

Exploring ESL Specialist Teacher Preparation and Professional Development
in British Columbia.

by

Boe Beardsmore
B.A., University of Alberta, 1992
B.Ed., Simon Fraser University, 2003

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ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative and quantitative examination of the teacher preparation and professional development of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia. Data were collected through survey questionnaires and the findings were then compared with the qualifications that were espoused as essential preparation by the experts in the research literature to determine if discrepancies existed between best practice guidelines gleaned from the research literature and extant preparation of ESL teachers in BC.

The findings of this research revealed that in general, the participants in this survey possessed the general levels of ESL preparation that were commensurate with the criteria recommended by the research literature and the criteria established by the British Columbia Ministry of Education ESL Policy Guidelines. Those who were situated in urban settings had the most access to and participated in the most ESL-related professional development workshops. They also had completed the most ESL courses and felt the most efficacious. Conversely, those participants situated in rural settings had the least access to and participated in the least number of ESL-related professional

development activities. They also completed the fewest ESL courses and felt the least efficacious. The majority of participants in this study felt more efficacious in the skills development elements of teaching ESL than in the cultural/social aspects of teaching ESL. Many participants voiced concerns with the lack of quality ESL services offered to ESL students in their respective districts and felt that there was insufficient preparation in the various teacher pre-service teacher education programs in British Columbia to teach ESL students.

Further studies could examine why teachers view cultural/social knowledge as secondary to the skills development when experts in the field have asserted that both are essential for teaching ESL; why accessibility to ESL workshops and courses for rural teachers is still a challenge with the available technology; how the various stakeholders in education view ESL and what they foresee as changes to accommodate the demographics of the student population; and how ESL specialist teachers impact the graduation rates of ESL students and the BC Foundation Skills Assessment scores.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Martin and Tobias for giving me the strength and inspiration to achieve my goals. Without their unconditional love, support and understanding, this would not have been possible.

Also to my parents for their love and support and for the many sacrifices they have made for our education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2001 British Columbia (BC) Census, over the last two decades, the majority of immigrants in the province arrived from non-English speaking countries in Asia, resulting in a “relatively higher proportion of the recent immigrants [possessing] no English language ability ...” (BC Statistics, 2006, p.1). According to the 2001 Canadian census, over 25% of school-aged students were immigrants and close to 20% of the students’ home language was other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2003). In the 2005/2006 school year, nearly 61 000 students (approximately 10.1% of students) in BC’s public schools were designated as English as a Second Language (ESL) students (Ministry of Education, 2006).

With increasing numbers of ESL students, teachers are encountering more English language learners in their classrooms, and are faced with the daunting task of addressing and meeting the needs of not only mainstream students but also ESL students in integrated classes. A report from the ESL Provincial Specialist Association (ESL PSA) asserts that “ESL learners now constitute the majority in the larger urban school districts” (Wild, Helmer, Tanaka & Dean, 2006, p.1) and teachers in urban districts have reported an increase of 30% to 45% in their ESL caseloads over the past five years. A report from the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) claims that rapid changes in student demographics have “created a gap between needs and reality” (Naylor, 1994, p.1). As ESL enrolment increases, so will the needs for ESL services.

Teacher Certification in British Columbia

Currently, no certification or standard accreditation for ESL specialist teachers exists in British Columbia beyond the minimum requirements for regular, certified classroom teachers as mandated by the BC College of Teachers. The BC Ministry of Education outlines suggested minimum preparation for ESL specialists in the *English as a Second Language Policy Guidelines (1999)*. According to the guidelines, an ESL specialist teacher can be identified according to the following three categories: possessing a Professional Teaching Certificate and basic classroom experience; training in methodology, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, multicultural studies, first and second language learning, and applied linguistics; or having relevant practical experience such as living in another culture for a period of time...[or]... learning another language (Ministry of Education, 1999, pg.17). These are only suggested minimum qualifications, and the Ministry does not monitor the hiring practices of districts to ensure that these minimum qualifications are being upheld. The hiring of qualified individuals is left to the discretion of the district.

While the minimum ESL specialist teacher preparation is considered a requisite in each school district, what these specific qualifications are or should be are unclear. No standard or guideline exists at the district or provincial level that explicitly states what would be accepted as the minimum qualifications for ESL teaching. Presently in British Columbia, the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) is the governing body that establishes the requirements for teacher education certification. The BCCT evaluates the applicant's qualifications and suitability to determine if the individual is qualified to teach in the public schools. Currently, for standard certification, applicants are required to have

completed a minimum of 4 years of post-secondary education in a teacher education program (120 credits) recognized by the BCCT; for professional certification, the applicants are required to have completed an undergraduate degree and a teacher education program (150 credits) recognized by the BCCT (BC College of Teachers, 2007). All teachers in British Columbia require certification from the BC College of Teachers in order to teach in BC's public schools. The BCCT neither outlines the general preparation guidelines for ESL specialist teachers nor grants certification for teaching ESL. ESL qualifications are only recognized as an endorsement or as an add-on certificate along with a general teaching certificate. An ESL certificate alone is not sufficient to teach ESL classes in BC public schools. Even with ESL certification, the College only recognizes the general teacher education program and only provides a general teaching certificate. Once again, the hiring of qualified teachers is left to the discretion of the school districts.

Although there is strong evidence to support the necessity of qualified ESL specialist teachers for ESL learners, there is still an absence of district/provincial/national policy to ensure that the ESL learners are receiving the quality of education that they require from qualified teachers of ESL. Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Canada, a national organization comprised of ESL specialist teachers, learners, and learner advocates, has created a national standard for ESL specialist teacher qualifications, but this standard is not policy. TESL Canada only provides a guideline, and encourages the institutions to staff accordingly, but does not compel them to adhere to the TESL standards. The school districts purport to hire based on qualifications. The BC Ministry of Education only suggests minimal ESL qualifications and fails to provide a

policy for hiring qualified ESL specialist teachers. Because there is no policy to guide districts in hiring qualified ESL specialist teachers, the districts are free to interpret qualifications when staffing their schools. Without a certification policy in place, there exists a great risk that unqualified teachers may be employed to teach ESL students. Based on the research literature, a huge disservice to the ESL learners would occur. According to Menken and Holmes (1992), in the United States in 1997, only 2.5% of teachers who instructed English language learners possessed ESL certification. Furthermore, only 30% of all teachers who had ESL students had received any professional development in ESL (Menken & Holmes, 1992). Without a universal standard for hiring well qualified ESL specialist teachers, the quality of education for ESL students will remain uncertain.

Certification Implications

The lack of certification or a standard in the field of ESL has several implications. Because no policy exists outlining the specific qualifications for ESL specialist teachers, the quality of ESL teacher preparation may vary significantly. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Canada and experts in the field of ESL have all provided a general list of areas of study, essential for teaching English language learners. Because these are not policies, however, there is no impetus for individuals to adhere to the recommended courses when seeking qualifications or for hiring institutions to apply these recommendations when hiring ESL specialist teachers. Qualifications may mean anything from an afternoon's workshop to a year's course work to a Master's degree (US Department of Education, 1996). Most in-service training courses for teachers tended to be shorter and less in-depth than pre-

service training for student-teachers (US Department of Education, 1996). The lack of parameters regarding the qualifications of ESL specialist teachers leaves the term ‘qualifications’ open for interpretation for the districts. The meaning is left to their discretion to determine if an individual is adequately qualified or not for the ESL teaching assignment. No monitoring process exists to ensure that the individuals who are hired are in fact minimally qualified to teach ESL learners. In many cases, teachers who have neither sufficient expertise nor the experience in working with ESL learners may be assigned to ESL classes.

An absence of policy addressing ESL specialist teacher preparation and professional development may result in significant variations in the quality of training offered at different institutions, resulting in varying levels, quality and types of preparation for ESL specialist teachers. All ESL specialist teachers are not equally trained or qualified. This is problematic given that research reveals that qualified teachers have a greater impact than unqualified teachers on student outcomes (OECD, 2005; Goldhaber, 2002; Lewis & Paik, 2002). Without ESL teacher standards or guidelines, what these qualifications are may be uncertain; therefore, determining minimum qualifications becomes challenging. As a result, the minimum (general) qualifications acquired by current ESL teachers in BC are presently unknown.

Because there are no guidelines or monitoring of ESL teacher preparation and professional development, individual districts have the discretion to determine if an individual is prepared adequately for ESL teaching assignments. In many school districts, concerns exist regarding “too few staff within each school [being] adequately trained to teach ESL/ESD students in an integrated setting” (Naylor, 1994, p.3). In the *Standards*

for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC (2004), the BC College of Teachers states that “educator competence is directly related to teacher education and to student achievement” (p.4). As the governing body that issues teacher certification in BC, the College has yet to develop or implement specific teacher qualification guidelines for ESL to ensure that teachers who teach ESL are prepared adequately. This is contrary to the research literature which states that due to the considerable differences between second language acquisition and other disciplines, ESL specialist teachers require extensive additional knowledge in areas such as second language acquisition, cultural/linguistic awareness, language/linguistic knowledge, and classroom-home liaison (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

The indeterminate nature of ESL certification/accreditation raises questions on the depth of training and skills of ESL specialist teachers and the degree of differences in qualifications among ESL specialist teachers in BC. In addition, is the preparation of BC’s ESL specialist teachers aligned with what the literature states is required or is there a discrepancy between what the literature espouses and what ESL specialist teachers actually possess? Ultimately, are ESL specialist teachers in BC adequately prepared to teach ESL students?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this research was to determine the general levels of current preparation and on-going professional development among practicing ESL teachers in the province of British Columbia. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between preparation and age, sex, setting, region, and measures of self-

efficacy and the relationships between professional development and age, sex, setting, region, coursework and measures of self- efficacy. These findings were then compared with the qualifications that were espoused as essential preparation by the experts in the research literature to determine if discrepancies existed between best practice guidelines gleaned from the research literature and extant preparation of ESL teachers in BC presently.

Research Questions

The following are subsequent questions that arose from the study:

1. Does the preparation of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia match the criteria for ESL teaching as stipulated by the research literature?
2. Do ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia meet the guidelines for skills and knowledge as outlined by BC the Ministry of Education?
3. Is there a relationship between the general levels of ESL specialist teacher preparation and age, sex, setting, region, and measures of self- efficacy?
4. Is there a relationship between ESL specialist teachers' participation in professional development and age, sex, setting, region, coursework and measures of self- efficacy?

Significance of the Study

This research is significant for several reasons. First, very little is known about this group of educators. Virtually no research exists that examines ESL specialist teachers' preparation in BC. As there is no standard accreditation for ESL specialist teachers in BC, the level of qualifications and skills remains unknown and undefined. Individual ESL teachers are responsible for obtaining the minimum credentials for

teaching ESL. As a result, the level of skills and training may vary greatly from one teacher to the next. Having a general idea of the qualifications will provide a clearer picture of who is teaching the growing number of ESL students in BC.

Second, no research to date has examined factors that may contribute to the variation in qualifications and skills among the ESL teachers. How variable are the levels of preparation among ESL teachers? What contributing factors affect the differences in qualifications? This research has provided a general landscape of current ESL specialist teachers' pre-service/current preparation and on-going professional development. The study identified commonalities and differences in the training and skills among the ESL professionals.

Third, this research identified the areas where further professional development/preparation may be needed among the target group and provided a base for further assessment on how best to deliver and provide this training to ESL teachers throughout BC. Finally, this research has provided the groundwork for future empirical studies on ESL specialist teacher preparation and ESL student achievement in BC to determine if any correlation exists between qualified ESL teachers and ESL student achievement.

Definition of Terms

In the ESL Policy Framework (1999), the Ministry of Education defines an ESL student as the following:

... English as a Second Language students are those whose primary language(s), or language(s) of the home, is/are other than English, and who may therefore require additional services

in order to develop their individual potential within British Columbia's school system. Some students speak variations of English that differ significantly from the English used in the broader Canadian society and in school; they may require ESL support (6).

In some literature, ESL students may also be referred to as English language learners (ELL), English as an additional language learner (EAL) or limited English proficient student (LEP).

Delimitations of the Study

The following limitations were imposed on this study:

1. The study was limited to the current membership (2007) of the English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists Association (ESL PSA).
2. The study was limited to the membership during the months of June and July of 2007.

Research overview

This study is a qualitative and quantitative examination of the teacher preparation and professional development of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia. Data were collected through survey questionnaires that included closed-type choice items, open-ended questions, and a comments section. The data were tabulated quantitatively and analyzed using traditional content analyses.

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction, research questions and the rationale for conducting the research, the significance of the study, definition of terms, the delimitations of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter Two presents the review of literature in general teacher qualifications and student

achievement and ESL teacher qualifications and ESL student achievement. This chapter also includes a discussion on teacher efficacy and home-school effects that impact student achievement. Chapter Three outlines the methodology: the instrument, population and samples, collection of data and data analysis of the study. Chapter Four provides the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected through the survey questionnaires. Chapter Five provides the results of the research, the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study and the recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Half a century after the Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka (1954) decision, discussions on equitable access to quality education for all children continue (Lewis, 2001) not only in the United States but also in many nations that have placed high quality schooling at the forefront of their national policy agenda (OECD, 2005).

According to a 2005 study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “raising the quality of learning...will not be achieved unless all students receive high-quality teaching” (p.7). The ongoing debate in the educational community focuses on the definition of high quality teaching. What defines an effective, quality teacher and which qualities impact student outcomes?

This literature review was conducted to address the following questions: What does the literature state about general teacher preparation and their impact on student achievement? What does the literature state about the preparation of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers on the achievement of English language learners? How does the preparation of general and ESL teachers differ from one another? Expectations on schools have become more complex as schools are now expected to address the various languages and cultural backgrounds of students in an effective and sensitive manner (OECD, 2005). The concern that arises is the ability of teachers to meet the challenge of a growing, diverse student population: do teachers have the knowledge and the skills to meet the needs of all students (OECD, 2005)?

The demographics of schools are changing quickly and dramatically. While becoming ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse places, schools are expected to

serve an increasing immigrant student population of whom many speak little or no English (Rong & Preissle, 1998). According to the US Census 2000, one out of five students enrolled in school in the United States is an immigrant (Goodwin, 2002). According to Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll (2005), 25% or almost 1.6 million youngsters are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) in California. California has approximately 32% of all the English as a Second Language (ESL) students in the country (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). According to the U.S. Department of Education, “almost 4 million public school children – nearly one in 12 – received special assistance to learn English in 2001-2002” (American Educational Research Association, 2004, p.1). Census 2000 (U.S.) estimated that there were approximately 3.4 million children between the ages of 5 to 17 who spoke little or no English.

Similarly in Canada, according to the 2001 Canadian census, in Vancouver and Toronto, over 25% of the school-aged population were immigrants, 40% of the students were visible minorities, and close to 20% spoke another language other than English or French at home (Statistics Canada, 2003). Since 1990, approximately 225 000 new immigrants have arrived in Canada each year (Statistics Canada, 2003). According to BC Statistics (2002), roughly half of the immigrants who arrived in British Columbia (BC) in the last decade did not have any English language abilities. Between 1992 and 2001, a total of 424 000 immigrants moved to BC, half of whom could not speak, write or read in English (BC Statistics, 2002). Approximately 83 000 immigrants were under the age of 20, and almost 75% of these immigrant children under the age of 19 had virtually no English language ability (BC Statistics, 2002).

A high proportion of immigrants who possessed no English language ability at the time of landing was of school age. Due

to the increasing number of non-English speaking immigrants entering the education system in the province, the demand on English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the school system has grown significantly during the last few years. With the increasing proportion of immigrants arriving from non-English speaking countries, there will be an on-going challenge of increasing demand on ESL in the provincial education system. (BC Statistics, 1996, p.1)

According to the BC Ministry of Education (1995), more than 62 000 ESL students (or approximately 11% of the total public school student population) were enrolled in the public school system during the 1994/95 school year. Out of 75 school districts in British Columbia, 73 school districts offered English as a Second Language (ESL) programs as “demand for ESL programs continued to exceed the rate of growth of regular public school enrolment...Over the past five years, public school ESL enrolment has increased by 82 percent, almost seven times the growth rate in the general public school population...” (BC Ministry of Education, 1995, p.1). In 2005/2006 school year, 10.1% of all public school students (approximately 60, 676) were designated as ESL students (BC Ministry of Education, 2006).

Research in the United States has revealed that an achievement gap exists between minority students and white students (D’Amico, 2001; Barton, 2001; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). According to the College Entrance Examination Board (1999), achievement differences exist based on race and ethnicity (Johnston, 2000), and these differences appear as early as Kindergarten and persist throughout college. The College Board report asserts that “differences in educational outcomes contribute to large disparities in life chances” (College Board, 1991, p.1). Raptis and Fleming (2003) caution that “[w]ithout good quality schooling for everyone,

important parts of the population are disqualified from participating fully in a nation's political and cultural life, thereby creating a class system and confining the tasks of civic leadership to elite classes..." (p.1). Disparities in performance are the highest at the top percentile for achievement as not all groups of students are attaining similar levels of achievement. The drop-out rates of minority students occur mainly at the secondary level (Gandara & Jolly, 1996). A persistent minority achievement gap has placed the educational system in a precarious position where educational differences may perpetuate these disparities, creating the potential for a progressively larger source of inequality and social conflict. The achievement gap has "serious educational, employment and economic consequences" (D'Amico, 2001, p.6).

Since the 1960s, significant research has identified various factors that may explain the differences in achievement gains. The Coleman Report (1966) identified various out of school correlates that had an impact on achievement (Raptis & Fleming, 2003). This report was the first large scale study to show that socioeconomic status (SES) was the strongest variable determining variation on student test scores (Barton, 2001). Hedges and Norwell (1998) state that one of the most widely replicated findings in social science is the relationship between test scores and socioeconomic status. In 1982, White described the effect as the most enduring finding in sociological research (Ma & Klinger, 2000). SES may account for one half of the black-white test score gap (Phillips et. al., 1998). In a Canadian study, Lytton and Pyryt (1998) claim that SES may account for up to 45% of the variation in achievement tests. According to the researchers, the most "ubiquitous and significant influence on achievement found in almost all investigations is students' social-class membership" (Lytton & Pyryt, 1998, p.282). A significant

percentage (35% to 50%) of the variability in student achievement of elementary students was due to their socioeconomic status (Rogers, Ma, Klinger, Dawber, Hellsten, Norwicki & Tomkowicz, 2006).

Difference in achievement based on race and ethnicity may also be rooted in the familial context. Differences in academic outcomes may be due to the differences in cultural values held by various ethnic groups (Blair, Legazpi-Blair & Madamba, 1999). Consideration of these differences is important when determining educational goals. Some examples of these differences are in behaviour of parents in disciplinary techniques and interactions, ethnic and cultural groups' specific culture or religion, language, and family values. Researchers have found that the gap begins before students start Kindergarten and the gap grows through high school and college (Barton, 2003). According to Lytton and Pyrypt (1998), characteristics such as ESL, special needs, and amount of parent involvement account for 6% to 11% of the achievement variation. Relevant student factors such as gender, prior performance and family characteristics also appear to have a significant impact on school performance (Rogers, Ma, Klinger, Dawber, Hellsten, Norwicki & Tomkowicz, 2006).

In a study on school effectiveness, Raptis and Fleming (2003) identified the following as the main school factors that affect achievement: a focus on student achievement; effective instruction; teamwork for a shared vision; an orderly, secure and caring climate; strong leadership from principals; monitoring and assessment linked to planning; high standards and expectations; and supportive home-school links. Raptis and Fleming (2003) state that the most widely reported characteristic in school effectiveness is a "focus on student achievement" (p.5). Barton (2003) examined various correlates of

achievement and also stated that the rigorous curriculum was a crucial element in student outcomes. According to Barton (2003), teacher preparation, experience and attendance were significant correlates in student achievement. Vandevort and colleagues (2004) concur that “teachers are powerful contributors to students’ academic achievement” (p.1). As well, Darling-Hammond (1998) states that good teaching results in high achievement as the quality of the curriculum and teacher skills impact student outcomes more than other school correlates. Cross (1994) identified the following school factors that impact student achievement (after social-class effects were controlled statistically), distinguishing effective from non-effective schools: high expectations for students; clear instructional objectives; school-wide emphasis on basic skills; close monitoring of student achievement; strong principal leadership; and safe and orderly school climate (Lytton & Pyryt, 1998). According to Witte and Walsh (1990), however, after socioeconomic status (SES), school effects, themselves, tend to be modest (Lytton & Pyryt, 1998) in impacting student performance.

Research reveals that out-of-school factors are more significant than in-school factors in influencing student achievement. Unfortunately, out-of-school factors such as socioeconomic status (SES) are beyond the control of the education system. School effects such as teacher qualifications, however, are controllable effects and may influence student achievement (Ma & Klinger, 2000). Although the impact of in-school effects may be less significant than out-of-school effects, teacher qualifications are an in-school effect that may be manipulated to improve student outcomes. It behooves educational researchers to discuss and explore these effects, regardless of how small the impact may be. In doing so, an assessment may be made to see if the school system is able to support

the diversity and challenges that exist presently. Is the BC public school system able to meet the demand for ESL programs with qualified, ESL-trained teachers? What qualifications do ESL teachers need in order to accommodate the needs of ESL students?

Distribution of Quality Teachers and Minority Achievement

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2005) asserts that the “connection between the distribution of teachers across schools and educational equity is particularly well documented in the United States” (p. 8). In New York, for example, the differences in the qualifications of teachers across schools are striking. The least qualified teachers are often situated in classrooms at urban schools where the majority of students are low SES, low-achieving minority students (OECD, 2005). According to Goldhaber and Anthony (2004), significant empirical evidence exists, revealing that “teachers are not randomly distributed across students...nonwhite, poor, and low-performing students are more likely to be taught by less qualified teachers...” (p.20). Empirical evidence originating with the Coleman Report (1966) reveals that teacher quality has a greater impact on low-achieving students; this is supported by the, “notable differences in findings for students of different races or ethnicities” (Goldhaber and Anthony, 2004, p.23).

Achievement disparities between various subgroups in the U.S. are also well documented and have come to be known as the ‘minority achievement gap’ (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; D’Amico, 2001; Johnson, 2000; Gorard, 1999; and Kober, 2001). In order to redress this inequity to quality education, the United States Congress passed in 2001 the “reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB)” (National Collaborative on Action, 2004, p.3).

The objective of this legislation was to “improve the academic performance of all students, while simultaneously closing achievement gaps that persist between students from different ethnic groups and economic backgrounds. The law includes a number of elements considered essential for reaching this goal, including ensuring that all teachers are *highly qualified* [italics added]” (National Collaborative on Action, 2004, p.3). How does the literature define *highly qualified* teachers? What does the literature say about teacher effects and student achievement?

An OECD (2001) survey of upper secondary education in 15 member countries revealed that approximately “15% of full-time and 30% of part-time teachers were not fully qualified...” (OECD, 2005, p.29). Less than 4% of teachers in Canada were not fully qualified compared to more than 10% of teachers in the United States (OECD, 2005). According to the UNICEF *Innocenti Report Card* (2002), students in Canada fared significantly better than students in the United States. In reading, mathematics and science, approximately 5% of 15 year-olds in Canada scored below the fixed international benchmark whereas in the United States, approximately 16.2% of 15 year-olds scored below the benchmark (UNICEF, 2002).

Defining High-Quality Teachers

In *Teacher Quality in Canada* (2002), teacher quality is defined by differentiating teacher quality (teacher preparation/qualifications) from teaching quality (teaching practices). Teacher quality includes attributes such as “...aptitude, professional preparation, college major, SAT and teacher examination scores, teacher licensure and certification, and prior professional experience [whereas] ... teaching quality refers to ... creating a positive learning climate, selecting appropriate instructional goals and

assessments, using the curriculum effectively, and employing varied instructional behaviours that help all students learn at higher levels” (Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education, 2002, p.12). Several studies have shown that teachers’ knowledge and their teaching methods do have an impact on student learning (Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education, 2002).

According to the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), highly qualified teachers are those who hold a bachelor’s degree or higher from a 4-year institution, are fully certified by the state, and can demonstrate competence in their subject area (National Collaborative on Action, 2004). The OECD (2005) study identified teacher qualities as including qualifications, experience and tests of academic ability and also those characteristics that are harder to measure. Teacher profiles need to “encompass strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, the capacity to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, to contribute to the school and the profession, and the capacity to continue developing” (OECD, 2005, p.13).

According to Gustaffson (2003) and Rice (2003), teachers who are effective are “intellectually capable people who are articulate and knowledgeable, and are able to think, communicate and plan systematically” (OECD, 2005, p.99). Student achievement was greater when students were taught by teachers who fared well on literacy and verbal ability assessments (OECD, 2005). In *Reframing Education: How to Create Effective Schools*, Raptis and Fleming (2003) state that according to Cotton’s 1995 literature review, effective teachers do the following:

[They] orient students to lessons through explanation, relation of prior learning to new knowledge, arousal of student motivation, and use of ‘advance organizers’; provide clear and focused instruction through directions, lectures, independent practice,

strategy training, and skill development; provide feedback and reinforcement; and review and re-teach when needed for mastery learning (Raptis & Fleming, 2003, p.8).

Recent discussions in teaching expertise have been structured around Shulman's (1986) "influential ideas of pedagogical content knowledge" (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002, p.1539). They include teachers' knowledge in the subject content and their abilities to present effectively this content to various learners, utilizing various teaching methods and addressing the different learning styles. Overall, expectations for teachers have broadened to include the following: initiating and managing learning processes; responding effectively to the learning needs of individual learners; integrating formative and summative assessments; teaching in multicultural environments (OECD, 2005).

Various studies have shown a positive correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement, and have suggested that teachers' sense of efficacy "plays a powerful role in schooling" (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 234). Teacher efficacy has been linked to numerous variables in order to influence student achievement:

level of professional commitment...instructional experimentation, a willingness to try a variety of materials and approaches, the desire to find better ways of teaching, and implementation of progressive and innovative methods...[and] a willingness to work with students who are experiencing difficulties rather than referring the students to special education..." (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 214-215).

In 1976, the RAND Corporation published a study by Armor et al. (1976) that examined the success of various reading programs and interventions. The findings revealed that a strong relationship existed between teacher efficacy and variations in reading achievement among minority students (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998).

Similarly, Berman et al. (1977) discovered that teacher efficacy had a positive impact on student achievement and a positive effect on the “percentage of project goals achieved, on the amount of teacher change, and on the continued use of project methods and materials after the project ended” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p.204). Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a more extensive and reliable measurement of teacher efficacy, measuring the degree to which “teachers believed that the environment could be controlled, that is, the extent to which students can be taught given such factors as family background, IQ, and school conditions” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p.212). Gibson and Dembo found evidence that teachers with a higher sense of efficacy were more supportive and persistent with those students who were academically challenged (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998).

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) defined teacher efficacy as teachers’ beliefs in their effectiveness as teachers and their ability to impact student performance. Bandura (1997) defined self efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p.210). According to Gist and Mitchell (1992), self efficacy deals with the self-perception rather than the actual level of competence, where the over or underestimation of the individual’s capabilities could influence their effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998).

Teachers’ sense of efficacy has shown to be a powerful variable in student performance (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992) and has also shown to relate to teachers’ behaviour in the classroom such as the effort put into their teaching, the goals they set for themselves, the expectations they

have of their students, and their ability to cope with the unexpected (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers are more willing to experiment, adapt, and accept new ideas and teaching methods to better meet the needs of their students (Berman et al., 19997; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) state that a positive correlation exists between teacher efficacy and significant variables such as student achievement (Armor et al., 1976), student motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, in press-a), teachers' adoption of innovation (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly & Zellman, 1997; Guskey, 1988; Smylie, 1998), superintendents' ratings of teacher competence (Trentham, Silvern & Brogdon, 1985), and teachers' classroom management strategies (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Because self-efficacy is a teachers' belief in their judgment of their abilities to bring about the desired outcomes in student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), an examination of self-efficacy may be of significance for it may be a contributing factor in the degree of teacher preparation and professional development of teachers.

General Teacher Qualifications and Student Achievement

Substantial research exists which serves to illustrate the correlation between quality teachers and student outcomes (OECD, 2005; Goldhaber, 2002; Lewis & Paik, 2002). According to Rowan, Correnti and Miller (2002), however, a good deal of evidence on the overall size of teacher effect on student achievement does not explain why some teachers are more instructionally effective, thus producing greater student outcomes. Researchers have argued that teaching is a specialization that requires “extensive professional preparation, strong subject-matter knowledge, and a variety of pedagogical skills” (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002, p.1538) and in research, teaching

expertise is commonly determined by the teachers' educational backgrounds, credentials, and experience (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002).

Much of the research on teacher effects on student achievement is from the United States and entails many factors including "teacher skills, knowledge, attitudes and practices" (OECD, 2005, p.2). Citing studies conducted by Santiago (2002), Schacter and Thum (2004) and Eide et al. (2004), the OECD study states that "teacher quality is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement" (p.26) and research reveals that there is a positive correlation between student achievement and "readily measurable teacher characteristics such as qualifications, teaching experience, and indicators of academic ability or subject-matter knowledge" (p.26). Barton (2003) concurs that teacher preparation, experience and attendance were significant correlates in student achievement. The OECD (2005) study, however, cautions that the correlations between measured teacher characteristics and student achievement may not have been as significant as expected due to a lack of "consistently clear and strong effects of commonly measured characteristics of teacher quality" (p.2). The OECD study suggests that perhaps a lack of variation in some of the characteristics in research studies has had an impact on the results. As well, the study surmises that there is a threshold for effectiveness where teachers require a certain level of qualifications or experience to be effective, but beyond that level, the impact of additional qualifications may not be significant.

In Add It Up: Using Research to Improve Education for Low- Income and Minority Students, Lewis and Paik (2001) assert that based on empirical research, quality teaching is the most significant effect on the achievement of low-income and/or minority

children. They further claim that nothing can parallel the impact of a quality teacher who has the knowledge base, the teaching skills and the dedication to further student success (Lewis & Paik, 2001). A seminal research study conducted by Ronald Ferguson of Harvard University suggested that unequal student achievement was explained entirely by differences in teacher qualification; overall, teacher expertise “accounted for more variation in student achievement than any other factor (more than 40%)” (Lewis & Paik, 2001, p.20). Goldhaber (2002) discovered that teacher characteristics accounted for approximately 8.5% of the variation in student achievement, similar to the findings of economists Eric Hanushek, John Kain and Steven Rivkin, who estimated that approximately 7.5% of the total variation in student achievement was attributable to teacher quality (Goldhaber, 2002). Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley and Berliner (2004) concur with Ferguson’s findings that “teachers are powerful contributors to students’ academic achievement” (p.1). Teacher quality is the essential component in student outcomes (Emerick, Hirsch & Berry, 2004).

William Sanders’ longitudinal study of teacher effectiveness revealed that students whose initial achievement levels were comparable had “vastly different academic outcomes as a result of the sequence of teachers to which they are assigned” (Haycock, 1998, p.4). Sanders found that teacher effectiveness was the most influential school effect on student achievement (Goldhaber, 2002). Sanders claimed that individual differences in classroom teachers were the “single largest contextual factor affecting the academic growth” (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002, p.1526) of students; the study also revealed that there were many degrees of teacher effectiveness. Rowan, Correnti & Miller (2002) conducted large-scale survey research to gather data on instructional

processes and student achievement in American elementary schools during the early 1990s. The researchers used the data from *Prospects: The Congressionally Mandated Study of Educational Opportunity* to “estimate the overall size of teacher effects on student achievement...” (p.1526). They concluded that teacher effects did have a substantial impact on elementary students’ growth in reading and writing (Rown, Correnti & Miller, 2002).

Good teaching (curriculum quality and teacher skills) results in high achievement and impacts educational outcomes more than any other correlate (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Good teachers make a difference in student outcomes; the uncertainty lies in what constitutes a good teacher. Evidence suggests that various teacher effects have an impact on student performance but the “relationship between readily quantifiable attributes – such as a teacher’s highest degree attained or level of experience and student outcomes is tenuous at best” (Goldhaber, 2002, p.2). As well, some teacher qualities are difficult to quantify such as “the ability to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways; to create effective learning environments for different types of students; to foster productive teacher-student relationships; to be enthusiastic and creative; and to work effectively with colleagues and parents” (OECD, 2005, p.27).

Research on teacher qualifications presents many uncertainties and contradictions, “but it raises questions on relying on academic qualifications in determining effective teachers” (OECD, 2005, p.101). Teacher variables used in current data and research methods “are not precise enough to unequivocally determine the exact influence and interrelationship of different factors” (Phillips, 2002, p.20). Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley and Berliner (2004) conclude that although “no single approved list of

characteristics has emerged” (p.2), there appears to be general agreement that teacher qualifications are not based solely on credentials; other variables are involved.

General Teacher Attributes

Research in teacher attributes has generated five areas of teacher effects from which to assess correlation to student achievement. These effects, discussed below, include the following: certification/subject knowledge, teacher experience/education, teacher test scores/verbal ability, advanced degrees, and teaching methodology/pedagogy.

Certification

A preponderance of research has focused on the correlation between teacher certification and student achievement. Working from an American perspective, Goldhaber and Brewer’s empirical study (2000) tested the differences in achievement of grade twelve students whose teachers had various degrees of certification – from none to standard certification. According to the researchers, “...little research exists on the effectiveness of the teacher licensure system, in terms of how well teachers subsequently teach and what works to promote positive student outcomes” (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000, p.129). Using the data from the *National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988*, the researchers investigated the relationship existing between the types of certification/licensure and student test score gains. The goal was to determine whether the conventional means of obtaining a license for teachers were more likely to prepare teachers more effectively for this profession (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). According to the National Commission for Teaching and America’s Future (1996), the goal of licensure is to “guarantee a basic level of quality or skill of teachers in schools ...” (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000, p.130). A study by Hawk, Coble and Swanson (1985)

revealed that students who were taught by teachers certified in mathematics outperformed those who were certified in areas other than mathematics (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000).

In contrast, a study by Rudner (1999) discovered that students who were home-schooled by a parent with a state-issued teaching certificate did not outperform those home-schooled students whose parents were not certified (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000).

Darling-Hammond (1999) reported that the Fuller study (1999) in Texas showed that students who were enrolled in districts that employed a greater number of licensed teachers had a higher tendency to pass the Texas state achievement assessments (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) discovered that student achievement in math was higher for students whose teachers had a Bachelors or a Masters degree in mathematics than for those whose teachers had out-of-subject degrees; such qualifications, however, had little effect on science achievement (p.138). This finding was consistent with previous studies conducted by Goldhaber and Brewer (1997a) and Monk and Kin (1994), wherein teachers' subject-specific qualifications were found to have an impact on student achievement for math but not for science. The difference in student performance was approximately 8% of one standard deviation on the test in mathematics. Teachers with a degree in Education had "no impact on student science test scores, and in mathematics, having a BA in education actually [had] a statistically significant negative impact on mathematics scores of students" (p.139). According to Goldhaber and Brewer (2000), the "type of certification a teacher holds is an important determinant of student outcomes" (p.139). In mathematics, students who were taught by teachers with subject-specific training (mathematics degree or certification) outperformed those who were taught by

teachers who did not have subject-matter preparation; surprisingly, those students who were taught by teachers with emergency credentials [in mathematics or science] fared just as well as those who were taught by teachers with standard teacher credentials.

Generally, American teachers with standard certification have completed teacher education programs and have passed state-required standardized tests or the Praxis I, a screening assessment to determine a candidate's suitability for teaching. Teachers with alternative certification possess bachelor's degrees and have passed subject-matter tests. Teachers with emergency credentials have not met state licensing standards but are permitted to teach in order to fill teacher shortages (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005).

According to Goldhaber and Anthony (2004), research in education has yet to arrive at a consensus over which readily identifiable teacher characteristics are linked to student outcomes. The U.S. National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), however, presents an opportunity to "address some of these issues through the creation of a voluntary certification process whereby teachers who are considered to be highly effective can demonstrate, and gain recognition for, their knowledge and teaching skills" (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004, p.2). Using primarily the 1996-97 data from North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction, Goldhaber and Anthony conducted the first large-scale quantitative study of the NBPTS program and its relationship to student achievement. The researchers used teacher and student level administrative records to measure NBPTS certification as an attribute of effective teaching on student outcomes (p.13).

The NBPTS was founded on the premise that the “attributes that make experienced teachers effective can be identified and evaluated” (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004, p.5). Goldhaber and Anthony discovered that National Board Certified teachers (NBCTs) did appear more effective than non-NBCTs, but the researchers questioned whether “the NBPTS certification convey[ed] information about teacher quality above and beyond what [was] learned from teachers’ licensure test performance” (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004, p.14). The researchers agreed that there was merit to the “NBPTS assessment process in distinguishing between more- and less-effective teachers: teachers who are certified by NBPTS tend to be more effective than unsuccessful applicants to the program” (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004, p.25). The researchers, however, qualified this by stating that the study revealed that teachers who were destined to become certified were more effective pre-certification than post-certification. There was no evidence to suggest that teacher effectiveness increased by completing the NBPTS assessment process (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004). Overall, the researchers concluded that teacher characteristics such as degree, experience and certification status only accounted for a small percentage of what made teachers successful (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004). Studies conducted by Goldhaber (2002), Goldhaber and Brewer (2000), and Hanushek (1986 and 1997) supported these findings. Teachers do matter but the qualities that make them effective may not be “strongly related to observed teacher characteristics” (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004, p.5).

Vandervoot, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner (2004) examined the relationship between National Board Certification (NBC) and student achievement based on the SAT-9 scores. SAT-9 scores of grades 2 to 6 from 1999 to 2003 from the Arizona Department

of Education were examined to compare the adjusted gain scores of NBCT and non-NBCT students (Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner, 2004). According to National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), Board certification status is granted only to those teachers who have demonstrated their abilities to enhance student learning with the expectation that students of Board-certified teachers will make greater yearly achievement gains than students of non-certified teachers (Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner, 2004). The study revealed that overall, students of National Board Certified (NBC) teachers outperformed the students of non-NBC teachers. The researchers discovered that Board certified teachers had significantly greater effects on student achievement over non-Board certified teachers. Although the “achievement test used as an outcome measure for the research appears small but ... the effect size may be quite compelling” (Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner, 2004p.36). In 1999/2000, the effect sizes were greater for students of NBC teachers than for students of non-NBC teachers with effect sizes averaging .134 in reading, .352 in math and .125 in language. In 2000/2001, the effect sizes were .149 in reading, .48 in math, and .21 in language in favour of students of NBC teachers (Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner, 2004). An effect size of 1.0 was “approximately equivalent to one academic year’s growth on a typical standardized test ...[and] since the academic year is ordinarily ten months in length, an [effect size] of +.10 is roughly equal to one-month advantage on the grade equivalent scale of a standardized test” (Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner, 2004, p.29). Students of NBC teachers gained an average of 1.2 months more than the students of non-certified teachers across various areas of subject matter: it appears that NBC teachers were able to get “about 25 more days of instruction in the typical 180 day

calendar” (Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley & Berliner, 2004, p.36) than the non-NBC teachers.

Studies in teachers’ subject-matter knowledge and student achievement have produced mixed results, but the studies suggest that the teachers’ knowledge of subject matter may be associated with students’ high performance (Goldhaber, 2002). Darling-Hammond (1999) cautions that there is weak support and inconsistency in the research for subject matter knowledge and student outcomes. Results were mixed, with the exception of mathematics. A positive correlation exists between “fully certified mathematics teachers and student achievement over those without certification in mathematics” (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p.7). Using the data from the Longitudinal Survey of American Youth, Monk (1994) explored the effects of mathematics and science subject matter preparation of teachers on student achievement. The results indicated that the teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter they were teaching had positive effects on students’ achievement gains, and the effects increased in advanced mathematics and science (Monk, 1994).

According to the OECD (2005), Woßmann (2003) found a positive correlation between teachers’ academic qualifications and student achievement; a teacher’s level of education is positively related to student performance, with the effects stronger in science than in mathematics. On the other hand, Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) discovered a positive relationship between teachers’ degrees in mathematics and student achievement but not in science. The OECD (2005) also reported that according to Wilson et al. (2001), a positive correlation exists between teachers’ academic qualifications and student performance, but qualified the finding by noting that studying for a longer period

was not always better. A minimum level of subject matter knowledge is essential but above and beyond that level, student gains are not necessarily associated with the higher levels of subject matter knowledge (OECD, 2005). A connection between teachers' subject matter knowledge and student achievement is moderately supported by research, but how much knowledge is required is still uncertain (OECD, 2005).

According to Allen (2005), an adequate knowledge of the subject matter is necessary for teachers to be effective, but just what 'adequate knowledge' means is unclear. The majority of the research in subject knowledge has been in mathematics and there has been "moderate support for the importance of solid subject-matter knowledge" (Allen, 2005, p.1). Having an undergraduate major in the subject area may be helpful as the research implies that some critical number of courses may be necessary for teachers to be effective, but the findings are inconclusive about the necessity of a subject major. Research suggests that there may be a threshold whereupon additional courses may be of minimal value (Allen, 2005).

Examining the test scores in mathematics and reading from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, the Stanford Achievement Test, and the Aprenda, Darling-Hammond *et al.* concluded that overall, certified teachers were significantly more effective than uncertified teachers or teachers with substandard certification in raising student test scores (Darling- Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005). Teachers who were certified but credentialed to teach out of field, teachers with emergency or temporary certificates, and alternatively certified teachers had negative effects on tests in math but had some positive effects on various reading tests (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman & Heilig, 2005). According to Darling-Hammond et al., teacher certification may be

representative of the real variables that relate to teachers' knowledge and skills. In general, the real variables include the categories of content knowledge, pedagogy, classroom management, curriculum development, assessment, and relationship with students, parents and other professionals; the combination of these categories appears to "make a difference in teacher effectiveness" (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman & Heilig, 2005, p.23).

Teacher Experience / Teacher Education

Kain and Singleton (1996) report that the research conducted by Hanushek (1989) concludes that no strong evidence is present to connect various school input variables to student achievement. Hanushek (1989) examined 187 studies and concluded that the results consistently found no "strong evidence that teacher-student ratios, teacher education, or teacher experience have the expected positive effect on student achievement" (Kain & Singleton, 1996, p.7). Goldhaber (2002) supports Hanushek's findings that suggest that the evidence is tenuous in connecting teacher degree and experience level with student learning. Conversely, a study conducted by Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996) showed that a strong relationship exists between student learning and teacher quality variables of teacher ability, education and experience. Meta-analytic methods were used to assess the impact of various school inputs on student achievement. The findings indicated that "school resources are systematically related to student achievement and that these relations are large enough to be educationally important" (Greenwald, Hedges & Laine, 1996, p.384).

According to Ferguson's study (1991), after teachers' language skills, teacher experience is the next most significant school factor as it "accounts for a bit more than ten

percent of the inter-district variation in student test scores” (Kain & Singleton, 1996, p.10). Teachers with more experience have a greater impact on student achievement but after approximately five years, more years of experience does not seem to have much effect. Barton (2003) states that teacher experience does impact student outcomes, but beyond five years of experience, the impact on student outcomes appears to diminish.

[C]hildren taught by a teacher with five years of experience make three to four months more progress in reading skills during a school year than do children taught by a first year teacher [but] the benefits of experience, however, appear to level off after five years . . . and there are no noticeable differences, for example, in the effectiveness of a teacher with five years of experience versus a teacher with ten years (p.10).

Kain and Singleton (1996) further state that a few education production function studies suggested that more experience may not equal more effectiveness: “an inverted U-shape relationship may be present between teacher experience and student achievement. . .

[S]ome basis exists for believing that there may be too much of a good thing when it comes to teacher experience” (p.10)

Teacher Test Scores / Verbal Ability

The Coleman Report (1966) identified verbal ability and other forms of content knowledge as being significantly correlated to student achievement (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002). Subsequent studies conducted by Hanushek (1971 and 1972), Ferguson (1991), Ferguson and Ladd (1995), and Murnane (1975) have also found that student achievement was significantly impacted by teachers’ verbal abilities and their high scores on other standardized tests (Kain & Singleton, 1996). According to Hanushek, the most consistent finding among the various studies has been that teachers who performed well on verbal ability tests were generally more effective in the classroom, but the evidence to support this was not significant (Kain, 1996). Students made substantial gains in

achievement with higher scoring teachers (Haycock, 1998). Consistent with this finding, in Alabama, Ferguson and Ladd (1995) found that although data is limited, there appears to be evidence to indicate that teachers who scored high on tests that measured their skills had consistently strong and positive effects on student outcomes (Kain, 1996).

In a North Carolina study, Strauss and Sawyer (1986) revealed that as average teacher performance on the National Teacher exam increased so did the average school district performance on standardized tests (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Similarly, Ferguson (1991) found that student achievement was indeed connected to various input variables. Ferguson concluded that language skills as measured by a basic literacy examination, the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT), were the “most important school input for both math and reading...” (Kain, 1996, p.8). The Ferguson study examined district-level data from approximately 900 Texas school districts and concluded that districts with “higher average teacher performance on the [certification] exam [had] higher student performance in mathematics” (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000, p.131). Interestingly, the Ferguson study (1991) also found that as the percentage of minority students increased, the average scores on the TECAT decreased.

Darling-Hammond (1999) examined how teacher qualifications were related to student achievement and concluded that little or no relationship exists between teachers’ measured intelligence and student achievement, citing Schalock (1979) and Soar, Medley and Coker (1983); however, there exists a positive correlation between teacher’s verbal ability and student achievement, citing Coleman *et al.* (1966) and Hanushek (1971) (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Using the data from the *High School and Beyond* longitudinal study, Ehrenberg and Brewer (1994) discovered that school and teacher

characteristics influenced student gains in achievement; teachers who come from more selective institutions had a greater impact on students' gain scores. According to the Ehrenberg and Brewer, the selectivity of teachers' schools may be a reflection of teachers' intelligence or verbal skills.

Advanced Degrees

In an examination of the Texas school districts, Ferguson (1991) found that teachers with Master's degrees had a moderately positive impact on test scores for students in grades one through seven (Kain & Singleton, 1996); this was contrary to most other studies that found no relationship between students' test results on standardized test and the teachers' years of education (Kain & Singleton, 1996). Ferguson and Ladd (1995) also found a moderately positive connection where "additional education for teachers, as measured by the proportion of teachers with master's degrees, also appears to increase student learning, but by a lesser amount" (Kain & Singleton, 1996, p.9). Conversely, Rowan, Correnti and Miller (2002) report that research in the past decades revealed that students who were taught by teachers with a master's or other advance degrees and those who were taught by teachers without these degrees showed no difference in the adjusted gains in student achievement. Allen (2005) states that the research is "far too slim to either support or deny" (p.1) the impact of advanced degrees. The research, therefore, is inconclusive.

Teaching Methodology / Pedagogy

Research in teaching methodology and subject matter expertise has shown that knowledge in teaching methods had positive impacts on student achievement (OECD, 2005). Teacher effectiveness was increased when content knowledge and pedagogical

coursework were combined, especially those courses that specifically addressed classroom management, student assessment, and curriculum development (OECD, 2005). Begle (1979) revealed that the “number of credits a teacher had in mathematics methods courses was a stronger correlate of student performance than was the number of credits in mathematics courses or other indicators of preparation” (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p.8).

According to Goldhaber (2002), more research is required to determine the impact of teachers’ pedagogical knowledge on student achievement. Currently, the only basis for associating pedagogical knowledge is founded in the licensure exams and certification. There appears to be a positive correlation between National Teacher Exam tests and student performance but it is unclear if this correlation is due to subject-matter knowledge or pedagogy training (Goldhaber, 2002).

Summary

Research on the impact of teachers on student achievement has been ongoing since the Coleman Report in 1966. Substantial research has been conducted to determine if teacher effects have an impact on student achievement. In doing so, research has concluded that “teacher quality is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement” (OECD, 2005, p.26). Teachers do matter in the learning outcomes of students, especially for low-income and minority students (Lewis and Paik, 2001). The majority of studies focused on the following observable teacher variables: certification/subject knowledge, teacher experience/teacher education, teacher test scores/verbal ability, advance degrees and teaching methodology/pedagogy. Research shows that a positive correlation exists between student achievement and teacher certification, especially in math and science. Teachers’ subject knowledge matters in

producing greater student achievement gains, especially for advanced mathematics and science; how much knowledge is required is, at this time, uncertain. Teachers with experience show a greater impact on student achievement over teachers with no experience, but this impact lessens after approximately five years. Teachers' verbal abilities and test scores have positive effects on student learning; higher scoring teachers have students with higher achievement gains. Research shows that advanced degrees do not have any significant impact on student achievement. Teaching methodology/pedagogy have tentatively shown to have positive impacts on student achievement as does knowledge of how to teach when combined with content knowledge.

ESL Teacher Qualifications and Student Achievement

Researchers have argued that special skills and training are required for teachers to work with English language learners (ELLs), as "...second language instruction is *fundamentally different* from other disciplines" (Tedick, 1994, p.301; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). In California, 47% of English language learners passed the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) yet only 10% of ELL students were successful in passing the English Language Arts portion of the California Standards Test (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). Furthermore, when test scores were compared for the English Language Arts portion of the California High School Exit Exam, only 39% of ELL students compared to 81% of English speakers passed this section of the assessment (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). According to Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly and Callahan (2003), data from various sources reveal a significant academic achievement difference between English learners and non-English language students.

Canadian data are sparse but the statistics on the achievement of ESL students in Ontario show a disparity in achievement between ESL students and non-ESL students. According to People for Education (2002), data collected over the past four years reveal that as the percentage of non-ESL students meeting the government standards in reading and writing increased from 1997-2001, the percentage of ESL students meeting the standards decreased. In 1997/1998, 47% of non-ESL students in Grade 3 met the minimum standard in reading. By 2000/2001, this increased to 50%. For ESL students, in 1997/1998, 23% met the minimum standards in reading and by 2000/2001 this percentage had dropped to 21%. In writing, non-ESL student percentages increased from 50% in 1997/1998 to 53% in 2000/2001; for ESL students, the percentages decreased from 29% to 26%. All Grade 10 students in Ontario are required to pass the Ontario Secondary School Grade 10 Literacy Test in order to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (People for Education, 2002). In 2001, 63% of ESL students failed the test, compared to 25% of non-ESL students (People for Education, 2002).

Brantfeldt-Waring (2006) examined the relationship between ESL teacher training and English language learner (ELL) student achievement, hypothesizing that effective ESL teacher training would increase ELL student achievement. This research studied the test scores of ELL students and the degree of ESL training of their teachers. Scores were gathered from the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (SELP) achievement results in reading, listening, and writing for grades K-2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12. Brantfeldt-Waring discovered that the ELL students in grades K-8 who had teachers with specific training for working with ELL students fared better than those students whose teachers did not have specific training. According to the study, “the trained group

always had higher test scores than the untrained group, regardless of the initial condition... [and] the trained groups always showed improvement while the untrained group did not always show improvement..." (p.71). Brantfeldt-Waring concludes that these results support the hypothesis that "training teachers in ESL does indeed lead to differences in ELL student performance [and] that more specifically, it suggests that providing training in working with ELL students leads to better results than simply relying on generic teaching skills" (p.71). The three subtests for grades 9-12, however, were not found to be statistically significant as the researcher surmised that this may be the result of a small sample size.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future uncovered that approximately 25% of all new teachers were hired without minimum certification standards and they were commonly assigned to low-income, high-minority schools (Darling-Hammond, 1998). In predominantly minority schools, students are less likely to be taught by teachers who are fully qualified or hold higher-level degrees. Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) have argued that "only 55% of all teachers of LEP/ELL students had taken relevant college courses or had received recent in-service training related to teaching second language learners. Only one third of teachers of LEP/ELL students had ever taken college courses concerning cultural differences and implications for instruction, language acquisition theory, and teaching English to LEP/ELL students..." (p.167). Menken and Antunez (2001) state that teachers with a degree in English as a Second Language only account for 2.5% of all teachers who currently teach ESL or bilingual education. Teachers with emergency credentials are more likely to be assigned to teach English learners than to any other children (Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly

& Callahan, 2003). According to the British Columbia College of Teachers (2004) survey of recent teacher education graduates in 2003, 28% of the respondents had a major or minor in ESL, while 35% of recent graduates reported teaching ESL (BC College of Teachers, 2004, p.7).

The low achievement of English learners and the low percentage of teachers who are qualified to teach them is of great concern as the National Commission report identified “teacher qualifications as the ‘single most important factor’ in predicting student achievement, and found that fully trained teachers are far more effective than teachers who are not prepared” (Menken & Antunez, 2001, p.4). Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000) have warned that the “U.S. teaching force is not well equipped to help [ESL] children and those who speak vernacular dialects of English adjust to school and learn joyfully: too few teachers share or know about their students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds or understand the challenges inherent in learning to speak and read Standard English” (p.3).

ESL Teacher Attributes

Empirical studies probing ESL teaching qualifications are limited. Among the few that exist, there is a general consensus on the kinds of preparation and knowledge that teachers need in order to work effectively with linguistic minority children: a synthesis of these studies found that the most successful teachers of EL students have identifiable pedagogical and cultural skills and knowledge including the ability to communicate effectively with students and to engage their families (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). Garcia (2000) has presented an overview of the results of the recent research and data syntheses funded by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on

“effective educational approaches that promote the acquisition of English language arts skills and grade-appropriate content for LEP students” (p.1). The research suggests that the acquisition of second language arts for LEP students is influenced by a variety of interconnected factors which includes access to high quality education (Garcia, 2000). For English language learners to achieve academic success, they require a specialized curriculum with properly trained teachers as well as access to the regular academic curriculum to maintain pace with the mainstream students (Rumberger & Gandara, 2000). If teachers are to contribute successfully to the linguistic, cognitive and academic development of LEP/ELLs, English language development must be integrated with content knowledge.

According to Solorzano and Solorzano (1999), classroom-based research has provided the standards and framework for effective teaching practices for non-ESL learners. Most studies lacked “samples of second language learners...thus were devoid of a linguistically and culturally diverse classroom context ...” (Solorzano & Solorzano, 1999, p.43). In 1993, the Educational Testing Services (ETS) developed a framework entitled Pathwise which is based on previous effective teaching research and a “culturally responsive pedagogy ... [that] takes into consideration students’ cultural background knowledge and experiences and integrates it in a meaningful way into the classroom instruction...” (Solorzano & Solorzano, 1999, p.46). The Pathwise framework includes four domains: organizing content knowledge for student learning; creating an environment for student learning; teaching for student learning; and engaging in teacher professionalism (p.46-62). The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) P-12 ESL Teacher Education Standards also provide a set of five domains of

“foundational knowledge and skills that new teachers need to be successful teachers of English to speakers of other languages” (Harper, 2002, p.23). The five domains consists of language, culture, instruction, assessment, and professionalism (Harper, 2002, p.23-24). In the past two decades, research studies have identified various factors such as “different teaching methods, classroom organization, positive attitudes and cultural understanding...” (Ghosh, 1993, p.85) to enable teachers to cope with increasingly diverse classrooms. The debate, however, continues on what the essential requirements are. Collier (1995) asserts that despite the various instructional approaches employed by educators to address the concerns for providing a meaningful education for language minority students, the most effective educational practices have yet to be identified. In spite of this claim, Collier (1995) has suggested that effective ESL teachers need to understand socio-cultural processes, language development, academic development, and cognitive development.

Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) examined the literature on teacher education to identify the essential skills, knowledge and attitudes required for teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The literature specified eight key areas of specialization: organization and effective delivery of instruction; knowledge of second language acquisition processes; knowledge of students’ developmental language practices; familiarity with students’ native and cultural background; familiarity with students’ learning and cognitive styles; effective classroom management; high expectations for students; and facilitation of parental involvement (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002, p. 169-175). Teachers also need to have mastery of the content areas

and instructional ability to convey the material in a comprehensible manner to students with varying learning styles.

Similarly, Hamayan (1990) included five general areas of teacher abilities that are required for working with potentially English proficient (PEP) students. These include the ability to mediate and facilitate student learning; facilitate the acquisition of English as a second language; provide proficient English language usage; represent mainstream culture; mediate the socialization and acculturation of students; and advocate for PEP students (p.2-4). Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000) also specify the fundamental areas of study that ESL teachers require to assist English language learners: language and linguistics; language and cultural diversity; sociolinguistics; language development; second language learning and teaching; language of academic discourse; and text analysis and educational settings (p. 32-34). They warn that too few ESL teachers are qualified to teach English language learners and the challenge presently is to prepare teachers for the diversity found in their classrooms. Teachers need a “systematic and intensive preparation in ... *educational linguistics*” (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000, p.4). That is, teachers “need to know about language and the kinds of knowledge about language that [students] need” (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000, p.34).

A 1998 Education Trust study concluded that effective teacher factors were teachers’ content knowledge, basic skills and ability to teach what they know (Menken & Antunez, 2001); however, the researchers asserted that research identifying the specific knowledge and skills required to be effective were lacking. Teachers must possess “the deep subject matter knowledge required in order for ELLs to meet grade level content standards, the pedagogy to enable these students to access the knowledge and skills

contained in the standards, and a thorough understanding of their students' language acquisition processes" (Menken & Antunez, 2001, p.6). Teachers of ELL students require further training beyond what is required for English-only classrooms: pedagogy, linguistics, and cultural and linguistic diversity (Menken & Antunez, 2001). The teaching of second language requires helping learners to "communicate across cultural and linguistic boundaries" (Tedick, 1994, p.301). Menken and Holmes (2000) further specify that teachers of English language learners need to have an understanding of the following critical elements:

Teachers need to understand basic constructs of bilingualism and second language development, the nature of language proficiency, the role of the first language and culture in learning, and the demands that mainstream education places on culturally diverse students. Teachers need to continually reassess what schooling means in the context of a pluralistic society; the relationship between teachers and learners; and attitudes and beliefs about language, culture, and race. Moreover, teachers need a 'vision of students as capable individuals for whom limited English proficiency does not signify deficiency and for whom limited academic skills do not represent an incurable situation'. Finally, promising professional development knowledge and perspectives available to everyone (p.4).

A study conducted by Hayes and Salazar in 2001 examined the relationship between the achievement of ESL students and their teachers' credentials. The study included 29 schools and 177 classrooms with large numbers of ESL students (Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan, 2003). The study concluded that state/district authorization of teachers does have an "impact on student outcome...students of credentialed teachers out-performed students of emergency permitted teachers ... students of teachers holding no state or district authorization achieved largely negative or very small positive adjusted gains..." (p.9).

The issue of how to better prepare teachers of ESL students has been plaguing the education system since the mid-1980s, and in response, there has been an expansion of materials about “multicultural education and the development of culturally relevant teachers” (Goodwin, 2002, p.159). Research in English as a second language teacher preparation has been predominantly “descriptive or prescriptive...” (Tedick, 1994, p.302). Second language education suffers from a “failure to consider the interdependence between first and second languages and cultures, the fragmentation and isolation of language arts fields, themselves, the pervasive view of language as ‘object’, a paralyzing focus on methodology, and a continued failure to reflect in practice the connection between language and culture” (Tedick, 1994, p.302). Tedick’s literature review revealed that research is lacking as very few articles pertained to addressing the educational needs of immigrant children. More significantly, Tedick states that no articles addressed the actual practical preparation for teachers to teach immigrant children. Tedick (1994) states that “...the literature on teacher education is vague about what teachers should know to effectively support the education of new arrivals to this country” (p.162). Despite this, researchers have continued to advocate for specialized training for ESL teachers; for example, Goodwin provided an outline of the requisite factors needed in teacher preparation of ESL students: differentiating instruction; second language acquisition; working with families and communities. In addition to the abilities required to do things in the classroom, ESL teachers need to be able to “understand at a deeper level why certain conditions must exist in the classroom in order for the needs of second language learners to be met” (Milk, Mercado & Sapiens, 1992, p.5). Gandara,

Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll (2005) have stressed that quality teachers are vital to student learning and quality encompasses teacher preparation and expertise in ESL.

Newman and Hanauer (2005) have explained that "...because of concerns about teachers' competence and the quality of programs that prepare them ... voluntary reviews of teacher education ...by organizations such as the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)" (p.753) in partnership with TESOL began developing the TESOL standards document. The *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students*, developed by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), state that a quality education for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) require the quality services of fully certified teachers (TESOL, 1997). According to TESOL, the professional development of ESL specialists should include the following:

...an understanding of similarities and differences in first and second language acquisition, the role of the native language in second language and content learning, instructional methods and strategies that facilitate both English language and content learning, instructional practices that accommodate individual differences in learning styles, the interrelationships between cultures, cognition and academic achievement, alternative approaches to assessment, and the importance of community-school linkages in education (TESOL, 1997, p.4).

In *Programs That Prepare Teachers To Work Effectively With Students Learning English*, Darling-Hammond and Gonzales (2000) state that ESL teachers require an understanding of language structures and an understanding of students as cultural beings. In order for teachers to attain this understanding, they require the following areas of study: cultural awareness, theoretical knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogical methodology, and field work (Darling-Hammond & Gonzales, 2000)

In *English as a Second Language Policy Guideline* (1999), the British Columbia Ministry of Education suggests that qualified ESL specialists should have the following qualifications: a Professional certificate and basic classroom experience; specialized skills including ESL methodology, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, multicultural studies, first and second language learning and applied linguistics; and / or relevant practical experience.

Summary

An examination of the various works reveals the following knowledge areas that appear to be significant, specifically for ESL teachers if they are to have a positive impact on the achievement of English language learners. Empirical research in ESL teacher effects on ESL student achievement is lacking but based on very limited qualitative studies, experts continue to advocate for specific preparation in four common areas. These include second language acquisition, cultural/linguistic awareness, language/linguistic knowledge, and classroom-home liaison.

Second Language Acquisition

ESL teachers should have an understanding of language acquisition theories and instructional strategies to support English language learners effectively (Goodwin, 2002; Carrasquillo and Rodriguez, 2000; Milk, Mercado & Sapiens, 1992). Teachers ought to develop a full understanding of the components of the English language structure (Menken & Antunez, 2001; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000) and have an “awareness of the kinds of special instructional services that second language learners experience at different stages of participation in bilingual and ESL programs” (Milk, Mercado & Sapiens, 1992, p.2; Garcia, 2000). Theoretical and practical knowledge of second

language acquisition is required to have an understanding of the relationship between first language and second language learning and language proficiency (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Menken & Holmes, 2004; TESOL, 1997; Hamayan, 1990; Menken & Antunez, 2001).

Cultural and Linguistic Awareness

An awareness of the nature and role of culture and cultural groups will allow for an understanding of the “social and cultural processes occurring through everyday life within the student’s past, present, and future, in all contexts – home, school, community and the broader society...” (Collier, 1995, p.2). According to Menken and Antunez (2001), students gain greater achievement when they are in an inclusive environment. As culture plays a significant role in the ways teachers teach, teachers can affect students’ learning in a positive or negative manner (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Menken & Antunez, 2001). English as a second language students are diverse linguistically and culturally, bringing with them culturally specific needs that teachers will have to address (Solorzano & Solorzano, 1999; Menken & Antunez, 2001). Teachers of ESL students will need the ability to address culturally specific learning styles and a different schema that each English language learner brings with him/her to the classrooms (Solorzano & Solorzano, 1999; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

Language / Linguistics Knowledge

Teachers need to have a sound understanding of the language system and its components (Harper, 2002; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Collier, 1995). In addition, teachers need an awareness of the various languages and dialects of the students, an

understanding of the differences between spoken and written language, and the ability to help English language learners to acquire and use English academically and socially (Harper, 2002). An understanding of linguistics can assist teachers to identify discourse patterns. As well, exposure to “psycholinguistics – the mental processes involved in language production, comprehension and cognition – and sociolinguistics – the study of the interaction between linguistic, culture and social elements in communication” (Menken & Antunez, 2001) will enable teachers to meet effectively the needs of second language learners.

Classroom – Home Liaison

Working with families and communities, teachers require knowledge about the “histories, cultures, and life stories of immigrant families” (Goodwin, 2002, p.169) in order to respond in culturally appropriate ways. According to Milk, Mercado and Sapiens (1992), the instruction of English language learners is greatly enhanced when parents of language learners are drawn into the classroom activities that access their wealth of knowledge and experiences. Through involvement, parents “often develop a sense of efficacy that communicates itself to students with positive academic consequences, especially in the case of language minority students” (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002, p.175). Teachers acquire the responsibility of bridging the social and cultural gap that exists between the home and the school whereupon successfully connecting the two spheres will enhance English learners’ achievement outcomes (Hamayan, 1990).

Conclusion

A comparison of the literature review of general teacher qualifications and ESL teacher qualifications provides some similar findings. Studies reveal that certification

appears to have an impact on student achievement. As previously mentioned, Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin and Heilig (2005) suggest that teacher certification actually embodies the real variables that are relevant to teachers' knowledge and skills; these variables may include content knowledge, pedagogy, classroom management, curriculum development, assessment, and relationship with students, parents and other professionals. The combination of these requirements appears to "make a difference in teacher effectiveness" (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005, p.23). The qualities that make general teachers effective also appear to apply to ESL teachers. An overwhelming number of papers focus on the specific knowledge that ESL teachers need to have to teach language learners effectively. A review of literature on English as a Second Language teacher qualifications identifies specialized teacher preparation in four common knowledge areas. The general belief among researchers in the field is that ESL teachers should understand second language acquisition, develop culture and linguistic awareness, have language and linguistic knowledge, and liaise between the home and classroom in order to work effectively with English language learners.

Nevertheless, this literature review has an absence of adequate empirical research in this area to support the common beliefs advocated by theorists of ESL teacher qualifications. Furthermore, there is a dearth of studies gauging the impact these understandings have on the achievement of English language learners. The necessity of teacher training in the specified areas of knowledge to increase effectiveness in ESL student learning has yet to be substantiated.

In conclusion, researchers have argued that, "training for teachers of language minority students must go beyond incorporation of research on effective professional

develop to also provide teachers with the knowledge and understanding of content and language learning that is necessary to meet the specific needs of these learners” (Menken & Antunez, 2001, p.4). The responsibilities of ESL teachers appear to be two-fold: they are responsible for assisting ESL students in their development of the English language and culture and at the same time, providing them with the academic content in all subject areas of the curriculum. In essence, “teachers need a wealth of content and pedagogical knowledge ... [and] ... a thorough understanding of educational linguistics” in order to be adequately qualified to teach ESL (ERIC, 2000, p.1). ESL teachers need to be trained and educated in their field of specialization just as their colleagues are highly trained to teach in specific subject areas like mathematics, chemistry, biology, and French (Ashworth, 1988). Equally important to learning how to teach, is learning the content of what will be taught; an understanding of theory behind the methodology is required in order for ESL educators to instruct students conscientiously for clarity and understanding (Kreidler, 1987). Research in ESL teacher qualifications needs to move away from conjecturing and move towards the collecting and analyzing of data to substantiate the assertions. Empirical research is required to support the claims.

This literature review has prompted further important yet unanswered questions. Does ESL student achievement correlate with ESL teacher preparation? If a correlation exists, what aspects of teachers’ preparation correlate most strongly? Given the paucity of research on ESL teacher preparation, what criteria do educational administrators use for hiring purposes? How do universities set their curricula for teacher programs? How does the governing body set the teaching standards for teacher certification? How do policy makers make policy? A consideration of the above questions may provide insight into the

status of ESL in the educational field and the reasons for the discrepancy between research and practice. Ultimately, this research may reveal the degree of quality of education for ESL students in British Columbia.

Summary

This chapter examined the literature on teacher preparation and student achievement and ESL teacher preparation and ESL student achievement. In Chapter Three, the methodology for this study is presented: the instrument, population and samples, the method for the collection and analysis of data, and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to examine the extant ESL specialist teacher preparation and professional development in British Columbia (BC) and to study the relationships between preparation and age, sex, setting, region, and measures of self-efficacy and the relationships between professional development and age, sex, setting, region, and measures of self- efficacy. This research sheds light on a specific group of educators in BC, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. To conduct this research, a survey questionnaire was administered to ESL specialist teachers in the province of BC. This method of research was used in order to reach a broad sample of the population in British Columbia. The results of the questionnaire were organized into various demographic groupings, and findings were also grouped based on emerging themes. Data came from self-administered questionnaires that were distributed and returned during a two month period in 2007. After approval for the ethics review of human research from University of Victoria was granted for this research, an information letter, introducing and describing the research (Appendix A), and the questionnaire (Appendix B) were emailed to the English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists Association (ESL PSA) via the June newsletter of the ESL PSA. A follow-up email letter (Appendix C) was sent approximately 4 weeks after the initial mail-out. This process was facilitated by the President of the ESL PSA, Sydney Dean.

Instrument

The construction of the questionnaire was shaped by various sources. First, some items in this survey questionnaire were adapted from the research conducted by

Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley and Berliner (2004) on teacher qualifications and student achievement. This enhanced the validity and reliability of the majority of questions included in this study as they had already undergone the validity and reliability assurances. In Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley and Berliner's study, an on-line survey questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information and opinions about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Similar questions were used in this study to obtain demographic information from the participants. Second, the questions in this study were based on the relevance to the themes and topics identified in the literature, what the experts in the field of ESL espoused to be crucial for ESL teaching. According to the researchers and theorists, the knowledge areas that appear to be significant for teaching ESL are the following: second language acquisition, cultural and linguistic awareness, language and linguistic knowledge, and classroom-home liaison. Furthermore, qualified ESL teachers should have specific preparation in the above four common areas in order to instruct ESL learners effectively and to have a positive impact on their learning outcomes. These themes formed the basis to ascertain the general credentials and qualifications of the participants. Third, the questions in this survey were also based on the recommended minimum qualifications outlined in the *BC Ministry of Education, ESL Teacher Guidelines*: a Professional teaching certificate and classroom experience; specialized skills (including ESL methodology, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, multicultural studies, first and second language learning and applied linguistics); and/or relevant practical experience (experience living in another culture, learning another language). Questions regarding the aforementioned guidelines were asked to determine how aligned the guidelines were with the

qualifications of ESL teachers currently employed. Based on the research information, the survey was organized into the following categories: demographics of the participants; teaching experience; teacher training; self-efficacy; and professional development.

The final version of the questionnaire was the result of the following process. Using the input from the research literature described above, a thirty-six item questionnaire was drafted. Next, the questionnaire was pre-tested and evaluated by a member of the ESL PSA. The questionnaire was then edited and revised prior to being reviewed by the executive members of the ESL PSA. Further revisions to the questionnaire were made based on the recommendations of the ESL PSA executive members, and then presented to the thesis committee members. The questionnaire was reviewed by the thesis committee members and further suggestions for revision were provided. Committee members suggested that the questions in the survey be regrouped in a more coherent way into category groupings. In doing so, the respondents were more likely to recall information because prior items would often serve as mental cues for the recall of subsequent information. As well, the committee members also suggested changing the response format of some items from categories to free response, especially for the continuous variable items. In doing so, the chance of losing information would be minimal.

The eight-page questionnaire for the target group in this research included 19 closed-type choice items, 15 open-ended questions, and one comments section. The closed-type items were grouped in the following areas: regions, sex, age, assignment, experience, training and efficacy. Closed-type items were tabulated quantitatively and responses were reported as means, medians and ranges. For those questions where

multiple choices were possible, the percentages of the total responses were reported. For items that required measuring beliefs, a numerical value was assigned to each of the possible responses. The values were then multiplied by the total number of participants who chose those responses and the mean and standard deviation (SD) were calculated. Responses to the open-ended and the comments section were analyzed using traditional content analyses, from which responses were grouped based on emerging themes. An example of an open-ended question in this survey is “What do you feel should be the basic pre-service certification for ESL specialist teachers?” Responses from open-ended questions and from the comments section were categorized and the findings were presented as percentages of the total number of respondents.

Questions 1-4 consisted of questions pertaining to demographics: location, geographic region, sex and age. Questions 5-8, 11 and 24-25 requested information on teaching assignments; questions 9-10 (teaching experience); questions 13-15, 17-20 (training); question 16 (relevant practical experience); questions 21-23 and 32-33 (professional development); questions 27-31 (self efficacy); question 35 (entry into ESL teaching); and question 36 (general comments). Due to a typographical error, the number sequence for the questions went from question 11 to question 13. Along with the questionnaire, an introductory / request letter was also included in the newsletter. The letter and questionnaire are included as Appendix A and B, respectively. The questionnaires were distributed and collected from June 2007 to July 2007. Implied consent was assumed with returned questionnaires.

Questionnaires are advantageous as they offer participants the convenience of completing the surveys at their own leisure (within a stipulated time-frame). Conversely,

the disadvantage of using questionnaires is the inflexibility of the questions. Once the questionnaires are distributed, the questions are fixed and may not be altered at any point after the distribution. In addition, when questions are left in individuals' hands, participant's interpretations of the questions may vary and their means of recording the answers may possibly affect the intended responses. Because survey research is based on self-reports, information may be concealed if the respondents wish not to disclose specifics to the researcher (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005). As a result, the most accurate data may not be obtained. One possible way to ensure greater accuracy in results is to assure confidentiality and anonymity.

Population and Sampling

Approximately 261 questionnaires were mailed to the membership of the English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists Association (ESL PSA) via the June 2007 newsletter. The ESL PSA was selected as the vehicle for distributing the survey questionnaires for the following reasons. First, this was the most economical and expeditious way of distributing the questionnaire. The materials were sent to a single organization, requiring only one consent/approval from the ethics committee and mail-out was logistically easier to monitor. Second, this research wanted to target those who were ESL specialists who worked specifically with ESL students as opposed to mainstream classroom teachers who had ESL students in their class composition.

A total of 27 completed questionnaires were returned, a return rate of 10.3%. A study conducted by Baruch (1999) examined 141 papers to ascertain what would be a reasonable response rate in academic studies. The study revealed that the average response rate was 55.6%. (Baruch, 1999, p.432). A high response rate from a "wide

representation of the whole population under study” is important [in order to obtain] dependable, valid, and reliable results” (Baruch, 1999, p.422). The response rate for this study was lower than expected, indicating a lower than ideal sample size; therefore, the results of this study may not be accurately representative of the general population of ESL specialist teachers. On the other hand, the percentages of respondents from the various regions were generally proportionate to the enrolment of ESL students in British Columbia. Approximately 77% of questionnaires were from the South Coast, 11% were from Vancouver Island and 4% from areas outside the Lower Mainland. The majority of surveys were from the South Coast, an area mainly comprised of a region referred to as the Lower Mainland.¹ According to the British Columbia Ministry of Education, 90% of ESL students are enrolled in Lower Mainland school districts (1999). A 1997 BC Ministry of Education report by Schaeffer and Charette notes that ESL student enrolments in areas outside of the Lower Mainland are less than 5% of the total district enrolments; in Victoria, the ESL enrolment is approximately 5%-10% of the total student enrolment. The percentages of respondents from the South Coast, Vancouver Island and regions outside of Lower Mainland appear to correspond to the percentages of ESL students from these regions.

The following reasons may have contributed to the low return rate of questionnaires. Questionnaires were mailed at the end of the school year which is often a busy and chaotic time for most teachers. Many are finishing units of study, preparing students for final examinations and/or graduation and writing final report cards for the

¹ The lower mainland is the southwest area of the province, the region surrounding Vancouver. It includes New Westminster, North Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, West Vancouver, Surrey, Coquitlam, White Rock, Delta, Langley, and Abbotsford.

year. Also, as the school year winds down, less correspondence via email is taking place and many teachers do not use or have access to their school district emails, especially after the school term is over. Because not all members have or use emails, many individuals may not have received the follow-up email requesting their participation in the survey. As well, many of the follow-up emails were returned as the email addresses were incorrect or not in service. The follow-up letter to the membership is included as Appendix C.

At the time of the mail-out, there were approximately 261 subscribers to the ESL PSA newsletter. This number, however, may not reflect the total number of ESL specialist teachers in BC. As not all ESL teachers are subscribing members of the ESL PSA, this survey may not have reached all the ESL specialist teachers in the province. As a result, the teachers who were part of this research may not have been entirely representative of the majority of ESL specialist teachers in BC. Several reasons may explain this. First, the ESL PSA membership may be comprised mainly of those who are very conscientious of their positions as ESL specialist teachers and seek further support, information and access to the various issues of ESL through the membership. Membership to the ESL PSA includes a subscription to the PSA newsletter and to the TESL Canada Journal. Second, the full-time equivalency (fte.) positions for many teachers include a hodgepodge of assignments. Teaching assignments may include a combination of ESL and another subject area(s). For many individuals, their smallest fte may be their ESL assignments. As ESL may not be the main component of their combined teaching assignments, these teachers of ESL may not identify themselves as ESL specialists. In addition, many teachers of ESL may only consider themselves as ESL

specialist teachers if they are teaching a large number of ESL students in self-contained ESL classes. ESL enrolment numbers often dictate the type of service offered to ESL students. Districts with low numbers may provide ESL students with pull-out programs whereas districts with large numbers may have self-contained ESL classes. The total number of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia is unknown as the numbers of ESL students fluctuate annually, and therefore, the number of ESL teachers fluctuates accordingly. The target group may represent a fraction of the total number and may represent the most qualified of the ESL specialist teachers in BC.

Although there are approximately 261 subscribers to the ESL PSA, the precise number of ESL specialist members in the ESL PSA is unknown. Members of the ESL PSA include ESL specialists, BCTF executive members, non-BCTF members, students/student teachers, retirees, non-ESL teachers, administrators, other interested stakeholders and external organizations such as various universities and libraries. The ESL PSA does not categorize its membership as ESL/non-ESL teachers so the exact number of ESL specialists is unknown.

Collection of Data

Before the study began, the English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists Association (ESL PSA) was approached to aid in the distribution of the questionnaires. The ESL PSA had to consult with British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) to determine whether BCTF would allow the researcher to conduct this study through the ESL PSA. After several weeks, the BCTF approved the participation of the ESL PSA in this study. Another few weeks passed before the executive members of the ESL PSA reviewed and approved the survey for the study. After receiving consent from the ESL

PSA executive to distribute the questionnaire via their newsletter, an application to the ethics committee was made. Once the ethics approval was received, the questionnaire and introductory/information letter were sent to the BCTF to be included in the ESL PSA newsletter to be mailed in the spring (2007). Unfortunately, the BCTF members were embroiled in strike negotiations; as a result, the distribution of the newsletter was delayed indefinitely. The strike resolution occurred at the end of May and service was resumed in June. The newsletters were then mailed-out at the beginning of June. To encourage more responses, a follow-up email was sent at the end of June to remind and request more participants to partake in the study. A follow-up letter was emailed by the president of the ESL PSA, Sydney Dean, on behalf of the researcher.

Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and grouped according to emerging patterns and themes. Closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the open-ended questions were organized according to themes. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2005), descriptive statistics are useful in “summarizing all the data in the form of a few simple numerical expressions ... [and] lead to mathematically precise statements...” (p.155). Examination of the responses also included seeking connections between the participants’ responses and the recommendations espoused by the experts in the literature review; for example, how many participants had the various training or professional development that were recommended in the literature and in the BC Ministry guidelines? As well, correlations were calculated between responses from various questions. Comparisons were made in coursework completion based on age, sex, setting, geographic area, and measures of self-

efficacy. Professional development information was analyzed based on age, sex, setting, geographic area, coursework and measures of self-efficacy. Data were examined to look for evidence that either supported or refuted the literature; that is, data were examined to determine how closely aligned the responses were to the literature.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology used in this study. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data on the ESL specialist teachers currently practicing in British Columbia in 2007. Twenty-seven questionnaires out of 261 were returned for analysis. The data analysis involved both quantitative analysis to calculate percentages of responses, and qualitative analysis to look for patterns and emerging themes from the completed survey questionnaires as well as correlations to the recommendations made by the experts in the literature review. As well, a discussion on the low return rate was presented in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected in this research. The characteristics of the participants and the emerging themes from the data collection are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In Chapter Four, the results of the data analysis of the survey questionnaires are presented. To review, the purpose of this study was to determine the general levels of current preparation and on-going professional development among practicing ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia. As well, this study also examined the relationships between preparation and age, sex, setting, region, and measures of self-efficacy and the relationships between professional development and age, sex, setting, region, coursework and measures of self-efficacy. The findings are presented in the following sections: characteristics of the participants; teaching assignments; teaching experience; teacher training; coursework completion and age, sex, setting, region and self-efficacy; professional development; professional development and age, sex, setting, region, coursework and self efficacy; self-efficacy; self-efficacy and age, sex, setting, region, coursework, and TESL Certification; emerging themes; and participants' comments and recommendations.

Characteristics of the Participants

A total of 27 ESL specialist teachers participated in this survey. Approximately 261 surveys were mailed via newsletter to the general membership of the ESL PSA, requesting their participation in the study. The participants in this study were responsible for returning the questionnaires to the researcher and were to remain anonymous. The ESL PSA does not differentiate its membership as ESL/non-ESL specialist teachers. Since there is no way to determine how many of the 261 'members' are ESL specialist teachers, it is not possible to estimate the return rate accurately. The questionnaire

contained 35 sections which included closed-type choice items, open-ended questions, and a comments section.

Questions 1 to 4 of the survey requested information pertaining to the demographics of the participants. In question 1, participants were asked to specify the location of their schools as being located in an urban, rural or suburban setting. Out of 27 responses, approximately 37% of the participants were employed in schools in an urban setting, 22% in a rural setting, and 41% in a suburban setting. In question 2, participants were asked to identify the geographic location of their employment (Table 1).

Table 1: Region

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Vancouver Island	3	11
Northern BC	1	4
Central BC	1	4
Columbia-Kootenay	0	0
Interior	1	4
South Coast	21	77
North Coast	0	0

(N=27)

The majority of participants were located on the South Coast, followed by Vancouver Island, Northern BC, Central BC, and the Interior. No surveys were returned from participants situated in the Columbia-Kootenay area and the North Coast region.

Question 3 asked participants to specify their gender. 11% of the participants were males and 89% were females. In question 4, respondents were asked to specify their ages. Those who participated in the study were between the ages of 33 and 61. The average age was approximately 46.2 years and the median was 47 years. Approximately 7% of the 27 participants did not disclose their ages: 40% of the participants were between the ages of 31 to 40; 16% of the participants were between 41 to 50; 40% of the participants were between 51 to 60; and 4% of the participants were between 61 and 65.

According to the BCTF report, Teacher Turnover in BC 2001-2011, approximately 35% of the teaching workforce is between the ages of 50 and 59. This is consistent with the percentage of participants (36%) who were in their 50s during the time of the study.

Table 2 presents the ages of the respondents.

Table 2: Participants' Ages

Age	Frequency	Percentage
31-35	4	16
36-40	6	24
41-45	2	8
46-50	2	8
51-55	7	28
56-60	3	12
61-65	1	4

(N=25)

Teaching Assignments

Questions 5 to 8, 11, 24 and 25 requested information on teaching assignments for the school year 2006/2007 school year. In question 5, respondents were asked if they were employed in public schools or private schools. All 27 participants were currently teaching in public schools when the research was conducted. In question 6, participants were asked to specify their teaching time, full-time equivalency (fte), in their current positions. Approximately 44% of the participants taught ESL full time or 1.0 fte and 56% taught ESL on a part-time basis. The part-time ESL teachers were employed between 0.1 to 0.9 fte and the average fte among the part-time teachers was 0.542 fte. In addition to ESL, 59% of the participants were responsible for providing other services (question 7) such as learning assistance, high school English instruction, French as a second language (FSL) classes or were also classroom teachers or ESL coordinators. Approximately 41% of the participants taught solely ESL. In Question 8, respondents were asked to identify

all the levels at which they taught ESL². Of the thirty-nine responses recorded for this question, the following grade levels were taught: 52% at the elementary level, 15% at the middle years, 41% at the secondary level, and 37% at the district-wide³ level. When asked to identify all the types of program delivery utilized in the participants' districts (question 11), the majority of participants (85%) identified the pull-out method as the main form of program delivery for their teaching. Approximately 45% taught in self contained ESL classes, 52% provided in-class support, 44% provided consultation only and 7% provided learning assistance as the main form of program delivery. The respondents were also asked to provide the number of students they were currently teaching (Question 24). An accurate number was difficult to ascertain from the responses. Many did not know the exact numbers as the range recorded on the questionnaires was from unknown to 280 students. Likewise, many of the participants did not know the number of ESL students enrolled in their districts (Question 25). According to the return responses, the approximate number of ESL students in the districts ranged from 20 to 15,000.⁴

Teaching Experience

Questions 9 and 10 inquired about the participants' teaching experience (ESL and general). The average ESL teaching experience (Question 9) was approximately 11.09 years, with the range of less than 1 year of experience to 40 years of experience (Table 3).

² Many participants taught at multiple grade levels; therefore, percentages reported do not add up to 100.

³ District-wide positions were held by district itinerant ESL teachers who traveled from school to school, providing instruction to ESL students at the individual schools.

⁴ In many districts, all ESL students are not assigned to one teacher. There are various forms and programs that ESL students could be registered for, such as, the international program or the district ESL program. In larger districts, there may be several ESL teachers, each assigned to a group of ESL students, working separately from each other.

The median was 7 years. Approximately 41% of the respondents had 5 years or less of ESL teaching experience and 59% had more than 5 years of ESL teaching experience.

Table 3: ESL Teaching Experience

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	11	41
6-10	5	18
11-15	3	11
16-20	4	15
21-25	2	7
26-30	1	4
31-35	0	0
36-40	1	4

(N=27)

The average for the length of general teaching experience (question 10) was approximately 17.13 years with the range between 1.5 years of teaching to 40 years of teaching (Table 4). The median was 16 years. Approximately 7% of the respondents had 5 or less years of general teaching experience while 93% of the respondents had more than 5 years of general teaching experience.

Table 4: General Teaching Experience

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	2	7
6-10	8	30
11-15	3	11
16-20	4	15
21-25	5	18
26-30	2	7
31-35	2	7
36-40	1	4

(N=27)

Question 16 asked if the participants had either taught or studied abroad. One of the minimum qualifications suggested by the BC Ministry of Education (1999) is 'relevant practical experience':

The experience of living in another culture for a period of time, participating in cross-cultural communication, learning another language (long-term study), and bridging cultural gaps can be beneficial to understanding and helping students from other language and cultural backgrounds (p.11).

Approximately 33% of the respondents had previously taught or studied abroad and 67% had not. Among the 33% who responded in the positive, 77% taught ESL abroad, 11% were students in a foreign country and 11% did not specify.

Teacher Training

Questions 13 to 15 and 17 to 20 pertain to the specific training the participants completed. According to the research literature, knowledge in second language acquisition, cultural/linguistic awareness, language/linguistic knowledge, and classroom-home liaison appears to be significant for ESL teachers if they are to have a positive impact on the achievement of English language learners. Similarly, the BC Ministry of Education has stated that qualified ESL teachers should have one of the following criteria: a Professional certificate and basic classroom experience; specialized skills including ESL methodology, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, multicultural studies, first and second language learning and applied linguistics; and / or relevant practical experience. In the following questions, the findings are presented on the specific qualifications of the respondents.

In Question 13, participants were asked to specify the type(s) of formal training completed (Table 5). The majority of respondents (44%) held post-graduate certificates in ESL. Multiple answers were possible.

Table 5: Formal Training

Credentials	Frequency	Percentage
Masters Degree	7	26
Post-graduate program certificate	12	44
Major/minor in degree program	3	11
None	0	0
Other	6	22

(N=27)

In the 'Other' category, the respondents also specified the following: ESL credits completed from Simon Fraser University, in the process of obtaining an ESL diploma, Bachelor of Education degree, job experience, special education, and reading recovery.

Question 14 asked participants to check the list of items on informal training in ESL and to identify all those that they had completed (Table 6). The participants were also asked to specify the activities for each item completed. Multiple responses were possible. The majority of respondents noted their participation in district and provincial workshops such as the English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists' Association (ESL PSA). They also identified an assortment of coursework completed in ESL, special education, and other languages from various post-secondary institutions. Many also attended the provincial ESL PSA annual conference and the international Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conference and were members of the ESL PSA. Some had participated in overseas work or in teacher-training programs.

Table 6: Informal Training

Training	Frequency	Percentage
Workshops	22	84
Conferences	23	88
Professional Organizations	20	76
College / University	19	73
Mentorship	14	53
Other	11	42

(N=26)

In the specific areas of ESL qualifications (Question 15), the participants were asked to identify all the various coursework or academic training they had completed in the eight specific ESL categories (Table 7). The average number of courses completed by the respondents was 5.33. Multiple answers were possible.

Table 7: Have you completed coursework/academic training in the following areas?

ESL Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Second language acquisition	24	88
Cultural/linguistic awareness	20	74
Language/linguistic knowledge	24	88
Classroom-home liaison	5	18
Methodology and methods for teaching ESL	21	77
Applied linguistics	20	74
Multicultural studies	17	63
Cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training	13	48
Other ⁵	7	26

(N=27)

In Question 17, participants were asked if they held a Bachelor of Education degree. Seventy-four per cent of the respondents stated they that they had a Bachelor of Education degree and 26% said that they did not. When asked to specify, those who did not have an education degree stated that they possessed a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree. Those who held a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree completed one year of a post-degree professional teaching program to qualify for teaching certification. Question 18 asked participants if they possessed a post-degree professional teaching certificate. Seventy-four per cent stated they did, 15% did not, and 11% did not respond.⁶ In Question 19, participants were asked to confirm all the listed credentials that they held

⁵ Other areas noted were course/training completion in assessment, curriculum development, learning disabilities, reading recovery, conflict resolution, cooperative learning, and linguistics.

⁶ Previously, teaching certificates were issued to those who completed a 4 year education program. Now, a fifth year is required to qualify for certification in BC.

(Table 8)⁷. Approximately one third of the participants had completed a Master's degree and over one third had completed TESL certification. Multiple responses were possible.

Table 8: Credentials

Credentials	Frequency	Percentage
Master's degree	8	30
Doctoral degree	3	11
TESL Certification	10	37
Bachelor's degree (other than in Education)	7	26
Other ⁸	9	33

(N=27)

Question 20 asked the participants to list any unclassified university-level courses completed beyond their last degree(s). Roughly 41% of the respondents stated that they had completed coursework in areas of dance therapy, learning disabilities, social studies, French, labour studies, art history, and technology. No respondents noted any ESL-related unclassified university-level courses. Approximately 33% noted that they had not completed any unclassified university-level courses and 26% did not respond.

Coursework completion and age, sex, setting, region, and self-efficacy

To determine if correlates exist between ESL qualifications and age, sex, setting, region, and measure of teacher efficacy, cross tabulations were performed. As noted previously, Question 15 asked participants to identify all the various coursework or academic training completed in the specific ESL categories. The average number of courses completed in the specific ESL categories by the respondents was 5.33 out of eight courses listed. The amount of coursework or academic training in the specific ESL categories was compared to variables such as age, sex, setting, region, and self-efficacy.

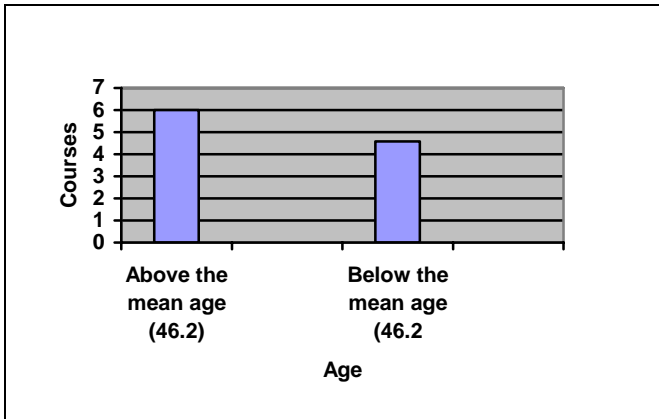
⁷ Question 19 requested the same information as question 13. To ensure internal validity, questions may be asked multiple times in different ways. If the return rate for this survey had been greater, the results may have been more revealing.

⁸ The most noted credential identified under the 'Other' heading was a diploma or coursework in special education.

In addition, TESL certification was also compared with coursework in specific ESL categories.

A comparison between ESL coursework completion and age (Figure 1) revealed that those respondents who were above the mean age of the participants (46.2 years) completed approximately 1.42 more ESL courses than those who were below the mean age. Participants who were above the mean age completed an average of 6.00 courses and those who were below the mean age completed an average of 4.58 courses.

Figure 1: ESL Coursework Completion and Age



A comparison between ESL coursework completion and sex (Figure2) revealed that overall, female participants completed slightly more courses than male participants with means of 5.41 and 4.66 respectively. When interpreting these data, caution is required. The sample sizes for the males and females differed greatly, 3 and 24 respectively. When sample sizes are small, each unit carries more substantial weight, possibly affecting the data analysis.

Figure 2: ESL Coursework Completion and Sex

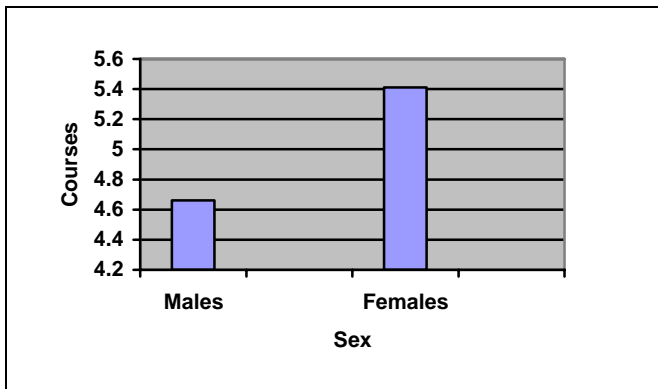


Figure 3 indicates the amount of ESL coursework completed in various geographic settings. Participants situated in urban settings completed the most number of courses, followed by those respondents in rural settings and then by those in suburban settings. The means were 6.40, 4.83 and 4.63, respectively.

Figure 3: ESL Coursework Completion and Setting

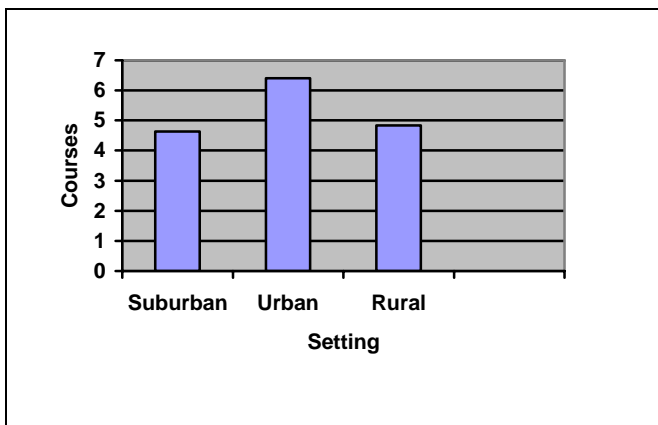


Figure 4 illustrates ESL coursework completed by region (Vancouver Island, South Coast, Interior, Northern BC, and Central BC). Participants from Vancouver Island completed the most coursework (6.66 courses), followed by South Coast (5.33 courses), Central BC (5.00 courses), Northern BC (4.00 courses), and the Interior (3.00 courses).

There was only one respondent from each of the following regions: Interior, Northern BC and Central BC.

Figure 4: ESL Coursework Completion and Region

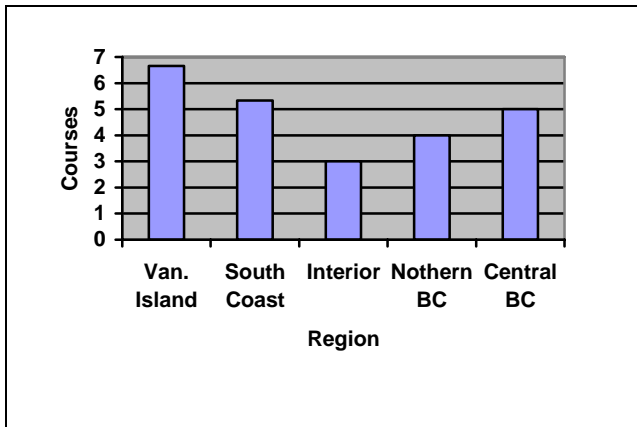
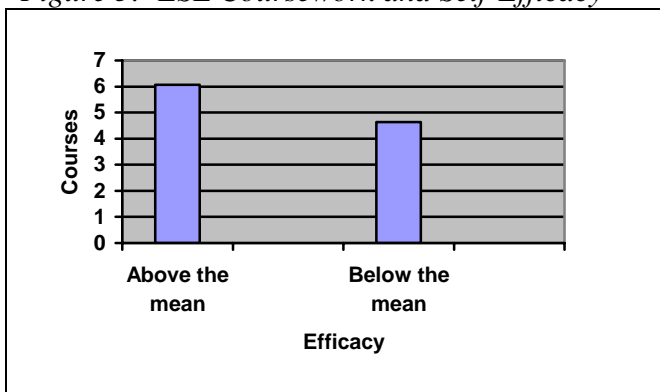


Figure 5 illustrates ESL coursework completion and self-efficacy. Respondents who scored above the self-efficacy assessment mean completed more ESL coursework than those scored below the self-efficacy assessment mean. The course means were 6.07 and 4.64, respectively.

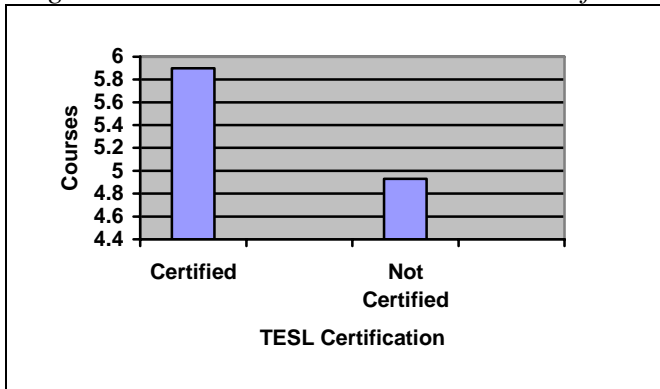
Figure 5: ESL Coursework and Self-Efficacy



The last comparison conducted was between ESL coursework completion and TESL certification (Figure 6). A comparison was performed to see if any differences existed in the amount of coursework completed by those who were TESL certified and

those who were not certified. Participants who were TESL certified completed approximately one more course than those participants who were not TESL certified. The mean for TESL certified teachers was 5.9 and 4.93 for non-certified respondents.

Figure 6: *ESL Coursework and TESL Certification*



Professional Development

Questions 21 to 23 and 32 to 33 requested information pertaining to the frequency and recency of participants’ professional development in ESL. Out of the 25 responses, the mean for the most recent ESL professional development session attended by the participants prior to June 2007 (Question 21) was 5.67 months prior with a range of 0 to 36 months prior. The median was 3 months prior (Table 9).

Table 9: *When did you last participate in ESL related professional development activities/workshops/district in-service?*

Months	Frequency	Percentage
0-4	14	56
5-9	7	28
10-14	3	12
15-19	0	0
20-24	0	0
25-29	0	0
30-34	0	0
35-49	1	4

(N=25)

Out of 24 responses, the mean for the number of professional development workshops attended by the participants per year (Question 22) was 3.66 with a range of 0

workshops to 18 workshops (Table 10). The median was 2.25 workshops attended per year.

Table 10: In a typical year, how often do you participate in professional development workshops or activities related to ESL?

Total per year	Frequency	Percentage
0	1	4.2
1	8	33.0
1.5	1	4.2
2	2	8.0
2.5	4	17.0
3	1	4.2
4.5	1	4.2
5	3	13.0
12	2	8.0
18	1	4.2

(N=24)

Out of 24 responses, in a typical year, the average number of workshops held by the participants’ districts (Question 23) was 3.47 per year with a range of 0 to 10 workshops held each year (Table 11). The median was 2.75 district held workshops.

Table 11: In a typical year, how often does your district offer professional development workshops or activities related to ESL?

Total per year	Frequency	Percentage
0	5	20
1	5	20
2.5	2	8
3	2	8
3.5	1	4
4	1	4
5	2	8
6	1	4
7	1	4
8	1	4
9	1	4
10	2	8

(N=24)

In Question 32, participants were asked to identify the professional activities (courses/activities/workshops/journals/others) that they considered most helpful in

teaching ESL. A total of 26 respondents completed this question. Multiple responses were possible. Approximately 56% stated that various workshops and conferences such as the annual English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists' Association (ESL PSA) conference and the Bureau of Educational Research (BER)⁹ courses were extremely helpful in providing information and teaching strategies. Approximately 23% of the participants stated that participating in mentorship programs and collaborating with their peers were helpful to their teaching. Similarly, 23% of the participants stated that the various ESL courses they completed were helpful in their field and 15% of the participants noted reading professional journals and various literatures as being helpful to their teaching. As well, individuals stated that reading / literacy programs such as the SMART Reading program¹⁰, reading recovery¹¹, and guided reading¹² were helpful in their ESL teaching.

In Question 33, participants were asked to identify specific areas of ESL in which they wished for further professional development and training. A total of 17 participants completed this question. Multiple responses were possible. Close to one-half of the respondents (47%) identified a focus on teaching specific skills development such as writing and grammar skills as a need for further professional development.

Approximately 26% of the participants stated that they would like further professional development in cross cultural learning and communication differences in ESL students,

⁹ BER is an organization that offers seminars and conferences for staff development and training in North America. It was founded by educators in 1976, and is situated in Washington State.

¹⁰ In the SMART program, students work with texts that they can read at 95% accuracy. Key comprehension strategies are explicitly applied and a structured talk routine is used by the teacher to deepen their understandings.

¹¹ Reading recovery is used to help low skill level students improve their reading abilities. Emphasis is put on the development of phonological awareness and the use of contextual information to assist reading.

¹² Guided reading offers small group support in reading and uses reading strategies such as the use of context clues, letter and sound relationships, and word structure.

followed by 21% of the respondents who specified a need for further development in ESL program planning and 16% of the respondents who noted a need for further development in ESL assessments.

Professional development and age, sex, setting, region, coursework, and self-efficacy

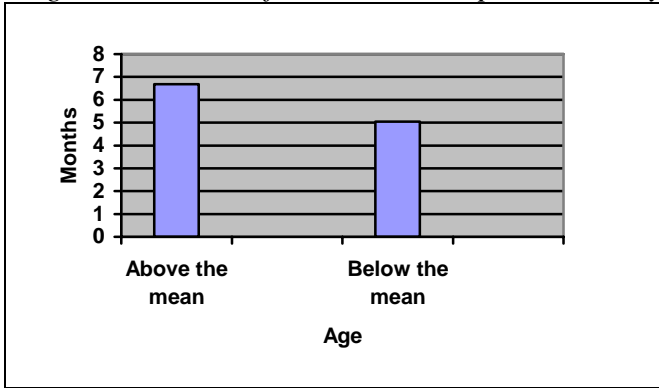
For Questions 21, 22, and 23 (Table 12), means were calculated based on age, sex, setting, region, coursework completion, and self-efficacy to determine if any differences existed among the variables and professional development responses. Responses that were left blank were not included and those that were presented as a range were averaged before the analysis.

Table 12: Professional Development in ESL

Question 21: When did you last participate in ESL-related pro-d activities/workshops/district in-service? (months prior)
Question 22: In a typical year, how often do you participate in professional development workshops or activities related to ESL? (per year)
Question 23: In a typical year, how often does your district offer professional development workshops or activities related to ESL? (per year)

When the responses to Question 21 were compared based on the participants’ age (Figure 7), those respondents whose ages were above the mean age of the participants (46.2 years of age) had completed their last ESL-related pro-d approximately 6.68 months prior whereas those whose ages were below the mean had completed their pro-d approximately 5.04 months prior.

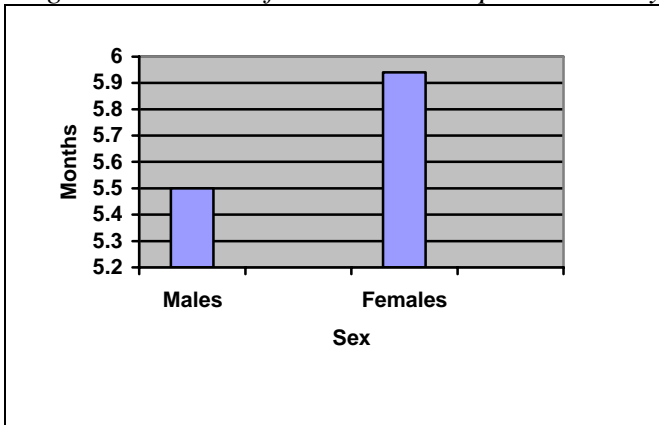
Figure 7: Last Professional Development Activity and Age



Responses to Question 21 were compared to the participants' sex (Figure 8).

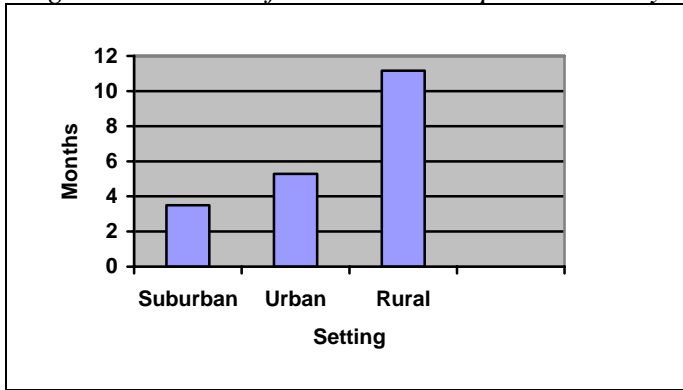
Male respondents had completed their last ESL-related pro-d activity approximately 5.50 months prior whereas the female respondents had completed theirs approximately 5.94 months prior. Only 2 males responded to this question.

Figure 8: Last Professional Development Activity and Sex



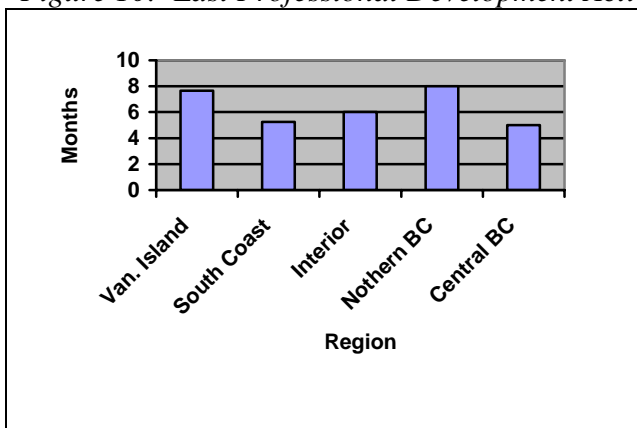
When the responses to Question 21 were analyzed based on the participants' setting, on average, the respondents from the suburban areas completed their last ESL professional development approximately 2.95 months prior to the survey (Figure 9). The participants from urban areas completed their last ESL professional development approximately 4.22 months prior and the rural participants completed theirs approximately 11.16 months prior.

Figure 9: Last Professional Development Activity and Setting



Responses to Question 21 indicated that participants from Vancouver Island completed their last ESL-related pro-d approximately 7.66 months prior to the questionnaire (Figure 10). Those from the South Coast completed theirs approximately 5.25 months prior, and those from the Interior, Northern BC, and Central BC completed their 6.00 months prior, 8.00 months prior, and 5.00 months prior, respectively. For the Interior, Northern BC, and Central BC, there was only one participant from each of these regions.

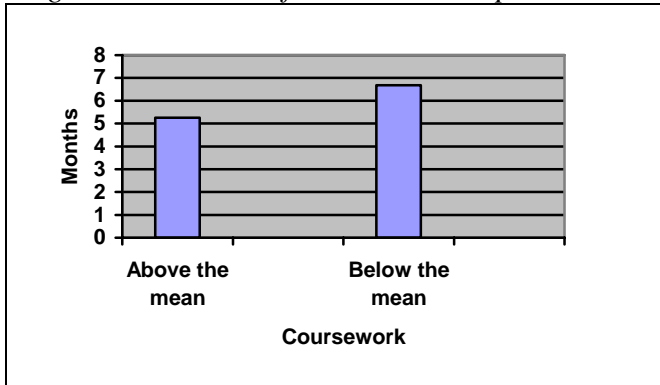
Figure 10: Last Professional Development Activity and Region



Responses to Question 21 were examined based on the number of ESL courses completed by the participants (Figure 11). For those respondents reporting coursework completion above the mean, their last pro-d was approximately 5.25 months prior while

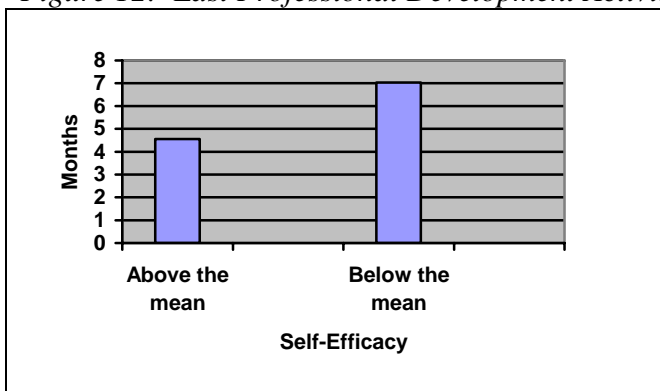
those whose coursework completion was below the mean attended their last pro-d approximately 6.68 months prior.

Figure 11: Last Professional Development Activity and Coursework Completion



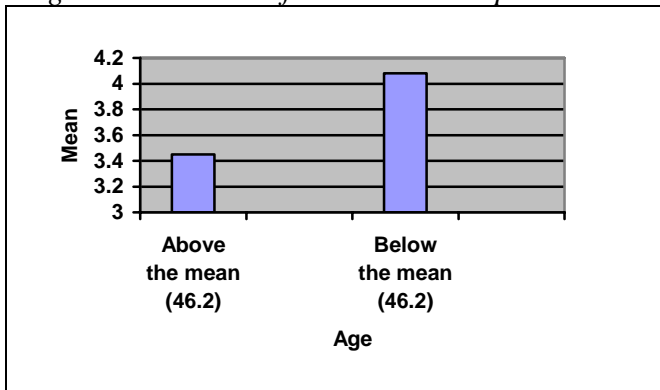
Responses to Question 21 were also analyzed based on the participants’ total scores on the self-efficacy section, questions 27 to 31, (Figure 12). For the respondents who scored above the mean (24.70 points) of the total participants, their last participation in ESL-related pro-d was approximately 4.56 months prior while those who scored below the mean attended their last pro-d workshop approximately 7.03 months prior.

Figure 12: Last Professional Development Activity and Self-Efficacy



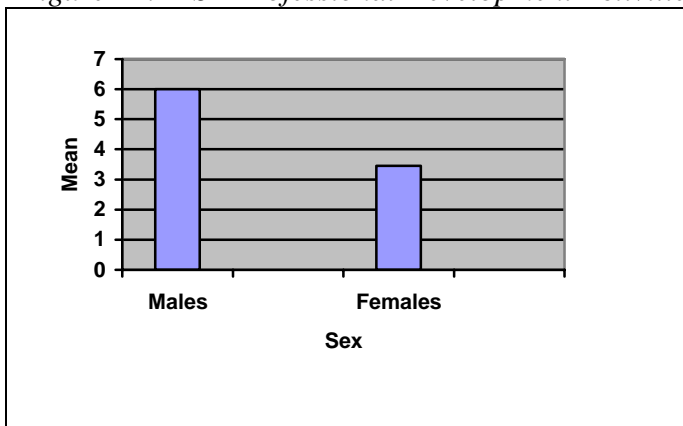
Responses to question 22 were compared based on the participants’ age (Figure 13). Participants whose ages were above 46.2 years completed 3.45 workshops per year while those below the mean age completed approximately 4.08 ESL-related pro-d workshops per year.

Figure 13: ESL Professional Development Activities and Age



Responses to Question 22 were considered based on the participants’ sex (Figure 14). Male participants completed approximately 3 more ESL pro-d workshops per year than their female counterparts. The mean for males was 6 pro-d workshops per year while for female participants, the mean was 3.3 workshops per year. There were only 2 male respondents for this analysis.

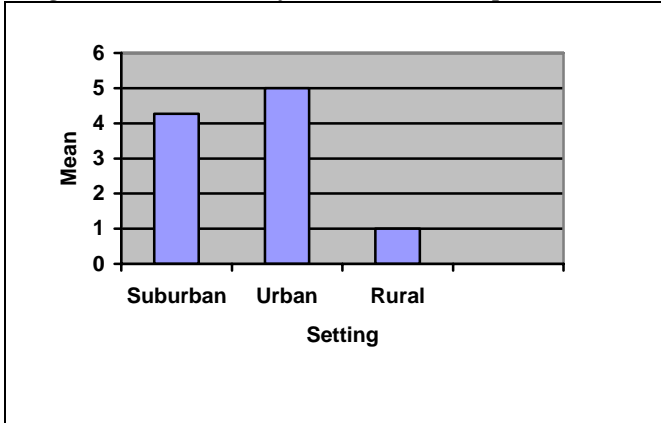
Figure 14: ESL Professional Development Activities and Sex



Responses to Question 22 were considered based on the participants’ setting (Figure 15). Participants from urban settings completed the most number of pro-d workshops per year, followed by those situated in suburban settings. Those from the rural areas completed the fewest pro-d workshops per year. The means for pro-d workshops

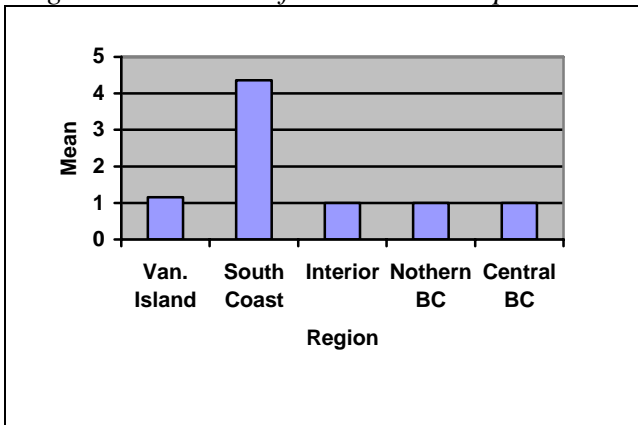
completed per year by participants situated in urban, suburban and rural areas are 5, 4.27, and 1, respectively.

Figure 15: ESL Professional Development Activities and Setting



Responses to Question 22 were assessed based on the participants' region (Figure 16). Participants who were located on Vancouver Island completed approximately 1.16 ESL pro-d workshops per year. Participants from the South Coast region completed approximately 4.36 workshops per year, and those from the Interior, Northern BC and Central BC completed 1 ESL workshop per year.

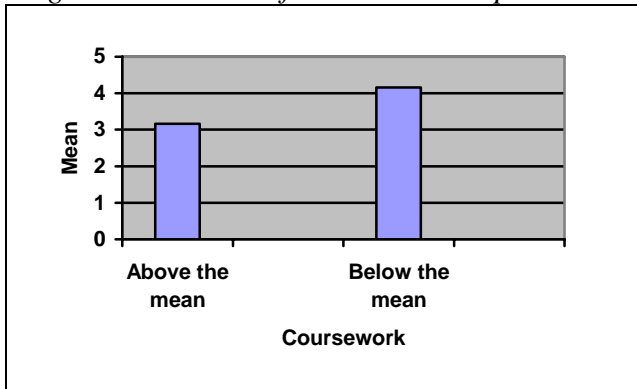
Figure 16: ESL Professional Development Activities and Region



Responses to question 22 were analyzed based on the participants' ESL coursework completion (Figure 17). Respondents whose coursework completion was

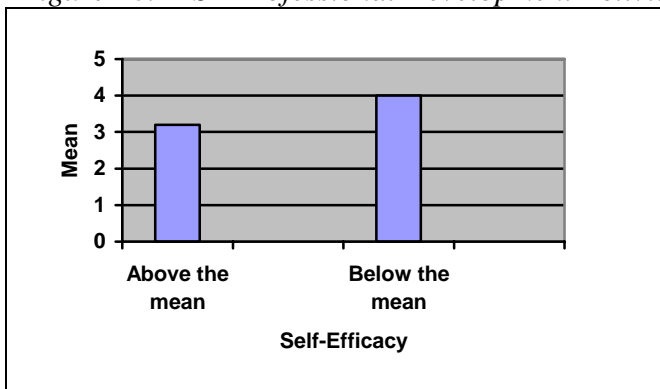
below the mean (5.33 courses) participated in approximately 4.16 ESL-related pro-d workshops per year. Participants whose coursework completion was above the mean completed approximately 3.16 workshops per year.

Figure 17: ESL Professional Development Activities and Coursework



Responses to Question 22 were examined based on the participants’ total scores for the self-efficacy section (Figure 18). Participants whose scores were above the mean in self-efficacy participated in approximately 3.2 workshops per year while those whose scores were below the mean in self-efficacy completed approximately 4 workshops per year.

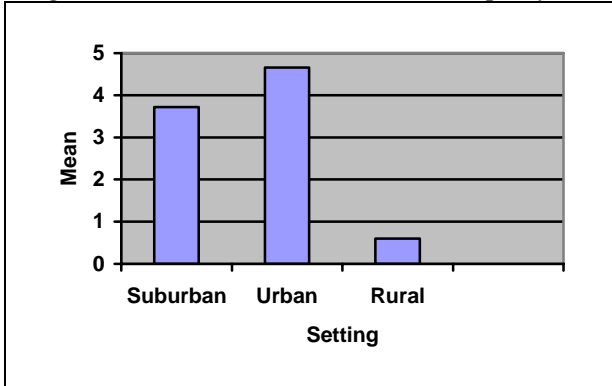
Figure 18: ESL Professional Development Activities and Self-Efficacy



Responses to Question 23 were analyzed based on setting (Figure 19). Respondents who were located in suburban areas worked for school districts that offered approximately 3.72 ESL pro-d workshops per year. Those who were situated in urban

areas worked for school districts that offered 4.66 workshops per year and those in rural areas worked in school districts that offered 0.60 workshops per year.

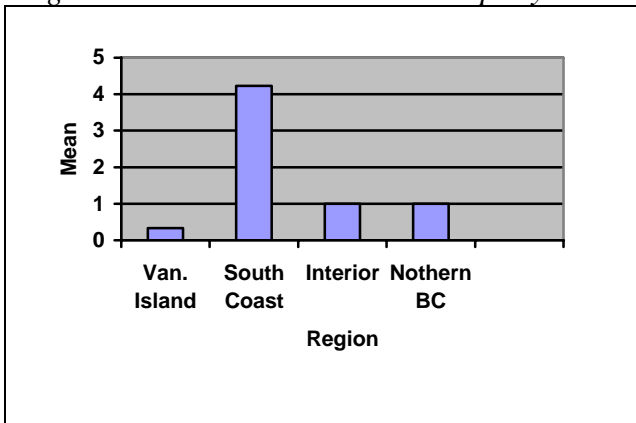
Figure 19: District-held ESL Pro-d per year



Responses to Question 23 were assessed based on region (Figure 20).

Respondents working on Vancouver Island worked for school districts that offered approximately 0.33 ESL pro-d workshops per year. Those situated in the South Coast worked for school districts that offered 4.23 workshops per year and those in the Interior and Northern BC worked in school districts that offered approximately 1 ESL workshop per year.

Figure 20: District-held ESL Pro-d per year and Region



Self-efficacy

Questions 27 to 31 queried the participants' views of their self-efficacy in ESL teaching. A 6-point Likert scale was used to assess the participants' extent of agreement or disagreement with the various statements with one indicating that the participant strongly disagree with the statement and six indicating that the participant strongly agreed with the statement. Table 13 presents the means and standard deviations for the self-efficacy statements.

Table 13

Self-efficacy statements	M	SD
Question 27: Feel confident in abilities and range of strategies to support ESL students.	4.85	1.378
Question 28: Feel confident in assessing ESL students' level of language development.	5.22	0.891
Question 29: Feel confident in assessing ESL students' level of academic development.	4.88	1.012
Question 30: Feel confident in assessing ESL students' social and cultural development.	4.40	1.248
Question 31: Feel confident in gauging the source(s) of struggling ESL students' difficulties.	4.44	1.085

Note: 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree

In question 27, participants were asked if they were confident in their abilities and the range of strategies they possess to support ESL students. A total of 27 responses were recorded: 37% (10 participants) strongly agreed; 37% (10 participants) agreed; 15% (4 participants) somewhat agreed; 4% (1 participant) neither agreed nor disagreed; 0% somewhat disagreed; and 7% (2 participants) disagreed with the statement that they were confident in their abilities and strategies to support ESL students.

Question 28 asked participants if they were confident in their abilities to assess ESL students' level of language development. A total of 27 responses were recorded: 44% (12 participants) strongly agreed; 41% (11 participants) agreed; 7% (2 participants)

somewhat agreed; and 7% (2 participants) somewhat disagreed that they felt confident in assessing their students' level of language development.

Question 29 asked participants if they were confident in assessing ESL students' level of academic development. A total of 27 responses were recorded: 26% (7 participants) strongly agreed; 52% (14 participants) agreed; 11% (3 participants) somewhat agreed; 7% (2 participants) somewhat disagreed; and 4% (1 participant) disagreed that they felt confident in assessing their students' level of academic development.

Question 30 asked participants if they were confident in assessing their ESL students' social and cultural needs. A total of 27 responses were recorded: 22% (6 participants) strongly agreed; 26% (7 participants) agreed; 33% (9 participants) somewhat agreed; 7% (2 participants) somewhat disagreed; and 11% (3 participants) disagreed that they felt confident in assessing their students' social and cultural needs.

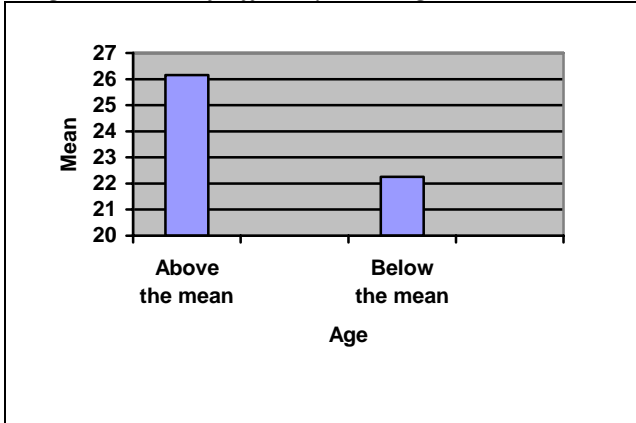
In the final question on self-efficacy, Question 31, the participants were asked if they were confident in determining the source of their students' difficulties. A total of 27 responses were recorded: 18% (5 participants) strongly agreed; 30% (8 participants) agreed; 33% (9 participants) somewhat agreed; 15% (4 participants) somewhat disagreed; and 4% (1 participant) disagreed that they felt confident in gauging their students' source of difficulties.

Self-efficacy and age, sex, setting, region, coursework, and TESL Certification

A comparison between self-efficacy and variables of age, sex, setting, region, coursework completion, and TESL certification was conducted. Self-efficacy scores were compared based on age (Figure 21). Those respondents whose ages were above the mean

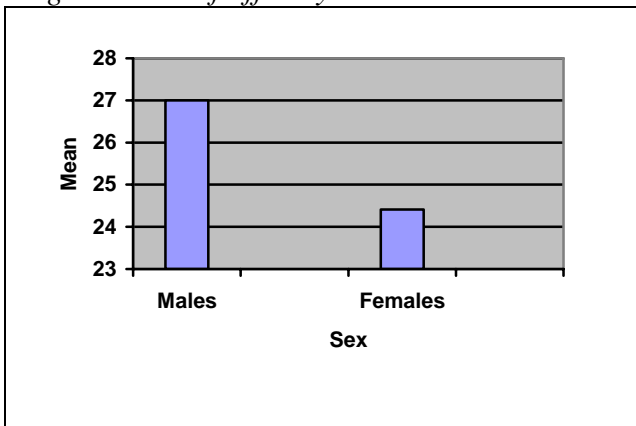
age scored a higher self-efficacy mean of 26.15 while those who were below the mean age scored 22.25.

Figure 21: Self-efficacy and Age



When self-efficacy scores were compared based on sex (Figure 22), the male participants outscored the female participants in the self-efficacy section. Male respondents had the higher mean score of 27.00 while the females had a mean score of 24.41.

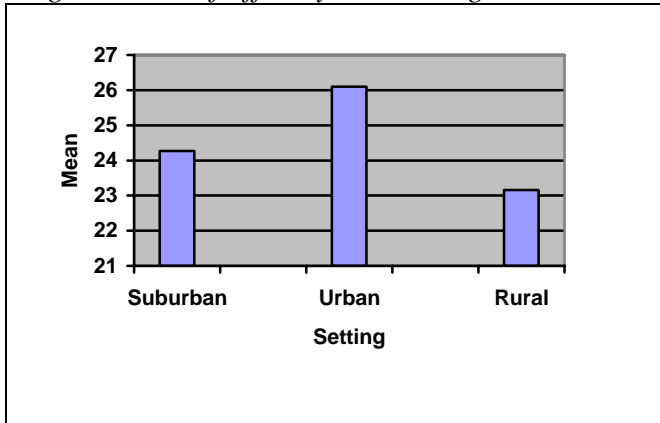
Figure 22: Self-efficacy and Sex



When self-efficacy scores were compared based on setting (Figure 23), participants from urban areas had the highest self-efficacy mean score (26.10), followed

by those from suburban areas (24.27). Respondents from rural areas had the lowest self-efficacy mean of 23.16.

Figure 23: Self-efficacy and Setting

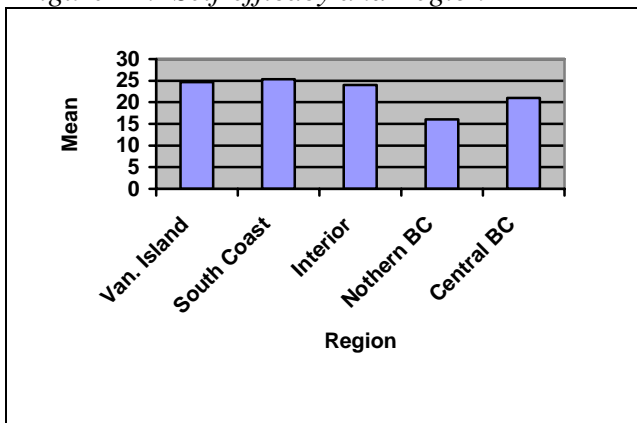


The self-efficacy scores were analyzed based on the region (Figure 24).

Participants from the South Coast had the highest self-efficacy mean score of 25.33.

Respondents from Vancouver Island and the Interior followed with mean scores of 24.66 and 24.00 respectively. Those from Central BC had a mean score of 21.00 and those from Northern BC had the lowest mean score of 16.00.

Figure 24: Self-efficacy and Region

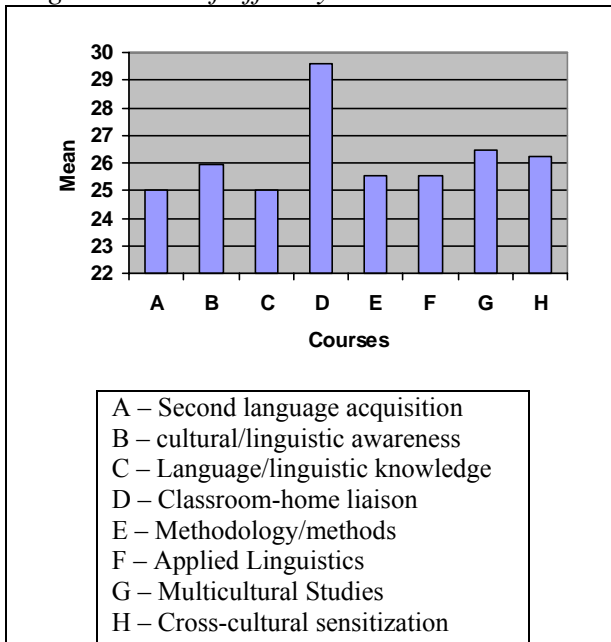


Self-efficacy scores were analyzed based on the individual ESL courses

completed by the participants (Figure 25). Those participants who completed coursework

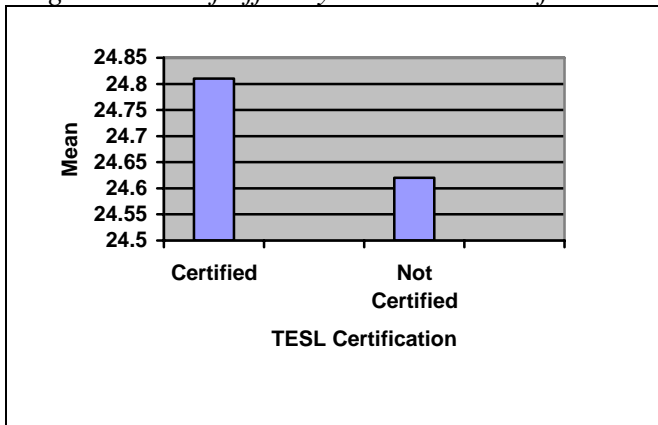
in classroom-home liaison scored the highest self-efficacy mean score of 29.60. Participants who completed coursework in multicultural studies and cross-cultural sensitization scored the next highest self-efficacy mean score, 26.47 and 26.23 respectively. Participants who completed coursework in second language acquisition, cultural/linguistic awareness, language/linguistic knowledge, methodology/methods and applied linguistics scored similar mean scores of 25.04, 25.95, 25.04, 25.52, and 25.55 respectively.

Figure 25: Self-efficacy and Coursework



Self-efficacy scores were compared based on the TESL Certification (Figure 26). The mean score for participants who were TESL certified were comparable to those who were not TESL certified. Their scores were relatively similar, 24.81 and 24.62 respectively.

Figure 26: *Self-efficacy and TESL Certification*



Emerging Themes

Questions 26, 34, 35 and 36 were open-ended and responses were coded according to emerging themes. Open-ended questions provided the participants with the opportunity to respond with answers that may otherwise have not been probed by the questionnaire's closed responses. Responses that were coded by 10% or more of the participants were considered as emerging themes.

Adequacy of ESL Services and Support

Question 26 asked participants if their respective districts offered adequate ESL services and support. A total of 37 comments were recorded for this question. From the 11 comments that stated that students were receiving adequate ESL support in their districts, one main theme emerged: at the elementary level, the participants felt that ESL students generally received adequate services and support, especially when the ESL teacher was stationed at one school.

When the ESL teacher is stationed at one school, we can work with the classroom teacher, give the child emotional support daily, and provide a safe place for them to come... (S22)¹³.

¹³ The S22 denotes the survey number from where the quote was taken. All subsequent quotes will be indicated with the S for survey followed by the number.

...solid program with good monitoring afterwards in elementary (S24).

This, however, was impacted by the amount of time and the varying degree of ESL needs. A total of 26 comments were recorded from participants who felt that ESL services and support were not adequate in their respective districts. More than one-half (58%) of the responses noted a lack of ESL support time; 31% cited large ESL class sizes and ESL student caseloads; 23% noted lack of ESL-trained specialist teachers; and 12% indicated lack of ESL funding. A couple of individual concerns mentioned were variations of support among schools and teachers' attitudes regarding ESL.

Recommended Pre-service Qualifications for ESL Specialists

Question 34 asked participants what they believed should be the required basic pre-service certification for ESL specialist teachers. A total of 26 responses were recorded. Sixty-two per cent stated that some coursework in ESL should be part of the requirements. The most commonly mentioned courses were linguistics and ESL methodology. Other types of courses mentioned were linguistics, assessment, methodology, language acquisition, and cultural/sociolinguistic awareness. 27% cited actual TESL/TEFL certification as a preferable requirement for ESL teachers but 12% stated that experience was sufficient for ESL qualifications. Some stated 3-5 years of teaching experience while others stated a minimum of 5 years as a requirement. Another recommendation was the completion of an ESL practicum during teacher training as a part of the ESL teacher pre-service requirements. This question did raise a concern regarding the specific identification of the courses. Some of the preceding questions might have inadvertently presented the items in the questions as possible ESL training requirements. Question 15, for example, identifies specific ESL-related coursework

which many of the participants may not have previously been familiar with but became aware of through this question. Their responses may have been influenced by some of the preceding questions.

Reasons for Teaching ESL

The participants were asked what prompted them to become ESL teachers (Question 35), and the following themes emerged from 25 responses recorded: 40% stated a general interest and an interest in various cultures caused them to seek ESL teaching assignments; 36% stated that their own work experiences related to ESL prompted them to seek employment as ESL teachers; and 20% stated that they became ESL teachers mainly due to district job reassignments.

General Comments

The final item (Question 36) of the survey asked participants to offer general comments on ESL teacher preparation and professional development. Several themes emerged from a total of 19 responses. First, 58% of the participants voiced concerns regarding the lack of trained ESL teachers in specialty, ESL positions. In many school districts, teaching assignments are filled based on seniority. The participants stated that many of the ESL positions were assigned to teachers who had neither the experience nor the training. Approximately 26% of the participants stated the use of the 'resource model or the learning service model to staff and teach ESL placed non-ESL trained teachers in ESL assignments as an issue of contention. The resource model is a service delivery model for student support services. The resource team is comprised of a number of specialist teachers who are each assigned to specific classes and are responsible for providing support for all students in assigned classes. Regardless of whether the

specialist teacher is an ESL teacher or a Special Education teacher, each is responsible for providing support for students who have a range of needs such as ESL support, learning disabilities, and severe physical/intellectual challenges.

The resource model forces teachers to teach in areas where they are unqualified (S15).

Approximately 26% of the participants voiced their concerns regarding the assumption made by teachers and administrators that teaching Language Arts, French Immersion or other foreign languages is sufficient preparation for ESL teaching. As one respondent noted succinctly, "...an English teacher does not make an ESL teacher" (S21). One participant singled out the British Columbia Teachers' Federation's (BCTF) attitude that 'a teacher is a teacher' as worrisome. The notion that any teacher, regardless of qualifications or experience, could teach ESL was felt by many as disconcerting. Sixteen per cent of the participants stated that due to the dramatic changes to school demographics, there is a strong and necessary need for further ESL training for classroom teachers. The participants voiced a need for further learning opportunities for ESL / classroom teachers in rural or remote areas since attending conferences in larger urban centres was not always feasible or affordable. In addition, many of the participants stated that there should be more ESL teaching focus in teacher education programs.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study on ESL Teacher Preparation and Professional Development in British Columbia. The findings were presented as the following sections: characteristics of the participants; teaching assignments; teaching experience; teacher training; professional development; self-efficacy; emerging themes; and participants' general comments.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Chapter Five presents the summary on the study on ESL teacher preparation and professional development and discusses the findings in light of current research literature. In addition, this chapter discusses the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Summary

This quantitative and qualitative study presented the general levels of current preparation and on-going professional development among practicing ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia. This study was significant because it offered an opportunity to gather information on a group of educators, ESL specialist teachers, of whom very little is known. Virtually no research exists that examines ESL teacher preparation in British Columbia; therefore, very little is known about their levels of current ESL teacher preparation and on-going professional development. There has been much conjecture in the research literature on what essential skills and knowledge ESL teachers should possess in order to teach English language learners effectively. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether the current levels of teacher preparation and in-service professional development of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia were aligned with the criteria outlined in the research literature.

Review of Literature

Research has identified teachers as the single most important school variable influencing the learning outcomes of students, especially in low income and minority students (OECD, 2005; Lewis & Paik, 2001). Chapter Two, reviewed the literature on

general pre-service teacher preparation and teachers' impact on student achievement.

This chapter also examined what researchers believe are the essential elements that ESL teachers should possess in order to optimize their students' achievement. Significant quantitative research revealed that observable teacher variables such as specific teaching certification (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Vandevort, 2004), teaching experience (Ferguson, 1991; Kain & Singleton, 1996), teachers' test scores (Hanushek, 1971; Ferguson & Ladd, 1995; and Haycock, 1998), and teaching methodology (OECD, 2005; Begle, 1979) appeared to have a positive impact on student achievement. Advance degrees (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002; Allen, 2005), however, seem to have little impact on the adjusted gains in student achievement.

Similarly, experts in the field of English as a second language have made claims that special training and skills are necessary when working with English language learners. Knowledge in fundamental areas of ESL-specific studies are required to assist English language learners effectively (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Menken & Antunez, 2001; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Goodwin, 2002; Solorzano & Solorzano, 1999). According to the experts, ESL specialist teachers should be trained in second language acquisition, cultural/linguistic awareness, language/linguistic knowledge and classroom-home liaison (advocacy). The BC Ministry of Education has also recommended guidelines for ESL specialist teachers wanting to teach ESL in BC's public schools. They include a professional certificate and classroom experience, ESL methodology, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, first and second language learning, multicultural studies, applied linguistics, or practical experience.

Although many experts in the field have identified specific knowledge required to be effective English language teachers, very little empirical research in this area is available to support their claims. A study by Bradfeldt-Waring (2006), however, did present empirical evidence to support significant findings between ESL teacher preparation and the proficiency achievement levels of English language learners. In this study, Bradfeldt-Waring found that students who had teachers with specific training to work with English language learners (ELLs) consistently had higher test scores than those who were taught by untrained ESL teachers (Bradfeldt-Waring, 2006). Essentially, generic teaching skills, alone, would be insufficient to instruct ESL students effectively.

General Findings

This study provided specific data on the demographics of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia. These included their location, sex, age, teaching experience, teaching assignment, and degrees. Most of the respondents who participated in this study were from the Lower Mainland and were situated in either urban or suburban settings, a finding that is not altogether surprising given the higher population density in these areas. All participants were employed in the public school system at the time of the study. Most of the participants were females and the average age of the participants was 46.2 years. The participants taught ESL at multiple levels, elementary, middle years, secondary, or a combination of the three. The majority of the ESL specialists had completed their Bachelor of Education degrees while some completed their Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degrees and completed one year in a professional development program. One-third of the respondents stated that they held TESL certification and approximately 44% completed post-graduate programs in ESL. A third of the participants completed

their Master's degrees and 11% completed doctoral degrees. Whether or not the master's and doctoral degrees were in the field of ESL is unknown. Overall, the average length of general teaching experience for the respondents was 17.13 years, compared to 11.09 for ESL teaching experience, implying that the respondents had moved into ESL after some time in a mainstream classroom. The percentage of participants who had less than five years of general teaching experience was 7% compared to 41% for those who had less than five years of ESL teaching experience.

The percentage of ESL specialist teachers with less than five years of ESL experience was 44%. This is noteworthy because some studies have shown that teacher experience has a positive impact on students' learning outcomes (Kain & Singleton, 1996). A notable difference exists between teachers with five years of experience and those who have less than five years. According to Barton (2003), students who were taught by teachers with 5 years of experience made 3-4 months more progress in reading than those students who were taught by teachers with less than 5 years of experience.

In this study, almost one-half of the ESL specialist teachers have less than five years of experience teaching ESL. This may have an impact on ESL students. Students who are taught by ESL specialist teachers who lack experience may not be getting the full benefit of an experienced teacher. A future study comparing the achievement levels of students taught by experienced and inexperienced ESL teachers could shed light on the impact of inexperienced teachers on ESL students and the differences in achievement outcomes.

Discussions of the Research Questions

1. Does the preparation of ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia match the criteria for ESL teaching as stipulated by the research literature?

As mentioned previously, the research literature maintains that ESL specialist teachers should have training in the areas of second language acquisition, culture and linguistic awareness, language and linguistic knowledge, and liaising between the home and classroom in order to work effectively with English language learners.

The teachers who responded to this survey generally possess the skills and knowledge stipulated in the research literature for teaching ESL. A high percentage of the respondents had preparation in three out of the four areas recommended by the experts in the field of ESL. The majority of participants did not have any coursework in liaising between the home and classroom.

2. Do ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia meet the guidelines for skills and knowledge as outlined by BC the Ministry of Education?

According to the BC Ministry of Education ESL Policy Guidelines (1999), an ESL specialist should possess one of the following qualifications: a Professional Teaching Certificate and basic classroom experience; training in methodology, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, multicultural studies, first and second language learning, and applied linguistics; or relevant practical experience such as living in another culture for a period of time...[or]... learning another language.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the respondents in this survey possess the necessary skills and knowledge for teaching ESL as outlined by the BC Ministry of Education. A high percentage of the respondents completed four out of the five courses

recommended and one third of the participants had resided in another country, with the majority of them working as ESL teachers.

3. Is there a relationship between the general levels of current ESL teacher preparation and age, sex, setting, region, and measures of self- efficacy?

Coursework completion was compared with age, sex, setting, region, and self-efficacy to determine if any relationship existed between the various elements. Those who were above the mean age (46.2 years) completed more coursework than those who were below the mean age. Overall, female respondents completed slightly more ESL preparation courses than their male counterparts. Participants residing in urban settings and who were located in the South Coast or Vancouver Island completed the most ESL courses. Those who were TESL certified completed only 1 more course than those who were not TESL certified. When ESL coursework completion was compared with self-efficacy, those respondents who scored above the mean in self-efficacy had completed more ESL coursework than those who scored below the mean.

On average, the participants completed 5.33 out of 8 courses identified in the literature as specialized courses for ESL. The courses completed by the most participants were in the skills development areas that addressed language components, pedagogy and methods in ESL. These courses were in second language acquisition, language/linguistic knowledge, and methodology and methods. These courses entail an understanding in language acquisition theories, instructional strategies, and language systems. Conversely, the courses that were completed by the least number of participants were those that addressed cultural and social aspects of ESL. These included multicultural studies, cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training, and classroom-home liaison. These courses

encompass a more general understanding of the role of culture and cultural groups (customs, attitudes, and beliefs) rather than language skills development.

An examination of various teacher education institutions revealed that at the time of this study, very few ESL courses were offered in the teacher education programs at the various post-secondary institutions in BC. The teacher education institutions examined were the following: Malaspina University College, Simon Fraser University, Trinity Western, Thompson River University, University College of the Fraser Valley, University of British Columbia, University of British Columbia-Okanagan, University of Northern British Columbia, and University of Victoria. ESL courses, however, were offered through other faculties at the three main post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. The department of linguistics at the University of Victoria offered a Bachelor of Applied Linguistics degree that prepared students to teach English as a second language. At the University of British Columbia, a diploma program in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) was available through the Faculty of Education, but was separate from the teacher training program. At Simon Fraser University, a certificate program in TESL Linguistics from the Linguistics department was offered for students preparing to teach English as a second language. The majority of ESL areas of study recommended in the literature were offered at the three main post-secondary institutions, but not through their teacher training programs.

What is interesting is that TESL training and teacher training are separate entities in this province. To teach ESL to international/domestic students at the language centres at various post-secondary institutions, ESL specialist teachers are only required to have their TESL certification but not their teacher education degrees. To teach ESL to

international/domestic students in BC's public schools, ESL specialist teachers are only required to have a teaching degree but not a TESL certificate.

Based on the findings, those respondents who were situated in urban settings and located in the South Coast region completed the most coursework. These participants appeared to have more access to course offerings than those who were situated in rural settings or located outside of the Lower Mainland region. Although very few courses were offered through teacher training programs, core ESL courses were offered through other departments at the three major post-secondary institutions all located in the urban centres in the Lower Mainland.

4. Is there a relationship between ESL specialist teachers' participation in professional development and age, sex, setting, region and measures of self-efficacy?

Professional development is an integral part of the teaching community where new skills and knowledge are acquired for a more informed practice. In the process, teachers become reflective practitioners, adapting their new found knowledge, skills and beliefs to their teaching context (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Professional development activities can come in many forms that offer the participants a forum for enquiry and collaboration, pertinent strategies, and access to 'best practice' models (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

The respondents in this study participated in a variety of professional development throughout the year. Workshops and conferences were the most cited ESL activities noted by the participants. More than one-half of the respondents attended the annual English as a Second Language Provincial Specialists' Association (ESL PSA) conference, followed by workshops held by the Bureau of Educational Research (BER). Other types

of professional development were participation in mentorship programs, collaboration with other ESL specialist teachers, completion of various ESL courses, and subscription to professional ESL journals.

A comparison of professional development activities and age, sex, setting, region and self-efficacy revealed the following findings. Respondents who were above the mean age (46.2 years) completed more professional development activities than those below the mean age. The male participants in this survey participated in more professional development activities than their female counterparts. Participants who were situated in urban or suburban settings complete considerably more professional development workshops than those situated in rural settings. Those respondents who were located in the South Coast region completed considerably more professional development activities than those from other regions in British Columbia. Last, those who scored below the mean in self-efficacy participated in more professional development activities as did those who completed below the mean in coursework completion. These participants may have felt in-efficacious given the small amount of courses/workshops offered. As a result, they participated in greater number of professional development activities and coursework.

From the data collected, school districts situated in urban settings held notably more ESL-related professional development workshops per year than those in suburban or rural settings. School districts located in the South Coast region offered significantly more professional development workshops than other districts located elsewhere in British Columbia.

Based on the data collected in this study, participants from rural settings and those located outside of the South Coast region not only completed the least number of professional development activities in a year but also had the least access to professional development activities within and outside their districts. Respondents who were from rural districts reported that on average, their districts offered 0.60 ESL-related professional development activities each year; for those located outside the South Coast region, their districts offered either 0.33 or 1.0 professional development workshop per year. A lack of accessibility to professional development workshops may be due to the following reasons. In many rural districts, it is not uncommon to have one ESL specialist teacher employed to services the entire school district. This individual may be perceived to be the only one working with ESL students; therefore, having a workshop for so few may seem impractical in terms of time and budget. Unfortunately, many fail to recognize that classroom teachers are the ultimate individuals who work with ESL students for the majority of their school time. Many of the respondents noted that classroom teachers also require some ESL training to work with ESL students in their classrooms. They suggested that training should be included in the teacher training programs, but until this happens, the districts, themselves, should be providing ESL professional development workshops that offer strategies to work with ESL students. As well, most districts have a specific amount of funds set aside for professional development. Each teacher has access to professional development funds to attend professional development activities held within or outside their districts. The funds vary from district to district. For those ESL specialist teachers situated in rural settings or outside the South Coast region, the cost of

the conference fees, travel, and accommodations may be significantly more than what is available to them to attend various professional development conferences or workshops.

The lack of access to professional development for rural teachers is of concern. According to a report by the Task Force on Rural Education, approximately 86 000 or 15% of BC's public school students are enrolled in rural schools in British Columbia (Clarke, Imrich, Surgenor & Wells, 2003). If professional development is a way of improving the quality of instruction, this inaccessibility may impact 15% of the total school population in BC. According to Statistics Canada's report, *Understanding the Rural-Urban Reading Gap*, a significant gap in reading levels between urban and rural students in BC exists (Clarke, Imrich, Surgenor & Wells, 2003). The 2002 FSA results in Reading and Numeracy for Grades 4, 7 and 10 reveal that student scores were significantly lower in rural districts (Clarke, Imrich, Surgenor & Wells, 2003). Quality instructional practice appears to be built through professional development that focuses on "interactive, systematic and collaborative means" (Clarke, Imrich, Surgenor & Wells, 2003, p.7). Access to professional development for rural teachers would affect not only the individual teachers but also the students. One of the recommendations from the Task Force on Rural Education was to "invest in the continuous instructional improvement and success of rural educators through professional development and teacher training" (8). This study has revealed that this may not have yet taken place. Rural teachers had the lowest ESL-related professional development participation and rural districts offered the fewest ESL-related professional development activities. Further research in this area may be needed to answer why accessibility has not yet improved, especially with the advancement in technology such as the internet and webcams and why the participation

rate in professional development in ESL for rural teachers continues to be substantially lower than the urban teachers.

Interestingly, when the participants were asked to identify an area where they would like further professional development, close to one-half of the respondents identified specific skills development like writing or grammar in ESL and only 26% identified cross-cultural learning and communication differences. The participants in this study felt less efficacious in their understanding of the cultural/social aspects of ESL and more efficacious in the actual skills development in ESL yet the majority of them requested further training in the skills development.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a teachers' belief in their judgment of their ability to bring about the desired outcomes in student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Self-efficacy also relates to teachers' behaviour in the classroom such as the effort they put into their teaching, the goals they set for themselves, the expectations they have of students, and their ability to cope with the unexpected (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Participants from urban settings scored the highest on self-efficacy, followed by suburban and rural participants. Those from the South Coast had the highest scores on self-efficacy; those from Northern BC had the lowest self-efficacy scores. This may be the case because participants from the South Coast participated in the most professional development activities. They may have gained a greater knowledge base and better informed practice from the ample opportunities available to them in this region. Male respondents had significantly higher self-efficacy scores than their female counterparts, a finding that supports research that has been conducted elsewhere (Imants & De

Branbender, 1996). Although the percentage of male participants in this study was low (11%), the results appear to be in line with the findings from previous studies.

Respondents who were TESL certified had similar self-efficacy scores as those who were not certified; however, this may be due to the fact that TESL certified ESL-specialist teachers completed only 1 more course than their non-TESL certified counterparts.

Participants who completed coursework in classroom-liaison (advocacy), multicultural studies and cross-cultural sensitization had the highest scores on self-efficacy. Yet the percentage of respondents who completed coursework in the above areas was the lowest compared to the percentage who completed courses in other areas of ESL. These participants had the highest efficacy scores because they may have gained an understanding of how to bridge the cultural gap that exists between the school and home. An understanding of the students' home culture may have greatly assisted the teachers in accommodating and supporting the English learners in their classrooms.

Participants were also asked to rate their self-efficacy in assessing their ESL students in four areas: own abilities and strategies (Q27), assessment in language development (Q28), assessment in academic development (29), assessment in social and cultural needs (Q30), and gauging sources of students' difficulties (Q31). The participants felt fairly efficacious for Questions 27, 28 and 29. These questions pertained to the skills development areas in ESL, an area which the participants completed the most coursework. Fewer teachers felt confident in the area of assessing students' social/cultural needs (Q30). The fewest courses completed by the participants were in this area of ESL.

The participants may not feel as efficacious in assessing their students' social/cultural needs for several reasons. The majority of courses completed as mentioned previously were in the skills development area, hence the feeling of greater self-efficacy for Questions 27, 28 and 29. The courses offered at the post-secondary institutions were mainly in second language acquisition, language development and linguistics. Participants may not have had the opportunity to complete any courses in social/cultural areas of ESL as these courses may not have been offered on a regular basis. The respondents may have a sound understanding of the 'academic' element of language learning but may not be well informed on the social/cultural elements in ESL. ESL may be viewed as mainly a subject area where the primary focus is on language acquisition. Consequently, teaching ESL may be perceived as teaching academics and the social / cultural elements viewed as outside of the teaching realm. As a result, this area continues to remain a mystery to many ESL specialist teachers. Teaching ESL, however, requires taking into consideration the cultural / social background knowledge and experience of students and incorporating these into the classroom instructions (Solorzano & Solorzano, 1999) in order to assist English language learners effectively. Without these considerations, students may not be benefiting fully from their ESL instructions. Possible future research could examine why cultural / social knowledge is secondary to the skills development in the eyes of not only ESL specialist teachers but also teacher training programs.

The participants in this research also felt less efficacious in gauging ESL students' difficulties (Q31). This may be due to a lack of understanding of the question, itself, as the participants may have been uncertain by what was meant by 'student's difficulties'.

This question could be made clearer by rephrasing the question: If one of my ESL students is struggling academically or culturally/socially, I feel confident in identifying the issues that may be the source(s) of this student's difficulties. As well, if teachers are not confident in assessing the students' cultural and social needs (Q30), they may find it challenging to recognize if the struggles are due to social and cultural issues.

This section revealed that those who participated in numerous professional development activities felt very efficacious. Those situated in urban settings and located in the South Coast region completed the most number of professional development activities and had access to the most number of professional development workshops and conferences.

Issues in ESL

The open-ended section and the comments section provided participants an opportunity to present their views on a number of issues in ESL. The salient issues that were raised are presented in this section.

An overwhelming number of the respondents voiced their concerns over the lack of quality ESL services offered in their respective districts. They cited lack of ESL support time, large ESL caseloads or ESL classes, and lack of ESL-trained specialist teachers as affecting the quality of service offered to ESL students. The majority of respondents were less satisfied with the way the districts allocated funding, time and staffing for ESL services. The respondents have charged that as their ESL student populations increased, the full time equivalency (fte) for ESL specialist teachers remained the same. Since the amount of fte did not increase with the increase in ESL student enrollment, ESL classes and ESL caseloads became larger, resulting in less service time

for individual students. As well, the participants expressed their concerns with the way districts were filling ESL specialist positions with non ESL trained teachers. Generally, teaching positions in the districts are filled based on seniority. A teacher who has more seniority may be successful in securing a position over another teacher who may be more qualified but has less seniority. As the enrollment of ESL students fluctuates on a yearly basis, the number of ESL specialist teachers required will also change, resulting in a shuffling of teaching assignments. Interestingly, 20% of the participants in this study came into their ESL teaching positions through district job reassignments. The participants who were situated in the South Coast region expressed their concerns over how the 'resource model' adopted by their districts were placing unqualified teachers into ESL specialist positions. By the same token, the 'resource model' also placed ESL specialist teachers in Special Education positions for which they felt ill-qualified.

The participants generally disagreed with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) of advocating the idea that 'a teacher is a teacher', meaning that regardless of qualifications, a generalist teacher should be able to teach any subject area, including ESL. The BCTF is an organization that represents all public school teachers in British Columbia. Its mandate is to protect the "rights of teachers and students in promoting public education" (BC Teachers Federation, 2006). Their stance on teachers as generalists appears to be contrary to their current practice. The BCTF includes 33 provincial specialist associations (PSA). These associations represent teachers in various specialty areas, such as the ESL PSA. The presence of the PSAs appears to suggest that the BCTF may recognize that different preparation may be required for specialty teaching areas. If students are to receive the best possible education, then they require adequately prepared teachers as is

urged in the research literature. The BCTF, however, is the collective bargaining agent for all teachers and to acknowledge and support the need for specialist teachers in specialist positions may create a conflict of interest within its membership. The BCTF may be reluctant to support certification because certification requirements in certain teaching areas may suddenly preclude a significant number of the members from various current and future teaching positions.

When participants were asked to identify the pre-service certification for ESL specialist teachers, many mentioned ESL course work as the main requirement for certification. Interestingly, the participants identified skills development courses such as linguistics, ESL methodology, assessment, and language acquisition as the courses to complete, but did not mention social/cultural courses like multicultural studies, classroom-home liaison or cross-cultural sensitization courses as requirements for certification. Once again, the respondents identified the courses that were the most common courses completed but did not mention those courses that were the least completed by the participants. The participants also discussed length of preparation as part of the certification process. Some stated 3-5 years should be adequate while others stated 5 years as the minimum. In addition, completing an ESL practicum during their teacher training was also viewed as important. Even among the ESL specialist teachers, a consensus on what should be part of certification seems to be lacking. What they did agree upon was a need for more ESL teaching focus in teacher preparation programs. They recognize that as the ESL population increases, the number of ESL students in mainstream classes will also increase, placing the onus on classroom teachers to provide quality teaching to ESL students.

Conclusions

Within the scope and limitations of this study and based on the findings garnered from this survey, the following conclusions can be made:

1. In general, the participants in this survey possessed the general levels of ESL preparation that were commensurate with the criteria recommended by the research literature by the experts in the field of ESL.
2. In general, the participants in this survey possessed the knowledge and skills suggested criteria established by the British Columbia Ministry of Education ESL Policy Guidelines.
3. ESL specialist teachers situated in urban settings had the most access to ESL-related professional development workshops, participated in the most ESL-related professional development activities, completed the most ESL courses, and felt the most efficacious.
4. ESL specialist teachers situated in the South Coast region of the province participated in the most ESL-related professional development activities and felt the most efficacious.
5. ESL specialist teachers who were situated in rural settings had the least access to ESL-related professional development workshops, participated in the least ESL-related professional development activities, completed the fewest ESL courses and felt the least efficacious.
6. Those participants who participated in numerous ESL-related professional development activities felt efficacious.

7. Participants felt more efficacious in the skills development elements of teaching ESL than in the cultural/social aspects of teaching ESL.
8. In general, the participants in this study voiced concerns with the lack of quality ESL service offered to ESL students in their districts. They identified large ESL classes, large ESL caseloads, lack of time and funding, and unqualified ESL teachers as the basis for their concerns.
9. Participants felt that there was insufficient preparation in the various teacher pre-service teacher education programs in British Columbia for teaching ESL students.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in this study that may affect the interpretation and applications of the results beyond the scope of this survey. At the time of the study, there were approximately 261 ESL PSA members. Of the 261 members, the actual number of practicing ESL specialist teachers at the time of the study is unknown as the ESL PSA does not differentiate between ESL and non-ESL specialist teachers. Consequently, the exact number of the target group is difficult to determine. The ESL PSA membership could include teachers with myriad assignments: practicing ESL specialist teachers; ESL specialist teachers teaching in mainstream classrooms; teachers with more than one specialty such as ESL and French, teaching either, both or neither of the specialties; ESL specialist teachers who started off part-time and became full-time or vice versa; members of a resource team with some ESL students on their caseloads; teachers without ESL qualifications or any ESL coursework teaching ESL or ESL specialist teachers reassigned to mainstream classes. As well, teachers could be

reassigned within schools / districts throughout the year, affecting the membership scenario. These are some of the possibilities and because the ESL PSA has continuous membership intake throughout the year, the actual number of ESL PSA membership may change at any given time. As a result, an accurate representation of the ESL specialist teachers in British Columbia may be difficult to obtain through the ESL PSA. I would recommend that a similar study be conducted through the individual school districts in order to target all and only the ESL specialist teachers at the time of the study.

The timing of the study also posed a challenge. Due to various circumstances, the questionnaire was not distributed until the end of the school year. June is generally a hectic time of year for most teachers with student exams, report cards, end of school meetings, parent-teacher interviews and classroom clean-up occurring during the last month of school. With their busy schedules, teachers may not be so inclined to participate in a survey questionnaire that requires the limited time that they have. In addition, as staffing occurs in May/June, ESL specialist teachers may have been reassigned to different teaching areas for the next school year. Realizing this, the survey questionnaire may appear to be irrelevant to them. I would recommend that the study be conducted in October for the following reasons. September is a time of uncertainty in terms of student enrolment and staffing. By the end of September, the Ministry of Education requires all districts to submit their student enrolment numbers (Form 1701s) including the number of students in various categories such as special education and ESL. In October, the staffing for the year is established and relatively stable, enabling the researcher to identify the ESL specialist teachers in the district more accurately. As well,

by October, the hectic start to the new school year will have subsided and teachers may feel more inclined to participate.

Many of the participants identified themselves as TESL certified and those who were not certified had completed a sufficient number of courses to be deemed qualified according to the literature and the Ministry guidelines. The issue regarding certification is problematic since there are no provincial guidelines to outline what courses constitute TESL certification. Individual post-secondary institutions offer TESL programs where the certification requirements are established by the institutions, themselves. Consequently, the requirements for certification may vary from one institution to another, resulting in a group of ESL specialist teachers whose qualifications may vary greatly from one another.

Recommendations

This study had set out to examine the existing ESL teacher preparation and professional development in British Columbia. As very little research exists regarding this group of educators, more research is required to gain a better awareness of this group of educators.

The participants felt most efficacious in their abilities in addressing the skills element of ESL teaching, and felt the least efficacious in their abilities to deal with the cultural/social aspect. Yet, they wanted more professional development workshops on the skills development rather than on the cultural/social elements. Possible future research could examine why teachers view cultural/social knowledge as secondary to the skills development when experts in the field have asserted that both are essential for teaching ESL.

This study has revealed that rural ESL specialist teachers continue to have the least access to professional development activities even after the recommendations made by the Task Force on Rural Education. Further research in this area may be needed to answer why accessibility has not yet improved, especially with the advancement in technology such as the internet and webcams and why the participation rate in professional development in ESL for rural teachers continues to be substantially lower than the urban teachers.

The lack of ESL content in teacher education programs was raised by the participants in this study. An examination of ESL course offerings in the various teacher education programs revealed that at the time of this study, very little was offered in addressing the ESL needs in today's classrooms. The respondents in this survey research were generally well prepared to teach ESL according to the guidelines established in the research literature and the BC Ministry of Education. Because there has been an absence of requisite ESL coursework for teaching ESL, specialist teachers may have taken it upon themselves to obtain the credentials that are required to teach ESL learners more effectively either through professional development activities or post-graduate coursework. Although the participants in this research were well prepared for teaching ESL, their responses to the open-ended questions revealed that many were still concerned with the lack of ESL coursework in the teacher training programs. They expressed concerns with the lack of qualified ESL specialist teachers in their districts and with the lack of general ESL knowledge among classroom teachers. The respondents, themselves, also wanted more preparation and/or professional development in various areas of ESL. The BC College of Teachers (BCCT) is responsible for establishing the required

preparation for teacher certification in BC. The BCCT needs to heed to practicing teachers and to the research and modify their certification criteria to reflect the changing face of education in BC. Perhaps, if the BCCT were to modify the requisite coursework criteria, then this might necessitate teacher training programs to follow suit and offer more courses in ESL. Teacher training programs have a duty to prepare teachers adequately to meet the demands of teaching ESL learners. Further research can shed light on where ESL fits in the teacher education programs. How important is ESL in preparing teachers? Future research can also examine how the various stakeholders in education view ESL and what they foresee as changes to accommodate the demographics of the student population.

Experts in the field of ESL have argued that specific preparation is required to positively impact the achievement outcomes of English language learners. Very few studies currently exist to support these claims. Future research on ESL specialist teachers' qualifications and an examination of assessment scores of ESL students may strengthen their positions. Possible areas to examine are the graduation rates of ESL students and the BC Foundation Skills Assessment scores.

Finally, a more extensive study on what increases or decreases efficacious attributes in teachers may prove to be valuable. If teachers are the single most important school variable influencing student achievement, then what impacts their abilities and attitudes in teaching may be a noteworthy study to conduct.

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Appendix A

Teacher Information / Request Letter

Teacher Information and Request Letter

Dear Colleague:

As part of my graduate work in the Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, I am conducting a research study entitled *ESL Teacher Preparation and Professional Development in British Columbia*. The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in this study.

The purpose of this research is to gain greater insight into the preparation and professional development of ESL teachers in British Columbia. With ever-increasing numbers of ESL students, I believe that the findings of this research will illuminate the role of ESL teaching in our education system and serve as a starting point for further research into the role and significance of ESL teaching in BC's public schools. Also, by participating in this study, you will assist in providing a general landscape of the preparation and professional development of current ESL teachers. Through participation, you will have an opportunity to examine and become more aware of your own ESL teacher preparation and professional development. As well, this may identify areas of professional development you may wish to pursue further.

I am asking you to participate because of your role as an ESL teacher in your district. Participation in this research is completely voluntary and will entail completing a survey questionnaire (approximately 15 minutes). There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. To ensure anonymity, no names of teachers or districts will be mentioned in my final report. To ensure confidentiality, all data collected will remain solely in my possession and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at home until my research has been accepted and the oral exam has been completed. Upon completion of my thesis, all data will be destroyed. The only other individual who will have access to the questionnaires will be my thesis advisor upon request. Once the surveys have been sent to me, it will be logistically impossible to withdraw the data.

The results of the study will be presented in the form of a master's thesis, which will be given to my thesis advisory committee. You may access the thesis by contacting me or by viewing a copy in the library at the University of Victoria. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Helen Raptis who may be contacted by phone at (250) 721-7776 or by email at hraptis@uvic.ca. If you wish to verify the university's ethical approval of this study, please contact the Associate Vice President, Research at the University of Victoria at (250) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at (250) 538-1726 (res) or (250) 537-1156 (bus) or by email at bbbeards@uvic.ca. If you participate and provide contact information at the end of the survey, you will be eligible to win a \$50.00 gift certificate. If you agree to participate in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive. It is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to

research participants. If you would not participate if the compensation were not offered, then you should decline.

By returning this questionnaire, you are consenting to participate. Please return the completed questionnaire to 189 Cormorant Crescent, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 1G8 by June 30, 2007.

Your support in this study is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Boe Beardsmore

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE

ESL Teachers Preparation and Professional Development in BC

QUESTIONNAIRE
ESL Teachers Preparation and Professional Development in BC
 The information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

For a chance to win a \$50.00 gift certificate, please complete the last page and mail along with the completed questionnaire.

Please mark the box to select the applicable responses.

1. In which setting would you consider your school to be situated?
 - Urban
 - Rural
 - Suburban

2. In which geographic area do you teach?
 - Vancouver Island
 - Northern BC
 - Central BC
 - Columbia-Kootenay
 - Interior
 - South Coast
 - North Coast

3. What is your sex?
 - Male
 - Female

4. What is your age? _____

5. In which school system do you teach?
 - public school system
 - independent school system

6. ESL teaching assignment:
 - Full time
 - Part time (please specify full time equivalency / fte): _____

7. Do you teach other subjects in addition to ESL?
 - Yes (please specify): _____
 - No

8. At which level do you teach ESL? Please check all that apply.
 - Elementary
 - Middle Years
 - Secondary
 - District

9. How many years of experience do you have teaching ESL students? _____
10. How long have you been teaching? _____
11. What main type of program delivery does your district use? Please check all that apply.
- Pull-out
 - ESL contained classes
 - In-class support
 - Consultation by District Staff
 - Other (please specify): _____
13. What type of formal training do you have?
- Masters Degree
 - Post-graduate program certificate
 - Major/minor in degree program
 - None
 - Other (please specify): _____
14. What type of informal training do you have? Please specify the type/name of each activity or workshop.
- Workshops: _____

 - Conferences: _____

 - Professional organizations: _____

 - College/university courses: _____

 - Mentorship (please explain): _____

 - Other (please explain): _____

15. Have you completed coursework/academic training in the following areas? Please check all that apply.

- Second language acquisition
- Cultural/linguistic awareness
- Language/linguistic knowledge
- Advocacy (Classroom home liaison)
- Methodology and methods for teaching ESL
- Applied linguistics
- Multicultural studies
- Cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training
- Other (please specify): _____

None of the above

16. Have you previously taught or studied abroad?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify the place, length of stay, and subject(s) taught or studied:

17. Do you have a Bachelor of Education Degree?

- Yes
- No (Please specify the type of bachelor's degree you possess): _____

18. Do you have a post-degree professional teaching certificate?

- Yes
- No

19. Do you have any of the following credentials? Please specify.

- Master's degree: _____
- Doctoral degree: _____
- TESL certification: _____
- Bachelor's degree (other than Education): _____
- Other: _____

- 20. Have you taken any unclassified university-level courses beyond your last degree obtained?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes please specify the course name(s) and the total number of units completed:

- 21. When did you last participate in ESL related pro-d activities / workshops / district in-service? _____ months ago.

- 22. In a typical year, how often do you participate in professional development workshops or activities related to ESL? _____ per year.

- 23. In a typical year, how often does your district offer professional development workshops or activities related to ESL? _____ per year.

- 24. How many ESL students do you currently teach? _____

- 25. How many ESL students are enrolled in your district? _____

- 26. Do you feel that ESL students are receiving adequate ESL service/support in your district?

Yes (please explain): _____

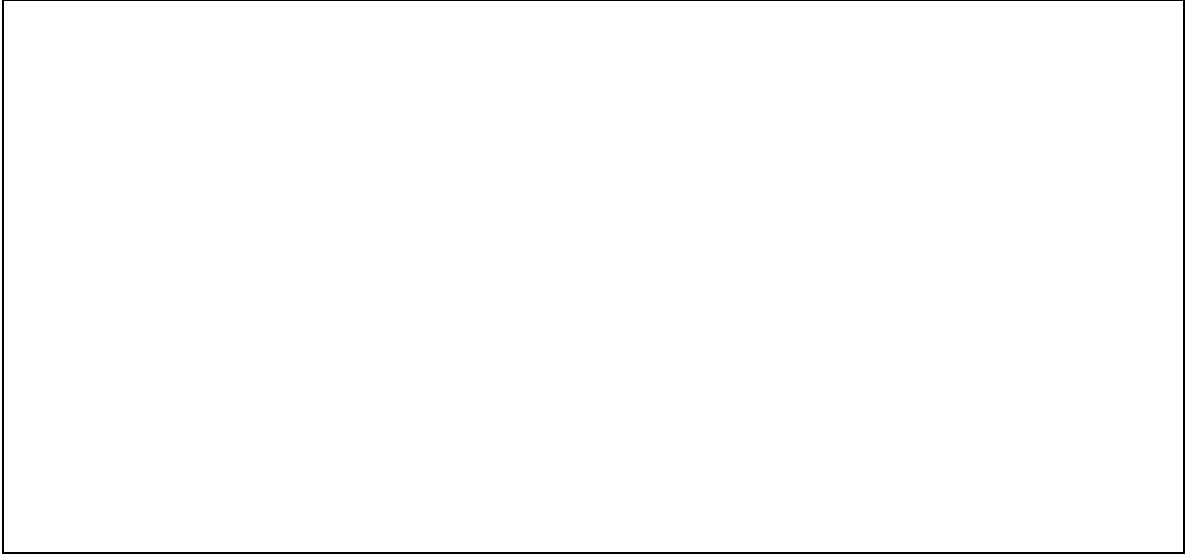
No (please explain): _____

27. I feel confident in my abilities and the range of strategies I have to support ESL students in my class(es).
- Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
28. I feel confident in assessing my ESL students' level of language development.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
29. I feel confident in assessing my ESL students' level of academic development.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
30. I feel confident in assessing my ESL students' social and cultural needs.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
31. If one of my ESL students is struggling, I feel confident in gauging the source(s) of the student's difficulties.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

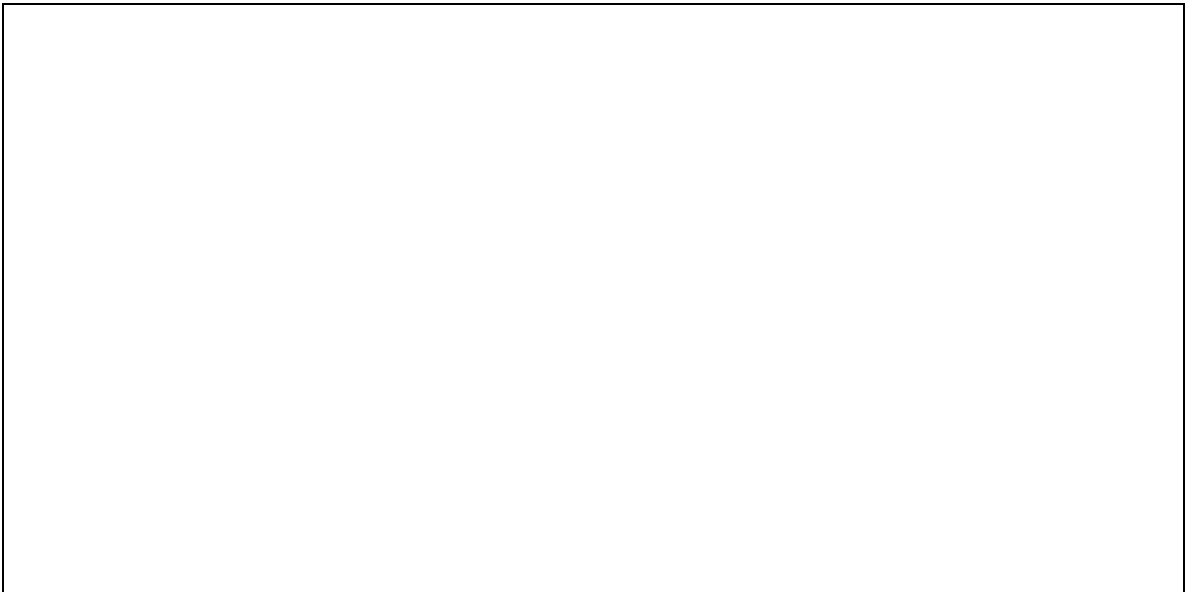
32. What professional development activities (courses / activities / workshops / journals / etc.) have been the **MOST** helpful to you in teaching ESL?

33. In which specific areas of ESL would you like further professional development/training? Why? Please explain.

34. What do you feel should be the basic pre-service certification for ESL specialist teachers?



35. What prompted you to become an ESL teacher?



36. Other comments on ESL teacher preparation and professional development:

Detach and return with questionnaire.

37. I wish to be entered in a draw to win a \$50.00 gift certificate from Chapters.

- Yes
- No

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Thank you for completing this survey questionnaire.
Please return the completed survey questionnaire to Boe Beardsmore, 189 Cormorant Cres.
Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 1G8.

Appendix C

Follow-up Email

Dear Colleagues,

I am hoping that you have received your June ESL PSA newsletter by now and have had the opportunity to review the questionnaire that is included in this month's newsletter. Thank you to those who have already completed and returned the questionnaire to me. I am very grateful for your support. For those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to do so, I just wanted to request your support once again and ask that you complete and return the questionnaire as soon as you can. The deadline for the questionnaire was originally set for June 30 but considering the delay in the distribution of the June issue and the hectic end-of-the school year schedule, the deadline has been extended to July 14, 2007. As I am hoping to glean an accurate landscape of the ESL teachers and the support available to you, I hope to have as many questionnaires returned as possible. I have also included the questionnaire for those who may require one. Thank you for your support and I look forward to sharing my findings with you.

Sincerely,
Boe Beardsmore
MA Student
Curriculum and Instruction
Faculty of Education
bbbeards@uvic.ca

Appendix D

QUESTIONNAIRE - RESULTS
ESL Teachers Preparation and Professional Development in BC

QUESTIONNAIRE - RESULTS
ESL Teachers Preparation and Professional Development in BC

1. In which setting would you consider your school to be situated?

Urban	Rural	Suburban
11	5	11

2. In which geographic area do you teach?

Vancouver Island	Northern BC	Central BC	Columbia-Kootenay	Interior	South Coast	North Coast
3	1	1	-----	1	21	-----

3. What is your sex?

Male	Female
3	24

4. What is your age?

Mean	Range
46.2 years	33 – 61 years

5. In which school system do you teach?

Private	Public
	27

6. ESL teaching assignment:

Full time	Part time
12	15

Part time fte:

Mean	Range
0.542 fte	0.1 - 0.9 fte

7. Do you teach other subjects in addition to ESL?

Yes	No
16*	11

*learning assistance, English, FSL, classroom teacher, toc, ESL coordinator, did not specify.

8. At which level do you teach ESL? Please check all that apply.
(Multiple assignments)

Elementary	Middle Years	Secondary	District
14 / 52%	4 / 15%	11 / 41%	10 / 37%

9. How many years of experience do you have teaching ESL students?

Mean	Range
11.09 years	<1 year – 40 years

10. How long have you been teaching?

Mean	Range
17.13 years	1.5 – 40 years

11. What main type of program delivery does your district use? Please check all that apply. (Multiple choices allowed.)

Pull-out	23 / 85%
ESL contained classes	13 / 48%
In-class support	14 / 52%
Consultation by District Staff	12 / 44%
Other (please specify):	2* / 7%

* language groups, TA support

13. What type of formal training do you have?

Masters Degree	7 / 26%
Post-graduate program certificate	11 / 44%
Major/minor in degree program	3 / 11%
None	-----
Other (please specify):	5* / 22%

*30 credits at SFU, ESL diploma in progress, on the job experience, Special Education, Reading Recovery

14. What type of informal training do you have? Please specify the type/name of each activity or workshop.

Workshop	22 / 84%
Conferences	23 / 88%
Professional organizations	20 / 76%
College / University	19 / 73%
Mentorship	14 / 53%
Other	11 / 42%

(n=26)

15. Have you completed coursework/academic training in the following areas? Please check all that apply.

Second language acquisition	24 / 88%
Cultural/linguistic awareness	20 / 74%
Language/linguistic knowledge	24 / 88%
Advocacy (Classroom home liaison)	5 / 19%
Methodology and methods for teaching ESL	21 / 77%
Applied linguistics	20 / 74%
Multicultural studies	17 / 63%
Cross-cultural sensitization and strategy training	13 / 48%
Other	7* / 26%
None of the above	1 / 4%

*ESL international certification, Linguistics 100, ESL and technology, assessing the assessment instruments, cooperative learning, conflict resolution, learning disabilities, reading recovery, assessment, curriculum development

16. Have you previously taught or studied abroad?

Yes	9* / 33%
No	18 / 67%

*Australia, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, South Pacific, London.

*7-taught ESL; 1-ESL student; 1- did not specify.

17. Do you have a Bachelor of Education Degree?

Yes	20 / 74%
No	7* / 26%

* BA – PDP, BSC – PDP

18. Do you have a post-degree professional teaching certificate?

Yes	20 / 74%
No	4 / 15%
No response	3 / 11%

19. Do you have any of the following credentials? Please specify.

Master’s degree:	7 / 26%
Doctoral degree:	3 / 11%
TESL certification:	10 / 37%
Bachelor’s degree (other than Education):	7 / 26%
Other:	9* / 33%

* Diploma in ESL, PBD TESL, Post-bachelor + 15 credits, Diploma in Special Education, ESL training in Germany

20. Have you taken any unclassified university-level courses beyond your last degree obtained?

Yes	11* / 41%
No	9 / 33%
No response	7 / 26%

* dance therapy, learning disabilities, social studies, core French, labour studies, art history, technology, Bed. recertification.

21. When did you last participate in ESL related pro-d activities / workshops / district in-service? (months ago)

Mean	Range
5.39 months ago	0 – 36 months ago

22. In a typical year, how often do you participate in professional development workshops or activities related to ESL?(per year)

Mean	Range
4.30 per year	0 – 20 per year

23. In a typical year, how often does your district offer professional development workshops or activities related to ESL? (per year)

Mean	Range
3.31 per year	0 – 10 per year

24. How many ESL students do you currently teach?

Mean	Range
	? - 280

25. How many ESL students are enrolled in your district?

Mean	Range
	20 – 15,000

26. Do you feel that ESL students are receiving adequate ESL service/support in your district?

Yes	No
11 / 41%	26 / 96%

27. I feel confident in my abilities and the range of strategies I have to support ESL students in my class(es).

Disagree	2 / 7%
Somewhat disagree	-- / 0%
Neither agree nor disagree	1 / 4%
Somewhat agree	4 / 15%
Agree	10 / 37%
Strongly agree	10 / 37%

28. I feel confident in assessing my ESL students' level of language development.

Strongly disagree	-- / 0%
Disagree	-- / 0%
Somewhat disagree	2 / 7%
Somewhat agree	2 / 7%
Agree	11 / 41%
Strongly agree	12 / 44%

29. I feel confident in assessing my ESL students' level of academic development.

Strongly disagree	-- / 0%
Disagree	1 / 4%
Somewhat disagree	2 / 7%
Somewhat agree	3 / 11%
Agree	14 / 52%
Strongly agree	7 / 26%

30. I feel confident in assessing my ESL students' social and cultural needs.

Strongly disagree	-- / 0%
Disagree	3 / 11%
Somewhat disagree	2 / 7%
Somewhat agree	9 / 33%
Agree	7 / 26%
Strongly agree	6 / 22%

31. If one of my ESL students is struggling, I feel confident in gauging the source(s) of the student's difficulties.

Strongly disagree	-- / 0%
Disagree	1 / 4%
Somewhat disagree	4 / 15%
Somewhat agree	9 / 33%
Agree	8 / 30%
Strongly agree	5 / 18%