing ELLs), cultural bias (e.g., test items that are not answerable unless there is an underlying understanding of the culture) and lack of professional training (i.e., on the part of the professional staff administering the assessment tool). While they were aware of these issues, each of the participants were able to name the different standardized assessments that they use, in particular the WMLS-R. They went on to explain their use of the WMLS-R to determine programming, track progress, and graduating students from the EAL program (i.e., no longer require EAL services).

The dichotomy of having concerns about using formal assessment tools but using them anyways was remarked in the transcripts, and was an interesting finding. This would indicate that there is still usefulness to data gained from formalized assessments by levelling students and collecting quantitative data to track progress. Teachers and academic assessors should be mindful of utilizing multiple forms of assessment (Sattler, 2009) in order to triangulate and determine the level of academic functioning of a particular ELL. Other assessments can include interviews, observations, and informal assessments (Sattler, 2009).

Three of the participants spoke to the use of Curriculum Based Assessments (CBA; Spinelli, 2009) which were both teacher and collaboratively developed. This kind of assessment may not have the psychometric properties of standardized assessments, however, CBAs do provide to teachers some guidance as far as differentiating instruction for their students. CBA does allow students to display what they know under optimal and responsive conditions (Spinelli, 2009). Saskatchewan might consider adopting or developing standards upon which to base programming assessments as an alternative to standardized measures. There is a lack of knowledge in this area, and a need for the field to understand the assessment and intervention of ELLs (Albers, et al., 2009).

Further, participants also the time and personnel involved in administering a complete and comprehensive assessment of the child upon arrival as important to consider. The needs of ELLs are complex and unique, however, educators need to remember the adage *measuring the pig don't make it grow*. It is important to know students strengths and deficits, but it should not replace providing quality instruction to students. At times, using performance, portfolio, or

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dynamic (test-teach-retest) assessments can be both instructional and assessment at the same time (Spinelli, 2009). Teachers in Saskatchewan have found ways through *Assessment for Learning* (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009) and other mandates to allow for more self-assessment in the overall evaluation of the child. Saskatchewan is actively trying to develop best practice for the province.

While there is a recognition of the problems associated with standardized assessment tools in Saskatchewan, the use of the WMLS-R is still used extensively in intake and programming decisions of ELLs. This puts the Saskatchewan situation in a bit of a quagmire. Participants identified two approaches to help resolve this issue. First, is the already demonstrated development of CBAs attached to a Saskatchewan curriculum (Spinelli, 2009). This approach is already underway, and in various steps of preparedness between the two urban centres. When curriculum objectives are formed following a normal trajectory of language development, assessment and instruction can be tailored to the curriculum, and is supported in the literature (e.g., DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007; Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). The other approach would be to further explore the use of the WMLS-R in Saskatchewan, perhaps developing norms that better represent the cultural and linguistic diversity in Saskatchewan schools. Further to language, Saskatchewan teachers did also recognize the need for qualitative data in programming decisions.

Need for qualitative data. While the respondents emphasized the evaluation of language, they were also very aware of the need to know the students personal situation (e.g., physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual conditions). Dispositional/psychological, situational and institutional barriers to effective language learning were reflected in the answers (Magro, 2007). It was important for teachers to get to know their students and build relationships with them. Largely, this information was not collected formally, but rather, within the unique caring relationship that an EAL teacher has with their students as described by the participants.

When qualitative data is collected formally in a clinical-like setting, it was mainly for bureaucratic or centralized use, rather than ground level teacher use. There are significant uses for this data, however, the provision of this data did create a perceived barrier to immigrants coming into the school system as reported by the community settlement worker. This institutional barrier (Magro, 2007) may impede building of a relationship with the school.   Long, drawn out intake procedures that involve a great deal of paperwork may not be a culturally

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responsive way to induct students into a school. RCT theory would argue that this could cause a disconnection between the school and the student which could lead to decreased enthusiasm, lowered self-esteem, confusion, reduced productivity, and withdrawal (Jordan, 2008). Methods of collecting qualitative data within relationships (i.e., with schools and teachers who work directly with the students) may be preferable to clinical settings (i.e., professionals who disconnect emotionally from the ELLs).

English Language Learning students have specific needs in language and in culture. Culture can be taught through an education of the self, learning experiences in contact with other culture groups, and an opportunity to debrief (Ilieva, 2001). RCT advocates for relationships that are reciprocal, in that the knowledge is shared between the teacher and the student, and this would seem to align itself with proper cultural brokering practices. Long form questionnaires, and bureaucratic (nearly clinical) interviews may create a barrier (Magro, 2007) while utilizing a structured interview by the classroom teacher may be a better fit for an RCT model of induction and would allow for data collecting needed by administrators. This would lend itself better to a growth-fostering relationship in which students could experience excitement about their new school, understanding of the school environment, increase personal self-worth, be productive, and desire to connect to the school community (Jordan, 2008).

Saskatchewan is moving towards a more bureaucratic style of data collection through the use of centralized intake centres. At the same time, teachers highly value their relationships with students, recognizing that EAL instruction transcends language. EAL teachers in Saskatchewan recognize their primary role is to teach language, and so require additional supports, such as the SWIS (Settlement Worker in Schools) worker, in order to best meet their cultural needs. RCT appears to be a model that can provide a framework for EAL teachers to build relationships with their students, and perhaps additional training and support can be given to teachers to help build their relational capacities with students. Further to this, additional research into the effectiveness of the SWIS program in Saskatchewan schools, and recommendations for its implementation, leading to an optimization and best utilization of these workers.

Summary. The first research question explored the identification and induction tools and processes in Saskatchewan schools. The responses indicated: (1) that Saskatchewan is moving towards a centralized intake procedure; (2) is in the process of identifying appropriate assessment tools to determine programming decisions (both standardized and CBAs); and (3)

recognizes the need to collect qualitative data both for program statistics and to develop relationships with their students. This suggests that schools and teachers should be working towards developing agreed upon benchmarks, assessment tools, and intake protocols to properly induct and program for students. Further to language instruction, there is a demonstrated cultural need for ELL students, which can be supported by SWIS workers and implementation of RCT principles by teachers and schools. Future research directions include: (1) exploring the effectiveness of centralized intake centres; (2) creating Saskatchewan norms or language benchmarks, possibly with the WMLS-R; and (3) optimizing the role of the SWIS worker. The research then proceeded to explore the current services provided for ELLs.

Research question 2. The second research question asked was, *What services are currently being provided for ELLs?*

The themes derived from the second research question included: (1) the use of pullout instruction; (2) combining academic content with language instruction; (3) a need for more government resources to improve the current program; and (4) providing supports to students and families outside the classroom. These themes are considered in relation to RCT and relevant research, and the findings are presented in new learnings and future research directions.

Pullout instruction. Elementary and secondary schools both use a pullout/push-in model of instruction in Saskatchewan schools. The pullout/push-in model is based on having students increasingly included in general classroom environments, as they increase in linguistic and cultural skills and knowledge requisite to full participation. While this goal is idealistic, it is problematic as full Cognitive Ability Language Proficiency (CALP; Cummins, 1984) to that of an English native speaker is not possible given emerging research (Roessingh, 2010). Pullout instruction in particular has been determined to be one of the least effective in the literature (Abraham & Chumley, 2000; DeCapua, et al., 2007). It is important to consider then this model's usage in Saskatchewan schools.

One benefit expressed of the pullout model is the small class size which allows for targeted, individualized, and intensive language instruction. RCT would advocate that in smaller groups there can be more reflexivity and responsiveness allowing opportunities for cultural growth and relational skill building, thus improving the *five good things* (Jordan, 2008). EAL teachers expressed that in small groups they are able to have a better understanding of their students and in turn, students can have personal relationships with their teachers. While the

pullout research has demonstrated limited effectiveness as far as language outcomes, perhaps this is outweighed by the potential for cultural outcomes.

Saskatchewan elementary schools are primarily using the pullout model of instruction for their EAL programs. There are many reasons for this movement towards pullout including: (1)

Table 5.2. Themes, Learnings, and RCT perspectives for research question 2.

Research Question: *Theme*	*What services are currently being provided for ELLs?* *Learnings*	*RCT perspectives*
Pullout instruction	- Saskatchewan elementary schools are primarily using this model	- Small group and individual instruction is better for the development of growth fostering relationships
Combining Content and Language	- Saskatchewan high schools provide sheltered EAL content area classes, as well as tutorial support - Saskatchewan uses the adaptive dimension in order to best serve students in general classroom settings - Saskatchewan is moving towards co-teaching models	- Congregated classrooms allow for relationship growth with student cohort - Co-learning and teaching by ELLs is possible in general classroom settings
Need for more government resources	- Saskatchewan schools would like additional finances and resources - Saskatchewan teachers are calling for a provincial EAL curriculum	- Voice and agency of CLD students and ELLs must be included
Supports beyond the classroom	- Saskatchewan teachers recognize the role of newcomer families in the language acquisition process - Mental health is a growing concern, and supports need to be in place for students and families	- Coordinating with settlement support workers can help with advocacy and agency for families. - Relationship with between the teacher-student must broaden to include school-family

the provision of EAL in home schools rather than in centralized locations; (2) the population of ELL students is dispersed across many schools; and (3) time, space, staffing and other logistics which complicate congregated classroom teaching. This learning suggests that administrators re-examine the choice of using pullout models in the light of student outcomes. Further, research can be done to see if the Saskatchewan approach is finding success in the language development of students as well as the cultural development of students. Saskatchewan uses other models of instruction as well, such as combining content and language.

Combining content and language. The administrators for the schools emphasized the importance of combining content and language when building a student's overall academic

competency, allowing for a development of both language skills and academic knowledge simultaneously. Within this model, there were two approaches: in class differentiated instruction and sheltered subject classrooms.

In the sheltered class model, language is taught in the context of a subject area such as science, social studies, or math. This approach is supported in the research, particularly when a bilingual approach (student's first language along with English) can be used (DeCapua et al., 2007). In contrast, the sheltered class model may have a isolating effect, by congregating all of the ELL students together, separating them from their English-L1 peers. The assumption is that they are a homogeneous group of learners, when in fact; there is a great degree of diversity within an ELL student population, in the United States, Canada, and Saskatchewan. Sheltered classes tend to move at a much slower pace, do not meet the requirements for academic credit, and result in lowered expectations of ELL students (Callahan et al., 2009). Sheltered classes may demonstrate an institutional barrier to students (Magro, 2007) by having the sheltered classroom causing a *disconnection* from the school(Jordan, 2008).

Teachers gave mixed reviews on sheltered classrooms. While they did acknowledge that some students needed that environment (e.g., to be a safe place, allow for language intervention, to be with same language peers), others did not. Students who are highly motivated, highly intelligent, and highly capable in their L1, may not need a slower passed delivery, but rather tutoring support because they lack the vocabulary but they understand the concepts. Tutoring is a controversial topic for EAL teachers who may assert their role as to teach language, and the general classroom teacher's role to differentiate instruction to teach content. In practice, there may be a need to collaborate.

What is shown as best practice is explicit language instruction, within the regular classroom (DeCapua et al., 2007). Good teaching which uses differentiated instruction to meet the needs of the ELL student in the classroom across content, process, and product (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). This acknowledgement was noted by the administrators who looked towards a co-teaching model which would differentiate classroom instruction, however, has been met with resistance from classroom teachers. It is agreed that there are more language exchanges in the general classroom with the increased number of English-L1 peers, and more opportunities for cultural learning when ELL students are not separated from their peers.

Saskatchewan utilizes sheltered EAL classes, in-class supports, co-teaching models, and

differentiated instruction utilizing the adaptive dimension in order to meet the language needs of ELL students. These models show promise in the literature, and should continue to develop in Saskatchewan. Further exploration on how to better implement these models should be explored, as well as the experiences of students who participate in these programs. It would be prudent to consider the lived experiences of ELLs placed in streamlined sheltered classes, compared and contrasted with the lived experiences of students who participated in general classroom settings with differentiated instruction and support. Tenets of RCT would argue for the approach that would most allow for the ELLs choice and agency, as well as development of relational and social skills. RCT and EAL teachers/programmers would concur that language is fundamental to one's ability to interact. To further these programs and outcomes, the respondents called for additional government resources.

Need for more government resources. A quality program needs to have quality training of professional staff, intentional pedagogy, standards-based curriculum, teach to the whole child, and have full administrative support (DeCapua et al., 2007), and these items require substantial financial backing from government. Additional supports was a theme that was echoed across all of the participants, more resources in terms of financing could hire more teachers (thus lowering teacher-student, and teacher-school ratios), and provide better training to EAL and other teachers (e.g., ensuring all EAL teachers are properly trained and credentialed), as well as administrators and school support workers who are increasingly working with CLD populations. Some stated it was hard to find another staff person who understood the work an EAL teacher did, and possibly the closest person was the special education teacher, however, the training of these two professions are different. Overall, there is a shortage of trained EAL teachers, and this can create a problem by leaving language instruction to monolingual teachers, or untrained bilingual educational assistants (Zeltin et al., 2011). More resources, including a Saskatchewan curriculum, would help support teachers and newcomers in their language and cultural development.

All of the respondents reported that more resources are needed by schools, classrooms, and community settlement agencies. The available funding to support newcomer Canadians has largely been reactive, rather than proactive when challenged with the consistent inflow of newcomer Canadians into Saskatchewan. The government of Saskatchewan recognizes this need (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011). The participants also voiced the request for the

development of a provincial EAL curriculum, with benchmarks and assessment tools to help plot the expected outcomes of ELL students, clarifying the admission and graduation standards. ELL students and their families should be given agency to advocate for their needs in Saskatchewan classrooms. EAL teachers and administrators need to participate in the development of a province wide curriculum. Further research could also be done in program evaluations, looking for the gaps in service delivery, particularly in rural conditions who are less prepared than urban centres for immigration. Additional supports beyond language and classroom are also needed.

Supports beyond the classroom. EAL teachers form close relationships with their students. This is done through storytelling, authentic communication activities, and the transactional nature of EAL instruction. Discussions of the respondents' personal relationships with their students were prevalent during the interview process. Their relationships broaden the teacher-student relationship, to the school-family relationship, as the EAL teacher becomes the ambassador for the school to the families of their students. Each of the participants was able to tell stories not only of their students, but their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins and friends back home. The programming in turn goes beyond language to also include family activities, cultural evenings, and school showcases. Often times the role of the language teacher is to be the cultural bridge for the school (school understanding the newcomer students), as well as for the family (family understanding Canadian school culture).

Support beyond the classroom does have implications for learning in that creating an environment of inclusion helps break down the barriers which can impede learning (Mathews 2008; Magro, 2007). Through providing supports, individual barriers are improved through a heightened sense of self-worth, self-concept, and self-efficacy, building upon knowing the self within a relationship (Jordan, 2008). Situational barriers are eliminated, allowing for learning when physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental needs are met (Magro, 2007). The growth-fostering relationship can allow for creativity and learning when an ELL feels connected to the school and classroom.

The main strategy to meet the needs outside the classroom involved the Settlement Support Worker in Schools (SWIS). This federally funded program provides trained social workers, immigrants, or school teachers to schools and families to assist in transitions, cultural brokering, and needs assessment and referral. The SWIS worker works independently from the schools, and advocates on behalf of the school to the family as well as by the family to the

school. SWIS provides services that can promote the growth of the family-school relationship, and which can also be growth-fostering when it displays the *five good things* (Jordan, 2008).

Saskatchewan schools recognize the role of newcomer families in the language acquisition process. This was understood as part of the role of the EAL teacher. If things are not going well at home, then the student will arrive at school unable to learn due to factors involving a disconnection with the school (Jordan, 2008). Additionally, mental health is a growing concern for immigrant families (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Teachers are making efforts, and school divisions are supporting these efforts through their own initiatives and participation in the SWIS program. Further academic exploration is warranted in the current mental health services for newcomers in Saskatchewan, and the experiences of immigrant families in Saskatchewan schools.

Summary. The second research question explored the services that are being provided to ELL students in Saskatchewan schools. The respondents reported that: (1) Saskatchewan is utilizing pullout/push-in methodologies to assist students towards full inclusion in general classroom settings; (2) EAL programs recognize the need to teach both content and language concurrently; (3) Saskatchewan schools are seeking more government resources in terms of finances and development of an EAL curriculum; and (4) Saskatchewan schools are recognizing the needs for additional supports outside the classroom to assist with acculturation and mental health needs. This suggests that teachers should further their exploration of methodologies that differentiate instruction through use of the adaptive dimension, and to continue to connect with community settlement agencies in order to meet the needs of the whole child (Decapua et al., 2007). The third research question explores the identification of exceptionality in ELL students.

Research question 3. The third research question asked, *How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptionalities in ELL populations?*

The themes from the third research question included: (1) identification procedures and processes to determine exceptionality in ELL students; (2) collaboration with special education; and (3) mental health and family shame. These themes are discussed below, contrasted with the relevant literature, and interpreted using RCT to determine practical implications and future research directions.

Identification procedures. Generally it was agreed that at the initial intake of an ELL student, it was important to gather an educational history, and ask if there were any issues

Table 5.3. Themes, Learnings, and RCT perspectives for research question 3

Research Question:	How are Saskatchewan schools identifying exceptionalities in ELL populations	
Theme	*Learnings*	*RCT Perspectives*
Identification procedures	- Saskatchewan primary indicator involves collecting educational history - Saskatchewan lacks a formalized approach - Comparatives to other students used as an indicator - Saskatchewan movement towards RTI - Saskatchewan is data driven - With no protocols in place, each case is done individually	- Each case should be considered individually, through relationships with the parents, student, and cultural community.
Collaboration with Special Education	- EAL teachers believe ELL students should receive services just "as any other student" - EAL and Special Education work together to develop interventions - Saskatchewan sees Special Education and EAL as allies - Movement towards having under same student services umbrella - There are a lack of professionals with training/competence in working in cross-cultural contexts	- Special education teachers recognize the individual differences of students - EAL teachers and programmers must recognize their *power-over* role, and avoid assuming typical language progression, and tendency to 'fix' students.
Mental health & Family shame	- Mental health concerns are outside of the schools mandate, however have a significant impact on learning - Saskatchewan newcomers often feel lost in school assessment procedures	- Building relationship and understanding with the cultural community is important for integration - Trauma affects one's ability to relate to people and to learning - Resiliency training through relationship may be of support to those who experience trauma

surrounding learning as it is known that an exceptionality will present in both a students' L1 and L2. After that point, it was up to the teacher to identify either rapid or slowed progress as compared to their siblings, or other ELL students. When an exceptionality is expected, the EAL teacher would take the lead and connect with the resources they need for the student. There is a

lack of formality in the identification process, and generally it is done on a case-by-case basis. This model raises concerns for Saskatchewan, as there is a need for cross-culturally trained professionals to assist with the designation process to sort out language or cultural difference from disability, particularly when addressing mental health concerns.

When this question was presented to the interviewees, generally there was no clear answer. Saskatchewan schools do not have a clear identification strategy to sort out language difference from disability. There is the potential to either over designate, or under represent students in special education programming without clear guidelines and procedures (Sullivan, 2011).

One of the main indicators of exceptionality involved a comparison to the student's peers. This model of discrepancy is based on teacher attentiveness and experience, rather than a reliable and valid instrument (Sullivan, 2011). There is not an agreed upon trajectory of language or cultural development across ELLs as they are a very diverse group, with many mitigating factors that can alter a student's natural development, although research in this area has been done (Roessingh, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010).

One approach that has been discussed in the literature involves Response to Intervention (RTI; Case & Taylor, 2005; Elizalde-Utnick, 2008; Schon, Shaftel& Markham, 2007; Wagner, Francis & Morris, 2005), and is alluded to from the participants. In this model, when an issue arises in a child's learning, differentiated instruction and intervention is provided in order to produce favourable outcomes for the student, in content, process or product (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008). The problem lies in determining which area the student struggling. Being an ELL learner is further complicated by socioeconomic status (SES), level of L1 proficiency, level of L2 proficiency, educational history, experiences facing barriers, interrupted schooling, and many others, and a lack of trained professionals to negotiate these differences (Zetlan et al., 2011).

Saskatchewan teachers primarily look to the previous educational history the best indicator for exceptionality. Currently, Saskatchewan lacks a formalized approach and bases referral decisions on: (1) disclosure from pervious educational history; and (2) rapid or slow progress compared to other ELL students or family members. Saskatchewan is currently moving towards the RTI model to determine student strengths and needs, and continues to be very data driven in their approach. Each case is treated differently, which raises concerns for consistency, whether students are being over or under served in special education services.

RCT theory, however, would support a case-by-case approach. RCT acknowledges that a student's relationship with a school is impacted by a variety of factors (e.g., sex role socialization, power influences, dominance, marginalization and subordination, in their mental health and relational development; Comstock et al, 2008). Further to this, it is plausible that an ELLs' ability or disability would impact their relationship to a school. A case-by-case approach would allow those in the *power-over* role (i.e., teachers and schools) more deeply understand the cultural and situational context of a student to determine the presence of unique abilities or disabilities. It also allows for agency in choosing the programming, and involvement in the decision making process. This process can also work in concert with an RTI approach.

Saskatchewan schools are working with community agencies and with special education teachers to help bridge the gap in identification and service delivery. Through the use of the SWIS program, teachers and other professionals are receiving training on cultural competency, and trained teachers can focus on factors of language acquisition. Future research in this area includes inquiring to the need for a standardized assessment protocol to determine exceptionality in ELL students. Further to the identification, the research explored the nature of the services provided to ELLs through collaborating with special education teams.

*Collaboration with special education.*EAL teachers and administrators agreed that ELL students with exceptionalities should be treated just like any student identified with exceptionality. It is important to consider that while EAL instruction may share some of the same themes as special education there may be some differences (Zetlin et al. 2011). ELLs are provided with additional supports (e.g., educational assistants, specialized teachers, technological aids, etc.) and learning environments (e.g., pullout/push-in, congregated classrooms, differentiated instruction) as are students who receive special education services. Being an ELL however does not qualify nor necessitate a student to receive these services in perpetuity or by using special education funding. An ELL may have a disability and require special education and EAL services from a school, however, it is difficult to distinguish between language differences and learning progressions and disabilities. It is also difficult to discern between behavioural or mood cultural differences and disabilities. This difficulty can be problematic in that students may be receiving services they do not need, or worse, not receiving services they do need (Sullivan, 2011).The cross over between special education and EAL programming is necessary as special education teachers understand exceptionality, while EAL teachers understand language and

culture, and there may be limited teacher expertise when working with students that cross between teaching disciplines (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008; Zetlin et al., 2011). The unique features of ELLs with exceptionalities is an area requiring further exploration and research in Saskatchewan.

Taking an RCT perspective, it is important to explore the *power-over* role that schools and teachers have in relation to their students. Special education and EAL teachers have areas of practice and expertise, however, families and cultures have understandings of ways to work with their young children. There must be a recognition of the context from which the family exists. When the *growth-fostering relationship* broadens to the family-school, then the relationship can include engagement of the family and school, clarity of roles and responsibilities, affirmation of worth of school and family traditions, creative problem solving, and a desire for a continued relationship (Jordan, 2008).

EAL teachers believe that ELL students should receive special education services *as any other student* would, however, they did not have a clear sense of what those services would look like considering the additional cultural and linguistic needs. Saskatchewan teachers acknowledged the need to work together under the umbrella of student services, work on teams, and advise on language and cultural issues as they pertain to special education. Currently, the respondents feel that there are a lack of professionals with training/competence in working in cross-cultural contexts, necessitating a need for collaboration between the two fields. Further research should be explored in determining the unique features of ELL students in special education classes, the perspectives of special education teachers working with ELLs, and identifying the training required by professionals to adequately meet the needs of ELLs with exceptionalities. Further to this, the participants expressed concerns with ELL student mental health, and family shame around exceptionality.

Mental health & Family shame. The immigrant perspective did raise the concerns of some parents who believe that to have a child with an exceptionality is shameful to the family. The interviewees reported that families may not acknowledge disability because either: (1) they have no understanding of disability within their culture; or (2) disabilities are shameful and occur to only *bad* families (i.e., due to morals, values, or personal flaws). As a result they do not want to acknowledge the disability, or even want their children to be receiving any special or additional instruction in school. At times, this can even include EAL instruction. Parents may

have limited exposure, or negative experiences with schools (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). Families may also be lost in assessment process which may involve psychologists, physicians, and speech-language pathologists. This research wonders if grouping the EAL students, under the umbrella of student services further exacerbates this issue for students and parents.

Further to this, the immigrant voice placed an emphasis on the mental health needs of immigrant people. As remarked by the participants, immigrants and refugees in particular have experienced significant trauma, family separation, and cultural uprooting (Magro, 2007; Stevenson &Willott, 2007; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). This can lead to psychological harm (e.g., anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other conditions). The community settlement worker expressed that more needs to be done to support ELL students who have mental health concerns. While mental health concerns are outside of the schools mandate, they do have an impact on student learning. Mental health does then become part of the services provided within an EAL program. Teachers may not be adequately prepared to meet these needs, and referrals with paraeducators (i.e., school counsellors, psychologists) who are competent in working with CLD populations are needed.

An RCT perspective would focus on mental health concerns, using relationship-building techniques to create healing outcomes. RCT recognizes building relationships is important for a student's integration into a school community. Trauma and mental health can have an adverse effect on learning and language acquisitions. ELLs who have mental health concerns can build resiliency by making new connections, reconnecting with lost connections, and taking steps to avoid disconnections (Hartling, 2008). This work can be fostered by teachers, and helping professionals who can work with students in need.

Mental health and family shame are significant factors which can impact an ELL's language acquisition. Teachers are not trained in providing for mental health needs, but need to be able to build relationships with students and refer to specialists when needed. Families can be ashamed, and feel vicarious trauma, when presented with information that their child has a disability. Teachers are, and must continue to be sensitive to the delicate relationship with families. Further research to explore the experiences of newcomer families in Saskatchewan schools can help inform the types of services that need to be provided.

Summary. The third research question explored the identification of exceptionalities in ELLs in EAL programs. The responses indicate; (1) Saskatchewan identifies students based on

background experience and comparison to peers; (2) collaboration needs to occur with special education professionals; and (3) mental health and family shame further complicate the identification and support for exceptionalities. Schools and teachers should be working towards: (1) utilizing RTI approaches to identify exceptionalities; (2) further collaboration with special education; and (3) training providing more helping professionals to work with CLD students and families. Further research into standardized intake protocols, the unique experiences of ELL students in special education, and the experiences of newcomer families should be explored.

Limitations

Five interviewees participated in a semi-structured interview to answer the research questions. The transcripts from the interviews were analysed, themed, and compared to the current research in the field. This study, like all studies, is limited in scope. Steps were taken, however, in order to accurately present the data in a truthful manner.

Methodology. The planning of this study required a small sample size in order to complete within a reasonable timeframe while collecting rich data to represent the view of Saskatchewan. Purposive sampling was used in order to recruit those with significant experience, expertise and saliency since the sample size was small. Rich data was obtained from two major centres in Saskatchewan through the interview process. Currently, these two centres have the highest numbers of ELL students, and are providing comprehensive EAL programs to their schools. As the immigration continues in Saskatchewan, so will smaller centres be welcoming more ELL students into their schools. This research then can be useful in the planning for the coming influx of students.

Semi-structured interviews also have limitations. The flexible format allowed for the exploration of many ideas in the individual interviews, however, this may lessen the reliability of the information based on the skill of the interviewer. In order to account for this, the researcher asked many follow up questions to confirm the points that the interviewees presented. The researcher also had opportunity to ask follow up questions after the interviews if the responses were not clear, and the interviewees had the opportunity to review the transcripts for truthfulness. Another limitation may be the difficulty to analyze open ended questions, however, this was done in a sequential process as described in chapter 3, using Kvale (1996)'s methods of meaning reduction.

Execution. The execution of this study may present some limitations as well, through the

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use of purposive sampling, researcher bias, and the honesty of participants. Interviewees were selected through a representative matrix to include a teacher, an administrator, and a community settlement worker from each of the two urban centres. The participants represented five school divisions, some working for multiple divisions, and participate actively in the provincial EAL teaching organization. The researcher was able to check for bias through the semi-structured interview process, clearing up misunderstandings and misinterpretations of direct responses by paraphrasing and checking for understanding. The participant's honesty was validated through the member checking of the transcripts, as well as through corroborating statements present within the data sets demonstrated in the thematic analysis.

Generalizability. The generalizability of the study may be limited by few perspectives, limited previous research of RCT, and the lack of a student voice. While there may have been few perspectives, since purposive sampling was used, the perspectives given were relevant and salient. The research also remarked the enthusiasm to participate in the research since the perspective needed to presented publically. This researched pioneered RCT as a theoretical perspective in analyzing the data, and to keep true, the founders (e.g., Jordan, Harting, etc.) were selected as primary source scholars to inform the research. Though no student voice was represented, the inclusion of the immigrant voice who came from outside the school system was included and is possibly more salient as he/she better understands the school-family relationship.This research can further academic exploration in other areas of EAL programing in Saskatchewan.

Future Research Directions

This research provided a touchstone to examine the current practices of intake, service, and identification of exceptionality of ELLs in Saskatchewan schools. Further in-depth exploration into other areas of EAL programming is warranted in Saskatchewan in order to highlight the successes and learnings from its unique perspective. This research found that four main areas could benefit from further investigation in Saskatchewan contexts: (1) EAL intake procedures; (2) EAL school personnel; (3) EAL teaching practices; and (4) CLD family experiences.

EAL intake procedures. Saskatchewan schools are moving towards centralized intake centres, using formal language measures, and collecting qualitative data at initial intake. Further exploration is warranted to determine whether or not improvements can be made to the current

system. Saskatchewan is currently moving towards a centralized system to collect data; however, no research is available for review to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of a centralized intake centre for ELLs. Saskatchewan is in a unique position to research and deliver its findings, and compare them to current practices.

Further to this, administrators and teachers are looking for a standardized tool in order to quantitatively measure and track an ELLs language acquisition. The WMLS-R is currently used, however, the norms are based on Spanish-English speaking bilinguals from the USA and Canada (Schrank, Wendling, Alvarado, & Woodcock, 2010). To increase the effectiveness and saliency of this tool, Saskatchewan could invest in norming the WMLS-R subtests. Doing so could create the opportunity to create English acquisition trajectories in Saskatchewan similar to those done in Alberta by Roessingh & Elgie (2008) with the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT; MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, Dreyer, & Hughes, 2006). This research could then provide benchmarks and standards, or the creation of a standardized assessment protocol across the province of Saskatchewan, which has been requested through the interview data. Further to this need, this research found that further consideration of EAL personnel would be beneficial.

EAL school personnel. More collaboration with outside agencies and special education are requested in order to serve the diverse cultural needs of ELLs. EAL teachers work with three main groups: SWIS workers, special education teachers, and paraeducators (e.g., educational assistants, school psychologists, counsellors, administrators, speech-language pathologists, etc.). Exploring how the role of the SWIS worker can be optimized in Saskatchewan would be of interest, as SWIS may expand to smaller urban centres as Saskatchewan continues to increase in immigration. The research found that EAL teachers and administrators appreciated and valued the SWIS program, and further development and expansion of this service to meet student needs in rural settings would be welcomed in the field.

Further to SWIS, EAL teachers are recognizing the need to work collaboratively with special education teachers. This research explored the perceptions and views of EAL teachers working with special education teachers, and perhaps further exploration of how special education teachers view working with EAL teachers could be compared and contrasted with this research. The experiences of special education teachers who teach ELL students with exceptionalities may create some insight into the support that they require from EAL teachers

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and programs. The research could identify areas of specialized service provision (e.g., exclusively EAL or special education), areas of overlap, and opportunities for collaboration.

Finally, with the significant increase of immigrants in the general student body, ELL students need to be considered in the provision of paraeducational staff who have competency working with CLD populations. Training programs have not historically included CLD perspectives which would leave paraeducators ill-prepared to work with CLD populations. Further research to identify areas of missing competencies in paraeducators, and opportunities for training, and building competency, capacity and expertise should be explored to better meet the needs of CLD students.

EAL teaching practices. Saskatchewan is primarily using a pullout model of language instruction, and pushing towards more supports in general classroom settings to combine language and content instruction. When compared to previous research, it was found that pull-out to be the least effective in terms of language acquisition(Abraham & Chumley, 2000, DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007), while this is the most common service delivery in Saskatchewan. Further exploration is warranted to determine the language outcomes in Saskatchewan EAL programs to determine if the current practices are seeing language improvement outcomes.

In addition, new techniques, those validated in previous research such as differentiated instruction (Elizalde-Utnick, 2008), bilingual instruction(DeCapua et al, 2007), and streamlined classes(Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Fisco, 2009; Decapua et al, 2007) could be explored in Saskatchewan. Exploration of these methods in Saskatchewan may provide better language and learning outcomes for ELLs. As well, there is a need to explore the gaps in EAL service delivery in Saskatchewan, particularly when considering ELLs who have exceptionalities. Further research exploring the unique features of ELL students in special education would benefit in determining recommendations for student personal program plans.

CLD family experiences. The participants reported that they recognize the role of the family in language and cultural acquisition, and that more services needed to be provided to support families of ELLs in Saskatchewan. Of particular concern were the mental health needs of immigrant families who come to Saskatchewan, who are faced with barriers as they attempt to integrate into Saskatchewan communities (Magro, 2008). More needs to be known about the current mental health needs of newcomers in Saskatchewan. This can help to identify the types

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of services and supports that are needed. Further exploration of the relationship between families and schools, and the experiences of newcomer families in schools in Saskatchewan could also inform the role that the school pays in the identification of needs, and referral for services.

Practical Implications for Teachers and Helping Professionals

The research data intends to inform Saskatchewan EAL programs in order to better meet the needs of ELL students. The participants shared perspectives on the current practices, and the discussion provided opportunities for future program improvement and direction. The following discussion outlines the current practices, and future opportunities as far as: (1) the induction of ELLs into Saskatchewan schools; (2) the provision of services for ELLs; and (3) the identification of exceptionalities in ELL students.

Induction. The research participants reported that Saskatchewan has intake procedures from which they have found success. Currently, Saskatchewan primarily collects language information when making programming decisions for students. This is primarily done with standardized language tools (e.g., WMLS-R), and CBAs (e.g., ERGO). Further, Saskatchewan programs recognize the need to collect background data on their students regarding their culture, language, family composition, and educational history. Saskatchewan teachers are also developing their own CBAs to better connect students to the right level of support they need.

The research indicates that more work needs to be done to better induct ELLs into EAL programs. Teachers must continue towards developing a standardized intake protocol to ensure that students are neither: (1) receiving services they do not require; and (2) being overlooked for services they do require. The current direction is towards centralized intake centres, however, schools and individual EAL teachers who work directly with students must have clear sense of the indication process (Matthews, 2008). Programs must also be mindful of the importance of the relationship between teachers and students, and focus on induction methods that promote *growth-fostering relationships* (Jordan, 2008). Additionally, teachers must recognize the needs outside the schools, and be able to connect with community settlement workers to assist in the school transition and acculturation process.

Services. The research participants reported that Saskatchewan provides pullout instruction, classroom support, and sheltered classes for their ELL students. The participants agreed that Saskatchewan is recognizing the needs of ELL students, and are actively providing EAL programs to Saskatchewan schools. The government of Saskatchewan is making EAL a

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priority with the influx of immigration to the province. Teachers and EAL program administrators also recognize the value of involving outside agencies to meet the global needs of students and families. There are many reasons to be proud of the Saskatchewan EAL program.

Further improvements can be made to the EAL program in Saskatchewan. The emphasis on pullout instruction is not supported in the previous research, however continues to be a staple in the Saskatchewan program largely for logistical and practical reasons. Further expansion into areas of co-teaching, differentiated instruction, bilingual instruction and short-term intensive language instruction could improve the language outcomes of ELL students. Continued emphasis and focus needs to be on meeting both the linguistic and cultural needs of students, through cultural sharing and bridging exercises so that an ELL feels welcome and included in general classroom and school settings. Beyond the teaching staff, paraeducators must be trained in the provision of specialist services to ELLs, and CLD populations including counselors, school psychologists, educational assistants, administrators, and speech-language pathologists.

Identification of Exceptionality. The research participants presented a perspective from the discipline of EAL teaching, and are not experts on learner exceptionality or special education. At this time they do not have a protocol for identifying exceptionality, and are identifying difficulties case-by-case. They focus on the learning relationship with the child, and remark where a student is struggling. Through their experiences, they compare students to their peers and siblings, noticing any differences in their learning progress. Also, at the time of intake they ask about any kind of exceptionality, or difficulties in the student's L1.

Further needs to be done to identify exceptionality earlier, so that interventions can occur before a student becomes frustrated, and possibly *disconnects* from the school and learning (Jordan, 2008). EAL teachers can work together with special education teachers, share knowledge and collaborate on personal program plans for ELL students with exceptionalities. RTI appears to be a reasonable alternative, and EAL teachers can work with special educators to better implement primary and secondary interventions that can benefit all students. Further competency working with CLD populations by specialists who identify disabilities would also improve early identification and intervention. Also, teachers need to become aware of the symptoms of trauma, and the effects it can have on language acquisition (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008).

Summary

Two teachers, two administrators and a community settlement worker contributed their voices to provide a Saskatchewan perspective on EAL programming and intake procedures of ELLs in Saskatchewan schools. Their responses outlined: (1) the needs assessment process for students both linguistically and culturally; (2) the services provided to meet the needs of student across academics, language, and cultural integration, and (3) the identification and services provided to ELLs with exceptionalities. Future research opportunities were outlined, including opportunities to explore: (1) EAL intake procedures; (2) EAL school personnel; (3) EAL teaching practices; and (4) CLD family experiences. Practical implications include: (1) exploring standardized protocols when inducting students while not losing focus on the relationship between teachers and students; (2) schools should explore other service delivery options, and general classrooms should continue to celebrate the cultures represented in Saskatchewan schools, and (3) focus on early identification and intervention of exceptionality through RTI procedures.

ELL students represent a heterogeneous group across cultures and languages, but also across all other domains of diversity (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, ability, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.). It requires learning not only of the student, but of the teacher and school community. The work is difficult and multifaceted. The voices represented in this research displayed the passion and excitement of this new and emerging need in Saskatchewan schools. The instruction of ELLs is one of adventure and exploration, and this work intends to encourage Saskatchewan to maintain that spirit.

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University of Saskatchewan
Student Application for Approval of a Research Protocol

Information Required:

1. Name of researcher(s) and/or supervisor (s) and related department(s).

1a. Name of student(s), if a student study, and type of study (e.g., B.A., Hon., M.A., Ph.D.)

Student:	Conor Barker
	Masters of Education Candidate
	Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
	College of Education
	University of Saskatchewan

Type of Study: Master's Thesis – M. Ed.

Supervisor: Dr. Laureen McIntyre

1b. Anticipated start date of the research study (phase) and the expected completion date of the study (phase).

Project Deadlines:

Starting date (yy/mm/dd): 11/03/01   **Ending date (yy/mm/dd):** 11/6/30

2. Title of Study

Project Title: Assessment of English Language Learners: Saskatchewan School Perspectives

3. Abstract (100-250 words)

English Language Learners (ELLs) are becoming increasingly present in Saskatchewan Schools. At present, Canada is hosting over 240 000 permanent residents, with Saskatchewan's portion tripling over the last ten years. School divisions are providing English as an Additional Language (EAL) instruction many economic, family, and refugee migrants who have limited English abilities. Research from the USA and Australia has indicated the need for good induction procedures to assess the needs of individual students. ELLs represent a heterogeneous

group, requiring support for their cultural and linguistic needs, and often face psychological, situational, and institutional barriers. An effective assessment procedure to determine the needs of these students is necessary. Current documents from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education indicate that assessment procedures to determine programming are left to individual school divisions, schools or teachers to manage, and best practices have not been evaluated. Through an online questionnaire given to school staff (teachers, administrators, support workers) this research seeks to determine: (1) How do schools in Saskatchewan identify English Language Learners who require services?; (2) What services are currently being provided for English Language Learners?; (3) What are the current induction procedures? (4) How are Saskatchewan schools identifying Learning Disabilities in English Language Learner Populations?

4. Funding
Indicate the source of funds supporting the research.

Not applicable. The graduate student will fund the research.

5. Expertise

Not applicable. No special or vulnerable populations are involved in this study.

6. Conflict of Interest

The relationship between the researcher and participants is professional, as fellow teacher in Saskatchewan where the data will be collected. No financial benefits will accrue for recruiting participants or conducting the research. No foreseen limits exist on the publication or distribution of findings.

No relationship exists between the researcher and students in the classrooms of potential teacher participants.

7. Participants

Describe the procedures for recruiting, selecting and assigning participants. There are two main issues of concern to the committee:

a) the potential for coercion that arises.
b) a possible loss of privacy or anonymity.

The recruitment of teacher will occur in two phases.

The first phase will occur at the Provincial SK TEAL/SK TESL conference in Regina, Saskatchewan. I will have an informational booth set up, requesting participants for the online questionnaire. Those who choose to participate will be given a ballot for a prize draw of a $100 gift certificate for Teacher's Trunk to purchase resources for their classroom. The ballot will be separate from their responses. The winner will be contacted at the end of the conference by phone or email.

The second phase will occur by email campaign through local school divisions who consent to distributing the questionnaire through their internal mail.   In the second phase, the final thank you screen will provide an opportunity to submit their name and email address to be entered into a second draw for a $100 gift certificate for Teacher's Trunk. This data again will be kept separate from their response data, as so that they are not identified. The second draw will take place on July 1, 2011.

The online form will collect responses and demographic information. No specific names of schools, school divisions, individuals or contact information will be put into the data table. General job titles, and distinction between rural/urban school divisions will be asked, but no individual will be named. Some data may be quoted, but not of specific information may identify the respondent.

The electronic data will only be retrievable from the researcher, and the researcher's supervisor. After the project is finished, the researcher will delete all files from his personal computer, leaving hard copies for the supervisor to hold in trust for 5 years, when it will be destroyed.

The researcher feels that there is little coercion to participate, since the prize benefits the students of the respondent, so they do not benefit financially. No individual person is to be identified in the questions or the demographic data collected. Data will be kept secure, and the risk of loss of privacy and anonymity is very low.

7a. Letters of invitation should provide the following information:

1. *Clear statement that the project is a research study.*
2. *Name and contact information of the researcher.*
3. *Procedures of the study and what is expected of the participant.*
4. *Amount of time required to participate.*
5. *The following standard statement, "If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact X and more details will be provided".*
6. *REB approval and contact information statement.*

Please see Appendix for the example invitation email, as well as the informed consent document.

8. Consent

In addition, the committee requests that researchers describe:

1. The process by which participants consent to participate in the research project.

Participants will be invited to participate in an online survey. The first screen will present the informed consent document. Participants will need to indicate their acceptance to participate in the data collection before they are presented with the online questionnaire.

2. The procedures that will be in place to ensure timely opportunities to give or withdraw consent.

Participants may quit the online survey at any time, and their data will not be used in the analysis of the research project. Their data will be destroyed. This information is also included on the informed consent document.

Consider whether any of the following concerns apply:

a) Alternative consent protocols
Not applicable – the questionnaire is to be filled in my teachers and other school professionals.

b) Recruitment from organizations
Consent and Ethics Review will be conducted at the school board level once university approval has been obtained.

c) Children under 18 years of age
Not applicable – only teachers and other school professionals are involved.

d) Participants are in a dependent relationship to the researcher
The researcher's relationship with potential participants is professional; no power relationship exists.

e) Participants are not able to given either consent or assent
Not applicable. The researcher does not foresee any participants not being able to give online consent.

f) Participant-Observation research
Not applicable. Participant-observation or naturalistic-observation research is not being

conducted.

g) Research involving small groups
There is a large pool of potential participants, no individual will be able to be singled out.

9. Methods/Procedures

Research participants will be contacted at the provincial conference of English as an Additional Language (SK TEAL/SK TESL Conference) in Regina in April, as well as through an email campaign through school division email distribution lists (after ethics approval is attained from individual school divisions). They will be invited to take an online questionnaire of 6 questions. After viewing and agreeing to the informed consent document, they will be presented with the questions. The questions are in long form, allowing respondents to write as much or as little as they desire. When the questionnaire is complete, they will be shown the informed consent document again (which they can print if they desire) that will detail how they can be informed of the results when all of the data is collected.

The researcher will use the survey tool at the University of Saskatchewan. The data output will be in an excel chart and will not be linked to specific demographic information. Respondents will not be able to be identified by the researcher.

The data will be analysed for common themes across the answers to determine the perspective of school staff as it pertains to the assessment and services offered to ELLs in Saskatchewan.

10. Storage of Data

Upon completion of the study, all data will be securely stored and retained by the researchers' graduate supervisor, Dr. Laureen McIntyre, Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education in the College of Education in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Saskatchewan. The data will be placed in a locked cabinet for a minimum of five years.

11. Dissemination of Results

Results from this project will be used for my thesis, scientific publications, and presentations to professionals, parents, and educators. The confidentiality of all information gathered from participants will be ensured. All responses obtained from participants will remain confidential.

12. Risk, Benefits, and Deception
This research will provide information to educators regarding the effectiveness of an

instructional strategy that is designed to help children learn to read. No perceived risk or deception is involved in this study. Participants will not be exposed to harm, discomforts, or perceived harm. Potential participant names will be removed and replaced with a code number. Therefore, there is limited opportunity for loss of privacy, confidentiality, or anonymity even though the researcher was able to identify potential participants in advance of their consent to participate.

When assessing the degree of risk entailed by your procedure, please consider the following questions:

a) Are you planning to study a vulnerable population?
No.

b) Are you planning to study a captive or dependent population, such as children or prisoners?
No.

c) Is there is a institutional/ power relationship between researcher and participant?
No.

d) Will it be possible to associate specific information in your data file with specific participants?
Demographic data will be stored separately from responses. The Researcher will not be able to identify the responder.

e) Is there a possibility that third parties may be exposed to loss of confidentiality/ anonymity?
No.

f) Are you using audio or videotaping?
No.

g) Will participants be actively deceived or misled?
No.

h) Are the research procedures likely to cause any degree of discomfort, fatigue, or stress?
No.

i) Do you plan to ask participants questions that are personal or sensitive? Are there questions that might be upsetting to the respondent?
No.

j) Are the procedures likely to induce embarrassment, humiliation, lowered self-esteem, guilt, conflict, anger, distress, or any other negative emotional state?
No.

k) Is there any social risk?
No.

l) Will the research infringe on the rights of participants by, for example, withholding beneficial treatment in control groups, restricting access to education or treatment?
No.

m) Will participants receive compensation of any type? Is the degree of compensation sufficient to act as a coercion to participate?

There will be a draw for 2 $100 gift certificates to purchase resources from "Teacher's Trunk", one at the conference where responses will be solicited, one for the email campaign.

n) Can you think of any other possible harm that participants might experience as a result of participating in this study?
No.

13. Confidentiality

The data output will be in an excel chart and will not be linked to specific demographic information. Respondents will not be able to be identified by the researcher. If a respondent answers a question in such a way that identifies a school division, individual, or student, the information will not be reported in the executive summary, or pseudonyms may be used. The researcher will consult with the research supervisor should any issues arise.

14. **Data/Transcript Release**
Not applicable.

15. **Debriefing and feedback**

All participants will be informed about the public access to the finished study at the University of Saskatchewan. A copy will be deposited at the University of Saskatchewan library. A copy of the study will also be provided to the school division. A brief executive summary of the project will be provided to each of the participants upon request.

16. **Required Signatures:**

(1) _____

    Conor Barker, Graduate Student

(2) _____

    Dr. Laureen McIntyre, Graduate Supervisor

(3) _____

    Dr. David Mykota, Department Head

17. Contact Name and Information

(1) Student Contact Information

Conor Barker
E-mail Address: conor.barker@usask.ca
Masters Candidate Telephone: (306) 880 0572
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
University of Saskatchewan
Mailing Address: 710 7th Street East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7H 0Y2
Fax: Not Applicable

(2) Supervisor Contact Information

Dr. Laureen McIntyre
E-mail Address: laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca
Assistant Professor Telephone: (306) 966-5266
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
University of Saskatchewan
Mailing Address: 28 Campus Drive

College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 0X1
Fax: (306) 966-7719

(3) Department Head Contact Information

Dr. David Mykota
E-mail Address: david.mykota@usask.ca
Department Head Telephone: (306) 966-7577
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
University of Saskatchewan
Mailing Address: 28 Campus Drive
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 0X1
Fax: (306) 966-7719

To: Teachers, Administrators, Educational Assistants, and School Support Workers (Ed. Psychs, SLPs, Resource Teachers)

RE: Participation in U of S English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming study

You are invited to participate in an online questionnaire that will be used to determine current practices in assessment and programming for EAL students in Saskatchewan. The research seeks participants across many different school roles including teaching, administration, and support workers. Any school staff that has been a part of offering EAL programming is invited to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is online and is available at *link*. It consists of approximately 6 questions, and should take 20-30 minutes to complete. There are no known risks to participating in the study. Some demographic questions will be asked at the conclusion, but are not connected to responses. No individual will be identified in the research procedure.

To thank you for your participation, those who complete the questionnaire will be entered into a draw for a $100 gift certificate for Teacher's Trunk to purchase resources for your school or classroom.

If you are interested in learning more about this study please contact the researchers using contact information below, and more details will be provided.

This research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. *number*.

Best Regards

Conor Barker
M.Ed Candidate – Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
conor.barker@usask.ca

Dr. Laureen McIntyre
Research Supervisor – College of Education, University of Saskatchewan
laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural **Research Ethics Board**

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled The Assessment of English Language Learners: Saskatchewan School Perspectives. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions you might have.

Researcher(s):   Conor Barker, B.Ed, B.Mus, CerTESL
                             Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
                             Masters of Education Candidate

                             Dr. Laureen McIntyre, Research Supervisor
                             Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education

Purpose and Procedure: A research project on the programming and assessment of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. The purpose of the study is to explore the perspectives of school staff in the programming and assessment of EAL students in Saskatchewan schools.

You are being asked to take part in this study by completing 6-7 questions on a online questionnaire. Your participation will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may also omit any items on the questionnaire you prefer not to answer.

Potential Benefits: The data will be used as part of a thesis for the partial fufilment to a degree of Masters of Education. The information will be shared publicly to inform policy and scholarship of EAL programming in Saskatchewan. To thank you for your participation in this study, your name will be entered to a draw for a $100 gift certificate for teacher's trunk to purchase resources for your school/classroom.

Potential Risks: There is little possibly of negative risks associated with participation in this study, however, If you should experience any distress you may discontinue at any time. Please contact the researcher if you have any concerns.

Storage of Data: The data will be electronic in nature and will be deleted of any hard drives at

the conclusion of the study. Hard copies will be printed and stored with Dr. McIntyre for a period of 5 years and then destroyed.

Confidentiality: The researcher will not request personal or identifying information from the respondents. Your responses will be provided anonymously to protect your privacy. At the end of the survey, you will be asked some demographic questions that will inform the description of the sample, but this information will not be attributed to your responses.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary, andyou can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. There is no guarantee that you will personally benefit from your involvement. The information that is shared will be held in strict confidence and discussed only with the research team. You maywithdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort and your name is still eligible for the prize draw. If you withdraw from the research project at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the research project, please feel free to ask at any point through email; you are also free to contact the researchers at the emails provided if you have other questions.   This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on (insert date).   Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084).   Out of town participants may call collect.

Follow-Up or Debriefing: If you would like to receive an executive summary of the survey results, please contact Conor Barker at conor.barker@usask.ca

Consent to Participate:
I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time. A copy of this Consent Form may be printed for my records.

_____   _____
(Name of Participant)   (Date)
_____   _____
(Signature of Participant)   (Signature of Researcher)

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire

1) How do schools in Saskatchewan identify and induct English Language Learners who require services?

   - How does your school identify students for EAL services?

   - What current assessment tools do you use with your EAL students?

   - What information do you gather for new EAL students entering your program?

2) What services are currently being provided for English Language Learners?

   - What services do you provide English Language Learners?

   - What services are available for English Language Learners with Special Needs?

3) How are Saskatchewan schools identifying Learning Disabilities in English Language Learner Populations?

   - What indications from a student would lead you to believe that your EAL student has a Learning Disability?

   - What is your school's current procedure for determining Learning Disabilities in EAL students?

Demographic Data:

Position: (General Classroom Teacher, EAL Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Educational Assistant, Administrator, Psychologist, Speech Language Pathologist, Other)

Years experience:

Years experience with EAL:

School Division Type (Urban/Rural)

Primary student group (Elementary, Middle Years, Secondary)

VITA

Conor Barker was born and raised in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and was raised by two educators and life-long learners. In high school he studied in the French Immersion program, Outdoor School program, and graduated from the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute in Outlook, Saskatchewan. He began studies at the University of Saskatchewan in 2002 in the combined Bachelor of Music (Piano) and Bachelor of Education programs, completing teaching areas in Music, French, Special Education, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Throughout his undergrad, he was able to take unique travel, study and work experiences in Whitehorse, YT, New York State, MøreFolkhøgskule (Ørsta, Norway), Ermitage International School of France (Maisons-Laffitte, France), and South-East Asia. He graduated in 2009, and taught with Saskatoon Public Schools in the English as an Additional Language and Special Education (Behaviour) programs. In 2011, Conor completed his Master's in Education in School and Counselling Psychology, having conducted research in the assessment of English Language Learners, the depiction of characters with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in youth fiction, and the student experience of leading group therapy. Conor is currently employed as an Educational Psychologist with Chinook School Division, in Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

If you wish to contact the author, he can be reached at conor.barker@gmail.com.

Thesis was typed by the author.