SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING NEEDS OF ILLITERATE ITALIAN ADULTS, STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the language learning needs of adult immigrants to Canada from Italy who were not literate in Italian, their first language, but who, for whatever reason, had to become literate in English.

The study presents an historical overview of literacy/illiteracy issues, immigration patterns and language policy in Canada, and developments in the field of adult literacy and ESL literacy.

It describes and compares the perceptions of second-language learning needs of these students, obtained from a sample of 5 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and 25 ESL students. The study presents qualitative data outlining the personal, behavioural, motivational and attitudinal

characteristics of the students. It also addresses their language-learning, information and personal needs. Ideal and actual teaching strategies employed by teachers are also described.

The study concludes with recommendations focusing on current thinking about the change process and a discussion of the future of ESL literacy in Canada.

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There is also a small cadre of people who have believed in me and love me despite everything and through it all: my mother, Aileen, and Don Brown; Penny Pattinson, John Douey, Don Cole, Jeanie Stewart and Lorraine Deason in Toronto; Richard Cawley in Montreal; Geoff Scott in Australia; and André Creux and Margie Woods (both now deceased). Thanks, too, to Pippo D'Antoni (now in Sicily).

I believe that we all work at the work we work at because there is a lesson in it for us. I am now a manager. My life's work has been to learn how to manage. And so it has been with this thesis.

I also believe that somewhere in all of this are some lessons for me from a few old children's stories about the tortoise and the hare, about the fox and the grapes, and about a match-girl looking through the frosted glass at the Christmas dinner in the house of "the haves". This thesis is the Christmas turkey I never thought I could have.

And most appropriately, there is an old Arabic expression that seems most fitting: "Nuskhur Allah!"

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In 1972, I returned to Canada having spent four years of my life teaching high school in Haifa, Israel. Unable to find a full-time job, I began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult immigrants in several night-schools in Toronto. By 1974, I had become aware that in each night-school class that I taught, there were always one or two students who were trying to learning English and who were not literate in their native language.

When I lived in Israel, I wanted to become both fluent and literate in Hebrew. I attended night-school classes in the Hebrew language-teaching system known as the "oulpan". I was constantly confounded by the experience of learning a non-Roman alphabet language. As with other Semitic languages, Hebrew is written from right to left, has no cursive script, and has both a formal style in which vowels are written, and an informal style, in which vowels are not written. Although I was literate in English, my native language, fluent in both French and Spanish as second languages, and experienced with Latin and German, I saw myself as illiterate when it came to this new Semitic language.

My Hebrew instructors had a set curriculum which had been tried and

tested for years with great success among those newcomers to Israel who were making "aliyah" (the return to the homeland); however, my particular language needs were not being met in these classes. I was a visitor on a work visa who was teaching English and French in a local school. I was not Jewish and was not preparing to make Israel my home. Despite my best attempts to inform my teachers of my specific language needs, they were unable to change the curriculum. What they perceived as my needs, based on their long years of experience with immigrants, were in fact NOT my needs. Although I eventually became a fluent Hebrew speaker, I was only able to achieve moderate literacy in the language. The experience was frustrating and discouraging to me.

When I returned to Canada and started teaching ESL, there was a prescribed text, Carson-Martin's Introduction to Canadian English, and a common curriculum focusing on everyday situations which newcomers to Canada might face. There were also classes which focused primarily on preparing them to become citizens. My intuitive sense was that what had happened to me in Israel was being repeated in the adult ESL classes in Toronto. I was teaching English to my students assuming that I knew what they needed, but I also knew that I had not actually asked my students what they needed.

The Research Hypothesis

My Israeli experience and my intuition about what was happening in adult ESL classes prompted my interest in ESL literacy, and most specifically, ESL literacy for students who are illiterate in their native language.

In 1974, there was almost no literature dealing with the concept of ESL literacy for this group of students. What literature there was will be examined in the next chapter. When I formulated my proposal for this thesis, my hypothesis was that the perceptions of teachers of adult ESL to students who were illiterate in their native language did not match the students' perceptions of their own language learning needs. The research questions were intuitive and did not emerge from a large body of literature that was dealing with ESL literacy. The questions came out of my personal experience, much like Jill Bell's much later study, Becoming aware of literacy (1991).

The data for this study were collected in the mid-1970s, and much of the analysis was done then; however, I was not able to complete the research at that time. I subsequently approached the Department of Adult Education with a request to reactivate my graduate program and to complete the research, which was approved. The original questions that prompted the research in the 1970s were, as it turned out, still unanswered in the 1990s. In fact, the number of immigrants coming to Canada who had no knowledge of English or French had increased from one in ten in the 1970s to four or five in ten in the 1990s.

Illiteracy in Canada: A Brief Overview

In 1989, Statistics Canada conducted a nationwide Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities. It revealed that 16% of Canadian adults (2.9 million people) lacked the literacy skills to deal with the majority of written material encountered in everyday life, and a further 22% (4 million people) tended to avoid situations which required reading because they lacked confidence in their literacy skills. The Southam survey, Literacy in Canada: A research report (1987), reported that immigration accounted for about one million of Canada's adult functional illiterates. Thirty-five per cent of foreign-born residents in the survey were unable to handle everyday literacy tasks in either of Canada's official languages. Immigrants who were not able to speak either of Canada's official languages were not included in the survey.

Who are the people who comprise this group of second-language immigrant adults? In 1968, European immigrants constituted two-thirds of the immigrant arrivals to Canada. By 1988, they comprised only a quarter. By contrast, immigration from Asia rose from 13% of the total in 1968 to 40% in 1989. By 1991, over two-thirds of the immigrants to Canada came from Third World countries. Visible minorities in Canada, that is, those people who are non-white, non-Caucasian and non-aboriginal, are expected to number 1.8 million people by the year 2000 (Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, 1991).

Cumming (1989) noted that immigration to Canada since 1970 reached its high point of 218,465 in 1974. Between 1980 and 1985, the number of immigrants admitted under all immigration categories declined steadily, yet since 1985, immigration levels have shown an increase, reaching 152,098 people in 1987. The 1987-88 Annual Report to Parliament on Future Immigration Levels announced a continuing policy of moderate, controlled growth in immigration levels.

The Southam survey (The Creative Research Group, 1987) reported that there were approximately 4.5 million adult functional illiterates in Canada, and that large-scale immigration accounted for about one million of them. Thirty-five per cent of foreign-born residents in the survey were unable to handle everyday literacy tasks; this rose to 42 per cent when adults from the U.S. and British Isles were excluded.

The Research Sample

At the time of the original data-collection for this study, the Italian community in Toronto was the largest non-English speaking immigrant group in the city. I selected this group of immigrants as the source of information for this study. Following an extensive external scan of second-language programs, I found a sample of Italian immigrants who were illiterate in their native language and who were students of English as a second language. They were

also willing to participate in this study.

The Italians

In 1976, Metropolitan Toronto encompassed an area of approximately 240 square miles and had an estimated population of 2,300,000. The 1971 census statistics showed that, at that time, half of the householders of Toronto had been born outside Canada (Neumann, Mezoff and Richmond, 1973).

The single largest group of immigrants living in Toronto with a native language other than English was the Italians. Forming approximately 10% of the total population of Toronto, the estimated 250,000 people of Italian ethnic background represented almost one-third of all of the Italians living in Canada. The major proportion of Toronto's Italians, approximately 68.5%, were first generation immigrants, while the remaining 31.5% were Canadian-born (Jansen, 1971; Ziegler and Richmond, 1972). In the 1990s, the Italians continue to form the largest single group of people in Ontario who speak a language of European origin other than English or French. In 1992, Statistics Canada reported 107,570 Italian adults who continue to speak Italian at home. Of the 326,035 Italian-speaking adults in Ontario, 33,805 had no knowledge of either English or French. Of the 510,990 Italian-speaking adults in Canada, 48,495 had no knowledge of English or French. It is still difficult to predict how many of them are illiterate in their native language.

Large-scale immigration from Italy to Canada only began during the post-war years. Between 1946 and 1967, there were 409,414 Italian immigrants to Canada (Canada, Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1974). Although immigration from Italy declined in the years following the 1967 changes to Canadian immigration policy, Canada continued to receive Italian immigrants. Between 1968 and 1973, another 54,556 immigrants from Italy entered Canada.

The majority of the Italian immigrants came from small towns in southern Italy, Sicily and Sardinia, arriving in the 1950s and early 1960s. Jansen (1971, p. 208) stated that 8 out of every 10 immigrants from Italy come from those rural areas which were "representative of the poorer parts of the country, and where people are less likely to be educated or to have experienced urban life."

Ziegler and Richmond concurred (1972). In their 1972 survey of the characteristics of Italian householders in Metropolitan Toronto, they found that the majority had come from the south of Italy and Sicily, and had no more than 8 years of schooling. Those with 4 years of education or less numbered 13%. Examining 1976 estimates of the Italian population, there were, therefore, approximately 33,000 functionally illiterate Italian immigrants in Toronto alone.

In summarizing the results of their survey, Ziegler and Richmond (1972, p. 14) presented a composite description of the typical Italian immigrant

householder in Toronto.

> He would be a male, aged between 35 and 44, who migrated to Canada between 1951-1961 in order to improve his standard of living, and with plans to settle permanently here. He would most likely have come from a small town [other evidence indicates it would be in the south of Italy], and his father would probably have worked in what, in Canada, would be considered a relatively low status occupation -- as a farmer, or in other semi-skilled or unskilled labour. Our immigrant would have five to eight years of formal schooling, and no special certification or technical qualifications, but he would have acquired work experience in Italy.

Most southern Italian men who came to Canada during this period had no difficulty in finding some form of work, entering the Canadian labour force, especially in construction, as semi- or unskilled workers. 67.6% of the Italian males working in Toronto in 1961 were classified as craftsmen, production workers, and labourers, in sharp contrast with the 37.2% of <u>all</u> Toronto males engaged in this work (Jansen, 1971).

Previous work experience in Italy appeared to have had a bearing upon the type of occupation in Canada, but an occupational shift was not uncommon. As most of these immigrants were moving from a rural to urban setting, it is not surprising to note that the most common previous work was farming. It was also found that the majority of persons previously engaged in farming tended to take jobs as labourers on arrival in Canada, while those who had been craftsmen in Italy were likely to remain in their craft in their first Canadian work experience (Ziegler and Richmond, 1972).

In the mid-70s, many Canadians regarded the Italian immigrant as the one who would fill most of the unskilled manual occupations; however, there were some stresses that accompanied the occupational shift from independent farmer to labourer to which many Canadians might not have been sensitive. Jansen (1971) pointed out that even though the role of labourer may be common in most industrialized societies, for the rural Italian immigrant, used to farming his own land, the concept of a job that demanded regular hours every day for 5 or 6 days a week might have been completely new. Jansen (1971, p. 214) went on to assert that, in spite of this difficulty, the Italians in Toronto seemed to be adapting, as they were "generally thought of as good, reliable and efficient workers by those who employ them."

By far the greatest obstacle to acculturation facing Italian immigrants as a group was language acquisition. Their low level of formal education was considered the greatest stumbling block to success in this area (Jansen, 1971; Nagata, Rayfield and Ferraris, 1970; Ziegler and Richmond, 1972).

This was accompanied by a high residential and occupational segregation wherein the largest proportion of Italian immigrants settled and worked with their own kinsmen and, therefore, had little opportunity to speak English. By forming "Italian communities" in the area of settlement, the immigrants effectively isolated themselves from the English-speaking community. In so doing, they maintained strong social networks, thereby alleviating some of the

stresses that accompanied immigration, but, at the same time, limiting their contact with the English-speaking community. They were, as a result, unable to extend themselves fully into the life of the total community (Ferguson, 1964; Jansen, 1971).

Other factors affected their language acquisition. Many of the Italian adults in the work force felt that attending school at their stage in life would be valueless to them (Jansen, 1971). Many were unable or unwilling to attend the language classes offered at night by the boards of education (Nagata et al., 1970). For Italian women in particular, the possibility of attending school as an adult was complicated by the attitude to women that prevailed in the patriarchal southern Italian society, that is, that "contact with the world outside her immediate family could influence a young girl only for the worse" (Nagata et al., 1970, p. 50).

The relative ease with which immigrant children learned the language intensified family difficulties. As the children reached school age, they began to speak English among themselves at home. Feeling deliberately excluded from their children's lives, Italian immigrant parents often exercised stern controls over their children. As the children acquired fluency in the new language, their parents became more dependent upon them. Not only did the children become translators of the language but also models of new behaviours, and interpreters of new societal norms and expectations. Roles became

reversed, and parents often had to compromise their sense of dignity and privacy when attempting to avail themselves of essential social services (Nagata et al., 1970). This role shift further complicated an adult Italian's willingness to return to school to study English.

Another factor that prevented Italian immigrants from enrolling voluntarily in a formal program of language study was their attitude to schooling itself, although many possessed a sophisticated attitude to learning. They were not embarrassed about their lack of literacy skills in Italian or English. Many believed that, whether educated formally or not, an intelligent person could acquire new and useful information (Nagata et al., 1970). This belief was borne out by the general success with which the Italian immigrant male learned the new skills required in his new occupational role. However, formal schooling was considered to be primarily a child's activity. As adults responsible for maintaining a home and raising a family, they tended not to see school as a viable option for themselves (Nagata et al., 1970).

One final issue of importance centred on the southern Italian's fear of ridicule, often used as a means of social control. Appearing foolish in front of one's peers was one of the major problems that prevented the Italian immigrant from venturing into the outside world. "The good-natured laughter that may be accepted by an Anglo-Canadian student who has made a mistake was not taken as such by the southern European adult. It may be painfully wounding"

(Nagata et al., 1970, pp. 53-54).

Although Italian immigrants to Canada faced many of the same problems as other immigrant groups, the nature of this immigrant population presented specialized problems related to learning English as a Second Language which are examined in this study.

The Research Questions

As I stated earlier in this chapter, the hypothesis for the study was that the perceptions of teachers of adult ESL to students who were illiterate in their native language did not match the students' perceptions of their own language learning needs. In order to gather data appropriate for analysis in light of this hypothesis, the study was conceptualized in three basic sections.

First, it dealt with the perceptions of 5 teachers of English as a Second Language regarding the language-learning needs and personal characteristics of 25 New Canadian Italian adults who were functionally illiterate in Italian and who were enrolled in ESL classes in the fall of 1975.

It dealt as well with recommended classroom and teaching strategies that teachers would employ, under ideal conditions, in dealing with the learning needs of the adult illiterate, and with the classroom and teaching strategies that these teachers in fact employed in their ESL classes.

These data were collected by means of a questionnaire (See Appendix A)

and a semi-structured interview schedule (See Appendix B) that incorporated the following research questions:

(a) What common personal, behavioural, motivational and attitudinal characteristics do ESL teachers perceive among illiterate Italian adult immigrants enrolled in their classes?

(b) In light of these characteristics, what common learning difficulties and needs do they perceive?

(c) What classroom and teaching strategies would teachers of ESL use, under ideal conditions, in dealing with the perceived needs and difficulties?

(d) What classroom and teaching strategies did they in fact use in dealing with the perceived needs and difficulties?

Secondly, by means of an in-depth interview conducted in Italian by an Italian-speaking interviewer (See Appendix C), it examined the perceptions of the students themselves. As well as gathering demographic data about the 25 students, the interview elicited information about the following research questions:

(a) How does the adult Italian illiterate student of ESL perceive himself in regard to his personal, behavioural, motivational and attitudinal characteristics?

(b) What does he perceive as his difficulties and needs in learning English as a Second Language?

(c) Have the ESL class and the ESL teacher dealt effectively with his perceived needs and difficulties?

Finally, the perceptions of the teachers and the students were examined and compared to determine whether the teachers' perceptions of the characteristics and needs of their adult illiterate ESL students were in fact the same characteristics and needs as perceived by the students themselves.

Major Definitions

The following definitions explain the terms used in reporting the data collected in the study:

Adult ESL student: one who is not regularly enrolled in an academic or vocational course taken for credit at a recognized educational institution, but who is enrolled in a daytime ESL program. Daytime programs were chosen for the practical reason of easing the task of finding a critical mass of students in one location at the same time.

Functionally illiterate Italian adult: an adult who has emigrated to Canada from Italy and who, regardless of the length of elapsed time, has completed grade 5 education or less in Italy (the UNESCO definition of illiteracy at the time of the data collection), and has not received educational upgrading in the Canadian

school system.

Teacher of ESL: any teacher engaged full-time in teaching English as a Second Language to adults in the daytime ESL program in the specified adult education centre.

The Organization of the Thesis

The introductory chapter has presented a brief overview of my interest in the thesis topic, and has presented the research questions and major definitions. Chapter II presents a review of the literature related to literacy and ESL literacy. Chapter III focuses on the historical context in which the study was undertaken. Chapter IV briefly summarizes the research methodology. The results of the data-gathering interviews and questionnaires are presented in the next two chapters, Chapter V focusing on the students, and Chapter VI on the teachers. The final chapter, Chapter VII, is a discussion of the results. It also addresses the limitations of the study and presents some suggestions for further research. The appendices contain samples of the data-gathering instruments: the teachers' questionnaire and interview schedule, and the students' interview schedule (in both English and Italian).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a brief overview of the issue of illiteracy and immigration in Canada. It then examines the literature on literacy and English as a Second Language literacy, by exploring the following topics: definitions of literacy; definitions of ESL literacy; the changing socio-political context of ESL literacy; the philosophical underpinnings of ESL literacy programs; the students in ESL literacy programs; programmatic goals and content; barriers for learners in ESL literacy programs; and, finally, the future of ESL literacy in Canada. The chapter concludes with a major summary of the issues presented in the chapter.

Illiteracy and Immigration in Canada - An Overview

There is still no single all-encompassing definition of illiteracy. The definition of functional literacy used in the Southam survey, Literacy in Canada: A research report, was "the information processing skills necessary to use the printed material commonly encountered at work, at home and in the community" (The Creative Research Group, 1987, p.1). The official definition of functional literacy used by the government in the 1970s to compile federal statistics was related to level of schooling, defined at that time as less than eight

completed years of schooling (Calamai, 1987, p. 9). The UNESCO definition of illiteracy is less than 5 years of schooling, and functional illiteracy as more than 4 but less than 9 years of schooling (Calamai, 1987). This is significant when reporting and interpreting statistics since the use of different criteria will result in different estimates of the number of functional illiterates in the country at any given time. Using the UNESCO definition, approximately 4 per cent of Canadians could be categorized as illiterate, with an additional 16 per cent as functionally illiterate, to a total of 20 per cent. Using the Southam criterion, 8 per cent could be categorized as illiterate, with an additional 16 per cent as functionally illiterate, totalling 24 per cent.

In 1987, the Southam survey noted that while immigrants constitute roughly 22% of all functional illiterates on a national scale, they account for roughly one-third of Ontario's illiterates. As well, the balance of illiteracy has shifted from rural settings to the large urban Canadian centres as a result of immigration. Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver account for approximately thirty per cent of Canada's total population as well as an equal proportion of Canada's functional illiterates. However, the three cities contain more than half of all immigrant illiterates. As the Southam survey reported that 46 percent of all foreign-born illiterates were less than 20 years old at the time of their arrival in Canada, we are now seeing a growing urban population of illiterate immigrants who are younger than in the past with limited work experience in

their countries of origin competing for employment in these large urban settings.

The Southam survey also noted that native or foreign-born illiterates derive disproportionately from the segment which has less than 9 years of schooling (55% for native-born, and 63% for foreign-born respondents), and declines dramatically among those with even some secondary schooling.

Statistics Canada's Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities: Reading Skills (1989) noted that almost 30% of those adults who were born outside Canada have limited everyday reading skills in either English or French. It defined 4 levels of reading ability as follows:

Level 1: Canadians at this level have difficulty dealing with printed materials. They most likely identify themselves as people who cannot read.

Level 2: Canadians at this level can use printed materials only for limited purposes such as finding a familiar word in a simple text. They would likely recognize themselves as having difficulties with common reading materials.

Level 3: Canadians at this level can use reading materials in a variety of situations provided the material is simple, clearly laid out and the tasks involved are not too complex. While these people generally do not see themselves as having

major reading difficulties, they tend to avoid situations requiring reading.

Level 4: Canadians at this level meet most everyday reading demands. This is a large and diverse group which exhibits a wide range of reading skills.

Table 1 compares the percentage distribution by reading level of adults who were born in Canada and those who were born outside Canada (Statistics Canada, 1989, p. 8). These data exclude persons who reported having no skills in either of Canada's official languages.

Table 1 Percentage distribution of adults born in Canada and of adults born outside Canada aged 16-69

	Population (000s)	Reading Skills			
		Lev.1	Lev.2	Lev.3	Lev.4
Total *	17,705	5%	10%	22%	63%
Born in Cda	14,522	3%	9%	22%	66%
Immigrants	3,177	14%(Q)	14%(Q)	24%	48%

*Total includes "Not Stated" country of origin.

Calamai (1987) also suggested that the illiteracy rate has risen sharply among immigrants since 1980 as immigration from third world countries has

increased. In 1989, Cumming reported on the major sources of immigrant landings to Ontario. The ten top sources of immigrants in order were Hong Kong, Guyana, Portugal, India, Jamaica, Poland, England, the United States, the Philippines, Vietnam and El Salvador. The Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council (1991) corroborates this information, reporting that a shift in immigration patterns occurred in the 1980s, and that, by the end of the decade, over two-thirds of immigrants to Canada came from Third World countries. Twenty-six per cent of the Southam respondents who identified themselves as other than from the United Kingdom, the United States, Anglo-Canadian, French-Canadian and Native Indian were illiterate. Significantly, immigrants who were not able to speak either of Canada's official languages were not included in the Southam survey.

A great deal of official language illiteracy comes from two factors. First, many of these immigrants do not speak English or French very well. What compounds the issue is that some of them are also illiterate in their first language. It is very difficult to sort these two issues out when looking at the statistics. What we know is that we are getting more people from Third World countries who have low levels of education in their country of origin; therefore, the ESL literacy situation is likely growing, not just reading and writing problems in English and in French.

Since 1982, Ontario has received 51% of all immigrants to Canada, and

Metro Toronto has received 59% of the immigrants to Ontario. Those immigrants coming from Asia are most likely to settle in Metro Toronto (63%), followed by those from South America (59%), the Caribbean (56%), and Africa (55%). Between 1990 and 1992, approximately 70% of the 202,822 immigrants to Metro Toronto were from these regions. Of these immigrants, 42% spoke no English or French (The Municipality of Metro Toronto, 1996).

> In the early 90's, the top five languages of immigrants other than English were Cantonese, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, and Punjabi. Immigrants speaking Cantonese, Polish, Spanish, Tagalog, and Tamil represented more than half of those having no official language ability. This report did not comment on their educational levels. (The Municipality of Metro Toronto, 1996, p.7)

Southam research suggests that 100,000 illiterates a year are being added to the Canadian population, among native-born Canadians through flawed provincial educational systems, and in the immigrant community through increasingly humanitarian immigration policies.

This brief overview of illiteracy and immigration in Canada shows us that approximately 1 in 5 Canadian resident adults is illiterate using both the UNESCO and the Southam definitions. Some of these illiterates were born in Canada; however, increasing immigration, particularly from third world countries, accounts for many of these illiterates, especially in large urban centres, where growing numbers of young immigrants to Canada are settling. Almost half of the immigrants to Canada in the early '90s had no official

language ability. We do not know how many are illiterate in their mother tongues.

English as a Second Language Literacy

The Southam survey (1987) discovered that immigration accounted for about one million of Canada's adult functional illiterates. Thirty-five per cent of foreign-born residents who participated in the survey were unable to handle everyday literacy tasks in either of Canada's official languages. This number would have increased substantially if immigrants who were not able to speak either of Canada's official languages had not been excluded from the survey. It is impossible to estimate how many of these people were also illiterate in their first language.

Since its beginnings, Canada has been an immigrant-receiving society. In the mid-1960s, the top 5 sources of immigration to the province of Ontario were England, Italy, the United States, Scotland and Germany. This pattern of immigration was reflected in the adult ESL classes of the 1960s and '70s. The majority of students in adult ESL classes were literate in their first languages, and those languages were written using the Roman alphabet. By 1987, the 5 major sources of immigration to Ontario were Hong Kong, Guyana, Portugal (notably the Azores), India and Jamaica (Cumming, 1989). This reality has dramatically changed the composition of English as a Second Language classes

in Ontario. In recent years, many adult ESL students are non-Roman alphabetic, a term used by Burnaby and Bell (1989) to describe a growing population of immigrants from Southeast Asia in particular. Canada has also received a large number of political refugees since the late 1970s. Many recent immigrants have low levels of literacy in their own first languages and need to become literate in one of the two official languages of Canada. This fact has also led to major difficulties for ESL teachers who were faced with students who not only had second language needs, but literacy needs as well. In the mid-1980s, as the second language and literacy communities responded to this growing need, the term "ESL Literacy" emerged.

Definitions of Literacy

A traditional and long-held view of literacy was the ability to sign one's name and read a simple sentence. Nearly fifty years ago, in 1948, a United Nations commission proposed a working definition of literacy as "the ability to read and write a simple message" (Calamai, 1987, p. 13). Calamai (1987) notes that "the U.N. and scores of experts have been trying to agree on a definition ever since, without success" (p. 13).

Attempts to refine the definition of literacy were made in the late 1960s. At this time, the term "functional literacy" emerged. It was widely adopted throughout Canada in the 1970s. Once again, there was no widespread

agreement about its meaning, although it implied that the learner was able to cope, that is, to function effectively, in society. William Gray in The Teaching of Reading and Writing (1956) uses the following definition:

> [A] person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group. (p. 24)

Klassen (1987) suggests that buried in Gray's definition is a hint at what in the 1990s becomes a major debate in the literacy literature, that is, mother-tongue literacy as a prerequisite for second-language literacy.

As early as 1975, the International Symposium of Literacy held at Persepolis emphasized that literacy should enable learners to find their voice in determining their lives and should not just be geared towards filling economic labour quotas by upgrading the "under-educated", "under-employed" or "marginalized" to enter the workforce. Paolo Freire was one of the critics at Persepolis. His critique came out of his notion of "conscientization" as the central component of literacy education, that is, developing a political consciousness or awareness which allows individuals and groups to voice their rights and personal capabilities both to transform their own lives and to reconfigure their relationship with society at large. Echoes of feminist thinking from the late '60s and early '70s, later popularized by Gloria Steinem in the 1990s, that "the personal is political" can also be heard in Freire's thought.

Referring to Jonathan Kozol's Prisoners of Silence (1980), Alemayehu (1990) notes that Kozol looks for more than a set of skills in his definition of functional literacy. He wants it to include the political dimension which requires instilling a "critical consciousness" in the learner in order to make literacy truly functional.

In its Guidelines on the Standardization of Educational Statistics, UNESCO defined functional literacy as follows:

> A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his/her group and community and also for enabling him/her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his/her own and the community's development. (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988, p. 3)

This definition de-emphasizes the acquisition of the literacy skills, and emphasizes use. It links individual need with community need, and therefore implies that different groups might require different levels and types of literacy. The Southam (1987) definition reflects the UNESCO definition, but is much simpler:

> Functional literacy is the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential. (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988, p 6)

There has been major controversy surrounding the notion of functional literacy over the past twenty years. Critics of the concept complain that functionality is often determined by external experts who establish in advance a generalized set of skills needed by an individual in order to function effectively

in society. These experts are often the providers of the literacy programs as well, and it is their social and political agenda that forms the basis of the training, not the needs of the individual learners (Klassen, 1987). Quoting Rockhill (1986, p. 10), Klassen (1987) notes as well that this notion of functionality is based in the idea

> that people are unable to function properly and that they need literacy in order to enable them to take their proper place in society. The specific ideological practices that flow from this idea are programs which teach people how to live their lives as the 'experts', who control the written word, would have them. (p. 25)

The official definition of functional illiteracy used to compile federal statistics by Statistics Canada is "less than eight completed years of schooling" (Calamai, 1987, p. 9). This grade level approach to literacy has also been used by UNESCO. Its November 1978 Guidelines on the Standardization of Educational Statistics state that

> a person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988, p. 3)

UNESCO determined that anyone with a grade 5 level of education or higher was literate, with those below this level classified as illiterate. The Council of Ministers of Education (1988) noted that the grade 5 cutoff did not account for those people who regress into illiteracy, or those others who achieve literacy on

their own as self-learners or through affiliation with other organizations that were not a part of the formal system.

In working through the definition to be used in the Southam survey (1987), both grade-level achievement and grade-level performance were named as criteria typically used in determining functional literacy. Grade-level achievement means completing a certain number of grades in school, while grade-level performance means a measurement of ability to complete tasks, such as measured performance at a grade 9 level of reading.

Calamai (1987) notes that most experts in the field reject the grade-level notion of literacy. "The majority view defines functional literacy as having the reading, writing and numbers skills necessary to perform tasks demanded by the community and, especially, by the job" (p. 15).

Southam rejected both notions of grade-level achievement and grade-level performance in its definition, noting that standards for performance at a given grade level might fluctuate depending on geographical locale, and that standards of performance now might be quite different from those measured twenty years ago. Southam also notes that we are in a complex information society. As a consequence, a second problem related to a grade-level definition was how to determine a literacy level required for functioning in today's world, and who determines what grade level is adequate to deal with these complexities. The determination of required literacy levels can be from a societal perspective,

taking into account the social, political, cultural and economic values of the society, or from an individual perspective, where the individual learner's self-actualization is the determinant of the required level of literacy. In the Southam survey, a jury panel helped to determine the definition used. Literacy was defined as the ability to use printed and written information to function in society.

In 1989, Statistics Canada completed its Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities. For this survey, literacy was defined as "the information processing skills necessary to use the printed material commonly encountered at work, at home and in the community" (p. 1).

As early as 1973/74, attempts were being made to define literacy in a more sociological competency-based way. The Adult Performance Level (APL) tests were developed in Texas. They were designed to measure literacy functions against the competency expectations of society; however, they were widely criticized as reflecting only white, middle-class, male-oriented norms. The literacy community concluded then that competency-based tests were very difficult to generalize among populations which are not homogeneous (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988).

In the United States, the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Adult Literacy Survey Project (1990) adopted the same definition. Being literate means being able "to fulfil self-determined objectives

as family and community members, citizens, job holders, and members of social, religious, or other associations" (Wrigley, 1992, p. 5). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) recognizes three distinct areas of knowledge and skills:

* prose literacy -- understanding and using information from texts, such as newspapers, magazines and books.

* document literacy -- locating and using information from documents, such as job application forms, bus schedules, maps, tables, and indexes

* quantitative literacy -- applying numerical operations to information contained in printed materials, such as checkbooks, menus, order forms, and advertisements. (Wrigley, 1992, p. 5)

Bell (1991) underwent her own experience of literacy in preparing for her study Becoming Aware of Literacy. She undertook the study of a non-Roman alphabet language, attempting to simulate the experience of the adult illiterate attempting to become print literate. Her experience of literacy was relational, and affected deeply her understanding of the process. In her conclusion, she writes:

> My study had made clear to me the individual component of literacy and the way in which the individual teacher and learner shape the literacy which is developed. I could no longer conceive of literacy as a neutral technology which could be presented according to a pre-specified format.
>
> My exploration of the commonplaces of literacy had focused particularly on the interaction between User and Process. I had experienced for myself the way in which the learner shapes the interaction with the text

> and is shaped by it. My entire history had come into play in affecting the kind of progress I made, and in shaping the process which I went through. It was impossible for me to conceive of giving teachers a set of rigid instructions to be followed with all learners. (p. 330)

Despite its critics, Klassen (1987, p. 23) notes "that the UNESCO concept of functional literacy continues to be a catchword in the professional literature." However, Thomas (1983) looks on the concept as an evolving one. As communication systems change and technology transforms society, our definition of literacy will change as well. "Print literacy" has been adequate for Western civilization until recently. However, CD-ROM technology, the internet, fibre optic communication, and voice-activated computers, to name just a few advances in electronic technology, all pose challenges to the literacy discussion. Thomas (1983) was clearly prophetic when she stated

> ...in this process, those with only five or six years education will be marginalized. In today's Canada, and certainly in Canada of the year 2000, an unemployed adult of age 40 or 45 with less than grade 8 education will be in a far from enviable position. For this reason, debates about literacy and illiteracy which concentrate on levels of reading and writing are misleading; the real issue is whether people possess the education and skills necessary to participate fully and productively in the life of their society. That is what functionality is about. (p. 2)

Finally, Klassen (1987) describes a sociolinguistic theory of literacy which defines literacy in relationship to the settings in which the learner lives, and the functions that literacy takes on in each of those settings. It names literacy as contextual, with different competencies required in different

contexts, and perhaps different literacies in different languages. Switzerland with its amalgam of French, Italian and Switzerdeutsch, and modern-day Israel using Hebrew, Arabic, English and French, and a score of other world languages among its immigrant population, are only two examples of the need for different literacies in different languages in different contexts. Bell (1991) stresses "that literacy cannot be understood as a neutral technology which is used in the same way for all purposes in all situations" (p. 330). This "multiplicity of literacies" (Bell, 1991, p. 330) includes within itself the social roles, cultural patterns, political realities, values, and meanings of a culture (Alemayehu, 1990; Winterowd, 1989). Functional literacy is therefore "... a relative -- not absolute -- term, and the criteria must be those of the learner's society" (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988, p. 3).

As we have seen above, the definition of literacy has changed dramatically over time. Despite the fact that the UNESCO definition of functional literacy continues to have widespread use, many literacy practitioners now see literacy as relational, a complex amalgam of interactions between the language, the person using the language, and the environment in which the person lives and in which the language is used. Literacy is now being seen in a more holistic way, encompassing a set of skills which allows users of the language to participate fully within the society in which they live. A further confounder is that literacy is no longer seen in a singular way, and, as

technology complexifies, literacy practitioners have determined that there are many literacies.

The focus of this study will be on ESL literacy.

ESL Literacy- Definitions

When English as a Second Language (ESL) programs were first introduced in Ontario in the 1960s, only 1 out of 10 immigrants to Ontario spoke neither of the official languages. The current situation is vastly different. Between 1990 and 1992, 42% of the over 200,000 immigrants coming to Metro Toronto spoke no English or French. Immigrants speaking Cantonese, Polish, Spanish, Tagalog and Tamil represented more than half of those who could not speak either of the official languages. It is estimated that 73% of immigrant children under the age of 5 spoke neither English or French (Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, 1996). As the linguistic composition and language needs of the immigrant population have shifted over the years, the response of the second language and literacy communities in Canada and in Metropolitan Toronto have shifted as well.

The concern about "ESL literacy" first emerged in the United States in the 1970s as the country experienced an influx of refugees from Southeast Asia, many of whom had little experience with reading and writing. As these students were primarily non-Roman alphabetic, traditional methods used in ESL classes

were found to be ineffective. Students historically had been expected to read and write the sentences they were learning to speak. These students were unable to do this because they did not know the Roman alphabet. The U.S. government's decision to provide an "amnesty" for undocumented immigrants in the late 1980s provided a second impetus to the field of ESL literacy. Many of these amnesty students were unable to access the information provided in the textbooks that had been mandated by the federal government. Many of them had only received a few years of schooling in their home country. It became clear that they needed to develop literacy skills as well as second-language skills if they were to be successful. It was the practitioners who adapted current ESL materials and improvised techniques drawn from literacy training in the native language that helped shaped the field of ESL literacy as it is known today (Wrigley, 1992).

Draper (1986, p. 29) quotes the 1984 definition of ESL Literacy put forward by the Chicago Urban Skills Institute:

> Literacy learning refers to the acquiring of basic reading and writing ability. ESL literacy learning refers to the acquiring of basic reading and writing ability in English as a Second Language by those who have never mastered basic reading and writing in any language. ESL literacy learners endeavor to acquire literacy in English despite having little or no ability to read and write their native language.

The definition used in Canada (Cumming, 1989) had the same basic components:

> English (French) as Second Language Literacy refers to basic English (French) as a Second Language training combined with basic literacy training for adults who are not native speakers of English (or French) and who are not functionally literate in any other language. (p. 227)

Since these early definitions, the ESL literacy field has been in transition, and the search for a widely-agreed upon definition has continued, although no consensus has yet been reached. Wrigley (1992, p. 7) notes, however, that there is a growing consensus about what ESL literacy is "not" from the perspective of practice.

It is "not" about

* learning the alphabet and copying words, although these skills are useful when finding a pizza parlor in the phone book or writing down the name of a good dentist
* phonics and decoding, although phonics are helpful when trying to pronounce the items on a menu in a Mexican restaurant
* translating words from one language to another
* focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
* reading paragraphs in a textbook and answering comprehension questions
* memorizing vocabulary lists
* filling in workbook pages

And finally, ESL literacy is "not just" about

* power and politics, although it is important to understand the political aspects of language
* functional literacy

* storytelling, although personal stories can enrich and enlighten the individual learner.

She goes on to state that ESL literacy teaching could be defined as

> ...supporting adults with little English and little formal education in their efforts to understand and use English in its many forms...in a variety of contexts...so that they can reach their fullest potential and achieve their own goals, whether these be personal, professional or academic. (Wrigley, 1992, p. 7)

The ESL literacy field has learned from traditional literacy programs which have incorporated a view of literacy that encompasses the social, political and cultural dimensions of life. As Bell (1991) spoke of a "multiplicity of literacies" (p. 330), Wrigley (1992) speaks of a "plurality of many literacies" (p. 5) shaped by social contexts and defined by the collective and by the individual. She also addresses the "literacy continuum" (p. 5) which grows and expands with an individual's increasing competence with different types of literacies, not the dichotomous view of literate or illiterate. Within this context, ESL literacy has more complexities. It depends on literacy in at least two languages, the native language of the learner and English, as well as on two cultures, the home culture of the learner and the mainstream culture within which English literacy is lived out.

When this thesis was undertaken in the mid-1970s, a grade-level definition of literacy was widely used by most second language teachers. There was little concern at that time about mother tongue literacy. Literacy in the

second language was determined by the students being able not only to speak the second language at the end of the prescribed period of instruction, but to read and write the language as well. The efforts of the second language teachers at the time were to help their students achieve a grade 9 level of use, primarily determined by their ability to read at the grade 9 level.

The ESL literacy field learned from traditional literacy programs, as outlined above. It no longer describes a person either as literate or not. It now incorporates a multiplicity or plurality of literacies connecting all parts of the learner's experience.

ESL Literacy - The Changing Socio-political Context

The socio-political context within which ESL literacy operates is changing quickly, including such notions as literacy as a social phenomenon, a growing movement to empower the learner, mother tongue literacy, issues of learner recruitment to and retention in programs, and finally, the place of ESL literacy within the educational system.

Literacy as a social phenomenon: The definitions of literacy and ESL literacy have undergone significant modifications over time, and continue to do so as educators recognize that literacy is "something meaningful and part of life, not something apart from it" (Thomas, 1990, p. 13).

Recent definitions have included the personal, socio-cultural and

economic contexts of the learners. Sauvé (1990) asserts:

> Like any educational program, those programs designed to assist learners in ESL literacy are made available within a socio-political context: a web of power relationships, of assumptions and understandings, of economic realities, and of varying world views. The web is complex and one does not easily see the way through it. (p. 52)

The Canadian Council on Social Development (1991) points out that many social issues have been addressed in isolation from one another rather than being seen as interconnected problems. These issues, such as family violence, poverty, illiteracy, drug abuse, crime and racism require "a 'horizontal' response across organizations, rather than a 'vertical' response limited to a single agency or group" (p. 11). The Council calls for cooperation among agencies and integration of policies and programs at both the community and agency level.

Wrigley (1992) notes that adult ESL literacy reflects another shift in belief that literacy is not an individual skill that exists in isolation, but that it is a "social phenomenon" involving readers and writers communicating through a process called "negotiating meaning." As a result, how ESL literacy learners use literacy in their lives, in their communities, at work, or in their interactions with the educational system has taken on new importance. Literacy is now seen as a collective act rather than an individual achievement. Not only is it seen as a social process, but it is also being defined by both the economic and political

dimensions of society. Wrigley expands on Street's (1984) idea of the "ideological model" which views literacy as culturally determined by the values and ideologies of a society's members as being in sharp contrast with the older "autonomous model" of literacy, which embraces a belief that "skills are skills" regardless of the context.

Learner empowerment: Another popular notion which affects ESL literacy is empowerment. Traditional teaching practice has the expert at the centre of the activity, be it the teacher or the curriculum developer. From a position of power, the expert decides what the learner needs to learn and then teaches it. Standardized tests and mandated textbooks support this process. The ESL literacy field has begun to recognize that the learner needs to be at the centre of the process, and that the learner is the expert on what s/he needs. Thomas (1990, p. 13) clearly states that "literacy programs have to start where people are and their needs have to be uppermost." This leads to individualized programing which takes into account the context in which the learner lives.

Sauvé (1990) supports this notion:

> Indeed, literacy is closely related to power and human relationships. Canadian society operates on the assumption that citizens can read and write. ...Those who cannot do what every citizen is assumed able to do are largely invisible to decision-makers. Their thoughts, needs and feelings do not count or are assumed by authorities to be acted upon by their children or some other person. To understand literacy as that which enables Canadians to influence decisions which affect their lives in a serious way is to understand that programs which teach literacy must teach more than encoding and decoding. Programs must be themselves

> opportunities for the experience of power. In them, there must be genuine dialogue so that the one who teaches and the one who learns are both teaching and both learning. From the dialogue will come the ability to select what is to be read and what written. It is because literacy has to do with power and human relationships that those of us concerned with literacy must look to the socio-economic contexts within which we work. (p. 54)

Wrigley (1992) reminds us that literacy is not value free, noting that power and gender issues have arisen in many adult ESL literacy programs. She notes:

> ... some programs serve women exclusively and try to support their traditions while others seek to share power by working collaboratively with learners. Some of these programs involve learners in decision making both in the classroom and in the program overall. Programs that deal with the social and political issues that shape literacy and work toward sharing the power between teachers and learners are often called "participatory programs". (p. 3)

Usher (1987) notes:

> ... the first prerequisite for participation in the process of empowerment is a set of generic skills which we have come to recognize as basic literacy. ... these skills have been identified as including written communication, logic and analysis, basic science, mathematics, understanding of the economic and cultural environment, problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills. (pp. 191-192)

ESL literacy is no longer only about reading and writing in order to prepare the learner to take part in the workforce. It is now being seen by the public as:

> a basic human right, an integral part of lifelong learning and an essential element of an individual's participation in a democratic society. (Ministry of Education, 1991, p. 7)

Not only do ESL literacy teachers need to recognize literacy as a basic human right, they need to be prepared to help their students not only learn the skills, but also to participate in the process towards empowerment by encouraging in the learners their right to act through the development of their own sense of self-efficacy or personal control. Sauvé (1990, p. 53) affirms this notion:

> As long as we see literacy education as a technical problem only, our response to the very human needs of the learners for a greater measure of control over their own lives will be of limited effectiveness at best.
>
> I am not concerned ... with an understanding of literacy which needs test scores and grade levels to assess who is literate and who is not. I am concerned with people's perceptions that they do not have the skill in reading and writing to work safely and effectively, to realize their opportunities for advancement in a career or elsewhere, to access community resources, to be informed citizens and consumers in our society, and to bear themselves with human dignity. For the person who perceives an inability to do these things due to lack of literacy or who is perceived by others as thus unable, a literacy problem exists.

Mother tongue literacy: There is also debate with the second language and literacy community about the role of the first language of the learner in ESL literacy training. In 1982, Haverson and Haynes raised the question of whether or not to teach native language literacy skills prior to teaching second language literacy skills. They note that, at that time, research in this area was inconclusive, but that some research supported the idea that initial progress in learning to read is more rapid in the learners' native language than in a second language.

The Council of Ministers of Education (1988) states that illiteracy in the

mother tongue "makes it more difficult to teach a second language and requires more attention" (p. 13). Some people believe that becoming literate in the first language will help in the acquisition of the second language because of the transferability of skills from one language to another. Burnaby and Bell (1989) argue in favour of the notion of the transfer especially in the case of educated ESL learners. They do not go so far as to state that this would be the case for non-literate learners first learning their native language followed by instruction in the official language of the new culture. They do contend, however, that acquiring second language literacy is enhanced by the presence of transferable learning strategies.

Cumming (1989) and Thomas (1990) both assert that some immigrants who are not literate in their mother tongue might have difficulty adjusting to official language literacy because they are not literate in their mother tongue, requiring instruction in oral fluency in the official language before literacy. However, Cumming (1990) points to a need for more research into this area, noting:

> It is not clear how learners' languages interact in acquiring literacy, what knowledge transfers across languages in adult literacy learning, how literacy instruction in one language affects literate performance in the other, or how literacy acquisition impacts on uses of first and second languages in social and work interactions. Research is needed. (p. 47)

In 1991, Bell modifies her position of two years earlier based on her personal experience of acquiring a second language:

> If we see literacy as a neutral technology, we can assume that literacy skills learned in the first language will transfer easily to the second language. If, however, we recognise that each culture understands and uses literacy differently, then we have to help learners discover far more than the technicalities of decoding and encoding. My own work with second language literacy suggests that literacy is such an intensely personal construct that many aspects of first language literacy may actually be dysfunctional when attempting literacy in a new cultural and linguistic setting. (pp. 1-2)

The debate continues. What we are left with at the moment is Alemayehu's conclusion (1990). He does not favour one position or the other, but states that ESL literacy instructors need to recognize first and foremost that this is a problem, and one for which there is no easy solution.

Learner recruitment and retention: Another issue facing ESL literacy is recruitment to and retention in the programs. Hartel (1986) contends that ESL literacy programs serve the neediest of all ESL learners, and, while there are often waiting lists for regular ESL classes, ESL literacy programs often have difficulty recruiting students. She attributes this fact to the personal experience faced by illiterate students. In their country of origin, these students may have been respected members of their communities and families, valued for their special skills or their lived wisdom.

She notes the repercussions their illiteracy may have once they arrive in the United States, where their traditional skills are likely to be undervalued, and where traditional family roles often get reversed as the immigrant children learn the new language quickly, taking on the role of translator and interpreter of

cultural norms for their parents. Because of their lack of experience with the educational system, they are likely as well to be resistant to the notion of adult education. Hartel suggests that ESL literacy programs need to devise more individualized, personalized, and active approaches to recruitment in order to reach potential students and help to lessen their fear of failure or embarrassment in class. Burnaby and Bell (1989) support the same position. For many ESL literacy learners, the educational system and the North American classroom setting becomes intimidating because of their lack of experience at home in the educational system, and because

> ... the classroom may represent to them either bad experiences they have had in the past or opportunities that they deeply regret not having had earlier in their lives. (p. 31)

The problem with enrollment and retention is supported by statistics. In Encouraging Adults to Acquire Literacy Skills, Thomas (1990) notes:

> In the Southam survey, fewer than two per cent of the 4.5 million people with literacy difficulties were enrolled in literacy programs in 1987. It also estimated that only 10 per cent of the low-literate population would consider taking literacy classes, and that dropout rates of 50 per cent had been recorded. (p. 1)

Jones (1993) estimated that some 70,000 adults needed language instruction in 1990. He notes:

> Between 1986 and 1989, Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC) provided language instruction for about 14,000 adults each year under the Canadian Jobs Strategy program (Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, 1991). In 1989-90 another 6,900 were

> enrolled in EIC sponsored Settlement Language Programs. Others were receiving language instruction from school boards, immigrant serving agencies, and other community programs, but these numbers are impossible to obtain. It is not likely that even one-quarter of the need is being met. (p. 16)

He attributes the small enrollment to the fact that adults have only been provided with limited opportunities for language programs, noting (p. 7):

> ... for many years the only fully funded second language program was operated as an employment-related language program, open to only a small number of immigrants. (Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, 1991)

The place of ESL literacy in the educational system: Where ESL literacy fits within the educational system is an ongoing debate. Is it an area of expertise unto itself? Does it belong under English as a Second Language? Under literacy education? Under Adult Basic Education?

In the United States, ESL literacy is seen as an area of specialization within adult ESL, along with Survival English and Pre-vocational ESL (Hartel, 1986).

Klassen (1987, p. 1) notes that

> In Toronto, it tends to be assumed that minority-language people who, for economic reasons or political necessity, have come to Canada have one "basic" learning need -- English -- because it is the standard language of the society into which they have come. Thus, their educational needs are not seen basically in terms of literacy, but rather in terms of English as a Second Language (ESL).

The problem of fit is highlighted by Bell and Burnaby (1984) in their

Handbook for ESL Literacy:

> ESL literacy students fall between two stools. Their lack of English language skills makes literacy classes difficult. Their lack of literacy makes ESL language classes difficult. They are attempting to cope with two challenges simultaneously -- learning the language, and learning how to read and write. (p. 7)

The Ontario Ministry of Education (1987) sees ESL programs for immigrants as part of Adult Basic Education, which consists of instruction in one of the national languages for adults with facility in neither language, adult basic literacy and numeracy (for people who can already speak English) and citizenship training.

Draper (1986) concurs:

> Adult basic education and teaching English or French as a Second Language are seen to have similar concerns as those relate to the role of the learner, recruitment, the need for innovative programming, and the production of meaningful and relevant materials. The link is even closer for those many immigrants who are not able to read and write in their own language. (p. 20)

This latter group that Draper refers to are the participants in ESL literacy programs.

His views are not shared by Burnaby and Bell (1989) who maintain that most ESL learners already possess the skills that would be taught in an ABE class, having been high-functioning members of their own society before coming to Canada. They assert that the problem that most ESL learners face is that they are restricted from participating in most aspects of the life of their

new community because they are unable to communicate in the dominant language.

Burnaby and Bell (1989) also point out that non-literate participants in regular ESL classes have major learning problems to contend with:

> The problem is that, while regular ESL classes teach literacy skills that are culturally specific to Canada, it is generally assumed that the ESL learners will transfer the bulk of their literacy skills directly from literacy in their first language. Such skills include being able to recognize and write Roman letters, to understand the concepts of word and sentence, to predict the content of written text in contexts like labels, posters, or newspapers, and so on (p. 191).
>
> These skills are not taught in regular ESL classes, so non-literate learners are not able to keep up with the literacy aspects of the ESL teaching. More significant, however, is the fact that most ESL teachers use literacy as a tool to teach oral language as well. Examples and diagrams are written on the blackboard, written materials are used as the basis for exercises, and reading or writing assignments may be given as homework. Thus non-literate learners soon realize that they can not follow even the oral language teaching being offered. (p. 186)

The Ontario government gave its support to literacy programs starting in 1986. In 1987, MacNeil advocated for

> policy measures to ensure that specified levels of performance are achieved by each citizen in terms of reading, writing, and numeracy skills that will permit them to learn continuously throughout their lifetime. (pp. 68-69)

In its Guidelines for Effective Literacy Programs in Ontario (1991), the Ministry of Education noted that school boards provide approximately seventy percent of Ontario's literacy education, while other major providers include

colleges, community-based agencies, Laubach Literacy Councils, private providers, ESL/FSL programs, libraries, unions and employers.

By 1993, there were more than 800 different literacy programs, offered by school boards, colleges, community groups, unions, and employers. While suggesting that these various literacy providers work co-operatively with one another, the Ministry clearly states that a broad government literacy policy and strategy needs to be put in place. The Ministry of Education's Adult Literacy Policy and Evaluation Project put forward a vision of adult literacy for Ontario in 1991; however, there have been no standardized guidelines or policies set for how all literacy programs should operate, or what they should do (Ministry of Education, 1993).

In sum, the socio-political context within which ESL literacy functions is changing quickly as societal changes also occur. The social context within which ESL literacy is delivered is taking on more importance. The expert model with the teacher at the centre is being replaced by a participatory model with the learners not only at the centre but as the experts on what they need. Meeting the learners where they are with increased individualizing of programing is a growing trend. As more non-Roman alphabetic immigrants arrive in Ontario, there is an increasing awareness of the issues surrounding mother tongue literacy, and the difficulties that non-literate students have in the ESL classroom.

Recruiting and retaining students for ESL literacy programs is difficult, often due to the poor learning experience the students' had in their country of origin. More importantly, despite a clearly articulated vision of what literacy programs should do and how they should operate, there are no widespread guidelines in place. This fact hampers cooperation amongst the providers, and prevents a clear message being articulated to potential learners about what is available to them. It also prevents good evaluation and outcome research being done, as there are no standardized and agreed upon policies and procedures to guide researchers in the field.

There is a growing management trend in the 1990s to eliminate vertical silos and to flatten organizations in order to achieve administrative efficiencies. It seems clear that the same principles will be called for in the literacy and ESL literacy fields as well. Neither can continue to operate in a disconnected fashion from other social agencies, especially as current governments demand that educators and other social systems do more with less without jeopardizing quality, and rationalization of services becomes a major quality issue of the late 1990s. Efficiency and accountability are two of the major underpinnings of service rationalization, and measures of outcome become increasingly important.

In 1991, the Ministry of Education predicted what is now transpiring in 1997:

> Along with funding there has been expressed a need for greater accountability to ensure the effective use of limited resources. This reflects the public mood which has become more critical of government spending, while at the same time increasing its demand for service.
>
> ... With increasing financial constraints on the community and government, there will be growing public pressure for literacy programs to operate within a climate of efficiency and accountability. While process and methodology will remain important factors, there will be increasing pressure to assess results. (pp. 6-7)

ESL Literacy Programs - Philosophical Underpinnings

There are some authors who have attempted to outline the components of a good literacy program. Although most of them are geared toward programs for learners studying literacy in their mother tongue, it seems clear that the same principles could apply to literacy programs for learners who are illiterate in their first language and who want or have to become literate in a second language, what we have been referring to as ESL literacy learners.

In the fall of 1991, the Policy Work Group of the Ministry of Education's Adult Literacy Policy and Evaluation Project formulated a vision for adult literacy in Ontario. The principles they outline reflect the principles found in Ontario's plan for Adult Basic Literacy (1986) and the Ontario Ministry of Education Statement of Beliefs.

The 1991 vision stated that a quality literacy program would need to include a community focus, both geographically and by community interests, as well as having access by the learners to services. The program would be

centred in the learner, focusing on the learner's needs, not the program needs, and would involve the learners in an equal relationship with the providers of service. Learners would share in the determination of the program goals. In their Handbook for ESL Literacy (1984), Bell and Burnaby offer their support for this idea:

> All learners do better when the teaching is cooperative and students can share in the process of information exchange, rather than when the learning is passive and teacher-directed. Giving our students the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience makes the learning both more pleasant and more effective. (p. 19)

This also supports the notion that not only do learners have the right to learn, but they also have the right to choose how they learn. It also recognizes that adult learners are adults, and content and methodology should reflect adult learning principles, not programmatic initiatives that have been developed for children. The program would implement a holistic view of literacy, recognizing that the learners are in relationship in their family, their social or cultural context, in their community and their workplace. The literacy learning would be seen to complement these relationships. The service would be delivered appropriately and effectively by trained teachers. Rather than promoting uniformity and sameness among the learners, the program would be based in the principle of equity of outcome, providing real opportunities for individual learners to achieve their personal and individual goals. The program would

promote cooperation and linkages among programs, while allowing both multiplicity and diversity of program offerings. This recognizes the principle of lifelong learning, providing linkages to other existing educational activities, and initiating new developments in continuing education. Finally, the programs would be rooted in sound business management practice, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and accountability for the funds, while putting in place sound evaluation techniques to monitor outcomes that are consistent with well-established program goals and objectives. Both measurement and reporting of results would take place on a regular basis.

The Ministry of Education (1993) notes other components. The provision of services must be flexible, providing full-time and part-time programs that are delivered not only during the regular academic year, but during the summer and in the evenings as well. Providers need to work cooperatively to ensure that geographic areas have sufficient programs. Without this coordination, and with no organization of the potential client groups, accurate needs identification is very difficult.

It is also important that teachers working in the field receive the necessary training to do so. Bell (1991) suggests that teachers need more than just training. She sees the literacy process as very complex, noting that there is neither one correct way to teach literacy nor one correct literacy to teach. She wants teachers to engage in a process of self-reflection and self-examination.

Her aim is:

> ... to help teachers recognize that they are not teaching a neutral technology, but that they have been raised to a culturally determined discourse of literacy, which has been shaped by their own personal experiences. If they explore the texts they use, the teaching methodologies they employ, and above all their own stories of literacy, they will be able to recognize where their expectations may come into conflict with those of their students. By becoming conscious of their own assumptions about literacy they will be better able to help their learners to an understanding of how literacy is used and understood in Canada. (p. 332)

Finally, the Ministry of Education (1993) addresses the need for guidelines and policies related to literacy programs, and by extension, to ESL literacy programs, stating that "no guidelines or policies have been set for how all literacy programs should operate, or what they should do" (p. 1). It does not make sense that the Ministry does not define programs. Questions relating to sufficient funding for literacy programs, and the development of quality guidelines and evaluation principles have also not been answered.

In summary, the criteria for a good ESL literacy program are rooted in adult learning principles. The program needs to be learner-centred, where learners have the right to choose what they learn and how they learn it. They would be involved in the determination of program goals and content, and the relationship of the learners and the teachers would reflect, at the very least, mutuality and respect, if not equality. The program would be community-based, with ease of access both geographically and by class time schedule. It would be

based in a holistic view of literacy, recognizing the connection of the learners to their interpersonal, social, political, economic and spiritual environment. A keystone of the program would be helping the learners to determine and achieve their individual goals, thus breaking the uniformity myth that all ESL literacy learners need the same things. Teachers would receive adequate and appropriate training, and would be encouraged to engage in processes of self-reflection and self-examination. Finally, there would be sound evaluation principles in place that emerge out of well-defined policies and guidelines.

ESL Literacy - Learners

Adult education has long supported the notion that adults are active, not passive, learners. ESL adult literacy is beginning to reflect this awareness as well. There is a growing body of research that shows that adults use literacy in order to think, to reflect, to conceptualize, to question and to problem-solve. Rather than passively taking in information, adult learners construct their own knowledge and understanding and apply this knowledge in the world around them. They use their own past experience with them, and the learning takes place when they integrate their new learning into what they already know to make sense of their world.

> As a result of the awareness of the cognitive abilities that adults have, we now see many programs that involve ESL literacy learners in complex tasks, such as jointly authoring a story or a text to be published,

> examining social issues that concern them, conducting interviews with friends and neighbours, and doing research in the community. (Wrigley, 1992, p. 4)

As well as the cognitive and problem-solving abilities of adult ESL literacy learners, researchers are also recognizing their metacognitive skills, that is, their ability to think about the way they learn or to reflect on the way they use language. Wrigley (1992) believes that adult learners may learn both faster and better if they are consciously aware of the way they construct meaning for themselves. This "language awareness" (p. 4) has prompted many programs to help learners see the social function of language by involving them in examining the role that literacy plays in their lives and in exploring the many ways that language can be used.

Haverson and Haynes (1982) and Burnaby and Bell (1989) note that there are some commonalities among the learners who come to adult ESL literacy programs. Wrigley (1992) has found similar commonalities. Most of them are adults who have a desire to learn English. They need to develop both their reading and writing skills. Most have had only a few years of schooling in their native language, and some have had none at all.

Burnaby and Bell (1989) further subdivide illiterate students into the following categories, as do Haverson and Haynes (1982):

(a) Non-literates speak a language for which there is a written form, but they have no reading and writing skills in any language. They have probably

had an experience of print through newspapers, street signs and books. Although they come from a literate society, they often have not been to school. Burnaby and Bell (1989, p. 186) point out that some of these students, as well as pre-literates (see below) may possess no transferable learning skills acquired from literacy learning in their first languages. Alemayehu (1990) suggests that "these are the ones who usually drop out of regular ESL or FSL literacy programs after a few classes for they cannot cope with what is being taught in the classes" (p. 30).

(b) Pre-literates speak a language for which there is no written form. They likely have had a limited experience of printed materials.

(c) Semi-literates: For Haverson and Haynes, semi-literates have the equivalent of three to four years of formal education and/or possess minimal literacy skills in some language. They might know the alphabet, have sight recognition of some common words, but usually can write only their name and address. For Burnaby and Bell, semi-literates may have had as much as eight years of formal education. Their attendance is often poor and sporadic. They understand that there is a relationship between the spoken and the written word. However, they lack study skills, and avoid reading or writing whenever possible.

(d) Functionally non-literate students understand the notion of words and sentences, and likely recognize signs, labels, and job-specific words. They tend

not to read for pleasure. Although they can often take simple messages, they tend not to express themselves through writing. Completing forms and following written instructions tend to present them with problems. Haverson and Haynes did not use this category.

(e) Non-Roman alphabetic students: Haverson and Haynes categorize these learners as literate in their own language but needing to learn the Roman alphabet and the sound-symbol relationships of English. Although Burnaby and Bell recognize the special difficulties of students whose native language is not written in the Roman alphabet whether literate or not in their native language, they recognize that these students may be found in any of the above categories.

There is a great variety among students of ESL literacy. They have differing second language abilities and competencies, but other factors influence their progress as well, such as their length of time in the country, their native language, their age, and their previous experience with education. Most ESL literacy teachers know that new literacy learners who have never been to school have very different challenges from those who have some basic reading and writing knowledge (Wrigley, 1992). Students who can read and write in their native language will be able to transfer those skills to a second language (Burnaby and Bell, 1984). This even applies to learners who are literate in a non-Roman alphabet who often acquire English literacy more quickly than learners who are not literate in any language (Wrigley, 1992).

Cumming (1990) sees the development of thinking skills as critical for ESL literacy learners because literate activities are usually performed by people independently, reading or writing on their own with no support from other people. He comments that "people with low literacy skills are not sure of how to perform literate tasks" (p. 37).

1. They approach reading or writing tasks without ideas about how to think, overall, while doing them.

2. They work in small units like single ideas or phrases without knowing how to integrate or analyze these small units in relation to a whole literate task.

3. They seldom know how to use other problem-solving strategies to control their behaviour.

4. As they have little familiarity with printed material, the kinds of language used in it, or the ways of behaving with it, they are often not familiar with the references, words or ideas which appear in this medium, nor are they sure of how to act on them appropriately.

He asserts that many ESL literacy learners may already know how to function very well in other areas of their lives, but not with complex ideas printed in texts. Teachers need to capitalize on these skills in their ESL literacy students because aspects of their existing knowledge or skills may be relevant to literate tasks.

Wrigley (1992) reminds us that ESL literacy students come to the classroom with many strengths. As adult learners they bring with them a lifetime of knowledge and experience. Many of them are "survivors" who have

found housing, built strong family and social networks and jobs. They have powerful problem-solving skills, and have "their own kind of strategic and communicative competence" (p. 9). Bell and Burnaby (1984) also name ESL literacy students as survivors, noting that they have likely lived in at least two cultures, have travelled widely, and have learned to judge people, think independently, and weigh facts critically. They remind us that these adults will likely question both the content and the process used by their ESL literacy teachers, and they assert that these learners need opportunities to do so. Many ESL literacy programs have succeeded because they have truly become learner-centred, involving these strong men and women in the very program decisions that affect them (Alemayehu, 1990; Wrigley, 1992).

In the 1960s, learners having literacy needs were labelled as disadvantaged. This concept will be more fully examined in the next chapter. It is worth noting here, however, that the notion of the disadvantaged literacy learner has been transformed, as noted above. As adult learners, their illiteracy is now being seen within a larger context. It constitutes only one part of who they are. Their abilities, skills, talents, thoughts and feelings are now being taken into account. Their culture is considered. Their gender, age, native language and previous experience with education are considered. They are seen as coming out of a place of strength, not disadvantage, full human beings who are capable of making choices and living with the consequences of their

choices. Even the notion of the illiterate learner has changed, experts recognizing that there is no singular, uniform description that fits all learners. New broad categories describe the illiterate: illiterate, pre-literate, semi-literate, non-literate and non-Roman alphabetic. These categories are not being used as all-encompassing labels which stigmatize the learner, but rather as a matrix that allows experts in the field to talk about commonalities that exist among the learners they work with. The ESL literacy field has come a long way since the days of the "disadvantaged illiterate".

ESL Literacy - Goals and Content

In ESL/Literacy for Adult Learners (1982), Haverson and Haynes outline what they believe to be the goals of ESL literacy training. These include following simple directions, recognizing and arranging shapes/symbols, letters and words, understanding word order and sentence sequence, and distinguishing both aural and written differences between consonants and vowels in their various formations in English. Although these goals are important in the learning of reading and writing, they do not take into account the holistic view of literacy, and do not include goals related to relationships that the learners have with their families, their communities or their workplace. They also do not include learner-generated goals. Their 1982 goals are quite incomplete given the movement of the ESL literacy field over the last fifteen years.

Anderson (1988) demonstrates a more learner-centred approach to the development of goals for an ESL literacy program. Anderson reinforces Bell's notion stated previously that the teachers' cultural assumptions might be a barrier to hearing what the participants in ESL literacy programs are really saying. To combat the effects of these biases, he advocates that teachers need to know the social, economic, political and cultural environment of the participants. In this way, "the learning facilitator will be able to suggest areas of possible interest if the individual is unable to articulate them for the purposes of program design" (p. 19). He also suggests the obvious. If you want to know what the participants want to learn, ask them, and then analyze their individual contexts, interests and community involvements. He also recommends getting input from members of the community who are in daily interaction with the program participants. The contrast between the "expert" approach of Haverson and Haynes, and Anderson's more participatory approach six years later highlights how quickly attitudes and beliefs in the ESL literacy field are changing to reflect new understandings of what ESL literacy is about.

Wrigley (1992) notes that the focus of second language teaching has moved from grammar to communication, while literacy has shifted its focus from skills to meaning. Early literacy teachers taught the alphabet and phonics before moving to "real-life" adult reading and writing. Recent challenges to this approach have resulted in a growing consensus:

> ... "real-life" reading should be the starting point rather than the ending point of teaching initial literacy and that skills such as phonics should be used as a tool in helping learners understand the "print" they see around them. (p. 2)

Similarly, ESL literacy students no longer have to wait until they have completely absorbed the alphabet or the writing system. Learners are being encouraged to write down whatever is meaningful to them in whatever way they can using "invented" or "experimental" writing, that is, using their own approximation of letters and words. ESL literacy has shifted to the process of "meaning making", that is, helping learners to understand that written language carries meaning and to turn their thoughts into writing.

One clear way of formalizing the involvement of the learner in the learning process is through the development of a learning contract. Bell and Burnaby (1984) noted that there is an implicit contractual relationship in adult ESL literacy programs that has a unique character, given that adults have primary roles in their lives, such as job and family, which put demands on their time that often conflict with their role as students. Since attendance is usually voluntary, and since their other roles are often seen as more important, teachers and students need to develop some shared understanding about the nature of the learner's attendance. They also note that planning lessons around students' needs is implicit in the contract since students want to be able to use what they learn in class immediately in their outside lives. Anderson (1988) corroborates

this view, noting that "adult ESL/literacy learners have no time to waste. ... The learning facilitator, therefore, must be adept at working with the learner to quickly identify the key learning tasks" (p. 18). He strongly recommends the establishment of a learning contract right at the start, and suggests using real life experience to establish the immediate relevance and practicality of what is being learned. In establishing a learning contract from the beginning, teachers and learners enter into a partnership so that from the beginning, the learners have control over what they learn and how they learn it. As well, it provides a way for learners to work steadily towards their objectives and to assume responsibility for their own learning. In this way, learners find support for their own autonomy. He believes that the learning contract needs to be re-examined and renegotiated at regular intervals, focusing on questions such as: What content do I want to learn? What process will I use to learn it? How will I evaluate what I have learned? How will I be able to practice and retain it? He also cautions that the program should remain flexible, so that the learning contract becomes a tool for the learner, not an intractable set of principles that impedes or limits the learning process.

Once the relationship of the learner to the learning process has been established, the content can be developed. Anderson (1988) suggests a thematic approach starting with the reality of the learner, and broadening the themes by drawing upon the varying viewpoints of various learners to depict a contrasting

reality. The learners then see that they can use the structural elements of their language learning, such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling as vehicles to express and expand upon that experience and knowledge.

> Psychologically, the difficulty of these skills diminishes when they are perceived as merely the means of getting where one wants to go. The barrier that grammar and numeracy has represented for many is reduced, and the learning facilitator is still able to point to specific language and numeracy skills that are being developed. (Anderson, 1988, p. 23)

As the emphasis has shifted in ESL literacy programs from phonics and grammar to communicative competence and making meaning, the nature of the learner/teacher relationship has also shifted. Recognizing the autonomy of the learner and that they are the experts about their own lives, the teacher is now being seen as a facilitator of learning rather than an expert repository of knowledge. The learning environment supports a relational experience between the learner and the teacher. The mutuality implicit in this relationship is clearly made explicit through the learning contract, wherein the learner's goals and expectations are clearly laid out, as well as the program goals and expectations. In this learning model, the learner moves then from the periphery into the centre of the mutually acceptable learning process. Success then is individualized, and becomes dependent on the learners achieving their goals, in combination with the goals of the learning institution.

ESL Literacy - Barriers

Haverson and Haynes (1982) point out some of the barriers facing pre- and non-literate English-speaking adult learners. Many have never experienced a formal learning environment, and must be introduced to it. They have often been successful in their country of origin, but never or rarely in a formal classroom setting. They need the ability to focus on a topic for an uninterrupted period of time. They do not necessarily know automatically that pictures represent real objects. Since most of them have learned in the past through the use of objects rather than through abstractions, they need to learn that two-dimensional objects may be used to convey meaning. Working independently or in groups might be new concepts for these learners, as well as following directions. They may need to develop visual perception skills, and learn to follow left-to-right and top-to-bottom progression. Appropriate responses to gestures must be taught. They may need to learn fine motor skills in order to use a writing instrument. Their face and throat muscles may need to be developed in new ways in order to produce unfamiliar English sounds.

Bell and Burnaby (1984) raise the special needs of ESL literacy students as well. They may not have the skills of shape recognition and discrimination or the concept of sound-symbol correspondence. They might also be unaware of left-right orientation. They note that these learners might not even know what a word is. It is worth noting that ESL literacy teachers could use these barriers

to develop learning objectives for and with their ESL learners.

While recognizing that adults bring both experience and maturity to the learning encounter, Bell and Burnaby (1984) note the added difficulty ESL literacy students have of trying to learn literacy skills in a language over which they have no oral mastery.

The Ministry of Education (1987) put forward a long list of potential barriers for the adult learner. I believe that these barriers might apply to the ESL literacy learner as well. One barrier was the learner's level of motivation, including attitudes towards the new language and culture, the amount of encouragement they needed, and the degree of their desired proficiency. Another barrier focused on individual learning style differences, including the fear of making mistakes, risk-taking behaviours related to experimenting with the new language, aural or visual learning mode preferences, preferences for memorization and rote-learning strategies or for a problem-solving approach to language learning, and confidence or lack of confidence in learning situations. A third barrier related to the learner's previous learning experiences, including the cultural orientation towards education, similarity or difference between first and second languages and cultures, the degree or oral and written proficiency in the mother tongue, other languages previously learned, and the general level of education.

ESL literacy learners may also have a set of assumptions that impede

their learning. Bell (1991) clearly states that students bring assumptions about literacy with them, and that "the kind of literacy they will want to develop will be shaped by their earlier individual and societal experiences" (p. 331). They might expect a traditional instructor/student relationship, doing what they are told without question (Anderson, 1988). They might have a child-like view of language learning based on early childhood experiences of school: reading aloud alone or in groups, copying words from the blackboard, memorizing vocabulary, parsing sentences. Some may not have the fine motor skills needed to use a writing instrument (Alemayehu, 1990).

Another barrier often named with respect to the literacy learner is poor self-image. Anderson (1988) states that many ESL literacy learners come with such low levels of self-confidence and self-esteem that they are unable to articulate what they need or want to learn. Because they do not have the language skills needed for daily functioning in society, they are often marginalized. Bell and Burnaby (1984) believe that ESL literacy students in English-speaking countries who have never been exposed to print have a better self-image than that found in English-speaking illiterates. They note, however, that those who have had unsuccessful attempts at literacy in their first language will often have doubts about their ability to learn to read and write. As well, some adult students might not believe that the school is an appropriate place for someone their age.

Eliminating the use of children's books and the practice of talking down to the students will help with this problem, but the greatest aid to overcoming this barrier is supporting the learner's autonomy and responsibility for their own learning. Providing choices about the process and their involvement in it and determining their own content will also help. They caution ESL literacy teachers against simplifying the content in order to simplify the language. They recommend that teachers suggest rather than order, and that they allow students to see their teacher's vulnerability and fallibility by admitting mistakes honestly when they are wrong. This provides a powerful role model for students not to feel embarrassed or foolish when they make their own mistakes.

Other barriers for adult students might be their poor hearing or eyesight, and fatigue resulting from carrying a heavy work load and trying to study as well (Bell and Burnaby, 1984). Fatigue and stress related to irregular schedules, settlement problems and family responsibilities have also been named (Ministry of Education, 1987). Age or undiagnosed learning disabilities may make the learning difficult, requiring a lengthy period of study to acquire the necessary skills (Wrigley, 1992). Refugees may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of years of warfare at home, and students in the country illegally may constantly live in fear of being deported (Wrigley, 1992).

Cumming (1990) notes that most illiterates have probably learned to deal with issues in their lives without literacy skills which might include "many

sophisticated, complex strategies for making do without literacy, avoiding literate behaviours, or having others assist them" (p. 39). They may be unwilling to give up these strategies or relationships. For many people, another barrier is the close association that literacy has both to social institutions and to political attitudes in their country of origin. Their own view of themselves might not fit into this belief system.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the literature that deals with literacy and ESL literacy, and therefore to provide a theoretical context for this study. What seems clear in retrospect is that major shifts have occurred within the field since its emergence in the early 1970s.

Literacy work began as a grassroots movement over one hundred years ago. Various attempts were made to define literacy between the 1940s and 1960s, where the focus was on grade-level achievement, and where students were seen as marginalized and disadvantaged. Many illiterates came out of the Canadian school system, and many more emerged as a result of immigration to Canada during the first half of the century. Most immigrants during this period spoke Roman alphabetic languages, and their literacy issues were addressed through formal school-based or more informal community-based English as a Second Language classes. As immigration patterns began to shift in the 1970s and 1980, increasing numbers of immigrants came from third world countries.

It was evident that many of these immigrants chose to become literate in one of the two national languages, English or French. Many of them were already literate in their mother tongues, and second language teachers based their programs on the assumption that their students possessed this mother tongue literacy. How many of the immigrants to Canada were illiterate in their mother tongue has been very difficult to determine.

Since the early 1980s, dramatic changes have taken place in the field of literacy and ESL literacy. The definition of literacy has shifted from one of functionality based on grade-level achievement to one which focuses on the learner's ability to use the language skills they need in their community. As a result of the rapid advances in technology, there is now a recognition that there is a multiplicity of literacies, not just print literacy. The shift has been towards a holistic approach to literacy, encompassing all parts of the learner's life. The newer definition of ESL literacy spoken of above was not a part of mainstream second language teaching in the mid-70's. Through my own prior experience learning Hebrew, I held a strong belief that second language learning, and second language literacy in particular, was not just about learning to read at a prescribed grade level, but was integrally connected to full participation in the life of the community in which I lived. It was this connection that formed the basis for the research questions about ESL literacy which are the foundation of this research.

Other changes have since occurred. Literacy is now seen as a social phenomenon which is not just an individual experience, but one that is a part of the collective experience. An empowerment model has emerged in which the learner is at the centre of the literacy experience. The needs of the learners are taken into account in the development of literacy programs, and there is a growing focus on the relationship that exists between the teacher and the learner. Choice, mutuality, self-responsibility, meaning, communication, relationship are the keystones of this new approach to literacy. As well, teachers are now being encouraged to examine their own biases as potential barriers in the learning experience, and to become more reflective and self-aware. They are also being encouraged to engage in specialized training related to literacy.

At the time this study was undertaken, illiterate students were seen as marginalized or disadvantaged. In the early 1970s, language teachers focused on phonics, grammar, and the alphabet. They also focused on teaching their students civics. Many of these efforts were directed toward preparing their students for citizenship. There were curricula developed and the needs of the students were secondary to the needs of the programs. A shift took place in the early 1970s with the introduction of the audio-lingual method of instruction with its de-emphasis on print literacy, and a shift toward developing language skills that could serve the students more effectively in their daily lives. These

issues will be address further in the next chapter which examines the historical context in which this study took place. What is important to note here is that teachers were still seen as the experts, and the clients did not have much of a say in what happened in their language classes.

This study set out to examine perceptions of language learning needs. Two sets of perceptions were elicited from the respondents: teachers' perceptions of their students' needs, and the students' perceptions of their own needs. There were and have since been other studies examining the language learning needs of students in literacy and ESL literacy programs. What is significant about this study is that it is one of the first studies designed to examine the language learning needs of students who were illiterate in their own language who had to become literate in a second language. Although this population has been mentioned briefly in the literature, there have been relatively few studies done either then or since with this focus.

The next chapter sets out the context in which the research was devised. It will provide an overview of developments that have taken place over the past twenty years, with a specific emphasis on government policy and changing views of immigrants and immigrant language acquisition, and will provide a background which explains the areas of focus and the parameters of this current study.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

In order to better understand this research, it seems important to examine the context in which the study was undertaken in the mid-1970s, and to outline some of the changes that have taken place in the intervening twenty years. This chapter, therefore, focuses on three areas: immigration, illiteracy and immigrant language acquisition. The chapter begins with a brief overview of immigration trends in Canada during the first seventy years of this century, followed by a summary of some of the perceptions of immigrant needs by social service workers and teachers. It then moves to a discussion of functional illiteracy in Canada. This section looks at the surprise that many Canadians felt in the early 1970s when they realized that illiteracy did in fact exist in this country. It continues with a review of adult basic education concepts, educators' perceptions of illiterates and literacy programs in Canada. The section ends with a brief statement about ESL literacy in the 1990s. The third section of the chapter focuses on immigrant language acquisition by focusing on ESL in the 1970s, and ending with a brief statement about ESL in the 1980s and '90s. The chapter is not chronological, although each of the three sections of the chapter are sequential in themselves.

Immigration to Canada

Mass immigration to Canada began in the late 1890s, fostered by the Canadian government's first official and concentrated policy to promote it. Attracted by gold in the Yukon and by the land in the Canadian West made accessible by the completion of the railroad, thousands of people entered Canada (Corbett, 1957, p. 6). Between the censuses of 1901 and 1931, there was an increase of over 1.3 million immigrants whose origins were neither British nor French (Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1970, p. 24).

With the onset of the depression of the 1930s, immigration dropped considerably, as the Canadian government issued orders-in-council to restrict immigration of

> all but British and American subjects able to support themselves, and to immediate dependents of earlier immigrants and farmers with sufficient capital to support themselves. (Borrie, 1959, p. 55)

Not until the end of World War II did Canada reassess its stand on immigration. In May, 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King announced the aims of Canada's post-war immigration policy (Corbett, 1957, p. 1):

> The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek by legislation, regulation, and vigorous administration to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can be advantageously absorbed in our national economy.

Prosperity and full employment had returned, and with it, a renewed immigration policy which accounted for the admission of approximately two-and-a-half million immigrants between 1946 and 1965. The economic climate was good and employment was high. Unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants were still needed.

Ferguson (1966, pp. 7-8) capsulized the history of the unskilled immigrant to Canada:

> Canada has always imported uneducated, unskilled labourers who have usually remained uneducated and unskilled all their lives. During the country's early development they were on the front lines, building railways, canals and highways, in mines and lumber camps, and on farms, but now that Canada's expansion is concentrated in the urban areas, the majority of them come to the cities. They are on the construction gangs, building new houses, apartment blocks, office buildings, shopping plazas, streets and sewers. They man the factories, and provide staff for restaurants. They do the service jobs in hotels and hospitals. The employment situation is good and most of them seem to be needed.

It is difficult to determine how many of the more than three million post-war immigrants to Canada had less than elementary school education in their country of origin, as the educational level of prospective immigrants was not of great concern to the federal government during that period, with the result that the method of recording educational levels did not allow for easy or meaningful tabulation (MacKenzie and Reimers, 1971). However, Kalbach (1970) suggested that the majority of the immigrants with less than grade 8 education appeared to be coming from southern European countries, particularly Italy,

Portugal and Greece. In Toronto alone, it was estimated that there were approximately 250,000 adult immigrants from Greece, Portugal and Italy who had less than an elementary education (MacKenzie & Reimers, 1971). The majority arrived in Canada during the two decades following World War II.

Between 1966 and 1973, there was a continuous decline in the skill level of immigrants arriving in Canada, the percentage of unskilled immigrants rising from 10% in 1966 to 13% in 1973 (Richmond, 1975). The amnesty of 1972, in which thousands of visitors and illegal immigrants were granted "landed immigrant" status without undergoing the regular assessment procedures, might account for this rise; however, it was not the purpose of this study to examine the "hows and whys" that accounted for the immigration of the unskilled and the uneducated. They were here, an invisible, heretofore unrecognized community in the labour market.

Immigrant Needs

In the late 1960s in response to a growing interest in the issues examined by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1970), the assessment of immigrant needs became an important activity for Toronto's social service agencies and educational institutions.

One of the issues of relevance to this study was the large number of sponsored immigrants who had entered Canada during the preceding decade. In

its survey of other needs and resources of immigrants in Metropolitan Toronto (1970), the Social Planning Council found that the majority of sponsored immigrants had been drawn from southern Europe, and had most often been persons of relatively little skill or education in their country of origin. Kalbach (1970) supported this finding, stating that the largest proportion of immigrants with less than grade 8 education appeared to have come from Italy, Portugal and Greece. Furthermore, the majority of these immigrants tended to come from the rural areas of southern Europe, and, upon arrival in Canada, settled in large urban communities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (MacKenzie & Reimers, 1971).

One might question why the skill level, educational level and place of origin were considered to be issues of importance to Canadian educators.

Borrie (1959) suggested that in order to become fully integrated into Canadian society, and, as well, to assume the responsibilities and privileges of Canadian citizenship, the new immigrant required a knowledge of one of the two official Canadian languages, together with a knowledge of Canadian customs, social systems, history and geography. Knowledge in these areas are the two requirements of the Canadian Citizenship Act.

For the educated, professional or skilled immigrants, literate in their native language, this knowledge could be acquired in a relatively short span of time, with the exception of competence in the language. A 1970 survey found

that it took professional immigrants between 3 and 6 years to think in English, express themselves spontaneously orally and in writing, and to feel at ease in the company of native English speakers (Social Planning Council, 1970).

For all immigrants, there are some basic and inevitable stresses in the process of integration. There are obvious problems, such as trying to communicate with native speakers of English (or French) if one's mother tongue is different, finding and keeping a job and a place to live, and learning how to use the services available. However, simple things which native urban dwellers take for granted can be frightening to a newcomer from a rural background. The system of public transportation, telephones, the monetary system, credit buying, arranging loans, banking -- all of these and more can create great anxiety in the newcomer, and have not changed greatly over time.

Another factor affecting the easy adaptation of the majority of southern European immigrants from rural backgrounds was that they tended to be males who came to Canada alone, and, once established, sent for their wives and/or families later. Many volunteer organizations working with immigrants felt that family relationships were put under severe strain by this period of separation, and that every effort needed to be made to foster the immigration of the family unit (Ferguson, 1964).

However, family immigration may have affected the acquisition of the new language. Although it provided an incentive to the breadwinner to achieve

economic success, it also provided a strong centre in which the language, customs and traditions of the country of origin might have been retained. Women immigrants, particularly homemakers, were thought to have a tendency to hold to the language of origin and to encourage its use in the home (Borrie, 1959). Not only were the language and traditions maintained, but family immigration tended to provide an incentive towards the immigration of the wider kinship groups, and chains of immigration were established from one locality in the country of origin to one particular area of the country of settlement (Borrie, 1959). In Toronto, for example, newcomers, particularly those from less complex agrarian societies, found themselves thrown into the complex life of a highly industrialized modern city. They often settled in a district where they could feel at home, where their language was spoken around them, where they could buy in shops run by their countrymen. Traditions persisted, and the tendency towards intermarriage with native Canadians or other newcomers of a different ethnic background was very limited, particularly in the first generation. Family ties remained strong, and familial obligations persisted. These people tended to try and transplant their village life, as it existed, into the new community where they tried to live as they had always lived (Borrie, 1959; Ferguson, 1964).

The conflict between the old and new cultures was often the cause of great dissension in immigrant families. Because immigrant children usually

became better educated than their parents, and particularly because they usually learned the language more quickly and more easily, they moved with a much greater freedom within the new community. Their parents were likely to be patriarchal in their attitudes, and to exercise stern control over their children. They were often against their children associating with Canadian children who, in their estimation, were bold and disrespectful to their elders. However, these parents often had to depend upon their children as interpreters for such things as visits to the doctor, lawyer or employment agency. This often resulted in a shift of power and authority within the family structure. The parents were often torn between their dependency on their children and their strong desires to play out the traditional parental roles according to the familiar patterns of the former society (Ferguson, 1964).

Overcrowded living conditions due to economic factors could also put undue stress on the family structure. For many rural people, used to having their own home, however small, with only the extended family around them, it seemed unnatural to be sharing their home with strangers.

Many Canadians continue to find fault with immigrants for living in colonies. They feel that their integration and acquisition of the language would be greatly accelerated if they scattered throughout the community among Canadians. However, since a major portion of the metropolitan area of Toronto is composed of immigrants, and since the cost of living in many areas

of Toronto is prohibitive even for native Canadians, the possibilities that many immigrants have of living in a "Canadian community", whatever that might be, are limited.

The rural background of most illiterate immigrants and a lack of facility in the language also contributed to what the Social Planning Council (1970) described as the "communication gap" and the "information gap". They were seen as two of the most serious problems facing rural immigrants in their attempt to adapt themselves to life in a modern urban community.

The "communication gap" was described as "the inability of non-English speaking immigrants to communicate effectively with native English speakers" (Social Planning Council, 1970, p. 69). It was seen as, and continues to be, one of the major problems in their obtaining employment, housing, social, health and other essential services. The gap is also widened by the apprehension with which most rural immigrants approach large institutions to seek help until they are forced into it by a crisis situation (Social Planning Council, 1970). While reticence and feelings of inadequacy on the part of rural immigrants contribute to their apprehension on the one hand, the situation is further complicated on the other because "it is difficult for Canadians brought up in an urban society to understand the shyness and the feeling of inferiority with which they [the immigrants] approach even a minor clerk" (Ferguson, 1964, p. 100).

Although a truism, it is clear that, in order to communicate effectively, the participants must have something to communicate, as meaningful communication presupposes not only a common language, but a knowledge of each other's background and culture as well. In order, then, for rural immigrants to communicate effectively in a new urban situation, they must have information.

Among the information areas considered by the Social Planning Council (1970) as critical for effective functioning in an urban Canadian setting, not only for immigrants, but also for the Canadian-born, the following were deemed essential: unemployment insurance, workmen's (now workers') compensation, family allowance, old age pensions, hospital insurance, public assistance, employment applications, wage laws, legal aid (eliminated by legislation in Ontario in 1996), human rights, the school system, the apprenticeship system, language classes, citizenship, income tax, property tax, marriage laws, mortgages, credit buying, zoning regulations, driving licenses, and traffic regulations.

Without a solid information base, the illiterate immigrant is often subject to severe exploitation. MacKenzie and Reimers (1971, p. 34) cited two examples:

> The most noticeable difficulties arise when there are official documents to fill in ... Only in the larger cities are interpreters available in public offices ... Unaware that such services exist, an

> illiterate immigrant may take a form or letter to a commercial office ... and there pay anything from $2.00 to $10.00 or more to have someone read and explain to him the official mail he does not understand.
>
> During the recent census (1971), which relied on self-reports rather than interviews, many immigrants paid at least $5.00 for help in filling in the report forms, unaware that the Government was providing free translation services.

Assessing the needs of immigrants is a difficult task. The Social Planning Council surveyed voluntary agencies, ethnic organizations, and school personnel to determine what they considered to be the major problems of immigrants to Canada.

The greatest problems of immigrants, as reported by these voluntary agencies were, in descending order of importance, housing, followed by general information, counselling, recreation, employment, finance, adjustment and orientation, legal advice, and medical assistance (Social Planning Council, 1970). It is curious to note that "language" per se was not mentioned.

When the ethnic agencies reported, language and employment were considered the greatest problem areas. These were followed, in order, by a lack of understanding of the Canadian way of life, housing, adjustment and orientation, general information, finance, medical and legal assistance (Social Planning Council, 1970).

School personnel stated that the major immigrant problems were low pay for hard work, language, educational handicaps, breaking away from the

"old life style" and the adjustment from rural to urban living (Social Planning Council, 1970).

Immigrant groups were not asked what they considered the major problems facing the immigrant!

In sum, language learning in the 1960s and '70s was directed to helping the immigrant become integrated into Canadian society and to become good, well-informed citizens. However, many educators and social service workers recognized the other psycho-social pressures that new immigrants to a country might experience: stress, finding a job and a place to live, loneliness and isolation when separated from family members, conflict between the old and the new cultures, not knowing how to communicate and not having adequate information to meet your daily needs. What was typical of the time was that the experts were asked for their opinions, but the opinions of the immigrants themselves were never taken into account.

Functional Illiteracy in Canada

Canada's Surprising Statistics

In 1956, a Canadian delegation was sent to the UNESCO Conference on the Cultural Integration of Immigrants in Havana. At the seminar on literacy among the immigrant and non-immigrant populations in Canada, the delegation reported that the problem of illiteracy did not exist in Canada (Borrie, 1959).

Kidd (1967) also noted that there existed in Canada a myth that literacy was not a problem in Canada, nor did most Canadians understand the seriousness of the problem of the 'under-educated' in this country. It was assumed that in a country in which compulsory school laws had existed for so many years, there should be few men and women who did not acquire at least 8 years of schooling, the minimum standard set for functional literacy in Canada by the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

Although educational levels were recorded in the Canadian census, they were not recorded in a way which allowed for easy analysis in light of the grade 8 minimum; however, the 1971 Census did provide the following educational information. Of the population not in attendance at school, both native-born Canadians and immigrants, 1,425,970 had less than a grade 5 education, and 4,102,160 had between 5 and 8 grades of education. If the grade 8 minimum is applied to these statistics, there were 5,528,130 "functionally illiterate" people in Canada in 1971.

It was difficult to state accurately how many immigrants in Canada were "functionally illiterate" in their native language; however, by examining historically the changes in Canada's immigration policy, it became clear that the numbers were sufficiently high to warrant in-depth investigation.

In 1972, Ian Morrison, the president of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), noted a major discrepancy between Canada's

standard of living and its standard of education:

> Canada enjoys a standard of living surpassed by only two other countries in the world. Our level of education, however, is ninth in the world. In an age of rapid technological change, the gap between national wealth and human investment points to a crisis for all Canadians: Canada is an undereducated country. (Morrison, 1972, p. 131)

In the early 70s, "under-education" in Canada and in most Western technological societies was one term used to refer to what later would become known as "functional illiteracy". It also became associated in Canada with Adult Basic Education (ABE).

That the issue of adult illiteracy in Canada had not been of major concern to educationists until a few years earlier was underscored by the newsletter of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, Interim. The headline of the fall issue (1968) read: "Five Million Illiterates in Canada!" Red-faced, angry, concerned, incredulous, the CAAE devoted the entire issue to Adult Basic Education in Canada.

> We are disturbed by pricklings of the conscience or make a display of anger because our responsible, interdependent society is allowing men and women to run around with practically nothing in their heads -- with hardly a loin-cloth to cover their educational nakedness. (CAAE, Interim, 1968, 5(1).)

Adult Basic Education

Since this study deals with the development of literacy skills, and since the term "functional literacy" was replaced in Canada for a while by the term "Adult Basic Education" (ABE), the literature in this area was reviewed. Whereas one of its primary concerns was the development of literacy skills among native speakers of the language, the literature on ABE was also considered useful in an initial examination of the development of literacy skills among immigrants, non-native speakers of the language.

Following the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, held in Teheran in 1965, the concept of "functional literacy" became internationally accepted. The Congress exhorted each nation to examine its population needs, and develop individual functional literacy programs designed to meet those needs, basing its recommendations on a two-fold principle outlined by Kidd (1972, p. 98). First, it was considered crucial that any program of adult literacy had to be "closely linked to economic and social priorities, and to present and future manpower needs." Second, the goal of any adult literacy program was seen to be "to achieve these specific socio-economic objectives by making men and women receptive to change and innovation, and by helping them to acquire new skills and attitudes."

In implementing this principle, Canada replaced the term "functional literacy" with "Adult Basic Education", and developed ABE programs that were

designed to provide sufficient upgrading to undereducated adults to allow them to enter industrial training, apprenticeship and occupational-training programs (Morrison, 1972, p. 131). Canada has since returned to the use of "literacy", and has added "ESL literacy" as well.

As ABE programs developed, so did the body of research literature on ABE. Two subsections of this literature had relevance to this study: first, the relationship between legislated government policy as it applied to ABE and manpower retraining programs, and the possibilities that the functionally illiterate Canadian had to benefit from these programs; and second, the basic characteristics of ABE students that contributed to their success or failure in such programs.

Based on the high employment levels and the upwardly spiralling economy of the late 1950s and early 1960s, manpower projections anticipated an increase in the demand for skilled workers. As a result, the federal government established extensive manpower retraining programs in the early 1960s. These programs were run by provincial departments of education, but were under the jurisdiction of the Department of Manpower and Immigration. Without a recommendation from this Department, no one could enroll in a retraining course (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1972). This department was later called Employment and Immigration, and has since been split into two departments: Human Resources Development, and Immigration

and Citizenship.

With the legislation of the Adult Occupational Training Act (1967) which provided for no more than 52 weeks of instruction in any one subject area, the possibilities for enrollment in a retraining program became limited to only those people who required one year or less to attain the prerequisite grade ten level (Morrison, 1972). The "52-week clause" had far-reaching effects for the illiterate Canadian. Webb (1972, p. 19) suggested that illiterates were screened out of manpower retraining programs, not because they did not have a need for further education, but for economic reasons. As there had been no concerted effort to provide educational programs for sub-literates, those, according to Webb, who had less than grade 4 schooling, no one was certain "that the extra time, effort and expense ... would be economically worthwhile." Brooke (1973, pp. 12-13) was in accord, stating that "only those trainees are admitted who can be brought to the employable level, or to a level at which they can benefit from an occupational skill course." In effect, the complete illiterate or those with less than four years of formal schooling were excluded. Clague (1972) put the minimum level of eligibility even higher, based on the fact that most occupations in the trades required at least a grade 10 minimum. As the BTSD program (Basic Training for Skill Development) could only raise the educational level by approximately three grades in the one-year period, Clague asserted that anyone with less than a grade 7 education would, in effect, not be

eligible for training. In short, the undereducated simply needed more time than the "52-week" legislation permitted.

A second policy requirement which restricted the entry of the illiterate into manpower retraining programs was that the applicant was required to state a specific vocational goal. Those individuals whose occupational experience was limited to unskilled or even semi-skilled labour would rarely be in a position to state a vocational goal with any degree of certainty, nor would they likely be aware of their own learning potential, interests or skills. Rather than being assisted to set realistic goals for themselves, they were expected to come to a program having made firm decisions about their own goals and expectations (Clague, 1972).

What is significant about the ABE literature is that the programs were driven by the economic vision of the federal government. With programs which were time-limited and restricted in access to those who could state a specific vocational goal, the unskilled or semi-skilled illiterate immigrant did not have a hope of benefiting from the programs that were in existence at the time.

Educators' Perceptions of Illiterates

The ABE literature of the mid-1970s suggested that one factor that might have had a bearing on the illiterate's successful participation in ABE classes was the very nature of the student population enrolled. Although referring to

native Canadians rather than to immigrants, ABE teachers observed that there were some basic behaviours and attitudes that were common among illiterate students. I considered these perceptions as a useful starting point for this study's examination of the illiterate immigrant's participation in the language-learning activity.

Boyd (1969) described teachers' perceptions of the initial behaviours of adult illiterates. They often arrived late for class. They tended to be evasive, to procrastinate, and to give up easily when facing a new learning task. Teachers also described the illiterate as timid, unaggressive, generally apprehensive, and exhibiting a fear of society. Hand and Puder (no date cited) described the adult illiterate as feeling victimized and manipulated by external forces, hostile to authority, experiencing feelings of shyness in regard to reading, and rejecting the desire to develop intellectually. Cass (1956) listed characteristics of extreme sensitivity, diffidence, feelings of frustration and futility, resistance to knowledge, inhibited social interactions, and mental blocks against the world.

Not only did ABE teachers perceive commonalities in the behaviours and attitudes of illiterates, but also in the areas relating to linguistic ability and abstract conceptualization.

Educators at the time believed that most literacy students needed to improve their skill in oral expression (Waite, 1973). Although most had

learned to use verbal symbols and simple numerical symbols, their learning was both less and different from that of the more highly educated. Davison (1972, p. 162) suggested that as the majority of illiterate adults were culturally deprived, having been isolated from the mainstream of society for many years, "their innate learning ability has been depressed, ... and they have not been taught the various thinking skills." Upon entering an ABE class, teachers believed that the student had to rekindle old learning habits or develop new ones, having had little formal learning in the past, and, more often than not, having had a negative and unsuccessful educational experience as a younger student (Clague, 1972; Davison, 1972). It is clear that descriptions of this type in the 1990s are not only not politically correct, but are inconsistent with the shifts that have taken place about the nature of the adult learner described in the previous chapter.

Boyd (1969) expressed the commonly held belief at the time that many, if not all illiterates were incapable of linking written symbols with the concrete objects they represented, and that they were basically incapable of abstract thought. The illiterate was seen to live in a world in which verbal symbols alone, that is, the spoken word, were used to represent concrete objects in the "real" world. As literacy skills developed, the verbal symbol was gradually associated with a printed or written symbol that was an abstract representation of the concrete object, and was less visually related to the object which it

represents. Boyd suggested that this facet of learning a language was directly related to illiteracy for some people.

Rather than focusing on their inability to connect the concrete and the abstract, Davison (1972) by contrast began a thinking shift away from the notion of the illiterate as marginalized and disadvantaged, and began to recognize that the students world view and their view of themselves was significant. He suggested the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the student as critical to a student's success. He noted that, although difficult to measure, there appeared to be four basic factors which contributed to an illiterate's success in an ABE class. First, the teacher had to become aware of how the students in the class perceived themselves. Second, the teacher had to be able to identify the goals which were responsible for bringing the student to class. Third, everything that was done in the class had to be directed to achieving those goals as soon as possible, so that the students became aware that they could indeed learn. The fourth, and most important factor which determined student success in the ABE class, was the teacher's genuine enthusiasm for other subject matter being taught. If the teacher regarded the material as important and useful, students appeared to learn.

Although Davison had the awareness that the role of the teacher as expert had to shift to a more learner-centred approach, it was not until the mid-1980s that a clear shift took place in this regard, as discussed in the last

chapter.

Literacy Programs in Canada

In the early 1970s, two federal programs focused on literacy. The Basic Literacy for Adult Development program (BLADE) and the Basic Training for Skills Development program (BTSD) provided upgrading for people with reading and writing skills below a high school level. By 1977, basic education became the responsibility of the provinces; however, the federal government remained involved in manpower retraining programs. In 1984, a federal government task force on manpower retraining recommended a federal-provincial conference to develop an action plan to address adult illiteracy in Canada. It also recommended a public advocacy campaign to combat adult illiteracy, and the start-up of a work program to develop teaching materials for volunteer literacy tutors. Three-and-a-half years later, no action had been taken on any of these proposals (Calamai, 1987).

In the Speech from the Throne in October, 1986, the federal government committed "to work with the provinces, the private sector, and voluntary organizations to develop resources to ensure that Canadians have access to the literacy skills that are prerequisites for participation in our advanced economy" (Atkinson, 1988, p.2). At that time there was an expressed interest by the Department of the Secretary of State in developing a national policy for adult

literacy in Canada, and in 1987, the National Literacy Secretariat was established. Now under the jurisdiction of Human Resources Development Canada, it does not provide funding for direct service, but does fund literacy research, promotion and coordination.

On International Literacy Day in 1988, then-Prime Minister Mulroney announced his government's intention to invest $110 million in the following five years "to combat illiteracy", naming that "the time is long since past when government can sit on the sidelines and leave the issue of illiteracy to the efforts of the voluntary sector" (Velis, 1990, p. 19).

Although the federal government is involved in literacy activities through the National Literacy Secretariat and through Human Resources Development Canada, primary responsibility for education in Canada rests with the provincial and territorial governments (Movement for Canadian Literacy, 1991). In 1986, the government of the province of Ontario adopted a Plan for Adult Basic Literacy, a plan designed to increase the quantity, variety, information base and funding resources of provincial literacy programs, and to expand on the existing literacy networks that had been established in the province.

In 1987, responsibility for literacy in Ontario began to shift from the Ministry of Education to ministries which were more concerned with skills necessary for employment (Atkinson, 1988). The onus fell primarily on three: administration of the overall government initiative and the new Ontario

Community Literacy program became the responsibility of the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture; literacy activities geared to vocational training to be provided through community colleges became the responsibility of the Ministry of Skills Development; and, basic and presecondary programs were to be provided through school boards under the direction of the Ministry of Education (Wagner, 1990). In 1987, Literacy Ontario was launched by the provincial government with monies provided for the production of promotional materials, public awareness seminars, and national and international literacy conferences (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988).

Cumming (1989) noted that there were two agencies dedicated to literacy issues:

> The Ontario Literacy Coalition provides information and resource support to literacy programs across Ontario and links with fourteen regional literacy networks in the province. Alpha Ontario is a literacy and language training resource centre serving the province in English and French and is linked into the National Adult Literacy Database. (p. 226)

The Ministry of Education and Training funded a substantial number of literacy programs: Ontario Basic Skills, Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace, Ontario Community Literacy, Literacy Field Development and Support, Adult Basic Literacy and Numeracy, Adult Basic Literacy, and Futures programs.

Thomas (1991) summarized some of these programs in Towards an adult literacy policy for Ontario - a discussion paper. The Ontario Community

Literacy program is delivered by community agencies and has as its objective the provision of adult basic literacy and numeracy to Ontario residents who speak one of the official languages, natives, learners with disabilities and other target groups. The Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy programs offered by school boards provide training up to Grade 8 competency for learners who speak English or French. The Adult Basic Literacy program is offered through the Independent Learning Centre and provides literacy/numeracy training to adult 16 years of age or older who are Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, or to Ontario residents who hold work visas, diplomatic visas or ministerial permits. The program is a correspondence course with additional professional services provided by telephone.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities (no longer in existence) provided partial funding to community colleges for full- or part-time students by purchasing language-training seats at the colleges, or other private institutions. Colleges of applied arts and technology (CAATs) offered full- and part-time classes year-round which focused on core, academic, and vocational preparation. Students paid a fee for CAAT programs unless they were federally or provincially sponsored. Other non-governmental, non-profit groups, organizations and community agencies also provided a wide range of ESL/FSL classes, such as parent and preschool programs, bilingual classes, tutoring in the home or by telephone, as well as citizenship classes.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities also funded other courses with an ESL/FSL component through programs like Ontario Basic Skills. In conjunction with the Ministry of Correctional Services, this Ministry also funded basic literacy education in young offender detention centres, jails and correctional centres. With Immigration Canada, it funded basic training and skill development programs, and basic job readiness training programs, as well as vocational preparatory training programs. It also funded preparatory programs for special population groups, such as students with learning disabilities, deaf and hearing-impaired students, Native peoples, Francophones and women. It is clear that, if native English-speaking illiterates were excluded from participation in retraining programs, the possibilities open to an illiterate immigrant who did not speak English were extremely limited.

By the end of 1990, 800 literacy programs were in place in Ontario, offered by both government and non-government agencies. By 1992, literacy education had a $70-million provincial budget. Aware that ongoing evaluation and outcome data describing the efficacy of these programs were missing, the Ministry of Education initiated the Adult Literacy Policy and Evaluation Project. Working in consultation with the literacy community, the project has been developing guidelines, policies and principles for both program development and evaluation (Ministry of Education, 1991).

To review, both the federal and the provincial governments involved

themselves in literacy education in Canada; however, many of the programs were vocationally driven, and for the most part, were designed for speakers of one or the other of the two official languages. Access to these programs was very difficult for those who were immigrants who did not speak either English or French, as well as for those who were also illiterate in their first language.

ESL Literacy

There is a continuing debate over where ESL literacy belongs in the education system.

In the mid-'80s, the Federal government responded to language program needs of immigrants. The Department of the Secretary of State funded provincial citizenship and language training through a federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement.

Cumming (1989) noted that at the federal level, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) funded and delivered ESL programing:

> It delivers the Labour Market Entry Language Training Program by purchasing ESL/FSL student places for eligible immigrants from the colleges of applied arts and technology; (2) it directly funds private language schools to offer ESL/FSL courses; and (3) through the Settlement Language Training Program (SLTP), it funds voluntary community organizations to offer language training. (p. 227)

The CEIC offered national-language training to new permanent residents who could not work at their own or other occupations due to their lack of knowledge

of English or French. Canada Employment Centre officers determined which newcomers would be eligible to receive language-training support. For immigrants to receive language training under CEIC-sponsored programs, they had to be "employment destined". Training allowances were given to participants in CEIC programs; however, "the basic training allowance is not available to persons who enter Canada as immigrants in the family class or the assisted relative class" (Cumming, 1989, p. 228). He noted:

> It is estimated that more than 91,000 immigrants entering Canada between 1979 and 1984 had no capability in an official language, and did not receive CEIC-sponsored language training. Of the more than 30,000 immigrants to Ontario in 1988 who spoke neither English nor French, less than one-third received any CEIC-sponsored language training.

It is impossible to know how many of these people were illiterate in their native language.

What continues to happen in Canada in the 1990s is that the language learning needs of immigrants who do not speak either of the Canadian official languages and who are illiterate in their first language are seen as ESL issues, not literacy issues. The statistics quoted earlier in this study show us that the numbers of immigrants who speak neither of the official languages is growing. As immigration shifts more towards the Third World countries, we can only expect that increasing numbers of the immigrants to Canada will not be literate in their first language.

Immigrant Language Acquisition

ESL in the 1970s

Following housing and employment, one of the most immediate difficulties faced by a new immigrant has been language acquisition. For the educated immigrant, literate in his native language, acquiring the new language is a long and often arduous process (Social Planning Council, 1970):

> The difficulty of learning the language and the time required is often underestimated, especially by those who never had to learn one. A study of immigrant professionals, most of whom knew some English on arrival, showed that it took them about three years to speak it well. But it took five to six years to think in English, to express themselves spontaneously, and most important of all for this group, to express their ideas in writing and to feel at ease in social situations. (p. 7)

Describing the plight of the adult immigrant with less than five years of formal schooling, Ferguson (1966) suggested that it would take at least 3 to 4 years of part-time language instruction before an illiterate adult immigrant could attend a class of any other kind with an English-speaking instructor. "Part-time language instruction" in this case, meant going to school two nights a week for six months, approximately 80 instruction hours per year. These part-time ESL classes, sponsored by the local boards of education, were the most common kind of language classes offered to New Canadian adults in Ontario. Courses were also sponsored under the federal Manpower Retraining Program, by the Citizenship Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, by voluntary and

social service agencies such as the YMCA, and by church groups.

Language classes offered by the federal Manpower Retraining Program lasted six months, five days a week, six hours a day. Students who met the eligibility criteria were provided with a subsidy, their admissibility having been determined by the Manpower counsellors on the basis of the following criteria (Government of Ontario, 1967, p. 2):

1. They had to be adults, 17 years of age or older;
2. They had to be landed immigrants or Canadian citizens;
3. They had to have a "good prospect of their earnings being substantially increased" as a result of studying English; and,
4. They had to be able to benefit from a basic level course in English.

How many illiterate or semi-illiterate immigrants enrolled in these programs is difficult to assess, as no certification or proof of previous grade level achieved was required. However, it is clear that the 24-week course could not have provided more than a very basic knowledge of English to the beginner, particularly to those who had not previously developed the fine motor skills necessary for writing.

Board of education courses were offered two nights a week, two hours a night, for a period of 6 to 8 months, depending on enrollment. Classes usually began in mid-September. An ESL class that had less than 15 students at the end

of the 6-month period was ordinarily terminated. A class with an enrollment of 15 or more was usually granted a 6- to 8-week extension.

Classes were usually divided into 3 categories -- beginners, intermediate and advanced -- and students were placed in their respective classes on the basis of an assessment given on the night following registration, a "test" of proficiency in English constructed by the ESL teachers. Ordinarily, new students with no literacy skills were placed in the "beginner" class; however, student turnover was high, the illiterate being one of the first to drop out of the course.

Attending night school carried with it its own unique difficulties. Men who had spent a long day at hard physical labour often found it impossible to concentrate on language classes in the evening. Many arrived home too late to attend English classes. Many immigrant women were and are traditionally prevented from going out in the evening.

As well, the audio-lingual method employed by most second-language teachers at the time emphasized speaking and comprehension, the first two skills acquired when learning a new language. The majority of students who studied full-time for six months "graduated" as reasonably fluent speakers of the language, able to understand and make themselves understood. It is doubtful that these same students would have been considered literate in the language, able to read and write with native proficiency, in that reading and

writing a new language are the most difficult skills to acquire.

Students of a new language who are literate in their native language appear to have a decided advantage over the illiterate (MacKenzie and Reimers, 1971).

> The audio-lingual approach limits the amount of time spent on reading and writing, so in some ways, the illiterate immigrant, not dependent on printed materials, has an advantage. However, many teachers have observed that those students who study at home 'from books' and who are able to take notes, ultimately do better. (p. 39)

The illiterate adult student of English as a Second Language appeared to have specialized learning and information needs which theretofore had not been specifically examined in great depth by researchers in the adult education field. The literature review in Chapter II explored how the literacy and ESL literacy fields have responded to these needs since the 1970s. However, at the time, the language learning needs of this population were not being addressed on a wide-scale basis. It was this research gap that this study set out to examine.

ESL in the '80s and '90s

In the 1980s, the Ontario government provided national-language programs. The Ministry of Education provided both money and policy support to provincial school boards which offered citizenship and ESL/FSL language instruction for adults which were offered free of charge to participants if they

were funded under continuing education grants. Teachers who successfully completed courses in the teaching of ESL/FSL at a faculty of education were also accredited by the ministry.

The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, through its Newcomer Language Orientation Classes (NLOC) Grants Program, provided money to voluntary organizations for the co-ordination, administration, and outreach activities of community-based programs, as well as for preschool classes adjoining adult classes. It also produced textbooks, periodicals, and teacher-training materials, maintained a resource centre of classroom and professional materials for all Ontario teachers, and provided training for instructors and volunteers in NLOC programs. It no longer provides ESL programing.

Other agencies also provided national-language programs directly to the public. Many school boards offered day and evening credit and non-credit courses free of charge to Ontario residents but funded by Ministry of Education dollars. Some boards also offered full-day ESL/FSL adult programs year-round. Universities also offered classes through their continuing education department both for continuing education students and for regular university students. Several Faculties of Education also offered ESL/FSL teacher training leading to Ministry of Education certification.

In 1986, a unique federal pilot language training program for immigrant women was begun by the Settlement Branch of Employment and Immigration

Canada. It involved part-time training programs for women who were not preparing for employment. No training allowances were paid. What is significant about this program, eventually known as the Settlement Language Program, is that it was truly community-based and reached large numbers of learners previously excluded from language-training programs.

Since 1990, the LINC program (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) has provided much of the ESL language training in Canada. Potential LINC students are assessed, and their language skills are compared with standardized levels of proficiency, including ESL literacy. They are then assigned to classes consistent with their current language facility. An exclusion policy wherein refugees and immigrants who have become citizens cannot participate in the LINC program as well as a time limit on the length of time a student can participate in the program continue to be barriers for large numbers of immigrants, and particularly for those who are illiterate in their first language.

Summary

When this research was begun, Canada was enjoying a time of great prosperity. Large numbers of well-educated immigrants were being welcomed to this country. The government was focusing its language-teaching strategies on the well-educated newcomers who were filling the ESL classes. Immigrants

were being prepared to become good citizens and to take up responsible skilled jobs in the major cities and towns.

There were, however, increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees coming to Canada. Many did not speak either of the official languages, and many were not literate in their own first language. Their language learning needs were not being met by the ESL system, and they did not fit into the literacy training programs that were also being developed to provide language instruction primarily for English and French speaking Canadians.

The problem continues to this day. Despite the fact that there are increased numbers of ESL and ESL literacy programs, they are not primarily geared to address the needs of those growing numbers of students who are illiterate in their first language.

What follows in the subsequent chapters is a presentation of the information gathered about one such group of students, Italian adult students of English as a Second Languages who were illiterate in Italian, and who found themselves in a situation where they had to become literate in English.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

This chapter outlines the research procedure used in this study. It includes the development of the data-collecting instruments, the rationale for using the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, the use of an interviewer who spoke the language of the students, and the details of the sample selection and data-collection procedures.

Development of the Data-Collection Instruments

As this study was designed to examine second-language learning needs of illiterate Italian adults enrolled in classes of English as a Second Language, as perceived both by the teachers and by the students, it was necessary to construct several data-collection instruments. The two types of instruments finally selected for use in data-gathering were the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview schedule.

The instruments were designed to gather information about two parts of the research question of this study: firstly, the perceptions of selected teachers of English as a Second Language regarding the language-learning needs and personal characteristics of Italian-speaking adults, functionally illiterate in Italian and currently enrolled in ESL classes, as well as with teachers'

recommended classroom and teaching strategies to deal with the learning needs of these students; and secondly, the perceptions of the students themselves about their language-learning needs.

Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire was developed to gather background information about the ESL teachers, and the various language-learning strategies employed by them in the ESL classroom. As a practising teacher of ESL to new Canadian adults, I formulated the questions based on my personal experience and awareness of the needs expressed by the immigrant students whom I taught.

After pre-testing an 11-page questionnaire whose bulk and physical appearance were reported to be "overwhelming", the same items were regrouped as a 15-page, 4"x 8" booklet (See Appendix A) which appeared less overwhelming and more manageable to the respondents.

The final questionnaire consisted of 4 sections:

1. Introductory Note. The introductory note established the parameters of the student population to be studied. It defined a New Canadian Adult Illiterate in this study as anyone who

(a) was an immigrant to Canada from Italy;

(b) had not learned English as the first language, and had not acquired

native proficiency in its use; and,

(c) had completed grade 5 or less in the country of origin (i.e. Italy), which marked the end of compulsory education in the Italian school system.

2. Background Information. This section asked the teacher's name, sex, age, academic education, professional training for teaching English as a Second Language, teaching experience, and linguistic background. As the questionnaire was to be accompanied by an interview, the anonymity of the respondents was not deemed a requirement of the study, although the teachers were assured that their names would not appear in the final report.

3. Language Teaching Strategies. In this section of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked to examine two broad areas: first, what they would do under ideal conditions in teaching illiterates in their ESL classes, and second, what they actually did in the ESL class that they were teaching. They were also asked to note "the restraining factors that would account for the differences between the 'ideal' and the 'actual'." The areas for examination in this section included the use of audio-visual equipment, language learning activities (for example, speaking, reading, writing, comprehension), and the percentage of time devoted to various content themes, including housing, employment, financial, medical, legal, recreation, and adjustment and orientation.

4. Language-Teaching Methods and Materials. The final section of the

questionnaire asked teachers to indicate which language-teaching methods and materials they used in teaching ESL to adult illiterates.

Interview Schedules

Since this study dealt, on the one hand, with the teachers' perceptions of the needs of particular students, and, on the other, with the students' perceptions of their own needs, the subjective, emotional impressions of the respondents were considered important. For this reason, the interview technique was selected as the second method of the data-collection. As well, since the students were illiterate, written questionnaires would have been more or less useless.

Two interview schedules were developed, one for use with the teachers, a second with the students.

Teachers' Interview Schedule

While the teachers' questionnaire elicited generalized background information about the teachers and the strategies they employed in the classroom, the interview schedule was designed to deal with the teachers' perceptions of individual students in their classrooms.

Since the second language-learning needs of illiterate adults was a new area of research at the time, there were no existing frameworks in the literature

to inform the researcher about the topic areas to examine. It is important to remember that I wanted to expore perceptions. I believed that perceptions, although based in fact, might have inherent biases that needed to be examined. The concept of bias helped me develop the questions.

Intuitively, I knew that the questions had to explore personal characteristics of the students, as well as their attitudes, behaviours and motivation, and also the needs that the students had for information, language strategies, and their personal needs. Since I was dealing with perceptions rather than facts, I also wanted to examine the teachers' perceptions of generalizable characteristics about the students.

Thirteen questions were developed to provide perceptual information about 8 different areas of concern to the researcher (see Appendix B):

1. the personal characteristics of each student.
2. the behavioral characteristics of each student.
3. the motivational characteristics of each student.
4. the attitudinal characteristics of each student.
5. the language-learning needs of each student.
6. the information needs of each student.
7. the personal needs of each student.
8. generalizable characteristics of the adult illiterate second-language learner from Italy.

Student Interview Schedule

Each area of concern was duplicated in the student interviews, although the structure of the questions was modified in the translation from English to Italian.

Although the interview technique was intentionally chosen as a second method of obtaining data from the teachers, the very nature of the student population precluded any other data-collection instrument but the interview, since the students, native speakers of Italian, had not acquired sufficient proficiency in English, and were unable to read or write Italian. The student interview alone had to elicit the same information obtained from the teachers by means of both the questionnaire and the interview.

Constructed initially in English, and then translated into Italian by the interviewer who later conducted the student interviews, the student interview schedule (See Appendix C) asked the students questions on the following topics:

1. the student's name, age, sex, highest grade completed, when completed, other languages spoken, length of times in Canada, previous occupation in Italy, and occupation(s) in Canada.
2. the length of time the student has been studying English.
3. the student's reasons for enrolling in English classes.
4. the student's impressions of the first days of school as compared with the present.

5. what and/or who had helped him the most during the period of time he had been studying English.
6. the student's family's feelings about his return to school.
7. the student's major difficulties in learning English.
8. other information that he had received as part of the language instruction program (for example, information about the school system, medical insurance, legal aid, social assistance, etc.).
9. what information he felt that he needed that he had not received from the ESL teacher.
10. the most important needs of an immigrant from Italy when he first arrives in Canada.
11. how the classroom English teacher could help immigrant students in their adjustment to the Canadian way of life.

Although modified structurally and syntactically to the Italian mode of expression, the above topics deal with the students' perceptions of their own motivation, behaviours, attitudes, personal and language learning needs, information needs, generalized needs of the Italian immigrant, and the teaching strategies employed by the teacher in the ESL class-room, thereby allowing an examination of the students' and the teachers' responses in the same information areas.

Italian-speaking Interviewer

The choice of an Italian-speaking interviewer to conduct the student interviews was a critical factor in the design of this study, based upon the conditions outlined below:

1. The researcher could not speak Italian.
2. The students could not speak English, nor could they read nor write Italian.
3. The interviewer had to be bilingual, not only in the technical sense so that he could correctly translate the student interview schedule into Italian, but also so that he could later convey to the researcher, in English, the subtleties and nuances of the words used by the respondents, as well as the emotional overtones of their responses.
4. As the study was designed to document student impressions, the non-verbal component of the students' behaviour was also important, as gestures, facial expressions, and body posture(s) are an integral part of the communication process. Since, by definition, the interview is a face-to-face, one-to-one confrontation, the interviewer had to be able to convey the significance of this "silent language" (Hall, 1959) to the researcher.

5. The literature review suggested that the students fulfilling the criteria for the sample were likely to be males from the south of Italy between the ages of 30 and 50, labourers, construction workers, or farmers. This, in turn, suggested that the interviewer should be a male from the southern Mediterranean area of Italy, between the ages of 30 and 50. It was anticipated that, by fulfilling this condition the interviewees would be put more at ease, thereby allowing the rapport necessary for satisfactory interaction between the students and the interviewer.

6. Finally, the interviewer had to be familiar enough with the principles of educational research to ensure his understanding of the nature and purpose of the study. Although the researcher was to be present at all of the interviews, the interviewer became, in effect, a surrogate researcher. Without his complete understanding of the underlying principles of the study, it was felt that the data collected would be virtually meaningless.

An Italian-speaking interviewer was found who satisfied all of the above conditions, and who was able to devote the three weeks' time necessary to complete the student interviews. He was a 37 year old Sicilian male, a graduate of the University of Western Ontario in Honours Italian, and a certified teacher in the province of Ontario. Having immigrated to Canada ten

years previously, he himself had been a student of English as a Second Language. Within the first six months after his arrival, he advanced from "no knowledge of English whatsoever" to completing successfully the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) required for university entrance at that time. Affable, well-read, intelligent, and empathetic to the needs of new immigrants, he was considered the most appropriate choice.

Sample

The sample of the study eventually consisted of 5 teachers of English as a Second Language, and 25 students of English as a Second Language.

The criteria used in the selection of the teachers and the students were closely linked. First, the teachers were selected. The two criteria used in the sample selection of teachers were that they be employed full-time during the day as teachers of English as a Second Language to adults, and that they have at least 5 New Canadian adult functional illiterates from Italy in their classes who met the criteria for student selection, as follow. The selection of day classes rather than evening classes was purely functional. It provided a mechanism for locating a large enough sample of students taught by a relatively small number of teachers. Had night school classes been selected, it is likely that up to twenty-five teachers would have had to be interviewed as well. This was deemed to be unmanageable and outside the scope of this study.

The criteria used in the sample selection of students were that they be enrolled in a full-time study of English as a Second Language during the day; that they be immigrants to Canada from Italy; that they had not learned English as their first language, nor had they acquired native proficiency in its use; and that they had completed grade 5 or less in Italy.

In order to locate such a sample, the researcher contacted boards of education, the Ontario Welcome House, the Citizenship Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and an Italian adult education centre in downtown Toronto. Although all had illiterate adult students enrolled in their ESL classes, only the Italian adult education centre had a sufficient number of students and teachers to satisfy the criteria established for selecting the sample.

Data-Collection Procedure

Four teachers at the downtown centre met the study criteria. A fifth teacher who had a number of students in her class who fulfilled the study criteria was found at the North York branch of the downtown location.

Interview Procedure

The student interviews were conducted over a three-week period.

The ESL teacher introduced the researcher and the interviewer to the class, whereupon the interviewer explained in Italian the purpose of the visit,

allowing for questions from the students. Although 9 of the 25 students in the class satisfied the criteria for the study, only 7 were willing to be interviewed.

Each student who had agreed to be interviewed was withdrawn individually from the class.

Although the researcher was present for all of the student interviews, they were conducted entirely in Italian by the interviewer. Each interview was recorded on tape for later translation and transcription, and lasted between 30 and 40 minutes.

The teacher interview was conducted by the researcher upon completion of the language class. The teacher was asked about the individual students who had been interviewed. The teacher interview (See Appendix B) was also tape recorded for later transcription, and lasted approximately one and three-quarter hours. At the conclusion of the interview, the teacher was given a copy of the Teacher Questionnaire and asked to complete it and return it to the researcher by mail, a stamped, self-addressed envelope being provided.

Encouraged by the fact that one teacher interview and seven student interviews had been conducted within an 8.5 hour period, the researcher and the interviewer began the remaining student interviews the following day at the downtown centre, where the same introductory procedures were followed as those employed at the North York centre. In all, 25 students at the downtown centre satisfied the sample selection criteria and were willing to be interviewed,

bringing the total number of student interviewees to 32. From this 32, 25 were randomly selected for the study.

The teacher interviews were conducted the following week, one per day, at the end of the teaching day. As at the North York centre, the teachers were asked to complete the Teacher Questionnaire and return it to the researcher by mail. All of the questionnaires were received without prompting within 4 days following the interviews.

During the three weeks of interviews, only one major difficulty arose -- the use of the tape recorder. It had been chosen because of the greater detail a taped interview provides, as compared with written notes. The second and more obvious reason for its choice was the researcher's limited knowledge of Italian. Having to rely upon the interviewer for all of the information gathered during the interview, it was decided that the taped interview, later translated into English, would help guard against biasing the results of the interviews arising from the data distortion possible through faults in the interviewer's memory, or his interpretation of the students' responses.

Although none of the teachers were hesitant to have the interview recorded, a number of the students were leery of its use, as had been anticipated. In attempting to assuage their fear, a number of preliminary steps were taken before the student interviews began. The interviewer explained to each student:

1. that the researcher was an experienced teacher of ESL who was concerned with improving the quality of language instruction to new immigrants;
2. that the study was being undertaken as a part of the researcher's program of study at the University of Toronto;
3. that the information gathered from the students would be held in complete confidence, and that no one at either of the centre's locations would have access to the tapes, thus ensuring the student's anonymity;
4. that the tapes would be erased once the information was transcribed;
5. that the responses would have to be translated for the researcher since he could not understand Italian, thereby ensuring that the information contained in the final report would be as accurate as possible;
6. that, at the end of the interview, the student would be able to listen to the tape if he so chose, and change any responses with which he felt uncomfortable; and,
7. that the information would not be used in any way in assessing either the student's performance in the English class, or the teacher's ability as a teacher.

This latter dimension was stressed more than once in attempting to assure the students that the information would not be used against them in any way. If, as a result of being interviewed, their positions would be jeopardized, they stated that they would not cooperate. They had too much at stake, since the assessments made by the teacher and the rehabilitation counsellors determined whether or not they would continue to receive Workmen's Compensation Allowance (i.e. in the 1970s, this money was given to the students in the form of an allowance while they prepared to enter their rehabilitation course), as well as the type of vocational rehabilitation course they would enroll in, once the language course was completed.

The men in the study were not typical of ESL students in mainstream classes. As illiterate men who had managed to earn a living and achieve a relatively satisfactory life without knowing how to read or write English, it is highly likely that none of them would have been enrolled in ESL classes at all had they not been injured in some form of industrial accident, and had there not been money available for retraining through Workmen's Compensation.

Despite the precautionary measures, problems arose during the week following the student interviews. At the time of the interviews, it seemed apparent that the students both accepted and understood the explanation for using the tape recorder, and each of the students agreed that the interview could be taped; however, four of the students reconsidered their decisions. As a

result, their interviews were not used. This reduced to 28 the number of student interviews available for analysis, 25 of which were randomly selected as the basis for the final report.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS: STUDENT INTERVIEWS

The data presented in this chapter were obtained from 25 interviews of illiterate Italian adults, students of English as a Second Language in two locations of the same Italian adult education centre.

In considering the demographic data obtained about the students, several differences emerged in the overall composition of the student samples at the two locations which, if left unreported, would have considerably distorted the results of this study. These include the age of the student respondents, the length of time elapsed since completing their formal education, and the length of time they had been in Canada.

Where major differences occurred in the results, they have been presented, therefore, first for the total sample of students interviewed (n=25), and then divided into two subsets. Subset A (n=5) refers to the students interviewed at the North York location; Subset B (n=20) to the students at the downtown location. Where no differences in the responses appeared, the results have been presented for the total sample.

An interviewer conducted the 25 student interviews in Italian in the presence of the researcher, using the Student Interview Schedule (See Appendix C). The details of the pre-interview procedures have been explained in the

previous chapter.

Demographic Data

The demographic data obtained during the interviews are presented separately below.

Age

The students interviewed (n=25) ranged in age from 17 to 59 years, with the mean age of 40.7 years.

Five of the respondents, comprising Subset A, were 20 years of age or less, and represented 20% of the total sample. They ranged in age from 17 to 20 years, with a mean age of 18.4 years.

The remaining respondents, Subset B, ranged in age from 20 to 59, with a mean age of 46.2 years. One of these respondents (4%) was between 21 and 30 years of age. The bulk of the respondents (76%) were over 30 years of age -- three between 31 and 40, ten between 41 and 50, and six between 51 and 60 years.

Sex

Twenty-one of the students were male, of whom 20 studied at the downtown location. The remainder, 4 females and 1 male, were students at the North York centre.

Highest Grade Completed

Twenty of the respondents (80%) had completed 5 years of formal education in Italy. This included the 5 students in Subset A, and 15 of the twenty students in subset B. Three of the students had completed grade 3, and 2 indicated that they had never gone to school as young children. However, each of the latter two had since participated in some extra-mural learning activities. One had spent 3 months under the tutorship of a neighbour at the age of 11, twenty-five years before. The other had "endured" 15 months of sporadic elementary education at a private school at the age of 15, thirty years prior to enrolling in the ESL class.

Length of Time Elapsed Since Completion of Formal Education

Over 30 years had elapsed since slightly more than half of the students (52%) had completed their formal education, with a mean of 28.5 years for the total sample.

As with "age" and "highest grade completed", there were marked

differences between the two subsets. All of the students in Subset A had completed their formal education within the previous ten-year period, ranging between 3 and 8 years, with a mean length of time elapsed 5.6 years.

Those in Subset B had completed their formal education between 16 and 48 years prior to starting language classes, with a mean on 34.2 years. Two of the students had completed their schooling between 16 and 20 years before, five between 21 and 30 years, nine between 31 and 40 years, and four between 41 and 50 years.

Length of Time in Canada

The student who had arrived in Canada most recently had come only 5 months prior to the interview. This was typical of the students in Subset A, the student in this group with the longest period of residency in Canada having been here just 10 months. The average length of time in Canada was 7.2 months.

However, Subset B exhibited a much greater range, from 3 to 24 years, with an average length of time in Canada of 12.5 years. Although 10 of the respondents (40%) had been in Canada between 1 and 10 years, nine of them had resided here for 6 years or more. The remaining 40% of the respondents had been in Canada for more than 11 years: five between 11 and 15 years, one between 16 and 20 years, and four between 20 and 24 years.

Other Languages Spoken

Only 5 of the interviewees indicated some knowledge of a language other than Italian. Three of these stated that they could speak and understand some French. The other two considered themselves fluent in a second language -- one spoke French, and one spoke Spanish, having lived in Argentina for 15 years. None of these students, however, possessed any reading or writing skills in the second language.

None of the others had ever been exposed to a second language on a full-time basis, although they were familiar with the occasional foreign-language word or expression resulting from the North American and European film market in Italy, nor had they ever had the need nor the desire to learn one. They had lived out their lives in a totally Italian environment prior to emigrating to Canada. Several of these men responded to the question with a slight hint of laughter in their voices: "No, of course I don't speak any other languages. I don't even speak Italian very well."

Occupational Data

None of the students had ever been employed in positions that required a high degree of literacy skills either in Italian or English. Table 2 represents the distribution of student respondents by previous occupation in Italy and occupation in Canada.

Table 2

Distribution of Student Respondents by Occupation

Occupation in Canada	n	Previous Occupation in Italy	n
Construction	15	Construction	8
		Farmer	5
		Truck Driver	1
		Plumber	1
Factory Work	2	Farmer	1
		None	1
Other			
Truck Driver	1	Truck Driver	1
Car Polisher	1	Clothing Merchant	1
Dressmaker (part-time)	1	Sales-clerk	1
Waiter	1	Farmer	1
Cabinet Maker	1	Cabinet Maker	1
Fibreglass Installer	1	Clothing Salesman	1
None	2	Store Clerk	1
		Waiter in Family Restaurant	1

Although the students had some degree of oral/aural fluency in their Italian dialects, the interviewer often had to repeat and/or interpret the questions being asked of the interviewees. In his view, the level of Italian spoken and understood by most of the respondents could not be considered either "standard", "very articulate" or "sophisticated" Italian. This applied to their English as well. English had not been required in the types of employment in which they had been engaged prior to their full-time study of English.

Fifteen of the respondents had been employed in Canada in the

construction industry. Of these, 8 had worked in the construction industry in Italy, primarily as masons, before emigrating to Canada. Seven, however, had undergone shifts in their occupations. Five had been farmers, one a truck driver, and one a plumber.

Of the two respondents who had worked on the assembly line in Canadian factories, one had formerly farmed his own land, and one had never been employed in Italy.

Two of the respondents had never worked in Canada during the 6 months of their residence; however, both had been employed in Italy, one as a store clerk, and one as a waiter in a family-owned restaurant.

Of the other 6 respondents, only two were employed in the same occupation both in Canada and in Italy. One was a cabinet maker, one a truck driver. The other four had changed occupations -- from clothing merchant to car polisher, from sales-clerk to part-time dressmaker, from farmer to waiter, and from clothing salesman to fibreglass installer.

These findings reflect Ziegler and Richmond's findings (1972) that an occupation shift is common among rural immigrants to Canada, and that those formerly engaged in farming would tend to become labourers in their first Canadian employment.

Of the 25 respondents, only the waiter felt the need to comment on the adequacy of his English language skills for the work he was doing. He stated

that he only "managed", having mastered the most common phrases used by the restaurant clientele. If he experienced difficulties, his brother, the owner of the restaurant, could help him or he could call on his co-workers for aid. The other 24 respondents stated that they had never felt the need for more than a few words of English to carry out their duties at work. Insulated from a native English speaking population at work, there were always fellow countrymen on the job site who could act as their interpreters, if, by rare circumstance, neither the boss nor the foreman spoke Italian.

English Language Study Experience

Length of Time Studying English

Twenty-one of the respondents (84%) had been studying English for 5 months or less, six of these having been studying for 5 months, and the majority, 11 students, for 2 months or less. Four of the respondents had been studying English between 6 and 11 months.

All of the students in Subset A had been studying for the same length of time, 1.5 months. The range in Subset B, however, was greater, from 2 weeks to 11 months, with a mean length of time studying English of 4 months.

Student Reasons for Enrolling in ESL Classes

The interviewees were asked why they had decided to begin studying

English.

Four of the students, all of whom were living with Italian-speaking relatives in an Italian community, stated that they had been motivated by a personal interest in "the communication value of the language". They felt that their relatives, most of whom had been living in Canada for many years, were cut off from the community at large, unable to participate actively in and unable to receive the benefits of their new life in Canada. All four wanted to become "real" Canadians, one stating emphatically, "It's obvious. My relatives have made Toronto a new Calabria. If I had wanted that kind of life, I would have stayed in Italy."

Two of these students also felt that their prospects for a better job would be greatly improved if they spoke English.

For the remaining 21 students, the primary reason for enrolling in an English language class was work-related; that is, they wanted to learn English to get a better job. One could, at first blush, attribute a high level of motivation and initiative to these students; however, as the interviews progressed, it became clear that 11 of them had begun their English study at the insistence of an external funding agency. Twenty of these students were being subsidized by the Workmen's Compensation Board (now known as the Workers' Compensation Board), and one by the Department of Manpower and Immigration, as the result of job-related accidents which prevented them from

returning to their previous types of employment, and which necessitated their being retrained in a new skill.

Only 3 of these students had attempted to learn English prior to their accident, and all 3 had quit in order to pursue a full-time job. One stated that the $75 Manpower Allowance which he had received was not enough to support himself and his family, and that, when he returned home nightly, he did not feel any respect from his family because he was not supporting them properly. At that time, work, and the respect it brought, was more important than language. Although not receiving as much money from the Compensation Board as he had been able to earn working in construction, his self-respect and the respect shown him by his family had been maintained while studying English because the accident was an "act of God", something which one "had to live with." "My family knows that when I have learned English and have a new trade, we will have money again."

A second regretted not having continued studying English when he had originally begun. At the time, work was more important, and there was no need for English at home. His family spoke Italian. His children were learning English in school, and could deal with any language problems that arose at home. His friends, his neighbourhood, and his fellow workers were Italian. It was only after his accident that his lack of English became a problem. Accompanied by his daughter to the Compensation Board, to the

hospital and the doctor's office, he felt ashamed in front of her, resenting the humiliation of having to disclose "personal information about my life and body in front of the girl." That he considered himself a modest man, and that he had been injured in the pelvic and lumbar regions further added to this shame and humiliation.

Student Attitudes to Language-Learning

It was considered important to see what effect, if any, the language-learning experience had had on the students. To this end, they were asked to describe the way they felt or the impressions made upon them during their first few days at school. They were then asked if their feelings had changed at all during the learning period, and, if so, why and in what way had they changed.

Fourteen of the students (56%) stated that they had felt happy and satisfied to be at school, that they had come willingly and that they had not experienced any feelings of stress nor problems in adapting to this new situation. Two of these students felt that it had been the understanding and help given them by the teachers that had made it so pleasant for them. One attributed her contentment to the fact that she herself had chosen to go to school, rather than being "forced" to attend by Manpower or the Compensation Board. She was sure that, had she been forced, as so many of the other students had been, it would have been a most unpleasant experience for her.

Three others felt that they would experience great satisfaction at being able to speak easily with non-Italian speakers for the first time in their lives in Canada, and were looking forward to expanding their social circle as their fluency in English increased. One was especially happy that he would no longer have to rely on his children to interpret for him once the language course was completed. All 14 felt pleased that their employment prospects would improve as the result of learning English.

The remaining 11 students described themselves as nervous, preoccupied, confused or uneasy during the first few days of school. Many reasons were given for their lack of satisfaction: too many students in the class, and, therefore, not enough time to practise the new structures and vocabulary; the complicated rules for pronunciation and spelling -- words that look alike are often pronounced differently; not understanding anything that the teacher said; other students laughing if someone made a mistake; having nowhere outside the classroom to practise what was being learned because they lived in a completely Italian environment and, therefore, forgetting everything before the next class; holding the pen or pencil, and keeping the letters between the lines on the paper; the physical pain of the injury they had suffered which prevented them from concentrating on what was being taught; not having enough money to support their families; a preoccupation with the type of work they would be qualified to do after they finished the language course; the differences between

the kind of English they heard at school and the English they had been used to hearing on the job site; being too old to learn a new language; not having done well at school in Italy and worried about the success they would have with English now that they had returned to school; concern about the report that would be given about them by the teacher to the Compensation Board -- if the report was not good, some were afraid that their allowance would be cut off, leaving them no opportunity for retraining, and, as a result, no means of support other than welfare.

Of the 25 students interviewed, only 3 stated that their initial feelings had changed, all in a positive direction. One man, describing himself as shy and timid, felt better about going to school because he had made some friends, although he did not feel that his English had improved very much. The other two were pleased that they were beginning to understand more, and had experienced a great deal of satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment in a task that they had initially felt impossible.

The feelings of the 14 who had described themselves as happy had not changed substantially. Their initial feelings of contentment and satisfaction had been maintained by the success they felt they were achieving and the marked improvement in their English language skills.

For 17 of the students, the language-learning experience had been a satisfying, fulfilling and rewarding one; however, the remaining 8 students

were even more discouraged than they had been at the beginning. The physical pain resulting from their accidents had thus far not been alleviated. This dissatisfaction with their physical well-being had affected their achievement, not only in the language class, but in the skill-training program as well. They had not understood English when they began the class, and still understood "only a very few words of what the teacher says". For them, trying to learn a new language had been a difficult, humiliating, and ego-destroying experience.

For two men in particular, their failure to achieve even a modicum of success in the language class might be attributed to and aggravated by the assessment made of them, and the subsequent skill-training program into which they were put.

One, a former labourer, had both his feet and lower legs crushed by a heavy piece of construction equipment. He had undergone massive reconstructive surgery, and was still following a post-operative physical therapy program when he enrolled in the language class at the suggestion of the Compensation doctor. The intense pain that he still suffered affected his concentration in the language class which, in his words, "was a complete waste of time" and where he learned "absolutely nothing". Following the initial assessment by the language teacher and the rehabilitation counsellor, he was sent to the cabinet-making shop for retraining, where he was on his feet the entire length of time, but allowed to rest whenever he wanted to. His major

concern about his chances of success in his future employment was stated simply:

> What kind of boss will allow me to work for him and rest or sit down, doing nothing, whenever the pain in my legs gets too great? I don't think I will ever find a suitable job. What will happen to me then?

The second man, also a former labourer, had also been involved in a construction accident in which he had received multiple injuries that affected his motor control and coordination in the entire left side of his body. At least once daily, but more often than not, twice or three times, he would suffer a spasmodic attack during which his body would involuntarily assume the fetal position. Not only was he unable to control his movements, but also to predict either the time at which the attack would occur nor its duration. Following the attack, it would take at least one-half hour before he achieved full control again. He had been assessed and sent for retraining as the operator of a large industrial sewing machine. His question too was simple. "What happens to me if I have an attack while I'm at the machine, and my hand or my arm passes under the needle?"

Afraid of complaining to the teacher or to the rehabilitation counsellor because of possible recrimination, and the resultant loss of the compensation allowance, these two men were trying to achieve success in a situation which they might never have tolerated had they not been dependent for their financial

allowance on the judgements made by the teacher. One might question the humaneness of the assessment process and the empathy/sympathy coefficient of the teachers and counsellors entrusted with the power and authority to make decisions that would intimately affect not only the lives of these men individually, but the lives of their entire families as well.

Who or What has Helped the Students

When asked who or what had helped them in their attempt to learn English the students' responses were varied. Nineteen of the students attributed their success to the teacher. Other responses, in order of frequency, were their own will and desire to learn (7), other students (5), the classroom drills (1), the English environment (1), and reading (1). Two of the students responded that they had not learned anything.

Few of the students could elaborate further on how they had been helped in their language study; however, several made comments about the teacher and their fellow students.

When speaking of the teacher, the majority simply stated "the way the teacher taught", and, even with further probing, could not give concrete examples. Only four could. The methods they found most helpful were drilling useful expressions in the classroom, vocabulary building, practising the irregularities of the English verb system, formulating sentences in a defined

context (such as, what you would say at a doctor's office), and writing practice. Two of the students emphasized that they had learned "because of a sense of collaboration between the teacher and the students" and because "the teacher treated them in a friendly way." One man wished that the teacher would show them things in class when they were learning new words, either pictures or actual objects, because he found it easier to remember the words when he could visualize the object concretely.

Five of the students felt that the other students in the class helped them to learn, primarily because they got consolation from seeing other students who were having difficulties and, therefore, did not get as discouraged as they might if the other students in the class were at a more advanced level than themselves. One felt that the sense of competition among the students was important and should be encouraged by the teacher. In that way, some of the students who were falling behind the others would feel the pressure from the group and would try harder. Another, having studied for 7 months in a class in which he was the only Italian, felt that whoever places students in a class should make sure that there are at least two students of the same language group in each class. Not only would that provide a mutual support system, but it would also allow the students to verify their understanding of the new items and concepts being taught.

Family Attitudes to Studying English

When asked what their families thought of the fact that they had gone to school to study English, twenty of the respondents indicated that their families were very happy that they were learning how to speak English. This happiness was coupled with a hope that, as a result of the language class, the students would be able to find suitable employment when the course was completed. Language-learning and the prospect of economic prosperity were very closely linked.

Only two of these students indicated that their family, their children in particular, were pleased because of the increased exposure to Canadian culture and attitudes, having expressed the hope that their parents would understand them better and allow them the freedoms of other Canadian children once the language course was completed.

Four of the students indicated that their families were angry about and resentful of the fact that there was so little money available. As the students themselves still resented having to come to English class at their age, and had not coped emotionally with their injuries and their inability to work, this is not surprising.

Language Problems

The students were asked what they considered the major language-learning difficulties that they had experienced during the period in which they had been studying English.

By far, the most common difficulty was English pronunciation. Sixteen of the students considered it the most difficult skill in which to become proficient. Many of the students elaborated upon their particular difficulties:

1. The vowel sound values in English were much more complicated than in Italian, in which each vowel is pronounced exactly the same way despite the spelling or the position of the vowel within the word. In English, however, the sound of the vowel is dependent upon the preceding or following letters. The spelling determines the pronunciation. Reading the single vowel "a" in the following words is a good example: fat, fate, far, fall, fast, fare. Or again, reading the single vowel "o": not, note, move, nor.

2. The phenomenon of the "silent letter" does not exist in Italian. English, on the other hand, is full of silent letters. Simple, every-day words provide great difficulties for the second-language learner: night, knife, knee, able, should. The ever-present English "silent e" at the end of a word dramatically changes the sound of the vowel: can, cane; pet, Pete; bit, bite; pop, pope; cut, cute.

3. Vowel diphthongs and consonant clusters in combination provide

special difficulties, one of the most confusing being the "ough" combination: bough, cough, dough, fought, rough.

Writing was cited as the most difficult skill by the other 9 students, and, after pronunciation, as the second most difficult skill by another 9 students. When asked to elaborate upon the difficulties, two aspects were emphasized. Eight of the students had experienced a great deal of frustration with the physical skills required by a person in order to write. Controlling the pen or pencil, forming the letters, the transition from printing to "joined letters" to writing, keeping the letters "on the lines" demanded a great deal of practice and concentration.

A second important distinction arose around the "writing" skill: Italian does not have an equivalent to the English word "spelling", translated into Italian as "scrivere", and meaning "to write". All 18 stated that "scrivere" in English was very difficult. The most common complaint was that "you don't write what you hear."

Information Needs

Traditionally, ESL teachers have regarded themselves not only as teacher of English structure and vocabulary, but also as sources of information that would allow their New Canadian students both to integrate themselves more fully into the life of the community and to avail themselves of social services

and benefits that are readily available to the native English-speaker.

When questioned about information that they had acquired in the English class that would be useful to them once they left the classroom, 19 of the students stated that they had received none whatsoever, although the interviewer gave examples of the type of information that the teacher might present during a lesson, such as the school system, hospitals, legal services available to immigrants, how to apply for work, how to contact the hospital, police and fire department.

Four students recalled a lesson that dealt with filling out application forms, one remembered a lesson on the use of the telephone, and another, a lesson on how to contact the hospital and the fire department in case of emergency.

Twenty of the students indicated that they had learned how to count in English.

Twenty-two of the students stated that they had been taught to be "more gentle and polite" and to say "please", "thank you", and "excuse me" when they were speaking.

In light of the fact that 10 of the 25 students had been studying English for 5 months or more, it is both curious and surprising that more students could not remember more information having been conveyed in the language class, other than the few items mentioned above, counting and a simple lesson in

manners.

On the other hand, this might be explained by the student responses to the question dealing with information that the students themselves had questions about. Twenty-two of the 25 interviewees stated that they didn't know what kind of information the classroom teacher could provide, emphasizing as well that if the classroom teacher spent time answering questions, there would be no time for teaching. "The teacher's main work is to teach the language!" For the majority of the students, learning "the language" was completely unrelated to learning about the Canadian way-of-life and the societal services, systems, attitudes and benefits available to native English-speaking Canadians. When questioned further, it became clear that the majority of these students believed that they could function effectively in these areas in Italian, and that to learn how to deal with them in English was of no practical value to them. Their desire for fluency in English was limited to their effective functioning in their new employment situation.

Only three of the students mentioned that they would like to know how to use English to deal with the difficulties of buying a house and financing a mortgage, their experience being that they had not always been able to find an Italian-speaking realtor or mortgage officer to deal with problems in these areas.

The students were also asked what they thought a teacher could do to

help a newly-enrolled student in an English language class other than teaching the language and providing information to the students.

Ten of the interviewees stated that they had no idea of what a teacher's duty and responsibility were, asserting emphatically that the teacher's job was to teach. As students in Italy, it had not been their place to make suggestions to the teacher about what they were learning. The teachers taught; they listened.

On the other hand, 14 of the students suggested that going out on field trips would be very useful to them, suggesting trips to a bank, the supermarket, the museum, a hospital and the subway. Although all of them had done business with banks and supermarkets, they felt that they had learned badly, as they had been taught by friends or relatives who themselves had learned haphazardly.

Several suggested trips to Ontario Place, the Ontario Science Centre and Pioneer Village, stating that they would never go to places like these unless they were with someone who could speak English well and who would be able to explain to them, in simple English, what they were seeing.

Two of the students wanted to practise using the telephone in class, as they found it very difficult both to understand and to make themselves

understood when using the telephone[1].

One other suggestion is worthy of note. One man stated that having a bilingual teacher, or at least, a bilingual teacher's assistant in the classroom would greatly ease the difficulties of learning the new language. If problems arose, or if the students did not understand the teacher's explanation, Italian could be used to clarify or explain the difficulty.

Needs of New Immigrants

The interviewees were asked what, in their opinion, were the most important needs of any newly arrived immigrant to Canada, in their order of importance. The responses have been categorized under 6 headings, and are presented in order of frequency from most to least important: food, clothing and shelter, language, employment, owning a home, medical assistance, and social assistance.

All of the students stated that food, clothing and shelter were the most important initial needs of a new immigrant, as they constitute the basic minimum for survival anywhere.

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[1]The "Telezonia Kit" was available to any ESL teacher for this purpose. It consisted of two complete telephones operated through a central "switchboard". It could be used in one room, or between rooms. It was loaned, free of charge, by Bell Canada. A children's telephone training version is still available; the adult version has been discontinued.

Fourteen of the students felt that, once the immigrant's basic needs were provided for, language learning was the next most important need, followed by employment, while eleven of the students felt that employment was the next most important need, followed by learning the language.

These students vividly illustrated the immigrants' dilemma. Unless they came to Canada with sufficient funds to support themselves and their families during the minimum 6-month period required to study the language full-time, a highly unlikely situation, they would have to find a job. As unskilled workers, their jobs would probably be as labourers, with the result that they would have little or no time to study the language, as the only option open to them would be night-school classes two nights a week. A minimum of 3 years of part-time study is required to achieve an adequate level of spoken and written English, even for the highly educated. As little or no provision is made for illiterates in the night school programs, their progress would probably be slow, and, more often than not, they would drop out of the class to return to their native-speaking environment, unable to speak, read or write English, and therefore unable to qualify for retraining or to achieve any type of job mobility.

If, on the other hand, they chose to attend language classes, they would have to find some means of support. They would probably not qualify for social assistance, unemployment insurance, or a Manpower retraining allowance, nor would they have the benefits of hospital insurance. Even if they

could receive a Manpower subsidy, it would probably not be sufficient to support them for the 6-month period, with the result that they would drop out of the language course to find employment.

Only 3 of the 14 students who said that language was the next most important need had attempted to learn English formally before their accidents, and their subsequent enrollment in the ESL class. All three had quit after a short time to find employment. One man, explaining the situation facing the immigrant, stated:

> If I had understood then what I know now, I would never have gone to work in construction. I would have gone instead to some office where I would have been directed to a place where I could learn the language. I could have gone to live in an apartment as so many others do instead of paying for a house.
>
> The worst thing that can happen to an immigrant is to find a job as soon as he comes here. Once you find a job, you won't go to school at night because you are too tired, and you can't quit work to go to school because of your family. Some people take courses for money when they first come here. However, if you have a family, the amount of money is not enough to pay for the basic needs. Therefore, people quit. They shouldn't, but there's the problem -- you should go to school but your needs force you out to work.

Those who chose work as the next most important need were in complete agreement. If you have a job, you have money, as well as medical and social assistance. You can always find people who speak your language, particularly in a city the size of Toronto, and therefore, you can maintain a vital social network without the use of English. If you have money, you can buy a house

and support your family in "high style". In short, "If you have work, all the other good things follow."

Owning their own home had a high priority with all but one of the students. As former home-owners, this was a goal to be achieved as soon as possible after their arrival in Canada. They would rent a house or apartment, or live with relatives for a short time, but this was viewed as an interim measure, something that they had to do until they got established, and could move into their own house.

Medical assistance and social assistance were considered important; however, as they were available soon after finding employment, none of the students felt that they had to elaborate upon their importance. They were simply benefits that came to anyone who was a part of the work force.

Summary

In summary, there were two subsets in the study. Subset A, consisting of 4 females and 1 male, had a mean age of 17.4 years, had completed 5 years of formal education in Italy, with a mean elapsed time of 5.6 years since completing their formal education. On average, the members of this group had been in Canada for 7.2 months. Subset B, by contrast, were all male, with a mean age of 46.2 years. Most had completed 5 years of formal education in Italy with a mean elapsed time of 34.2 years since completing their formal

education. On average, they had been in Canada for 12.5 years.

Although the two groups displayed very different demographic variables, there were no significant differences expressed by them in response to the remaining items in the students' questionnaire. Ten of the students had the same type of job in Canada as they had had in Italy, while fifteen had undergone an occupation shift. Most were studying English primarily for work-related reasons, 21 of them being subsidized by external agencies to get retraining as a result of job-related accidents which prevented them from returning to their previous occupation. Several of the students noted that they were motivated by the social benefits that would accrue to them if they spoke English more fluently.

More than half of the students described themselves as "happy" to be at school, while slightly less than half saw themselves as nervous, confused or preoccupied initially. By the end of their learning experience, two-thirds of the students felt fulfilled and satisfied. However, for one-third of the students, their ongoing physical pain and their level of shame in being back at school as adults, plus their fear about losing their compensation allowance if they stated their true feelings to their teachers or counsellors underscored a painful and humiliating learning experience.

The teachers' way of teaching was seen by the students as the main contributor to their success, along with the support of their fellow classmates.

Eighty per cent of the students named family support and encouragement as a third contributor to their success, coupled with the belief that their new language skills would help them find a better job.

Pronunciation and spelling were seen as the two greatest difficulties they faced in learning English. Most could not recall any new information they had learned about the Canadian social system, although manners and politeness were clearly noted by the majority of the students as new learning in the English class. The majority of the students saw the teachers job as "teaching the language" only, not giving information about Canadian society. However, slightly more than half recognized that field trips would be beneficial to them, especially to places that they would frequent as part of their daily life experience.

The students ranked the needs of the new immigrant to Canada in order of importance as food, clothing and shelter, language, employment, owing a home, medical assistance and social assistance.

The next chapter will deal with the information obtained from the teachers' questionnaires and interviews.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS: TEACHERS

Information about the teachers and their teaching practices was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Information about the teachers' perceptions about the language learning needs of their students was gathered through a structured interview. Results of data obtained through both means are reported on separately below.

A. TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The teachers' questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to gather information in three broad areas:

1. background information about the teachers;

2. the language-teaching strategies employed by them in their ESL classes as viewed from two perspectives -- what they would do under ideal conditions, and what they actually did in their ESL class; and

3. the language-teaching methods and materials they used in their ESL classes.

The data therein obtained are presented and examined in this chapter in the order in which they appear in the questionnaire.

Background Information

Name

The teachers were asked their name solely for the researcher's convenience, since the questionnaires were not completed in his presence, but returned to him by mail. Had the teacher sample been larger, a coding scheme might have been more appropriate; however, because of the small size of this sample (n=5), this was not considered important.

Sex

Four of the respondents were female, and one was male, reflecting Campbell's (1973) findings that a larger proportion of women than men (3:2) are engaged in teaching ESL to adults in the province of Ontario.

Age

The respondents were not asked to state their exact age, but rather to check one of six categories ranging, in 10-year periods, from "25 or under" to "over 65". Two of the respondents were between 26 and 35 years of age, and the remaining three were between 36 and 45. All of the respondents in the survey of ESL teachers of adults in the borough of North York (Milligan, 1975) were between 26 and 45 years of age, as were the majority of the respondents (78%) in Campbell's study (1973).

Academic Education

The teachers were asked to indicate the highest level of academic education achieved by checking one of 9 categories. These included "below Grade 13", "Grade 13", "B.A.", "B.Sc.", "B.Ed.", "M.A.", "Ed.D.", and "Ph.D.". They were also asked to indicate their area of major concentration in their university degree program.

Four of the five respondents had attended university. Two had received B.A. degrees, one a B.Ed. degree, and the fourth, an M.A. in Sociology. The fifth respondent had ceased academic education after Grade 13.

The teachers sampled in this study compare favourably with the teachers of ESL to adults in the United States. The majority (92%) of the TENES teachers (Teachers of English to Non-English Speakers) had received a Bachelor's degree, and 45% had received their Master's degree (Allen, 1966). They were, however, well above the Ontario average. Only slightly more than half (54%) of the Ontario teachers of ESL to adults responding to Campbell's (1973) study had received a university education.

Professional Training in Education

All of the respondents were certified teachers in the province of Ontario. Three had attended teacher's college, qualifying them to teach children at the elementary level. Two of these teachers, both of whom were born outside of

Canada (one in the Ukraine, and one in the United Kingdom), had also participated in in-service training programs for teachers of elementary school children.

The two remaining respondents had attended the Ontario College of Education (O.C.E.), the forerunner to the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto, qualifying them to teach both children and youth up to and including Grade 13.

Only one of the respondents had received further formalized professional training for teaching adults, having received a Certificate in Adult Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1969.

Professional Training for TESL

At the time of the study, several opportunities existed for Ontario teachers to acquire specialized training for TESL, including university courses, teacher certification courses, and specialized workshops. Four of the respondents had received the Ministry of Education Certificate in TESL, and two had attended specialized workshops at annual TESL teachers' conferences.

Teaching Experience

All of the respondents had been teaching for more than 10 years, with a range between 10 and 19 years, and an average of 12.6 years. Although the

teachers were not asked either the grade level of the subject(s) they had taught prior to teaching ESL to adults, it might be assumed from their level of professional training in education that they had taught in the elementary and/or secondary school system. Nor were they asked about their reasons for choosing to teach ESL to adults. These questions would be both interesting and important to a broader in-depth study of ESL teachers of adults.

In contrast with Campbell's (1973) study in which only 11.5 % of the respondents indicated more than 8 years' experience in teaching ESL to adults, all but one of the respondents in this study had taught ESL to adults for more than 8 years. The total number of years teaching adult ESL ranged from 1 to 11 years, with an average of 7.2 years. With the one "extreme" response eliminated, the average climbs to 8.7 years, somewhat surprising in that Campbell (1973) comments that "rapid teacher turnover among ESL students" is considered a "serious problem for ESL programs", with an average in that study of 3 to 4 years.

Linguistic Background

Only one of the respondents had learned English as a Second Language, and had maintained fluency in her first languages, Polish and Ukrainian. This respondent was also fluent in both Russian and German, and had some knowledge of Slovak, French and Italian. Although none of the other

respondents were fluent in any other language, all had some knowledge of French, one indicating further knowledge of Spanish, and a second of Italian.

Summary

Four females and one male teacher agreed to participate in the study. They ranged in age from 26 to 45, and four had completed some form of post-secondary education. All were certified teachers in the province of Ontario with an average of 12.6 years of teaching experience. Four were certified as ESL teachers. Only one teacher was fluent in a second language, while all reported some familiarity with a second language.

This population was typical of adult ESL teachers in the mid-1970s. Many teachers taught ESL as a second job at night school after teaching either at elementary or secondary schools during the day. ESL certification was relatively easy to obtain as well in the mid-1970s, consisting basically of one upgrading summer course offered through the provincial Ministry of Education. There were very limited opportunities for teachers to engage in full-time ESL teaching at the time. Welcome House and a few community-based organizations were the few full-time ESL programs in existence. There were many more women than men engaged in ESL, and most had limited capability in a second language. In fact, an essential part of ESL training in the summer programs was for the teachers-in-training to have an experience of learning a foreign

language in which the language instructor only instructed in the language of instruction with no translation into English. The language of instruction more often than not was Ukrainian. This was an attempt on the part of the training program developers to sensititize the new ESL teachers to the experience that their students might be encountering in their ESL classes. Mother-tongue language assistants who helped out in ESL language classes were just being introduced, and this innovation was seen as quite radical at the time.

Language-Teaching Strategies

Audio-Visual Equipment

The teachers were asked to comment on their use (both ideal and actual) of the 10 pieces of audio-visual equipment most commonly used in ESL classes at the time: the tape recorder, both reel-to-reel and cassette; the projector, including the overhead, opaque, movie and film-strip types; the record player, language lab, language master, and the video trainer.

Ideally, three or more of the teachers indicated that all of the listed equipment, with the exception of the movie projector and the record player, would be useful "sometimes" or "often" in teaching ESL to adult illiterates.

However, in actual fact, only the reel-to-reel and cassette tape recorders, the film-strip projector and the language lab had been used "often" by one teacher each. The overhead projector, the reel-to-reel and cassette tape

recorders, and the film-strip projector had been used "sometimes" by one teacher each, and the movie projector "seldom" by one teacher.

Table 3 represents the ideal and actual use of audio-visual equipment in the ESL classes at the centre.

When asked to account for the differences between the "ideal" and "actual" use of this audio-visual equipment, three of the five teachers indicated that "such equipment was not available to them", although at least one reel-to-reel and one cassette tape recorder, a record player, a film-strip projector and an overhead projector could be found in the centre.

One teacher said that the poor classroom conditions accounted for the difference:

> The classroom is very hot and crowded. The rooms are small and there is too much light to use any projector profitably. There are too many students for a profitable use of a tape recorder, which, in my opinion, is more adaptable to individual use.

Only one teacher had attempted to deal with the physical limitations of the classroom by using pictures, charts, flash cards and maps during the language lessons, finding them "easier to use and more appropriate for the type of course I have been conducting."

A lack of money for supplies and a lack of time were also cited by one teacher.

Table 3

Use of Audio-Visual Equipment
("Ideal" and "Actual")

Audio-Visual Equipment	Ideal Use				Actual Use			
	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	None	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	None
Language Lab	4	-	1	-	1	-	-	4
Reel-to-reel tape recorder	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	3
Cassette tape Recorder	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
Overhead Projector	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	4
Opaque Projector	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	5
Film-strip Projector	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
Movie Projector	-	2	1	2	-	-	1	4
Record Player	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	5
Language Master	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	5
Video Trainer	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	5

Language-Learning Activities

The development of language comprehension, both understanding others and being understood by them, is the keynote of a second-language program. This comprehension includes the development of oral/aural fluency, as well as reading and writing skills.

Table 4

Language-Learning Activities
("Ideal" and "Actual" Time Spent)[1]

Language-Learning Activity	Time Spent[2] Ideal (%)	Actual (%)
Aural Comprehension	28	28
Speaking Fluently	23	23
Pronunciation	13	15
Dictation	10	10
Spelling	9	11
Oral Composition	7	7
Handwriting	6	7
Oral Reading	5	5
Written Composition	4	3
Silent Reading	3	3
Field Trips	3	6
Music	3	2
Literary Appreciation	1	-
Knowledge of Grammatical Terms	-	2

[1] Percentage of time spent during a 24-week program (600 instruction hours).
[2] Mean percentage of time spent.

The teachers were asked what percentage of the time they would spend on the language-learning activities listed in Table 4. There were only minor differences between the "ideal" and the "actual" amount of time spent.

Ideally, between 20 and 30% of the time would be spent on each of aural comprehension and speaking fluently; between 10 and 19% on each of pronunciation and dictation; between 5 and 9% on each of spelling, oral composition, handwriting and oral reading; and less that 5% on written composition, silent reading, fields trips, music, literary appreciation, and knowledge of grammatical terms.

In actuality, the teachers spent the same amount of time engaging their students in the language-learning activities listed above as they would "ideally" with any class of illiterates, with a few exceptions. They spent slightly more time (only 1 - 3%) on pronunciation, knowledge of grammatical terms, handwriting, spelling, and field trips, and slightly less time (1 - 2%) on written composition and music. None of the teachers had actually used literary appreciation in their ESL class.

Information Themes in the ESL Curriculum

Traditionally, the ESL teacher has been thought of as having two primary responsibilities to ESL students. The first responsibility is to provide them with a linguistic model upon which to base their speech. This includes

the teaching of both English-language structure, as well as the vocabulary necessary for day-to-day interaction. The second responsibility of the ESL teacher is to provide students with the specialized information and the appropriate basic vocabulary necessary to cope adequately with their new life styles and the diverse and presumably new social systems particular to the receiving society.

The teachers were asked to indicate what percentage of time they would spend, and, in fact, did spend on seven broadly-classified information themes. These were housing, employment, financial, medical, legal, recreational, and adjustment and orientation.

Ideally, the greatest percentage of time would be spent on adjustment and orientation (28%), followed by medical (20%), recreation (10%), employment (7%), and housing, financial and legal (each 2.5%).

In actuality, only four of the themes had formed a part of the ESL curriculum. These were adjustment and orientation (18%), medical (14%), recreation (3%), and employment (1%). None of the teachers had dealt with housing, financial or legal issues in any detail, although they indicated that they mentioned these topics briefly in their ESL class (less than 1% of the time).

The teachers gave two main reasons for not including a great deal of "information" in their language classes. First, most of the students had been in Canada for many years, and were able "to manage, even though it is done

mostly in Italian"; and second, "that there is no accurate or pertinent information available to teachers that can be presented quickly and effectively to illiterate students."

The teachers were then asked to examine in detail each of the broad information themes, to indicate which of the items in each category they would incorporate in an ESL curriculum for adult illiterates, and to indicate those information items which they had actually included in their lessons.

Although all of the items but two (building permits and zoning regulations) would be included "ideally" in an ESL curriculum for adult illiterates by one or more of the teachers, few of the items were actually included by them.

The itemized categories are listed below in order of "ideal" frequency within each information unit, and require no further commentary.

Table 5

Thematic Content of Lessons

ITEM	IDEAL	ACTUAL
Housing		
Tenant/Landlord Relations	3	1
Lease	3	2
Mortgage	1	1
Other: Rental costs	1	-
Types of Accommodation	1	-
Building Permits	-	-
Zoning Regulation	-	-
Employment		
Social Insurance Number	4	3
Statutory Holidays	4	2
Department of Manpower (sic)	3	1
Employment Agencies	3	-
Minimum Wage	3	2
Holiday Pay	3	1
Metro. Licensing Commission	2	1
Overtime	2	1
Unions	2	-
Apprenticeship	1	-
Financial		
Banking Procedures	4	3
Income Tax	3	2
Family Allowance	3	-
Unemployment Insurance	3	-
Welfare	2	-
Old Age Pensions	2	-
Workmen's Compensation	2	-
Loans	1	-

Table 5 (Continued)

Thematic Content of Lessons

ITEM	IDEAL	ACTUAL
Medical		
O.H.I.P.	4	3
Hospitals	4	1
Poison Control Centres	3	1
Medical Insurance	3	1
Doctors	3	1
Clinics	2	-
Other: Distress Centres	1	-
Ambulances	1	-
Legal		
Human Rights	3	1
Legal Aid	2	1
Lawyers	1	-
Recreation		
Parks, camps, etc.	4	2
Hobbies	3	1
Sports Facilities	2	-
Adjustment and Orientation		
Canadian Geography	5	4
Citizenship	4	3
Canadian History	4	2
Canadian Politics	4	1
Ethnic Organizations	2	-
Ethnic Newspapers	1	-

Table 5 (Continued)

Thematic Content of Lessons

ITEM	IDEAL	ACTUAL
Adjustment and Orientation (Continued)		
Language Classes	4	1
Parents' Night	4	1
Upgrading Courses	4	2
Educational System	4	3
Rehabilitation Courses	3	1
Traffic Regulations	4	2
Transportation	4	2
Driving Licences	4	2
Employment Applications	5	4
Food Shopping	4	2
Credit Buying	3	2
Clothing	3	1
Food Labelling	3	1
Consumerism	1	-
Telephone	5	4
Government Agencies	4	1
Police Department	3	-
Fire Department	3	1
Day Care Centres	3	1
Dating	2	1
Churches	1	-
Marriage Laws	1	-
Environmental Issues	1	-
Other: Postal Code	1	1

Language-Teaching Strategies

Obviously, the emphasis given to various teaching/learning strategies in an adult ESL class is dependent upon many variables. To mention only a few the following seem important: the size of the class, the linguistic background of the students, the level of the class being taught, the students' proficiency in the English language, and their length of time in Canada prior to enrolling in the ESL class.

The teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the most commonly used second-language teaching strategies in meeting the language-learning needs of the adult illiterate ESL student. These strategies are listed in Table 6.

Very Effective Strategies. Pattern practice, dictation, picture stimulus for conversation, listening comprehension, and backward build-up each were considered the most effective strategies by 3 of the 5 teachers. Next, came mim-mem drill. In a mim-mem drill, the teacher would demonstrate a languagepattern which the students would then mimic (mim). They were then expected to memorize the pattern (mem), including the words as well as the appropriate inflection. Then, in order, came substitution drills, oral reading, and transformation exercises. Only one teacher considered each of fill-in-the-blank exercises, reading comprehension and minimal pairs as very effective. None of the teachers indicated grammatical description as an effective strategy for use with adult illiterates.

Moderately Effective Strategies. Of the moderately effective strategies, fill-in-the-blank exercises were considered the most effective by four teachers. Three indicated oral reading and reading comprehension. Next, in order, came pattern practice, dictation, picture stimulus for conversation, listening comprehension, substitution drills, transformation exercises, minimal pairs, and grammatical description. Mim-mem drill was indicated as moderately effective by one teacher.

Ineffective Strategies. Seven of the 13 most commonly used teaching strategies were considered not effective for use with adult illiterates by one or more of the teachers. Substitution drills, transformation exercises, and reading comprehension were each cited by one teacher each as not effective. Next, indicated by two teachers each, were backward build-up, mim-mem drill and minimal pairs. Finally, three teachers indicated grammatical description as having no effectiveness in dealing with the language needs of the adult illiterate.

None of the teachers suggested any ways in which their use of the "moderately" or "not effective" language-teaching strategies could be improved. Three of them stated emphatically that their effectiveness as language teachers did not need improving, but that these methods were just not effective with the students they were teaching.

One teacher suggested that more research should be done on the psychological difficulties encountered by adults engaged in learning a second

language. "Children seem to learn by rote, but possibly a 'reasoning' approach is better for adults -- but does this apply to adults with no education?"

Table 6

Effectiveness of Language-Teaching Strategies[1]

Language Teaching Strategies	Effectiveness (n=5)		
	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Not Effective
Pattern Practice	3	2	-
Dictation	3	2	-
Picture Stimulus for Conversation	3	2	-
Listening Comprehension	3	2	-
Backward Build-up[2]	3	-	2
Mim-Mem Drill[3]	2	1	2
Substitution Drill	2	2	1
Oral Reading	2	3	-
Transformation Exercises	2	2	1
Fill-in-the-blank Exercises	1	4	-
Reading Comprehension	1	3	1
Minimal Pairs[4]	1	2	2
Grammatical Description	-	2	3

[1] Itemized in order of greatest effectiveness

[2] Sentences would be practised starting at the end of the sentence and moving toward the front of the sentence, using the same inflection and rhythm.

[3] The teacher would model a phrase, the students would mimic it ("mim") and then memorize it ("mem").

[4] One item would be changed in a word to practise the different sounds, especially related to long and short vowels. The teacher would say the pairs, and the students would repeat them: e.g. bit, bite; cop, cope; fat, fate; etc.

Several of the teachers added further language-teaching techniques that they generally employed with adult illiterates in their ESL classes. These are outlined below.

1. With the introductory literacy lessons, a great deal of phonics work was used, emphasizing initial and terminal consonant sounds and vowel blends.

2. Controlled conversation between the teacher and each student in imaginary situations, such as buying stamps, inviting a friend to a party, ordering lunch in a restaurant.

3. Free conversation (with immediate correction) initiated around a particular student's problem or area of interest.

4. Role-playing exercises. Although similar to the "controlled conversation" mentioned above, in this exercise, the students would participate without the help of the teacher unless they got into difficulties, at which time the teacher would prompt the students with the correct word or structure.

Language-Teaching Materials

Nine commercial texts were listed as particularly useful in teaching ESL to adult illiterates; however, none of these texts were recommended by more than one teacher each, reflecting the overall lack of materials that had been prepared especially for use with adult illiterates at the time.

B. TEACHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The teachers' interview schedule (See Appendix B) was designed to gather information about the illiterate Italian adults enrolled in the ESL program from the teachers' perspective.

Four broad areas were examined:

1. the students' initial attitudes and behaviours.
2. their reasons for enrolling in the ESL class.
3. specific language-learning difficulties.
4. immigrant needs other than language.

Student Attitudes and Behaviours

Twenty-one of the students were described by the teachers as positive in their attitude to coming to school. Within this group, however, there was a great range.

Six of the students were described as extremely positive in their attitudes. They were keen to learn, participated actively in the classroom drills, answered questions on their own initiative rather than waiting to be called on, and asked questions about things they had not understood outside the classroom.

The teachers regarded attendance as one measure of attitude. These students rarely missed class, and if they did, the teacher knew that it was because of illness rather than lack of interest. Because of the consistency of

their attendance, they were able to progress rapidly and build on what they had already learned.

They were all described as cheerful, friendly, outgoing and not afraid of mistakes. They knew that the teacher would correct them if they made errors, and they accepted the correction with ease. When they were speaking, they would say several phrases or sentences, and then pause, just in case they had made an error, and wait for the teacher's correction.

The teachers attributed their positive attitude to the fact that all had become fairly fluent in English and easily understood the new items that the teacher was presenting. Because their oral/aural skills had been well developed, they had a firm base on which to build. As a result, they saw themselves making progress, and were eager to move on to developing their writing and reading skills.

Their classroom behaviours were considered manifestations of their attitude. They were seen by the other students as the leaders and often became the class disciplinarians, verbally reprimanding the others for their lack of attention. They often acted as interpreters for the teacher, translating items into Italian that the other students were finding difficult to understand. This was particularly useful, in the teachers' view, when dealing with the more abstract concepts, such as honesty, hope, justice or truth, as opposed to the concrete objects encountered in daily living.

The teachers felt the strongest rapport with these students. They did not regard the teacher as an authority figure, but rather as an equal who possessed some knowledge that they could share. They were not afraid of meeting the teachers socially, and would occasionally go out to a restaurant together for lunch, or for coffee or beer after the class.

The teacher also attributed this positive attitude on the part of the students to the fact that they were no longer in physical pain. Their injuries had healed, and they had come to grips psychologically and emotionally with the fact that they could not return to their former employment. They had accepted their need to learn English in order to follow a retraining program, and were doing their utmost to be successful in as short a time as possible.

They were also seen as the most intelligent, the most diligent, and the fastest learners in the classes.

The remaining fifteen students whose attitudes were described as positive exhibited a wide range of classroom behaviours.

Seven were described as very shy. Although they tried hard in class, they did not grasp things readily. All seven relied heavily on translation, and, rather than listening to the teacher, would turn to the more advanced students for the Italian translation of the new item being presented. Although they would attempt to respond to the questions posed by the teacher, they would never offer a spontaneous response, waiting rather to be called on by the

teacher. While their oral/aural comprehension was described as "fair to good", their speaking skills were poor, having problems with pronunciation, structure and rhythm. As well, their written skills were not highly developed. However, the teachers felt that they were making adequate progress.

They had developed a fairly good rapport with the other students in the class, and appeared to have made friends. For them, the ESL class served two functions -- learning a sufficient amount of the language to "get along" in English, and providing a centre in which they could interact socially both with other Italians and students of other ethnic groups.

These seven students were the youngest of the twenty-five students interviewed. The teachers felt that this factor inhibited a strong rapport being built up between the students and the teacher. As the youngest, they had most recently been at school, and seemed to regard the teacher as an authority figure.

The remaining eight students whose attitudes were described as positive were looked upon by the teachers as "loners". Although they attended fairly regularly, there was very little interaction between them and the other students. Although they appeared willing to learn and fairly satisfied with their own progress, they were extremely quiet. They rarely would respond to questions posed by the teacher, and even if called upon, would respond haltingly. Their writing and reading skills, although still at a basic level, were much more

highly developed than their oral skills, and they spent a great deal of time working on their own.

One in particular had been completely illiterate two months prior to the interviews and had learned to read and write during that period. He took his books home and had been receiving help from his children. His teacher considered him a triumph, and was confident that his oral skills would ultimately improve as a result of his seeing the success he had made in writing.

These students were considered the hardest workers, although the least intelligent and the slowest learners. The teachers did not have much hope that they would become proficient in the language, but commended their courage and their diligence.

The description of one student from this group reflects the other teachers' perceptions:

> He is the hardest worker. It is almost heart-breaking to watch him. He does double the homework you ask him to do, and half of it is wrong. He is so keen to learn, and hasn't lost heart at all. That's the heart-breaking thing. Some day he has to realize that he is never going to be completely fluent. It would take him between 6 and 7 years of full-time study before he reached the point where he could read and write at a Canadian standard.
>
> In simple repeating, he can't even repeat the sounds, never mind write them. When you ask him what it means, he doesn't know. Yet, he is still optimistic. If I were in his shoes, by this time I'd say there was something wrong.

These students were seen as the "moaners and groaners". They were still suffering the physical pain of their injuries. When they got stiff, or when the pain would get too great, they would get up, leave the classroom, walk down the corridor, and return a few minutes later. Their concentration span was not long, and it sometimes took upwards of ten explanations of an item before they would grasp it. They demanded a great deal of individual attention, and were, for the most part, the slowest to complete assigned tasks.

Only four of the students were seen as having a negative attitude. They were described as shy, reserved, very quiet, and gloomy. They did not smile. They were absent more than 50% of the time. When in class, they would not participate in the classroom drills. They could not speak English nor could they write. They could not take dictation. They demanded individual attention in class, and had not made any friends among the other students.

At the time of the interviews, all four had just been told by the rehabilitation counsellor that they were being put onto a one-week trial period. If, during that time, they did not show some signs of improvement, they would not be allowed to continue in the program. Although they had been made aware of their fate, they had not made any apparent efforts toward improvement nor of participating more fully in the program.

These students were seen as totally alienated from the others in class, and the teachers did not see any hope of success for them then or in the future.

Although the teachers suggested that there may be common language-learning difficulties among ethnic or cultural groups, none of the teachers felt that classroom attitudes and/or behaviours could be classed as "typical" of one ethnic group or another. They stated simply that the behaviours and attitudes they had observed among the adult Italian illiterates were "typical" of any adult ESL class -- a combination of high-, middle-, and low-achievers.

Student Motivation

The teachers were in complete agreement that the one force that had motivated the entry of those students who were being subsidized by the Workmen's (now Workers') Compensation Board was money. As they all had been injured and were unable to return to their former types of work, they had to be retrained. In order to follow a skill-training program, they had to improve their English-language skills. In so doing, their prospects for eventual economic success would be improved.

Although money was cited as the primary reason for enrolling in the course, several other factors seemed to have contributed to the students' continuing in the course. The teachers believed that many of the students were experiencing success in a formal learning situation for the first time in their lives. Having adjusted to the fact that they had no choice but to study English, they were doing their best, and, as they progressed, their self-confidence and

self-esteem improved. Learning the language had become a satisfying, enjoyable experience.

A second factor which emerged was the social component of the language class. As they couldn't go out to a job, and since they had to do something with their time, they came to the English class. The teachers believed that the classroom provided a mutual support system which allowed the students to see that they were not alone in an impossible situation. Other people had similar problems to theirs, and coming to the language class provided them with an opportunity to share their experiences with their peers.

The four younger students who were not being subsidized by Workmen's Compensation were seen as motivated by social reasons. They were regarded as extremely lonely, and for the young girls in particular, school was one place their parents would allow them to come alone. As well, the teacher felt that they realized that without the language, they would have little opportunity of making Canadian friends, and would probably remain "outsiders" in the community. The teacher was sure that they did not want to remain "isolated in their ethnic group forever", and having seen that an opportunity to learn was available to them, they were taking advantage of it.

The teachers did not believe that the majority of Italian men would ever enroll in a language class voluntarily. They were seen as able to find employment relatively easily, and could live completely functional lives without

learning a great deal of English. Improving their English was seen as totally incidental to their lives in Canada.

On the other hand, the younger Italians were regarded as highly motivated to learn. They were encouraged by their families to succeed with the language so that they would be able to achieve economic success in the community.

One teacher had worked extensively with Italian women. In her view, the women would enroll in a language class only after their children were raised. The language class provided them with an opportunity to engage in social interaction with other women of their age group, and helped to alleviate the loneliness and isolation that they felt once their children had left home. They were typified as hesitant and shy, and very few achieved any success with the language. They had tended to maintain the use of Italian in the home, and, over the years, had picked up a "pidgin English" which was very difficult to change. As their primary motivation was seen as social, the teacher was not concerned that they didn't learn a great deal of the language. She believed that the social function of the ESL class was an important one, and if the older women improved their language skills over the course of time, this was an added bonus.

Language-Learning Difficulties

None of the teachers felt that they could isolate one area that was difficult for all of the students, stating that they all had difficulties in all areas, to varying degrees. However, the most common difficulty centred on the oral skills.

Despite the repeated presentation of an initial structure, constant oral drilling, choral repetition, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, the majority of the students still pronounced the English words as if they were speaking Italian. Although they could imitate the rhythm and intonation patterns of the new structures, they often inverted words within the structure. "Whose key is it?" became "Whose is it key?" Although their vocabulary was increasing, they were unable to pattern a sentence correctly in the English mode, translating directly from Italian to English when they were structuring English phrases.

The teachers believed that these difficulties arose because of the students' prior exposure to "fluent broken English" on the job site, and that the language they had been used to hearing was not the language that they were hearing in the language class.

Writing was also regarded as presenting a major difficulty for many of the students. For some, the concept of the lines on the page as guidelines was new. Many had not realized that they should write to the end of the line and

then start a new one. For others, controlling the pen or pencil was difficult. Some were unable to make the transition from printing to cursive script. Some could not distinguish between capital and small letters. Spelling provided a major difficulty for most. Although they understood what they were hearing, they could not relate the sound of what they heard with the visual written representation. Copying from the blackboard presented many difficulties. One teacher in particular felt that the students could not relate what they saw on the blackboard with what they were writing in their notebooks, often leaving words out, or inverting such letters as "b" and "d", "p" and "g".

Reading was seen as providing the fewest difficulties for most of the students; however, in spite of the fact that the students could pronounce what they were reading, their comprehension was considered weak.

Of all the strategies available to the ESL teacher, oral drills were seen as the most effective for use with the adult Italian illiterate, followed by writing, spelling, and dictation practice in class. None of the teachers corrected students' work at home, believing that the students had to see how to form the letters based on the teacher's model. As a result, blackboard work was the most commonly used writing practice technique.

In assessing the difficulties of illiterate Italian adults, the teachers agreed that they appeared to have more problems learning English than any group they had worked with. Weeks would go by, and they would see no change. One

summarized the feelings of the others:

> I can get discouraged, and I'm not easily discouraged. It's amazing. I have worked with some New Canadians in adult education who have had a pretty low level of education. Their problems are nothing compared to these students. You don't know what they know, nor where to start. You must assume nothing!

Student Information Needs

Three of the teachers felt that the Italian students had coped adequately with their information needs, as most of them had been in Canada for a long time.

The other two teachers, however, felt that their students had very little knowledge about Canada. They had attempted to provide some information about Canadian geography, the Prime Ministers, the Premiers of the provinces, capital cities and Toronto city hall. They had arranged two field trips, one to Pioneer Village and a second to Ontario Place. They prepared for the field trips beforehand by using information folders as the basis for their lessons. They made up experience charts with pictures from the trips, and used them as a means of vocabulary and structure reinforcement. As the students had participated in the trips, they were easily involved in the classroom drills about them, and their interest was kept alive.

They had also attempted to teach employment applications, without much

success. Having spent one full week teaching all of the items, the teachers were amazed that the students were still unable to complete even the lines dealing with their name and address:

> They couldn't fill it out. They could barely pronounce the name of the company they had worked for. Since I couldn't understand what they were saying, I couldn't help them write it.

Both of these teachers felt that it was the students' responsibility to become aware of the information they were going to be asked for -- their address, their postal code, their wife's "maiden" name, their former employer. Although the teacher could prepare the students by telling them what information they would be asked for, the student had to acquire that information on his own.

All of the teachers felt that they were not primarily language teachers, but social workers. One described herself as "running a mental health clinic." A second considered himself 30% a language teacher and 70% a social worker:

> I try to make them happy. The important thing is to make them feel comfortable so they come back and back. Whatever English they pick up is incidental, as they're not really coming for the English at all.

The teachers felt reconciled to the fact that they wouldn't reach everyone who came to their classes. If 10 out of every 50 students were successful, the teachers felt that they had done a good job.

Summary

The teachers' interview elicited information about four broad areas. The teachers viewed their adult illiterate students as typical of any adult ESL class in terms of the students' initial attitudes and behaviours. There were high-, middle- and low-achievers whose attitudes ranged from very positive, diligent and hard-working to alienated, shy, quiet and gloomy. The prime driver for most of the students was seen as their financial subsidy. However, self-efficacy and the social component which provided a mutual support system were also seen as keen motivators for the students continuing in the language class. The teachers saw the greatest problem for the students as their acquisition of the oral skills associated with learning English, while the physical act of writing combined with problems in spelling provided a second major language-learning problem. They all felt that the illiterate Italian adults that they were working with appeared to have more difficulties learning English than any other group they had worked with. The teachers were somewhat discouraged about their teaching, noting that they primarily were using social work skills, rather than language teaching skills. Their key motivator was trying to get the students to feel comfortable so that they would come back to the class.

The discussion chapter that follows will compare the perceptions of the students and the teachers in light of the original research questions outlined in the introductory chapter of this study.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

The main goal of the present research was to study the perceptions of the second language learning needs of illiterate Italian adults enrolled full-time in adult English as a Second Language classes. The perceptions were those of the teachers who were providing the instruction, and the students who were enrolled in the classes. Information was gathered from the ESL teachers through the use of a questionnaire and a structured interview, and from the ESL students through the use of a structured interview in Italian. What follows is a discussion of the significant findings from the study.

The chapter is divided into five main sections. It addresses the main research questions; the limitations of the study; relevant changes in the ESL literacy field; some statements about further research needs; and the future of ESL literacy in Canada.

Main research questions

Personal characteristics of the students

The "typical" student, using the mean in each of the demographic categories examined, was a male 40.7 years old. He had completed five years of formal education in Italy (the official "school-leaving level" in Italy)

approximately 30 years prior to enrolling in the ESL class. He had lived in Canada for approximately 13 years, and had worked in construction or in agriculture prior to coming to Canada. He only spoke Italian and had very limited reading and writing skills. He did not need a knowledge of English to carry out his work responsibilities, and if he had any need at all for English, he depended on friends or relatives to act as interpreters. He worked in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the construction industry, and would have undergone an occupation shift once arriving in Canada from the work he had done in Italy. He was in the English class because he had had an industrial accident which prevented him from continuing his employment, and necessitated his retraining. He had been enrolled in the language class on average for about 3 months.

The motivational characteristics of the students

Both the teachers and the students agreed that the students' primary motivation for enrolling in the language class was economic. Most were being subsidized by external agencies, and the need for money to support their families after their industrial accidents was a major driver. From the teachers' point of view, if the students could learn English, they had improved prospects for a better job. From the students' point of view, they also named that they would have improved prospects for a better job, but they would also have the occasion to regain the respect of their families once they were able to work

again. What seems significant is that the teachers framed this need in terms of making money; the students framed the need in terms of a need to work. The research questions could have more fully explored the teachers' and the students' personal values about the meaning of money and the meaning of work. They appear on the surface to be the same economic driver, but the underlying attitudes seemed to be quite different. The students themselves named the high value that they placed on supporting their families and being employed. Without these two things in place, they felt a profound lack of respect from their family members and a deep sense of shame as well. For the teachers, on the other hand, the driver was primarily economic.

The other very significant fact is that the majority of the students in the study were there because of industrial accidents. They were unable to continue in their work lives, and were studying English because of the Workers' Compensation allowance and the possibility of retraining. It is likely that they would never have enrolled in ESL classes had the accident not occurred. The Workers' Compensation connection in fact says more about the group of men their age who were not enrolled in ESL classes at that time than it does about the ones who were enrolled. An entire generation of illiterate Italian men who came to Canada in the late 1950s and early 1960s did not attend ESL classes.

While the teachers cited the fact that the students were experiencing a sense of success, possibly for the first time in their lives, the students did not

mention this as a motivator for attending classes. The teachers also named the social component as important, with the language acquisition as a secondary outcome. While several of the students corroborated this notion, along with the possibility of improved communication and an opportunity to participate more widely in Canadian society as motivators for coming to the class, these reasons were not acknowledged by the bulk of the students.

Both sets of interviews were constructed using open-ended questions in an attempt to get unbiased responses. However, it would have been interesting to have had the teachers' perceptions first before developing the student interview schedule so as to be able to test out whether or not the teachers' perceptions were shared by the students, or whether they were just projections of the teachers' own views of why someone would study ESL.

The behavioural and attitudinal characteristics of the students

The teachers saw the majority of the students as having a positive attitude, although there were two distinct groupings named. One group was seen as highly positive. The teachers experienced these students as peers, seeking both professional and social interaction, and experiencing a high degree of self-efficacy based on the successes that they were having in their language acquisition. They were seen as outspoken leaders who acted as disciplinarians, informal "coaches" and interpreters for those who were less advanced. They

were extroverted and their "active" participation in the class was obvious to the teachers. It would be interesting to have these students complete a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and compare their extroversion coefficient with the second group who were seen as moderately positive, but typified as quieter and shyer, typical descriptors of Myers-Briggs introverts. This second group was also seen by the teachers to have more social goals than language acquisition goals. Only three of the students were seen as having "negative" attitudes with little progress being made.

The students had a different view of their experience. Only slightly more than half saw themselves as happy and looking forward both to expanding their social circle and improving their job. They also saw their own self-efficacy as the major contributing factor to their feelings of well-being, and looked forward to continuing to build on their successes. The others saw themselves as nervous, preoccupied, confused and uneasy, and primarily governed by fear.

The language-learning needs of the students

The students saw their language-learning needs as primarily related to pronunciation. Most also had great difficulty with writing, both the physical act of holding the pen or pencil, and joining letters and keeping within the lines. Spelling was also seen as a major problem, because you don't write what you hear in English as you do in Italian. The teachers concurred that oral skills and

writing were the two greatest language-learning needs of these students.

The information needs of the students

The teachers believed that the information needs of the students related to how to function in society were important ideally in an ESL literacy class, but not realistic for this group of students who were seen as quite capable of having all of their information needs met in Italian in the Italian community. The students agreed. They found it difficult to understand the interview questions about what the teachers should be teaching them about Canadian society. That was not seen as the teacher's responsibility in the language classroom. The teacher's job was to teach the language. They believed they could get most, if not all, of their other information needs met through their network of friends and resources in their own community. What stood out for the student learners was being taught how to count and how to exercise their manners in polite society.

The personal needs of the students

The students saw that the needs that had to be dealt with first were for food, clothing and shelter. The student group was split half and half as to which need came next, employment or language. The teachers saw that the students primary personal needs were for money and for work, for some level of

acceptance of their injuries and the fact that they would not be returning to their former employment, as well as for relief of physical pain.

The teachers did not seem to be aware of the level of fear experienced by many of the students. One of the greatest fears was related to the fact that it was the teacher who might terminate them from the program and thereby cut off their source of income. The teacher was their teacher, but was also their judge. If the teachers judged them poorly or their progress was seen to be too slow, the students believed they would be terminated from the program. In this light, the teachers did not seem to have a sense of their own power within the "power over" dynamic that was so typical of language classes throughout the 1970s and the first few years of the 1980s where the teacher taught, the students learned, and the personal context of the students' lives stayed outside of the classroom. In reality, according to the teachers, it rarely happened that a student was terminated, but the fear was very real for the students. What the teachers noted was that the students who left the program before completing it would drop out of the programs on their own, rather than being forced out by the agency.

Many of the students expressed other fears such as not understanding what the teacher was saying, being ridiculed, forgetting what they had learned because they had neither the time nor the opportunity to practise what they were learning, not having enough money to support their families, being too old

to learn a new language, and not being successful in school.

The teachers did not name these fears when describing either the motivation or personal needs of the students. The teachers had a totally different set of untested biases and assumptions about who the students were and what motivated or did not motivate them.

What negatively affected the students' experience of the language learning process, according to the teachers, were first and foremost the students' rural background and their lack of basic education. The teachers believed that there was 'an Italian attitude' towards learning that supported learning for the young but not for adults. The students were seen as preoccupied with their mortgages and their family problems and this drew their attention away from their learning. The students in the retraining program were seen to have a 'lower' status at the centre than did the other language students. This lowered status and the accompanying lack of esteem, in conjunction with their difficulties with Rehabilitation and the Workmen's Compensation Board, was perceived to make their language learning more difficult. As well, the teachers perceived that the students were experiencing a concurrent sense of hopelessness and an increasing lack of possibilities to achieve anything worthwhile in a country where they had thought they were going to get rich and where their children were going to get a better education.

The teachers believed that many of the students were so withdrawn from

the Canadian reality that they could not possibly envisage why they should be studying English. The motivation to learn might have been there. They may have had innate curiosity to learn, but they could not see how it related to their daily lives.

Both the students and the teachers agreed that most of the students who immigrated to Canada from Italy and who subsequently enrolled in the centre's language programs had been in Canada for many years, and had survived without knowing English.

The teachers felt that it was extremely difficult to stimulate the students' interest in learning a new language. They saw their students' progress ordinarily as very slow, and for the most part, that they were only concerned with achieving sufficient fluency in the language to allow them to get a job.

The teachers also commented on the strong ties the students had to the Italian community. Their perceptions were that once the students finished the language course and were retrained in a new skill, they would return to their own environment. They shopped in their own areas, they visited their own people, and used their own recreational facilities. If they went to the movies at all, they went to Italian films. There were Italian newspapers and radio stations. If they went out to dinner, they would go to Italian restaurants. As a result, the students would have little opportunity to continue using the language skills they had acquired. It was clear, from the teachers' perspective, that the

language learning activity was something that had to be endured as a part of the retraining process, and not something that these students would do on their own initiative if they didn't have to in order to receive the training allowance. The majority of the students shared the same views.

Although there were opportunities to study English as a Second Language in Toronto in the 1970s, the illiterate adults among the Italian community did not take advantage of them. The ESL teachers sampled in this study believed that, without a concerted effort on the part of the government and educational institutions in the province, Toronto's illiterate Italian adults would never be attracted to enroll in ESL programs as they were currently constituted.

Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations.

(a) The definition of functional literacy at the time was based on UNESCO's grade level achievement. In doing the study again, the definition of literacy would have to be refined to reflect the changes in thought that have taken place in the last 20 years.

(b) The data are qualitative and descriptive rather than quantitative and analytical. The intent of the research was to provide a picture of one group of students who were illiterate in their native

language who had to become literate in English. At the time, it was almost impossible to find comparison groups because most ESL classes were not dealing with issues of ESL literacy.

(c) The data-gathering instruments were designed specifically for this research. They were not tested instruments that were valid or reliable for a large population. They were designed to elicit attitudes and beliefs, as well as some demographic and programatic data, and as such, were seen only as springboards for the interview process.

(d) The generalizability of the present study's finding are limited. The sample was very small. The population in the sample, for the most part, were white Italian men who were receiving Workmen's Compensation allowances. A great number of the current students in ESL literacy classes belong to visible minorities, many are women, and many come from non-Roman alphabet languages. However, the study does provide a method of examining perceptions which might be valuable to replicate with other populations of students in ESL literacy classes.

ESL literacy

The field of ESL literacy has made enormous movement over the past 10 years. It has embraced principles of lifelong learning, equity of outcomes for its students, and has begun to focus on integrating services so that literacy will be seen as a part of the bigger social context in which the students live. It has taken on a holistic view of the students, recognizing that literacy involves the mind, the emotions, the body and the spirit of the learners. It has begun to recognize that there is a continuum of literacy, not just dichotomies or polar opposites, and that literacy is dependent on the context in which the learner lives. In other words, there are many literacies that one person might have. In this regard, illiteracy can span the boundaries of class, education and gender. It is no longer just the plight of the poor or a danger to society, as it once was seen.

Since ESL literacy deals with people who are focused on making some profound changes in their lives, the field might benefit from some advances in thinking currently being made about motivation and the process of change. I did not raise this thinking first in the literature review because it had not been formulated at the time the original research design was put in place. To have done so, in my view, would have biased the reporting of this research by raising questions which were not part of the original study. However, it is clear to me that the questions proposed in this study foreshadowed much of the

current thinking related to these two notions of motivation and change, as well as to an expanded notion of matching that is being used in current addiction treatment, as well as in some educational and therapeutic institutions.

Many professionals consider that change only happens when a person is motivated. Miller and Rollnick (1991) have greatly influenced the thinking about motivation in their book Motivational Interviewing. They contend that the traditional view of motivation is that it is something that a person has, a quality or a trait that one either possesses or not. By contrast, they see motivation as

> a state of readiness or eagerness to change which may fluctuate from one time or situation to another. This state is one that can be influenced. (p. 14)

From this point of view, it is clear that a person's motivation can be affected by any variety of conditions in their internal or external environment. It also names motivation as emerging out of a relationship between the change agent and the person who wants to make the change. In the case of ESL literacy, this means that the relationship between the teacher and the student would become the key indicator of success in the student's change process, coupled with the student's readiness to make the change. The implications for the field are great. Teachers would have to shift whatever authority or "power over" relationship they might have with their students, and place the students at the centre of the learning activity, a movement that has been promoted by ESL literacy experts

quoted earlier in this thesis, notably Burnaby, Bell and Wrigley.

Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente (1995) have expanded on this notion of readiness by examining thousands of people whom they categorize as "self-changers", that is, people who have made significant changes in their lives without the aid of an external change agent. They propose a "readiness for change" model that consists of six phases: precontemplation, in which the person is unaware or underaware that there is a need for change; contemplation, in which the person is experiencing some ambivalence about their current situation and is beginning to explore possibilities of making a change; preparation, in which the person has made the decision to change and is making the appropriate preparations to implement the change; action, in which the person actually initiates the change; maintenance, in which the person puts strategies in place to help not to revert to the earlier behaviour; and finally, termination, in which the new changed behaviour is integrated into the person's life. They have also discovered that there are certain strategies that a change agent can employ which are appropriate for each of these stages and which will help the "changer" to move from one stage to the next.

The participants in this study were clearly in the contemplation phase around learning a new language. Faced with the reality of their situation, most were still ambivalent about whether they wanted to learn or not, despite the fact that they were actually attending classes. Part of the job of resolving their

ambivalence would have been for the teachers to be more attentive to the fears the students were experiencing but not necessarily expressing, and by developing a relationship that was more mutual and less authoritarian.

This stages-of-change model works particularly well with principles of matching that have been implemented widely throughout the health care system in the United States, and which are now entering the Canadian system. Matching is a process that has been defined by Institute of Medicine (1990) which also puts the client at the centre of the change activity. It is based on a simple question that has six parts:

a) What people

b) with what kind of problems

c) can achieve what kinds of goals

d) using what kinds of interventions

e) delivered by what kinds of practitioners

f) in what kinds of settings?

How is the matching question reflected in this study? The participants in this study were a special group of people who were quite different from the usual students found in ESL classes at the time. What was significantly different about them is that their participation in the language learning experience was primarily driven by their need for retraining. Had they not been injured at work and subsequently put under Manpower allowances, it is unlikely

that any of them would have enrolled in an ESL class. They had managed very well with limited English language skills for most of their adult lives in Canada, and would likely have continued to use their limited English and the resources of friends and relatives when there was a need. It is worth noting, however, that they did in fact know what they needed from the language learning experience. They consistently stated that they needed to learn language that was useful to them. They did not believe they needed to learn civics or the other informational items that the teachers included in their classes. The vocabulary that they needed was directly related to their new work. They also knew what they expected from the teacher. The teacher's job, in their view, was to teach English -- pronunciation, spelling, writing, and reading. They were primarily not looking for a social experience. Their greatest need was to learn the language and to find a way of dealing with their fears and anxieties, as mentioned above.

The teachers spent much of their time focused on aural/oral practice. The themes they focused on were orientation and adjustment issues, as well as medical issues. Given the popularizing of Freirian ideas, and a shift away from the "expert" model that has taken place in literacy education over the past years, I believe that the teachers would plan their lessons quite differently if they were to teach these students today. They probably would spend a great deal of time developing curricula that matched the students' needs more closely,

with vocabulary and language learning experiences being rooted in the students' own experiences. They would spend more time on developing a personal relationship with their students, and would begin to recognize the students as the architects of their own futures. They would help them remove some of the barriers to their learning and help them make choices. They would support their students in the notions of self-efficacy and personal responsibility. They would individualize their language programs to a greater degree. They would help the students decrease the desirability of holding on to old behaviours. They would practise empathy, provide feedback, and help their students clarify their goals through active helping. With an expanded understanding of the various types of literacies that now exist, they might use more technology in their classrooms, or spend more time outside of the classroom, helping the students to explore their relationship with the external environments in which they live and work.

If ESL literacy is to continue to deal with the whole person in a context, the answers to the "matching question" could provide ESL literacy teachers with a superb foundation on which to build their programs.

Further Research

This study has extended the literature on ESL literacy in several ways. It provides a basic framework for examining the second language learning needs of adult ESL students who are illiterate in their native language and who have

to become literate in a second language. It illustrates that the needs of the students as perceived by the teachers are not necessarily the needs that the students perceive. If students and teachers have different criteria about the students' language learning needs, elucidating these criteria could have important theoretical and practical implications.

There is clearly a continuing need for research into the areas of mother tongue literacy as a precursor of second language literacy, and into the role of the transferability of skills between languages.

Further research needs to be done to examine the implications of applying the stages of change model and the concept of matching (as noted above) to an ESL literacy population. It is important for teachers to ask thorough questions of their students in order to better understand not only their students' needs, but also their students' readiness to engage in the learning process. This speaks to a more sophisticated type of assessment in which the students are co-assessors of their needs along with the teachers. It is also important to recognize that the assessment process is an ongoing one which impacts regularly not only on what is being taught but how it is being taught as well. It speaks to a process rather than an outcome, a process of involvement that is based on mutual respect and sharing, and a recognition of the rights of the students to determine their own learning experience.

ESL Literacy - The Future

What is the future of ESL literacy in this country? Cumming (1990) reiterates the dilemma facing the field. Literate expertise and second language proficiency are two very different things. Learners in ESL literacy programs are challenged in both areas. To acquire literacy in ESL, these learners must acquire literate knowledge and expertise, a second language, different cultural practices, knowledge and values, and new ways of interacting with people. Since so many studies of literacy in a second language have assumed literacy in the first language, Wrigley (1992) sees the need for ongoing research that focuses particularly on the learning needs of second language learners who are illiterate in their first language.

Cumming (1990, p. 39) names conditions which appear to foster literacy development, and reiterates the need for policy guidelines which support them:

1. participation in an environment where literacy is used purposefully on a regular basis;

2. access to appropriate models of literate behaviour and texts;

3. self-controlled practice in developing the skills, strategies, and knowledge to perform literate tasks independently.

Although the programs examined in this study provided an opportunity for students to participate regularly in an environment where literate skills were valued and taught, the teachers noted sadly that there were not sufficient numbers of texts in place to help the adult students who were illiterate in their

native language. The teachers used the methods that were popular at the time to teach the second language, but opportunities were few for the students to practise their newly acquired literate skills independently, as they more often than not returned to their Italian-speaking community and were not required to use their literate skills in their workplaces.

Sauvé (1990) suggests changes that need to be in place to meet the needs of ESL literacy learners: literacy programs which are designed specifically for ESL learners; learning systems that provide the learners with an experience of their own power in decision-making regarding content, the process of learning and the creation of their own learning materials; programs staffed by people who understand the social meaning of literacy as well as the ability to teach literacy skills; flexible and accessible programs; and, teacher training programs which emphasize critical reflection.

The students in the programs that were examined in this study had very little input into the content of their lessons. The teachers used the prescribed ESL text, Carson Martin's Introduction to Canadian English, and booklets prepared by the Ministry of Citizenship relating to history, government and civics. They did not experience decision-making regarding content, nor were the programs flexible or easily accessible throughout the city. Teacher training programs for ESL were limited, and had no basic literacy component. It lasted only a few weeks and focused on techniques, rather than critical reflection.

Current training for ESL is a much longer and hopefully more reflective process.

The Ministry of Education (1991) names the current and future trends in its Guidelines for Effective Literacy Programs in Ontario. As demands for educational equity increase, literacy programs will have to become more accessible and responsive to the needs and interests of special populations, such as Aboriginal peoples, racial minorities, Franco-Ontarians, people with disabilities and women. Although the Ministry does not include ESL literacy learners in its list of special populations, it seems clear to me that these guidelines will help to minimize the communication difficulties faced by ESL literacy learners as well.

They propose increasing the use of "plain language" in all public communication to reduce the barriers to understanding for people with weak literacy skills.

With increased international competition in business and industry, employers will be pressured to incorporate literacy education into job training and employment programs. The ability of people to find stable employment and the province's economic success depend on a fully literate workforce.

Technological innovation and economic restructuring will impact on the job market as traditional jobs change, and computer skills and more complex language become increasingly important. Although unions have begun playing a

role, they will have to continue responding to a growing literacy need in the workplace.

1996 has seen major cuts to health budgets and education budgets, a reduction in transfer payments, major restructuring of social services in the province, and a resurgence of fundamentalist right-wing beliefs throughout the United States and Canada. The government has continued the cuts in 1997, rationalizing the addiction treatment system, reducing the number of school boards in the province, and beginning a process of closing hospitals. Metropolitan Toronto is on the verge of becoming a megacity with one centralized government. Critics of these decisions point to further reductions to education budgets and social services.

These do not bode well for the poor, for marginalized people, for women, for people living with HIV disease and other life-threatening illnesses, or for the immigrant with ESL literacy needs. Despite the expressed need, the future for ESL literacy training in the province of Ontario looks very uncertain.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Second Language Learning Needs: A Survey

A comparison of the Perceptions of New Canadian Adult illiterates from Italy (Students of English as a Second Language) and selected Teachers of English as a Second Language in Metropolitan Toronto.

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

James N. Milligan
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
August, 1975

Introductory Note

In this questionnaire, "New Canadian Adult Illiterate" designates anyone who

(1) is an immigrant to Canada from Italy

(2) did not learn English as his first language, and has not acquired native proficiency in its use, and

(3) has completed Grade 5 or less in his country of origin.

Background Information

1. Name: _____

2. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )

3. Age:

25 or under	___	46 - 55	___
26 - 35	___	56 - 65	___
36 - 45	___	over 65	___

4. Academic Education:
(Please indicate the highest level achieved)

below Grade 13	___				
Grade 13		___	B.Ed.	___	
B.A.	___	B.Sc.	___	Major	_____
M.A.	___	M.Ed.	___	Major	_____
Ed.D.	___	Ph.D.	___	Major	_____

5. Professional Training in Education:

Teachers College (or equivalent)	___		
O.C.E. (or equivalent)		___	
In-service training ___	None	___	
Other (Please Specify)	_____		

6. Professional Training for T.E.S.L.:

None: ___	Specialized workshops	___	
Min. of Ed. Certificate in TESL	___		
U. of T. Certificate in TESL		___	
Other (Please specify)	_____		

7. (a) Total number of years teaching: _____
(b) Of this total, the number of years teaching ESL to adults:
_____

8. (a) Did you yourself learn English as a Second Language?
Yes ( ) No ( )
(b) If "Yes", what is/was your first language?
_____

9. What other language(s), if any, do you
(a) understand and speak fluently?
_____
(b) have some knowledge of?
_____

****

In the next section of this questionnaire, I would like you to examine two broad areas: first, what you would do under ideal conditions in teaching illiterates in your ESL classes, and second, what you actually do in your ESL classes, noting the restraining factors that would account for the differences between the "ideal" and the "actual".

****

** IDEALLY **

1. If they were readily available to you, and you had both the necessary training and the time to prepare for their use, which of the following pieces of audio-visual equipment would you use in teaching ESL to adult illiterates?

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Reel-to-reel tape recorder	___	___	___
Cassette tape recorder	___	___	___
Overhead projector	___	___	___
Opaque projector	___	___	___
Movie projector	___	___	___
Film-strip projector	___	___	___
Record player	___	___	___
Language lab	___	___	___
Language master	___	___	___
Video trainer	___	___	___
Other (please specify)			
_____	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___

** ACTUALLY **

2. In the last ESL programme that you taught, which of the following pieces of audio-visual equipment did you use?

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Reel-to-reel tape recorder	___	___	___
Cassette tape recorder	___	___	___
Overhead projector	___	___	___
Opaque projector	___	___	___
Movie projector	___	___	___
Film-strip projector	___	___	___
Record player	___	___	___
Language lab	___	___	___
Language master	___	___	___
Video trainer	___	___	___
Other (please specify)			
_____	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___

3. What factors account for the differences between the "ideal and the "actual" use of audio-visual equipment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

** IDEALLY **

4. In a 24-week program (600 instruction hours) and under ideal conditions, what percentage of the time would you spend in the following learning activities in order to meet the language learning needs of the adult illiterate student?

	%age		%age
Aural Comprehension	___	Music	___
Literary Appreciation	___	Handwriting	___
Speaking fluently	___	Spelling	___
Written composition	___	Pronunciation	___
Silent reading	___	Oral reading	___
Oral composition	___	Field Trips	___
Knowledge of grammatical terms			___
Other (please specify)			___

_____

5. In a 24-week program (600 instruction hours), what percentage of the time would you devote to the following themes?

	%age		%age
Housing	___	Medical	___
Employment	___	Recreation	___
Financial	___	Financial	___
Adjustment & Orientation	___	Legal	___
Other (please specify)			

_____

** ACTUALLY **

6. In the last ESL program that you taught, what percentage of the time did you spend on the following learning activities?

	%age		%age
Aural Comprehension	___	Music	___
Literary Appreciation	___	Handwriting	___
Speaking fluently	___	Spelling	___
Written composition	___	Pronunciation	___
Silent reading	___	Oral reading	___
Oral composition	___	Field Trips	___
Knowledge of grammatical terms			___
Other (please specify)			___

7. In the last ESL program that you taught, what percentage of the time did you devote to the following themes?

	%age		%age
Housing	___	Medical	___
Employment	___	Recreation	___
Financial	___	Financial	___
Adjustment & Orientation	___	Legal	___
Other (please specify)			___

8. What factors account for the differences between the "ideal" and the "actual"emphasis on these themes?

_____

_____

_____

_____

** IDEALLY **

9. For each of the following themes, please check the items that you would include in your lessons:

(a) Housing

( ) Tenant/landlord relations
( ) building permits ( ) mortgage
( ) zoning regulations ( ) lease
( ) Other (Please specify)
( ) _____ ( ) _____

(b) Employment

( ) Department of Manpower
( ) Metro Licensing Commission (permits for skilled labour jobs)
( ) employment agencies ( ) unions
( ) statutory holidays ( ) holiday pay
( ) overtime ( ) apprenticeship
( ) minimum wage ( ) S.I.N.
( ) Other (Please specify)
( ) _____ ( ) _____

(c) Financial

( ) banking procedures ( ) loans
( ) old age pension ( ) income tax
( ) workmen's compensation ( ) U.I.
( ) family allowance ( ) welfare
( ) Other (Please specify)
( ) _____ ( ) _____

(continued on page 10)

** ACTUALLY **

10. For each of the following themes, please check the items that you included in your lessons in the last ESL course that you taught:

(a) Housing

( ) Tenant/landlord relations
( ) building permits ( ) mortgage
( ) zoning regulations ( ) lease
( ) Other (Please specify)
( ) _____ ( ) _____

(b) Employment

( ) Department of Manpower
( ) Metro Licensing Commission (permits for skilled labour jobs)
( ) employment agencies ( ) unions
( ) statutory holidays ( ) holiday pay
( ) overtime ( ) apprenticeship
( ) minimum wage ( ) S.I.N.
( ) Other (Please specify)
( ) _____ ( ) _____

(c) Financial

( ) banking procedures ( ) loans
( ) old age pension ( ) income tax
( ) workmen's compensation ( ) U.I.
( ) family allowance ( ) welfare
( ) Other (Please specify)
( ) _____ ( ) _____

(continued on page 11)

** IDEALLY **

9. (continued) For each of the following themes, please check the items that you would include in your lessons:

(d) Medical

( )	medical insurance	( )	O.H.I.P.
( )	poison control centre	( )	doctors
( )	hospitals	( )	clinics
( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

(e) Legal

( )	lawyers	( )	Legal Aid
( )	Human Rights		
( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

(f) Recreation

( )	sports facilities	( )	hobbies
( )	parks, camps, etc.		
( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

(g) Adjustment and Orientation
(g-1)

( )	Canadian politics	( )	citizenship
( )	ethnic organizations	( )	Cdn. Geography
( )	ethnic newspapers	( )	Cdn. History

(continued on page 12)

** ACTUALLY **

10. (continued) For each of the following themes, please check the items that you included in your lessons in the last ESL course that you taught:

(d) Medical

( )	medical insurance	( )	O.H.I.P.
( )	poison control centre	( )	doctors
( )	hospitals	( )	clinics
( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

(e) Legal

( )	lawyers	( )	Legal Aid
( )	Human Rights		
( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

(f) Recreation

( )	sports facilities	( )	hobbies
( )	parks, camps, etc.		
( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

(g) Adjustment and Orientation
(g-1)

( )	Canadian politics	( )	citizenship
( )	ethnic organizations	( )	Cdn. Geography
( )	ethnic newspapers	( )	Cdn. History

(continued on page 13)

** IDEALLY **

9. (continued) For each of the following themes, please check the items that you would include in your lessons:

(g-2)

( )	rehabilitation courses	( )	language class
( )	upgrading courses	( )	parent's night
( )	educational system		

(g-3)

( )	traffic regulations	( )	transportation
( )	driving licences		

(g-4)

( )	employment applications	( )	clothing
( )	food labelling	( )	credit buying
( )	food shopping	( )	consumerism

(g-5)

( )	police department	( )	fire department
( )	government agencies	( )	telephone
( )	day care centres	( )	churches
( )	marriage laws	( )	dating
( )	environmental issues		

(g-6)

( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____
( )	_____		

** ACTUALLY **

10. (continued) For each of the following themes, please check the items that you included in your lessons in the last ESL course that you taught:

(g-2)

( )	rehabilitation courses	( )	language class
( )	upgrading courses	( )	parent's night
( )	educational system		

(g-3)

( )	traffic regulations	( )	transportation
( )	driving licences		

(g-4)

( )	employment applications	( )	clothing
( )	food labelling	( )	credit buying
( )	food shopping	( )	consumerism

(g-5)

( )	police department	( )	fire department
( )	government agencies	( )	telephone
( )	day care centres	( )	churches
( )	marriage laws	( )	dating
( )	environmental issues		

(g-6)

( )	Other (Please specify)		
( )	_____	( )	_____

( )

** SOME OTHER QUESTIONS **

11. Which of the following language teaching strategies do you find most effective in dealing with the language learning needs of the adult illiterate in your ESL class?

1 - very effective
2 - moderately effective
3 - not effective

	1	2	3
Grammatical description	___	___	___
Mim-mem drill	___	___	___
Pattern practice	___	___	___
Substitution drill	___	___	___
Dictation	___	___	___
Oral reading	___	___	___
Picture stimulus for conversation	___	___	___
Transformation exercise	___	___	___
Fill-in-the-blank exercise	___	___	___
Listening comprehension	___	___	___
Reading comprehension	___	___	___
Minimal pairs	___	___	___
Backward build-up	___	___	___

12. Of the "moderately effective" and "not effective" strategies, what factors (e.g. additional teacher training) would improve your effectiveness in their use in teaching ESL to adult illiterates?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. If the preceding categories have not included the language teaching strategies that you generally employ in your ESL classes, briefly elaborate:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Which commercial texts, programmes or tapes do you find particularly useful in teaching ESL to adult illiterates?

	Title	Author	Publisher
1.	_____		
2.	_____		
3.	_____		
4.	_____		
5.	_____		
6.	_____		

****

Thank you for your help and cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Appendix B

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. In your opinion, when (name of student) first came to English class, how did he (she) feel about
    a) coming to school?
    b) you?
    c) his fellow students?
    d) learning another language?
2. How were the feelings manifested?
3. In your experience, is his (her) behaviour typical of students from Italy?
4. What other behavioral characteristics have you noticed among your students from Italy?
5. Why do you think (name of student) enrolled in an ESL class? i.e. What specific reason motivated his entry?
6. What are the most important reasons for students from Italy enrolling in an ESL class?
7. What are the greatest difficulties that (name of student) had to overcome in coming to school, other than linguistic difficulties?
8. What did (name of student) find most difficult about learning English?
9. What teaching strategies do you use to help him (her) to cope with these difficulties?
10. Besides language instruction, what other needs did (name of student) have in regard to

his (her) adjustment to Canadian life when he (she) first came to you ESL class?

11. How have you helped him (her) to satisfy those needs?

12. What do you consider to be the most common important needs of students coming from Italy with regard to

    a) language learning?

    b) personal needs?

    c) information needs?

13. What can the teacher do in the ESL classroom to help meet these needs?

Appendix C

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ITALIAN)

1. Nome e Cognome.
2. Data di nascita.
3. Sesso.
4. Grado d'istruzione.
5. Data ultima di frequenza.
6. Data d'arrivo in Canada.
7. Occupazione in Italia.
8. Occupazione in Canada.
9. Da quanto tempo studia Inglese?
10. Quali motivi l'hanno spinta a studiare Inglese?
11. Descriva il suo stato d'animo (le impressioni ricevute) i primi giorni di scuola (contento - preoccipato - nervoso diffidente).
12. É il suo stato d'animo cambiato?
13. In che senso? Perché?
14. Chi o che cosa l'ha aiutato di piú ad imparare l'Inglese? In che modo?
15. Cosa pensa la sua famiglia del fatto che lei studia Inglese?
16. Parla altre lingue? Quali?
17. Quali sono state le difficoltá maggiori incontrate durante il periodo di apprendimento? (comprendere l'insegnante - pronunciare, leggere o scrivere l'Inglese?)

18. Che cosa ha imparato, oltre alla lingua, di cui non era a conoscenza prima? (Sistema scolastico - laserata dei genitori - informazioni riguar do a ospedali, polizia, pompieri, servizi legali, domande di lavero, ecc.)
19. Quali altre informazioni avrebbe voluto avere?
20. Quali sono, secondo lei, le cose di cui un immigrante ha bisogno piu' impellente, quando arriva in Canada? (Lingua - impiego - abitazione - assistenz medica e legale, ecc.)
21. In che modo puó un insegnante aiutare gli studenti che si iscriveno per la prima volta a un corso di lingua Inglese? (Escursioni - metropolitana - supermercati - banche - telefoni, ecc.)

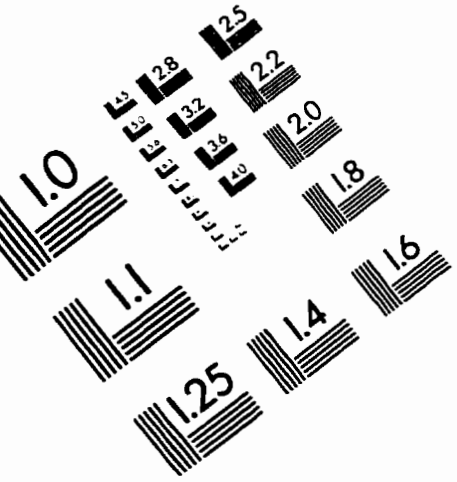
STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ENGLISH)

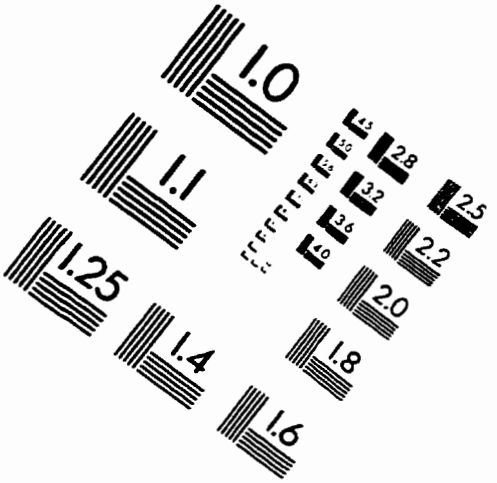
1. Name.
2. Age.
3. Sex.
4. Highest grade completed.
5. When.
6. Length of time in Canada.
7. Previous occupation in Italy (if any).
8. Occupation in Canada (if any).
9. Length of time studying English.
10. Why did you begin your study of English?
11. How would you describe yourself and your feelings on the first day of school?
12. Do you feel that your feelings have changed?
13. If so, in what way? Why?
14. Who or what has helped you most in studying English?
15. What does your family think about the fact that you are studying English?
16. Do you speak any other languages? Which ones?
17. What do you consider the major difficulties of studying English?
18. What else did you want to learn, besides English, that would help you to adjust to Canadian life?
19. Is there any other information that you think you need?

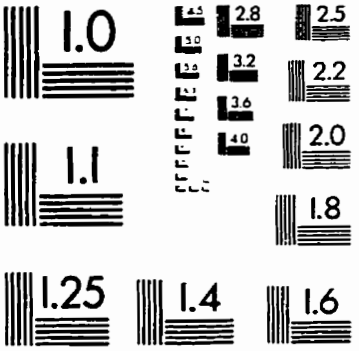
20. What, in your opinion, are the most important needs of an immigrant when he first arrives in Canada?

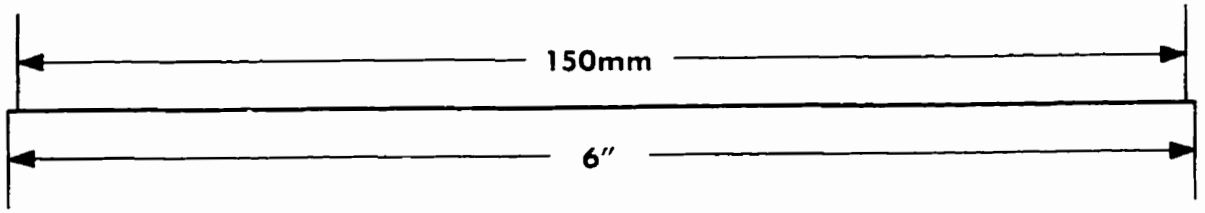
21. Besides teaching language, are there any other things that the English teacher can do to help an immigrant when he first enrolls in the English class?

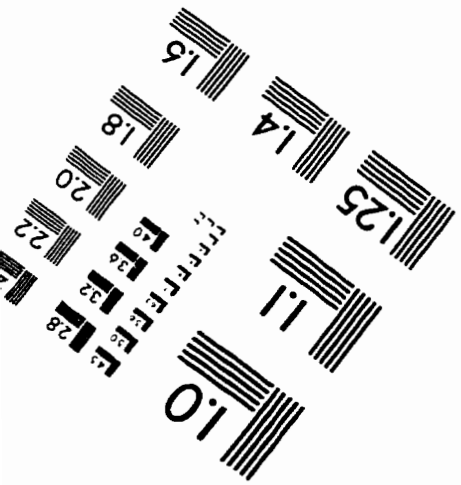
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

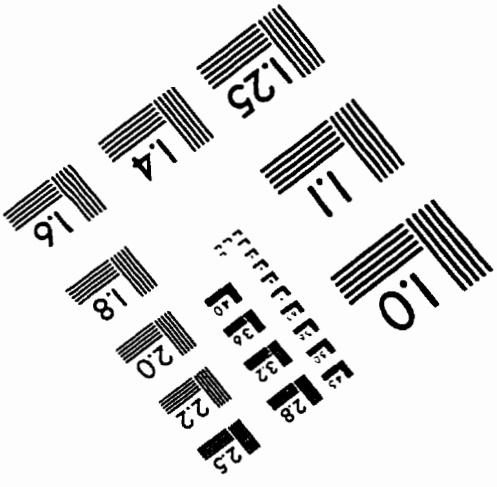












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