Collaboration to Support ESL Instruction

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Abstract

Collaboration in English as a Second Language (ESL) education holds potential for consistency and efficiency in pedagogical planning for English Language Learners (ELLs), and supports ELLs’ needs through targeted instructional strategies. This study sought to investigate these processes of collaboration, and was guided by three research questions: (a) How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs? (b) What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment? (c) How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs? The research adopted a case study approach to explore how ESL teachers collaborate with educational professionals within ESL education. Qualitative data included classroom observations while ESL teachers collaborated with teachers and other educational professionals in the classroom. Semi-structured interviews explored how ESL teachers described collaboration within ESL education, opportunities ESL teachers had for collaboration, how ELS teachers are professionally supported to integrate resources (digital and/or non-digital) within classroom instruction, as well as teachers’ understandings and apprehensions about using technology to support literacy instruction for ELLs. Overall, the findings indicate that ESL teacher participants expressed a desire to collaborate, and took initial steps to facilitate collaboration with educational professionals, but expressed that the current educational climate does not provide sufficient resources for deep-rooted and authentic collaboration. Informal collaboration occurred more frequently than formal or scheduled collaboration.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In Canada, the growing number of English language learners (ELLs) underscores the need for effective pedagogical support in an evolving global landscape (Cheng, Klinger, & Zheng, 2009). Contemporary ELLs have language learning needs that are often supported through a complement of in-school professionals, including: English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, classroom teachers, educational resource teachers, ESL consultants, and administrators. Often, educators are challenged to collaborate on a cohesive educational plan that best addresses the multimodal learning skills of 21st century ELLs (Gallagher et al., 2015).

This chapter begins with a contextual overview of ESL education in Ontario, including a discussion about the unique learning needs of ELLs in Ontario as well as research pertaining to models of collaboration. Following this section, the progression of ELLs’ literacy development will be considered as it relates to educational considerations and policy documents. In doing so, the chapter provides an overview of the Ontario Ministry of Education’s (OME’s) recommendations and resources for supporting ELLs’ needs. Finally, the current research project will be delineated by background of the problem, a statement of the problem context, the purpose for the study, research questions, and the rationale and scope of the study.

Background of the Problem

In Ontario, many newcomer students enter predominantly English speaking schools with a range of English literacy skills. These students, referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs), comprise 25% of the Ontario student population (Statistics Canada, 2011). The OME (2007) defines English Language Learners as:
Students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario’s schools, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English. (p. 8)

ELLs may be from other countries around the world, or may be born in Canada; they have a wide range of school experiences. In Ontario, the number of ELLs varies depending on geographic location. Statistics pertaining to the number of ELLs in various school boards are not readily available. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB, 2014) does provide some information on its website, indicating that over half of the students in the TDSB speak an additional language other than English at home. In other areas of Southern Ontario, recent available statistics shows that 4.5% of the total population identifies as a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2011). This statistic does not necessarily indicate the number of students who are receiving ESL support. As of 2016, 8.8% of the total number of students enrolled in the school board\(^1\) in which the study took place reported speaking a language at home other than English.

People for Education (2017) reported 72% of Ontario English elementary schools included ELLs. As of 2017, the number of ELLs in elementary schools has dropped to 63% in Ontario. The decrease in the number of ELLs does not necessarily indicate that fewer ELLs are enrolling in schools. The decrease may indicate the success of ESL programs with students achieving benchmark goals and transitioning out of the ESL program. For the purpose of this project, the intent is to explore ways in which

\(^1\) Source data pertaining to the school board cited here is intentionally suppressed for confidentiality purposes.
collaboration as described by ESL teachers may influence ESL teachers' perceived effects of ESL education.

ELLs face the added challenge of learning English in addition to learning the curriculum content, and thus require focused support. Similar to proficient English speaking students, ELLs have unique talents and skills, and make academic progress when given appropriate learning opportunities. A distinction exists for students who have had little to no formal instruction in English, or students “who arrive in Canada from countries where English is the first language but other varieties of English are in common use”—referred to as English Language Development (ELD) students (Education Quality and Accountability Office, 2002, p. 7). The distinction is that ELDs speak a dialect of English as the native language; however, ELD students have limited prior schooling experiences, and limited access to education or opportunities to develop literacy skills in any language. To support these students, ESL instruction, which is defined as “a system of instruction that enables students whose native language is not English to acquire academic proficiency in English” (Yingli, 2013, p. 642), has been used in conjunction with classroom activities. The roles that classroom teachers as well as ESL teachers play in ESL instruction will be discussed later in this thesis.

While basic social language is usually acquired within 2 years of social interaction, research indicates that this form of literacy accounts for about 10% of required academic communication skills (OME, 2013). Cummins (1996) refers to social language as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). This type of language begins as “survival” language, including simple words or phrases such as “bathroom” and “drink,” and begins to develop through basic instructions. This type of literacy does not
account for the academic literacy that has been linked to academic success. The OME (2005) notes that a student’s Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) relates to specialized academic literacy skills and underlies academic success. Typically, for ELLs to become proficient in CALP literacy, 5 to 7 years of schooling is required. Thus, it is crucial that ELLs receive scaffolding to support their unique learning needs for successful development of academic literacy skills. The OME’s (2007) *English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services* highlights the importance of providing ELLs with “opportunities to develop age-appropriate first-language literacy skills” (p. 22). The document highlights the fact that students who have little to no educational experiences in their native countries “have had limited opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in any language” (p. 22). These students lack the academic language in their first, or native, language (L1), the interdependent literacy skills which research shows are transferable from the L1 to the second, or subsequent language (L2) (Cummins, 1996).

Collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers is fluid, and dependent on various factors, including: needs of ELLs, teachers’ schedules, unit plans created by classroom teachers, and unforeseen events that affect the flow of classroom activities. In navigating these factors, flexibility is required on the part of both educators to co-creating a collaborative relationship. Hoffman and Dahlman (2017) define teacher collaboration in ESL education as occurring on a continuum, and including in-class collaboration for delivering and monitoring pedagogical tasks, as well as scheduled collaboration outside the classroom to monitor and plan learning goals for the ELLs. This
comprehensive and flexible conceptualization of collaboration within ESL instruction was adapted for the scope of this research project.

Davison (2006) has outlined five stages of collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers: passive resistance, compliance, accommodation, convergence, and creative co-construction. An example of passive resistance is a pull-out model of instruction, in which the ESL teacher works with the ELL independently of the tasks that are planned by the classroom teacher. At the compliance level, collaboration is generally regarded as beneficial by both ESL teachers and classroom teachers, however barriers such as a lack of tools (such as time and resources) to facilitate collaboration and limited time result in surface level collaboration. An example of this is when educators value collaboration, however incorporate collaborative practices inconsistently as they face challenges such as limited time and a lack of pedagogical tools. Accommodation includes “a strong emphasis on practical implementation” (Davison, 2006, p. 466). An example of accommodation is ESL teachers drawing on their pedagogical knowledge to support ELLs on classroom tasks. This may be characterized by planned or impromptu collaboration. Convergence is a desire to facilitate collaboration and an understanding of the impact of collaboration on lesson plans, as well as the perceived benefits for ELLs and other learners in the classroom. The drawback to this approach is that collaboration is inconsistent, “[and met with] limited understanding of the rationale and theoretical basis” (Davison, 2006, p. 470). This type of collaboration is characterized by "efforts to engage with co-teachers' ideas and initiate dialogue and interaction/experimentation, high degree of respect for each other evident, understanding that solutions are not ready-made [...] impact on context of lesson, not just delivery” (p. 468).
The last level of collaboration discussed by Davison (2006) is creative co-construction. Co-teaching and fluidity of roles are examples associated with this stage of collaboration. In order for this level to be established, teachers require an extensive understanding of curriculum expectations, teaching experience and mutual trust.

Honigsfield and Dove (2007) apply the definition of co-teaching in the ESL context as collaboration in regards to planning and facilitating lessons to benefit all learners in the classroom. Co-teaching in the classroom is considered to be the ideal form of collaboration, as it creates a context in which ELLs are immersed in the heterogeneous classroom with peers of various academic and literacy skills, in which they benefit from peer interactions “offer[ed by] English-proficient peers to serve as [a] language model” (Honigsfield & Dove, 2007, p. 10). Davison's (2006) stages of collaboration have been applied as a conceptual model to frame the current project.

Planning is a key factor in successful co-teaching. Honigsfield and Dove (2007) suggest that teachers should have opportunities to plan on a weekly basis for successful co-teaching to occur. Honigsfield and Dove also suggest that due to time restraints, alternating between one educator leading a lesson while the other observes and works one-on-one with students is a potential strategy to save on planning time. The full inclusion of ELLs into the classroom is the current trend in ESL practices in Ontario. The OME’s (2008b) Supporting English Language Learners With Limited Prior Schooling: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators indicates that best practice for supporting ELLs is gradually increasing classroom inclusion to accompany ELLs’ increasing English language proficiency. That is to say that an ELL student with minimal English literacy skills would require more support in a pull-out model, in which the ESL teacher would
work with the student outside the classroom on tasks unrelated to what is being taught in the student’s classroom. Over time, as the ELL begins to develop increasingly sophisticated CALP skills, the ELL would experience more support from the ESL teacher within the classroom.

Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) state that “an ESL program should enhance student understanding of English while learning classroom content, as well as offer English-proficient peers to serve as language models” (p. 9). To support the inclusion of ELLs into the classroom, ESL teachers must be familiar with the classroom tasks and plans created by the classroom teacher as they work with the ELLs. This inclusion has the potential of fostering collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers as they: communicate about the achievements and educational needs of the ELLs; co-plan instructional strategies and resources; identify modifications and accommodations necessary for the ELLs; and co-create literacy objectives, educational milestones, and long-term learning goals (Hoffman & Dahlman, 2017). Dieker (2001) also discusses the importance of curriculum expectation and pedagogical goals familiarity on the part of classroom teachers and special education teachers. Dieker discusses how special education teachers navigated their role of focusing on student accommodations and modifications in combination with a mutual understanding between special education teachers and classroom teachers regarding curriculum goal planning for integrating students with special needs into the classroom. The parallels between the literature and the current research project are ways in which ESL teachers navigate their role as special education teachers in combination with their knowledge of curriculum expectations to facilitate collaboration with other educational professionals.
Ontario Ministry of Education Documents: ESL Education

In response to the growing number of ELLs, the OME has developed policies and resources to aid educators in supporting Ontario students. An overview of the documents pertaining to ESL education in Ontario is important in considering what is mandated for educators, and ways in which ESL teachers utilize the documents to inform collaborative practices, and as a site of collaboration. The OME’s (2005) *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom* provides strategies for “creating an inclusive learning environment that supports the success of every student” (p. 4). The document prioritizes the classroom inclusion of students with diverse backgrounds to support language acquisition. In addition, the document espouses a holistic approach by emphasizing the importance of ELLs’ academic and personal growth through targeted classroom instruction and integration of ELLs into a welcoming school community.

The OME’s (2007) *English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools* contains two sections designed to provide educators with tools to understand and support ELL learners by tailoring the curriculum, and it outlines the process of initial assessment and school placement for ELLs.

The OME’s (2008a) *Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators Grades 1 to 8* is designed specifically for classroom teachers as a tool to highlight the types of supports required by ELLs in the classroom. The document’s three sections include: contextual understandings of ELLs; in-school approaches to including and supporting ELLs, with information ranging from the
registration process to communication with parents; and recommendations for curriculum adaptations for ELLs. The document also includes resources for educators, such as planning templates and sample units.

More recently, the OME’s (2011) *STEP: Steps to English Proficiency: A Guide for Users* was created to support ESL teachers in the planning of targeted activities for ELLs to develop the English literacy skills for academic success. The *STEP* document is comprised of grade-specific literacy proficiency descriptors with specific *observable language behaviours* (OLB) criteria designed for educators to gauge ELLs’ development (OME, 2011). Additionally, the *STEP* document outlines initial as well as continuing assessment with an emphasis on ongoing classroom assessment for ELLs. The *STEP*’s OLB resource for ESL teachers outlines a continuum of concepts and skills derived from the Ontario curriculum with modification or accommodations specifically for ELLs. Each OLB is customized according to the language learning *STEP* (OME, 2011) that the student is working on. This resource, which is shared between the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher, is designed to aid in instructional planning as well as tracking students’ language acquisition. Taking into account the continuum of literacy skills acquisition, the *STEP* document offers an instructional and assessment guide for creating appropriate skill-level tasks for ELLs (OME, 2011). The practical applications of this document for ESL teachers have been examined as part of this study’s data collection.

While there are numerous policy documents, planning resources, and in-school teams of educators to assist ELLs, there are sometimes challenges in providing appropriate assessment and programming for ELLs. Why is this so? The Ontario government allocates funding based on the amount of time ELLs have spent in Canada,
rather than on any measure of a student’s literacy proficiency (People for Education, 2013). Thus, many students who attain basic “survival” communication skills as well as emergent CALP skills, and are no longer considered in need of ESL support, continue to struggle with academic language skills, and are thus at risk of experiencing academic setbacks (People for Education, 2013). As ELLs struggle to attain the academic literacy levels of their peers, ESL funding is necessary to aid the ongoing assessment to ascertain their required levels of support, and to scaffold programming to assist in the progression of language acquisition.

These issues demand an examination of how consistent pedagogical goals for ELLs might be co-created by classroom teachers and ESL teachers. Integrating content-based teaching with appropriate skill-level tasks for ELLs requires a collaborative effort between classroom teachers and ESL teachers. This calls for research in ESL education targeted at exploring how educators collaborate to meet the educational aims set by the OME for ELLs.

**Statement of the Problem**

Collaborative teaching practice is an area that has been advocated for widely in the teaching profession (Davison, 2006). ESL educator often works with several different students at both site schools or home schools, which makes collaboration with the classroom teacher essential. When ESL teachers and classroom teachers collaborate, there is potential for consistency and efficiency in pedagogical planning of targeted learning strategies for ELLs. Effective collaboration between the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher can be an educational practice to support ELLs’ academic needs. This research project will document the nature of collaboration between educators working with ELLs and their use of instructional resources in ESL instruction.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study is threefold: to explore how ESL teachers describe collaboration in ESL education; to explore opportunities that ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how ESL teachers are supported in creating a collaborative environment; and to investigate how in-school educators use resources (digital and/or non-digital) to enhance oral and written language skills and support ELLs as they acquire English skills. Overall, this research will document the collaboration among ESL teachers and other educators who are attempting to address ELLs’ needs.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs?
2. What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment?
3. How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs?

Rationale for the Study

This study is founded on the sociocultural perspective that learning and teaching are processes situated in social interaction within a multidimensional and social framework (Hawkins, 2004). The study will explore how educators collaborate to plan instruction including accommodations and/or modifications for ELLs using resources such as the OME’s (2011) STEP guide and digital/non-digital resources. This investigation is timely because professional collaboration in addressing challenges associated with ESL instruction potentially can create authentic, ongoing, and supportive
relationships between educators to support ELLs (Russell, 2012). The *STEP* guide suggests that ESL teachers collaborate with other in-school educators for “developing linguistically appropriate teaching strategies” (OME, 2011, p. 7). Davison (2006) highlights some essential tenets of collaboration between educators in effective ESL initiatives, including

the incorporation of explicit goals for the ESL development into curriculum and assessment planning processes, the negotiation of a shared understanding of the ESL and mainstream teachers’ roles/responsibilities ...[and] the establishment of systemic mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and feedback. (p. 456).

When ESL teachers collaborate with classroom teachers and other educational professionals to create plans and share resources for systemically integrating activities that address the language development needs of ELLs, a consistent continuum can be developed to support learners as they progressively acquire academic literacy skills.

Furthermore, this study explored how educators collaborate to use resources (digital and/or non-digital) as tools within instruction for ELLs. Diallo (2014) contends that tablets and apps are instructional tools that are changing English language pedagogy. The OME (2008a, 2008b) outlines instruction that effectively uses information technology as a way of supporting ELL instruction. While there is a mandate in educational policy for educators to employ various mediums in ESL instruction, including technological resources, educators are often challenged in utilizing resources in ESL instruction. This research will document the ways in which educators can collaborate to develop, implement, and share educational resources to address ELLs’ learning needs.
Overview of the Remainder of the Document

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature regarding educators of ELLs and their respective roles, collaboration between educators in ESL education, resources used in ESL instruction, and collaboration to use technological tools in ESL instruction. In addition, the chapter reviews the literature related to ELLs’ unique educational needs, such as language acquisition theories, and motivational aspects involved in learning a new language and how this motivation is infused in ESL education. The theoretical framework for this research is social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), and based on this framework, the chapter examines how educators collaborate to create accommodations and/or modifications for students. Social learning is a cornerstone of social constructivist theory, as are dialectical processes which consider language a tool to co-constructing socially shared meanings (Gallagher et al., 2015; Gindis, 1999).

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methods chosen for the current study. Specifically, the chapter discusses participant and site selection, the data collection and analysis process, and presents a description of participants. Finally, the chapter describes the actions taken to maintain credibility of the findings in addition to the ethical guidelines that were followed. Chapter 4 presents research findings of the study in relation to the three research questions. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, implications for theory, implications for practice, as well as the limitations and implications for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explored how ESL teachers collaborate to support ELLs, and opportunities for collaboration in ESL education. Classroom observations and interviews were conducted to describe how educators collaborate, the barriers to collaboration expressed by ESL teachers, and ways in which ESL teachers collaborate with other in-school educators to using digital and/or non-digital supports for literacy instruction. The research questions that guided this study were: (a) How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs? (b) What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment with other in-school professionals? (c) How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs?

The following review of related literature informed the present study. It presents a summary of the theoretical perspectives guiding this project, particularly social constructivist and digital connectivism theories as well as language acquisition theories. Next, the chapter describes the characteristics and learning needs of ELLs as outlined in the OME documents. Finally, the chapter discusses the literature relating to educators of ELLs, collaboration amongst educators, resources used in ELL instruction, and collaboration to motivate ELLs.

Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical framework of this research is based in social constructivism which emphasizes the connections among social and mental processes and the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivism is rooted in the co-constructed production of
knowledge through processes of social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivism adheres to the key element of constructivist learning theories as it values experiential learning in which “individuals learn best when they actively construct knowledge and understanding in light of their own experiences” (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta, & Marini, 2010, p. 282).

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that all learning occurs within social, cultural, and historical spheres. Social learning theory is a cornerstone of social constructivist theory, in which dialectical processes consider language as a tool to co-constructing socially shared meanings. Vygotsky, Hanfmann, and Vakar (1962) refer to language as an interpsychological tool used in social interactions; language is a pivotal tool in mediating social situations (see also Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky says learning occurs as a result of the exchange of dialogue, and can be employed in future social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Language is an integral aspect of learning as it is a linguistic tool, and symbolic of the social culture (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). The Vygotskyan-inspired interest of exploring the relationship between language and social influences has resulted in a focus on the relationship between language use and meaning construction. Therefore, the dialogical aspects of communication are key in social language learning. In this way, the learning process occurs in the social and mental realms of development (Gindis, 1999).

Social constructivist theory differentiates between knowledge and learning. Knowledge is constructed and mediated through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1986), learning, while it may occur socially, is developed within the individual as a by-product of the knowledge accumulated in the social environment. Pedagogy that stems from a social constructivist perspective facilitates learning though collaborative tasks which require students to co-construct knowledge (Gindis, 1999).
Within the framework of social constructivism, the interplay between development and learning has been referred to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Kivunja, 2014; Palincsar, 1998). According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is the difference between what a student can do alone at a particular point in time and the potential development of what the student is capable of accomplishing with the guidance of a more capable other. Thus, the ZPD differentiates between “the actual and the potential levels of development” (p. 352), and this might be applied to the social and dialectical processes of ELL instruction (Palincsar, 1998). The individual support or scaffolding provided by educators in accordance with ELLs’ level of language learning is the bridge between what students can do independently versus what they can do with the help of a more knowledgeable other. The interest of this research project is on the ways in which scaffolding is a collaborative process between ESL teachers and other educational professionals both for ELLs’ literacy knowledge construction as well as educators’ pedagogical learning.

An ESL educator whose pedagogy is based in the social constructivist perspective would be likely to target instruction for ELLs that builds on students’ prior knowledge, and encourages meaningful problem solving with “more capable peers” (Palincsar, 1998; p. 353) to advance students’ language development. Therefore, literacy tasks that are challenging and encourage ELLs to make connections to their prior experiences will extend in-school learning to a broader literacy engagement and extend ELLs’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). These pedagogical processes may be arrived at through active dialogue with the classroom teacher, educational coaches, or resource teachers who work with the ELL.

Focus is placed on the socially and culturally driven processes and tools, such as language and the transmission of culture (Palincsar, 1998). Learning is ultimately a by-
product of the interdependence between the individual and social processes of assimilating new information (Palincsar, 1998). When regarding language acquisition and the development of literacy skills as a social process, it is important to acknowledge the various actors who are part of the learning process. Taylor, Bernhard, Garg, and Cummins (2008) suggest that literacy is a social practice, rather than a set of individual attributes or skills. NLS [New Literacy Studies] allows us to reposition family and other out-of-school literacies as valid, pedagogical and dynamic practices situated within different domains of learners’ lives and shaped by different social institutions and power relationships. (p. 272)

The current project takes a socio-cultural stance in considering the various educators who work together to create educational plans for ELLs. This project incorporates socio-cultural theory in exploring the ways that educators collaborate to support ELLs, while also infusing personal beliefs about collaboration into their practice.

The social dimensions of learning are of particular interest to this research project, as language plays a dynamic role in ELLs’ literacy acquisition. An example can be found in the early work of Scardamalia and Bereiter (1989), who write about the deep cognitive learning processes that occur through acts of explaining one’s thinking to a peer. Consistent with the notion of working within the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), ESL instruction should create opportunities for “social interaction, [in] an environment where the skills, concepts, and language valued in the new community for appropriation by the learner through multiple modes of interaction with those more ‘fluent’ in the discourse of the community” (Hawkins, 2004, p. 16). As ELLs build their English literacy skills, as well as their confidence in a new language, social learning occurs; the ways in which ESL teachers collaborate with other educational professionals and work as a community to
facilitate such learning activities for ELLs have been a focus of this research project. Contemporary sociocultural theorists value the activities that ELLs use within collective environments. They concentrate on how individual learners’ actions and goal-directed behaviours interplay with the actions and goal-directed expectations of the sociocultural context (Mitchell et al., 2013). It is crucial to consider that learning does not occur in a vacuum, but rather is situated within a social context, and the learner is an active participant in the learning environment. Incorporating technology into ELL instruction, and classroom instruction that includes all learners, allows for connections with a broad social network and transcends the obstacle of distance. Thus, technology may be a vehicle to allow students to connect with their peers from anywhere in the world in a collective technological environment. There is potential for ESL teachers to collaborate with classroom teachers to use digital tools in ESL instruction to aid ELLs in developing literacy skills.

This project explored how educators shared digital tools to assist ELLs in bridging spoken and written language. Therefore, it is crucial to consider theory related to teaching and learning in a digital age. The theoretical perspective which considers the impact of technology on learning is digital connectivism, which includes critical thinking and problem solving to guide students to meaningful learning through the means of technology (Kivunja, 2014). Digital Connectivism theory was created to shed light on the role of 21st century digital learning tools (Siemens, 2005). Digital Connectivism shares some aspects of social constructivism, namely the notion that learning does not occur in isolation, but rather through interacting and navigating through webs of information on technological platforms (Siemens, 2005). The structure of a Digital Connectivist
classroom may “be like an atelier, an open space in which students pursue their work, with opportunities for the instructor to make suggestions from which all of the students can benefit” (Kivunja, 2014, p. 17). Given the fact that technology has the capacity to provide students with freedom in their learning, as well as learning resources that expand learners’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), technological platforms such as Apps on tablets may be used to promote critical thinking and problem solving skills in ESL instruction. Kunkel (2010) has found that educators use digital platforms such as websites to share learning-based project ideas with other educators on a world-wide scale. Kunkel highlights the professional learning opportunities derived from online sharing of pedagogical tools and resources that arise from teachers collaborating together on such platforms that transcend geographical boundaries. This project explored how educators worked together to share technological tools to support ELLs. Thus, the interest for this project is ways in which ESL teachers collaborated with other educational professionals to use digital tools to foster learning for ELLs.

**Language Acquisition**

Language acquisition theories are important in understanding the specific ways in which ELLs acquire knowledge. For the discussion surrounding teacher collaboration in ESL education, language acquisition theories are pertinent to ways in which ESL teachers' pedagogical practices are informed by these theories, and how their language acquisition knowledge informs collaboration with other educational professionals. Theories of second language acquisition (SLA) explore processes of achieving fluency in more than one language from interdisciplinary perspectives, including linguistics, psychology, education, and discourse analysis (Gass, Behney, & Plonsky, 2013). SLA
theories extend from the broader discipline of the study of language or language
behaviours. As Gass et al. (2013) indicate, these theoretical areas are intertwined as they
are both concerned with “linguistic principles [which] reflect the possibilities of human
language creation and the limits of human language variation” (p. 48). Cross-linguistic
influence is a branch of SLA that considers influences of L1 (first language) in L2
learning (subsequent language).

Learners of a new language compartmentalize new linguistic knowledge cross-
linguistically or interlinguistically, “as pegs on which the learner can hang new
information by making use of already existing knowledge, thereby facilitating learning”
(Gass et al., 2013, p. 322). This is consistent with the theoretical position of this research
project with respect to addressing learners’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). In terms of exploring
ESL education from a cross-linguistic perspective, linguists have informed some key
aspects of ESL programming. Ortega (2007) suggested that five key areas are intricately
connected within ESL education, namely, “the nature of second language knowledge, the
nature of interlanguage development, the contributions of knowledge of the first
language, the linguistic environment, and instruction” (pp. 225-226). These perspectives
are consistent with recommendations made by the OME in that ESL education should
integrate ELLs’ existing knowledge as a resource to aid them in L2 literacy acquisition
(OME, 2008a, 2008b).

Overall, the spectrum of language acquisition theories can be categorized into
three main viewpoints: (a) the linguistic perspective, which is mainly concerned with
language acquisition processes which occur on a neurobiological level; (b) the social
psychological perspective that focuses on “modelling individual differences among
learners, and their implications for eventual learning success” (Mitchell et al., 2013, pp.
19-20); and (c) the sociocultural perspective which views the ELLs as social agents integrated in social networks (Mitchell et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study, the focus was primarily on the sociocultural perspective as it aligns with the guiding theoretical perspective. A sociocultural cultural perspective was utilized in the process of data analysis by exploring the ways in which participants discussed how their practice is socially constructed, the ways in which they consider language acquisition as occurring through social processes, and the ways in which this influences how they regard collaboration.

Linguists who explore language use from a sociocultural perspective are interested in contextually situated processes that involve internal and external linguistic influences (Gass et al., 2013). An externalized behaviour of language learning which incorporates these two influences can be observed in the ways in which children engage in private speech as an internal function of language. Private speech, in particular, is used by children in imaginative play and it guides behaviour, and therefore serves a self-regulatory purpose (Smith & Mathur, 2009). In the context of ESL instruction, private speech reflects initial use of language, before fully mastering the linguistic skills in the new language. Students use private speech as a tool to self-direct problem solving when partaking in tasks with a degree of difficulty in a new language (Mitchell et al., 2013). Research by McCafferty (1992) found that a learner’s linguistic proficiency levels affect the amount and frequency of private speech that the learner engages in, with less advanced learners using private speech more frequently.

Taken in combination with psycholinguistic theory, this study explored how these language acquisition theories are integrated in the collaborative pedagogical practices between ESL educators and other educational professionals. Faez (2011) states that “the ability of teachers to relate theories of language, teaching, and learning to language
teaching in actual situations is also part of teachers’ pedagogical reasoning and decision making” (p. 40). Thus, ESL teaching may be considered a craft of integrating theories of language acquisition, with educators’ unique pedagogical experiences and their knowledge of ELLs’ unique learning styles.

**The English Language Learner**

Learning is a process that is social, dialectical, and cyclical (Mackeracher, 2004). ELLs learn by constructing relational meaning between their native language and English through social processes (Larrotta, Moon, & Huang, 2016). Some students have little to no prior school experiences or exposure to literacy in their native language. There is an additional complexity for these students, whose cultural literacy practices are diverse or those who may have limited prior experience with print or literacy activities in a school context (Hawkins, 2004). ELLs are faced with the challenge of striving to achieve a level of academic language skills that most of their peers have achieved.

Becoming proficient in English occurs at different rates on a continuum of development. ELLs have unique learning needs, as they learn the English language concurrently with academic content. However, as Hawkins (2004) emphasizes, “there has been little focus on identifying the specific forms and features of language and participation that a student must be able to recruit and display to be recognized as a ‘successful student’” (p. 22). These might be considered levels of mastery for language acquisition; this has implications in regards to instructional planning for ELLs, as well as the progression of scaffolding and support that ELLs require.

People for Education (2013) highlight the potential advantage that ELLs with previous in-school experiences have in acquiring English literacy skills as opposed to students without reading or writing skills in their native language. Previous literacy
experiences are seen as transferrable, and students can draw on these experiences to aid in the acquisition of a new language. Students without reading or writing skills in the native language may lack literacy fundamentals or “prior understanding about how language ‘works’” (OME, 2005, p. 49). Depending on ELLs’ amount and quality of prior schooling experiences, students will require individualized support with various accommodations or modifications to classroom tasks, in order to be successful.

There are complexities involved in the acquisition of a new language, in particular, students’ social identities, which are negotiated and constructed in a social context (Hawkins, 2004). Learning occurs within a community, and while ELLs are learning features of the language, language acquisition is an ongoing process in classrooms that act as “sites of specific situated cultural and language practices, with learners coming together to negotiate meanings and understandings” (Hawkins, 2004, p. 16). ELLs are social agents who are integrated into structured social networks within the classroom, the school and the community. These students identify with multiple social groups, and their relationship within ELL instruction is dynamic and constantly in fluctuation as they engage in diverse social practices with peers and educators.

The monolingual principle, the practice of conducting ESL education through English as the target language, has been challenged by academics in the field of bilingual education (Cummins, 2009). The OME’s (2005) Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English language Learners in Every Classroom emphasizes educational tasks that draw parallels between ELLs’ pre-existing knowledge and the development of their literacy knowledge in the L2. Cummins (2009) states that for effective language instruction, building on ELLs’ existing schema in their native language is essential in L2 literacy learning. Cummins describes some of the advantages associated with the inclusion of the
L1 in ESL instruction, including the development of students’ critical thinking skills by encouraging ELLs to employ literacy skills while completing tasks using their L1. Through these pedagogical practices, students develop critical thinking skills without the lag of L2 acquisition. In these situations, partnerships between educational professionals and family or community members is strengthened, as these individuals are involved in the process of students’ literacy acquisition by aiding in the translation of students’ work from the L1 into English. Cummins (2009) states that “legitimating students’ LI as a cognitive tool within the classroom challenges the subordinate status of many minority groups and affirms students’ identities, thereby promoting what ... has [been] called identities of competence” (p. 320). Thus, the result of incorporating ELLs’ L1 in ESL instruction comprises students' feelings of competence in addition to the acquisition of literacy skills.

**English Language Learners’ Motivation**

Student motivation in relation to literacy learning activities is driven by a multitude of factors including: levels of interest, the difficulty of the task in relation to the student’s current knowledge, and the student’s level of confidence (Ushida, 2005). Literature has linked success in acquiring literacy skills in a new language to many factors, with one of the most prominent aspects being levels of motivation. Ushida (2005) defines motivation to learn a new language as “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to learn the language and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p. 52). In this context, instructional planning that incorporates a level of student satisfaction derived from language acquisition progress is an essential element in ESL co-planning to facilitate student motivation.
Social constructivism is rooted in the process of developing an instructional plan for ELLs that facilitates success by considering the ELLs’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) in the progression of language acquisition. In a collaborative model, a sociocultural stance is created through the social interaction between educators involved in the development of an educational plan for ELLs. These educators consider the ELL’s current observable language behaviours (OME, 2011), and co-construct a long-term, subject specific educational plan through processes of social interaction and collaboration (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). Educators who work with an ELL during a particular task or subject area may observe motivating factors that are situational or context specific. Thus, collaboration among various educators working with ELLs is important in sharing pedagogical techniques to keep the student engaged and motivated.

Gardner’s (1985) socioeducational theory suggests that ELLs’ motivation to learn a new language is driven by positive attitudes in regards to the new culture. Thus, one’s attitudes towards the new language are linked to literacy achievement and culture. Mitchell et al. (2013) state that predictors of new language learning success are integrative and instrumental to motivation. Integrative motivation is defined as an interest towards the new language community, while instrumental motivation is related to the perceived benefits of new language acquisition (Mitchell et al., 2013). The current research project considered how ELLs’ motivation might be addressed as a factor in educators’ collaboration. This study explored factors taken into account when educators collaborate to create engaging instructional activities for ELLs, and ways in which educators consider fostering positive student attitudes and ELLs’ engagement with instructional resources. For the purpose of this project, motivation pertaining to literacy
learning for ELLs is important as ESL teachers may draw on individual motivating factors as they collaborate with other educational professionals when working with ELLs.

**Educators of English Language Learners**

Within Ontario school districts, schools with a large ELL population are designated site schools with one or more full-time ESL teachers on staff (Van Viegen Stille, Jang, & Wagner, 2015). Schools with smaller ELL enrollment have itinerant ESL teachers who rotate among several different schools within a district. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of ESL teachers within Ontario schools from 2008 to 2017. The numbers of ESL teachers in schools has been increasing, and the increasing presence of ESL teachers in schools is a potential contributing factor to collaboration with other educational professionals in Ontario schools.
Figure 1. Percentage of English language elementary schools that have ESL teachers. Source: People for Education (2017).
Collaboration is encouraged in ministry documents between ESL teachers and classroom teachers in order to provide ELLs with developmentally appropriate task accommodations (OME, 2008a). The OME’s (2008a) *Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators Grades 1 to 8* highlights the importance of integrated literacy instruction by stating that “all teachers—across all content areas—are teachers of both language and literacy” (p. 2). As ELLs’ literacy skills develop, both ESL teachers and classroom teachers are responsible for utilizing the *STEP* guide (OME, 2011) resource to accommodate curriculum expectations to students’ language proficiency development (OME, 2007).

Often the process of accommodating curriculum expectations begins with ELLs undergoing an initial assessment conducted by the ESL teacher (OME, 2008a). This assessment profiles ELLs and provides information documented in the Ontario Student Record regarding students’ prior schooling experiences, as well as the ELLs’ *STEP* guide (OME, 2011), which have been used as a guide to target instruction. Over the course of ELLs’ progression through school, ESL teachers communicate with classroom teachers regarding the oral, verbal, and writing proficiencies of ELLs. ESL teachers support ELLs’ vocabulary development through organized literacy-based activities, assist students with reading and writing assignments developed by the classroom teacher, and co-plan activities in relation to ELLs’ *observable language behaviours* guide (OME, 2011). Within publicly funded Ontario schools, in addition to being registered members of the Ontario College of Teachers, ESL teachers must have an ESL Additional Qualification (Teach in Ontario, n.d.).

In addition to roles and responsibilities assumed by classroom teachers in planning, facilitating, and assessing learning tasks for their ELLs, teachers observe,
monitor, and assess the language development of ELLs in the classroom by using the STEP guide’s outlined descriptors (OME, 2011). These descriptors are used to accommodate or modify classroom tasks in accordance with plans that have been co-constructed with ESL teachers. Classroom teachers can support the learning of their ELLs when they engage with teaching partners to form an ESL support system that is focused on appropriate educational goals. In addition, educators who are culturally reflective in their practice use language conscious teaching, “which occurs when teachers are cognizant of students’ language proficiencies and can understand the linguistic challenges they face in the classroom” (Meyers, 2004, as cited in Baltus & Belhiah, 2013, p. 91).

Educators themselves have unique personal experiences and areas of expertise that inevitably affect their practice. Through ethnographic research with pre-service educators who self-identified as having multicultural identities, Clark (2008) found a unique “interplay and impact of language practices, ideologies, and identity (re)construction and negotiations” (p. 2). Clark found that teacher candidates drew on their in-school experiences that relate to their multicultural identities, and these in turn shaped their pedagogical outlook in regards to competencies and motivational strategies. It is possible that the experiences that ESL teacher participants had in relation to ESL education influenced their teaching strategies and the way in which they regarded collaboration with other educational professionals.

Collaboration Between Classroom Teachers and ESL Teachers

Teacher collaboration is defined as communication between educators with the scope of enhancing student success, and can range from informal to structured and deliberate (DelliCarpini, 2014). The OME documents recommend collaboration between educators working with ELLs. For instance, the OME’s (2008b) Supporting English
Language Learners With Limited Prior Schooling states that “ESL/ELD and Special Education teachers need to work collaboratively to design an appropriate program for English language learners” (p. 19). Echoing these directives, the OME’s (2005) Many Roots, Many Voices emphasizes that the collaboration between classroom teachers and ESL teachers helps ELLs to:

- develop proficiency in their new language and succeed in school. The influence of classroom teachers, working in collaboration with ESL/ELD teachers, board resource staff, and others with responsibility for these students, and supported by their school and board administrators, can be significant for these students. (p. 23)

Key to this statement is the provision of administrative support for teacher collaboration, however, there is not a detailed action plan or resources allocated to aid teachers in collaboration. This project explored the recommendations made by ESL teachers in regards to administrative supports needed to facilitate collaboration in ESL education.

In addition to teacher collaboration to support ELLs, the OME’s (2008a) Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators Grades 1 to 8 defines the professional learning that occurs as a result of collaboration: “all teachers work collaboratively to plan student learning and to evaluate and improve their own instructional strategies” (p. 17). In regards to ESL instruction, the overall intention of teacher collaboration within Ontario Ministry documents is to create an inclusive climate for students.

Research investigating the benefits of integrating ELLs within the classroom to support and develop literacy skills has resulted in some misconceptions related to ESL instruction (Meyers, 2006). According to Meyers (2006), these misconceptions include:
“language learners can develop linguistic and academic proficiency without specialized supports; equity for English Language Learners is assured; all teachers are ESL teachers” (p. 31). The last of these misconceptions calls for targeted ESL support for ELLs, and highlights the necessity of collaboration between ESL teachers who have the tools to provide individualized support, and classroom teachers who spend the greatest amount of time with ELLs.

Literature on the topic of ESL instruction stresses the importance of teacher collaboration between classroom teachers and ESL teachers. Meyers (2006) advocates for a whole-school approach to supporting the needs of ELLs. This alludes to collaboration to support ESL instruction that includes other educational professionals, such as literacy coaches, resource teachers, and educational assistants. Baltus and Belhiah (2013) call for enhancements to collaborative practices by relying on the ESL teacher’s role as a resource within the classroom. These authors advocate for collaborative practices both within as well as outside of the classroom. Practices should include “learning about ESL methods and materials, modifying the curriculum and exchanging vital information about students’ abilities and progress” (Baltus & Belhiah, 2013, p. 111). These authors find that the collaborative experiences of teachers range from minimal collaboration to co-teaching in the classroom. Collaboration between ESL teachers and other educational professionals has the potential of minimizing pull-out practices of ELLs through cooperative planning of developmentally appropriate pedagogical tasks. Benefits for ELLs include forming social relationships with peers within the classroom, context-specific learning and feelings of inclusion and competence (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). The current study sought to add to the body of research that explores ESL teaching
practices by specifically exploring how ESL teachers are professionally supported in collaborating with other educational professionals to support ELLs in the classroom. Collaboration models may include various professionals who have contact with ELLs. Delivery of instruction and support for ELLs includes professionals who work with the student in a specific content area, such as educational or literacy coaches or resource teachers; educational assistants (EAs); educators who to have specific knowledge related to language acquisition such as ESL teachers; classroom teachers who spend the majority of the time with the ELL and are responsible for mapping out learning plans for the ELL to meet curriculum expectations and creating assessments for the ELL; and volunteers who may monitor lunch breaks/school trips and know the ELL is a less formal environment. Figure 2 illustrates how the anonymous school board in Ontario that was part of this study envisions an ESL delivery model. This delivery model includes the various professionals noted above as well as the role of assessment and instruction for the ELL.

In order for meaningful collaboration to occur between ESL teachers and classroom teachers, sharing goals for students, which have been derived from a common framework is advantageous. Van Viegen et al. (2015) found that the shared vocabulary relating to ESL instruction derived from the STEP guide (OME, 2011) has aided teachers in co-planning from a common framework of reference. Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) found that educators who are “committed to social justice and inclusive practices” (p. 4) are more likely to seek collaborative opportunities to support ELLs. Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) indicate expressed gaps reported by classroom teachers in regards to ELLs, which include “sociocultural, linguistic, academic, or emotional need(s)” (p. 5).
Figure 2. The anonymous school board’s English as a Second Language (ESL) delivery model.
Perhaps the greatest benefit to collaboration among educators is the potential for addressing teaching gaps which repress the support provided to ensuring ELLs’ overall success. This research project explored uncertainties that educators had in planning and delivery of instruction for ELLs by exploring the ways in which ESL teachers talked about collaboration.

In other jurisdictions, Huberman, Navo, and Parrish (2012) explored the policies that contribute to successful practices in special education within several districts in California and found that one strong indicating factor is “an emphasis on professional learning communities (PLCs), with collaboration between general and special education teachers” (p. 65). Key members who engage in collaborative practices in these school boards included classroom teachers, special education teachers, and school psychologists. All teachers in the selected school boards had received professional training in “explicit skill development and conceptual understanding” (Huberman et al., 2012, p. 69). As a result of this professional training, classroom teachers were better equipped to identify gaps in students’ understandings and work in collaboration with special education teachers to decide on a best approach to addressing gaps. In this study, the by-product of such collaboration meant that students receiving special education supports were integrated in the classroom and followed educational plans that facilitated their individual learning needs. The connection between the study conducted by Huberman et al. and the current project is in the opportunities that teachers have for collaboration. Specifically, the present study examined the ways in which teachers attempt to develop a collaborative environment. In a collaborative relationship, educators who share their expertise and specialization can contribute pedagogical techniques to the learning plan to assist learners in a variety of
ways. Houtz and Watson (2001) found that collaboration between science teachers and special education teachers resulted in individualized educational plans that utilized pedagogical practices to enhance learning in accordance with the unique characteristics and learning styles of students. In Houtz and Watson’s study, collaboration between teachers who had a science background and educators with a background in special education was integral to delivering the material in an individualized way to service the educational needs of the learner, while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum material. The current research project explored the ways in which ESL teachers’ educational background and specializations influence collaboration in ESL education with educational professionals.

Despite the benefits of teacher collaboration in the ESL setting, a multitude of heuristic challenges impede collaborative efforts. Arkoudis’s (2006) research accredits the marginalization of ESL teachers to problematizing meaningful collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers. Underlying assumptions held by educators can also affect the nature of the collaboration. Davison (2006) found that when a dichotomy of expert and novice is established between collaborating educators, the resulting collaborative planning is superficial in its aims. In addition, educators’ individual communication, pedagogical, and instructional goals may pose obstacles to collaborative efforts (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). In contrast, professionals need to view members within the collaborative relationship as a community of professionals working together for the benefit of ELLs and when this occurs, the resulting collaboration is authentic in scope and outcomes. Risko and Bromley (2001) argue that the act of collaborating “reduces role differentiation among teachers and specialists, resulting in shared expertise for problem
solving that yields multiple solutions to dilemmas about literacy and learning” (p. 12). Knowledge and experience have the potential of impacting the authenticity of collaboration depending on the alignment of perceived goals and benefits that teachers attribute to collaboration.

Limited planning time available to educators is another barrier to collaboration. In tackling some of these scheduling challenges, Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) suggest that educators “engage in ongoing, regularly scheduled collaboration” (p. 10) by setting aside designated time for professional collaboration, which must also be supported by administration in order to be successful (Davison, 2006). Ultimately, the purpose of this research project was to explore: how ESL teachers describe collaboration in ESL education; opportunities that ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how ESL teachers are supported in creating a collaborative environment; and how ESL teachers collaborate with in-school educators to use resources (digital and/or non-digital) to enhance oral and written language skills and support ELLs as they acquire English skills.

**Educators’ Use of Non-Digital Resources With ELLs**

In addition to inquiry learning and technological teaching tools, this project also explored how ESL teachers collaborated with other educational professionals to use non-digital resources with ELLs. Inquiry-based learning is a form of instruction which incorporates several skills and competencies, including critical thinking and active problem-solving (Kivunja, 2014). Within the context of ESL instruction, application of inquiry-based tasks may develop academic literacies, including “observing, classifying, comparing, communicating, measuring, inferring, and predicting” (Yingli, 2013, p. 645). This form of learning is aligned with a social constructivist paradigm in which learning is
the outcome of active discoveries made by students and is facilitated by expanding learners’ ZPD (Kivunja, 2014). Inquiry projects often include several curriculum expectations and are facilitated over an extended period of time. Often during inquiry-based learning activities, ELLs require individualized support. While these projects may be designed by the classroom teacher, ESL teachers may play an integral part in modifying these projects to the unique language needs of ELLs. Depending on the level of literacy acquisition, ELLs require varying levels of guidance in order to “formulate complete thoughts in English and to express their questions and answers” (Kivunja, 2014, p. 645). Taking into account the specific needs of ELLs, inquiry-based learning opportunities, both digital and non-digital, hold potential for the development of language learning as well as academic language driven by students’ individual interests. This research project explored how ESL teachers collaborate with classroom teachers in planning and facilitating activities and non-digital resources with ELLs.

There is some literature describing the use of non-digital resources for ESL instruction, and the OME (2008a) emphasizes the use of teaching tools to promote the development of reading, writing, and oral communication skills through differentiated instruction for ELLs. To support teachers in the development of skill-appropriate task modifications for ELLs, Noseworthy (2015) calls for a “fully developed curriculum for bridging programs, [and] curriculum based on a needs assessment of this specific group of students” (para. 8). In response to these directives, Baltus and Belhiah (2013) found that teachers expressed the ongoing need for teaching resources from the OME to assist in the planning of curriculum modifications for ELLs. The lack of student work
exemplars to aid teachers in assessing ELLs work is also noted as a finding in the research.

The OME’s (2005) *Many Roots, Many Voices* supports social learning by emphasizing the importance of drawing on students’ existing L1 knowledge and experiences to support instruction. Benefits of developing literacy parallels between the L1 and English include preserving a sense of identity within the students’ cultural community as well as enhancing their self-esteem (OME, 2005). The *Many Roots* document is founded on a social constructivist approach with recommendations for educators to teach English in a cross-curricular approach. It espouses the idea that the classroom inclusion of ELLs should be a part of an instructional design, as students are more likely to incorporate language learning with meaningful and contextual problem-solving activities. A limitation of this publication is the lack of direction in regards to incorporating digital technology within ESL instruction. This gap was examined as part of this research project.

**Educators’ Use of Digital Technology With ELLs**

Preparing students for future success in a rapidly changing global economy involves fostering digital literacy skills. Taking into account the multitude of digital educational tools and resources available to educators, it is essential to explore how these platforms have the potential of impacting ESL education. The use of educational technology “can be a powerful tool when it is well designed, carefully validated, and properly implemented” (Abrami, 2011, para. 13). Students require scaffolding and explicit instruction to learn how to safely navigate and critically use a variety of digital platforms (Argentin, Gui, Pagani, & Stanca, 2014). Uses of digital technology in ESL
education is important to consider in exploring how digital technology instruction or uses of digital platforms to find, store and share pedagogical tools contributed to collaboration between ESL teachers and other educational professionals.

In accordance with the social constructivist theoretical perspective of the current study, the interplay of social and mental processes have been explored in relation to “immaterial entities such (discourses, beliefs and values)” (Rowsell & Gallagher, 2017, p. 14) and negotiated through teacher collaboration, resulting in various pedagogical practices within ESL education. Dagenais, Fodor, Schulze, and Toohey (2013) state the importance of exploring the interaction between human and non-human resources in how they shape meaning-making experiences of ELLs. This idea is important to the current research project in exploring how ESL teachers described collaboration within pedagogical practices to support ELLs. Exploration of teacher discourses in regards to technological tools used in ESL education was explored within the current project.

Within ESL instruction, technology-based tools may offer individualized differentiated instruction and offer comprehensive input, by making instruction comprehensible to the learner (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). In contrast to traditional ESL teaching approaches focused on grammar, memorization, and learned syntax rules, incorporating technological teaching tools and applications increases student interest and potential language input (Bahrani & Tam, 2012).

Technological resources also allow for differentiated instruction by adjusting texts to students’ reading levels. This is time effective for educators and motivating for students (Turgut, 2011). Digital resources which automatically adjust the reading level of the text based on ELLs performance (without students being aware of such modification)
maintain student motivation (Turgut, 2011). It is imperative that technological tools chosen by educators provide students with immediate feedback to prevent students from making schematic integrations of incorrect responses (Cumming & Draper Rodriguez, 2013). In this way, students gain an awareness of where errors are made, and are able to apply this new learning in the future. Once students become comfortable and develop an aptitude for using technological tools, learning benefits such as “increased engagement for students with particular language-based learning needs” begin to occur (Cumming & Draper Rodriguez, 2013, p. 45).

Language barriers often result in ELLs feeling alienated in the classroom (OME, 2005). Using technology may counter such barriers and create an inclusive and collaborative classroom environment and build ELLs confidence levels. Gallagher et al. (2015) found that when teacher[s] took advantage of the resources on the iPads such as apps, thus flattening classroom hierarchies by acknowledging students as experts ...[this was] a resource model of learning because students were harnessing the iPad as a means of seeking and displaying their knowledge. (p. 20)

In addition, Rowsell and Gallagher (2017) have found that student interactions with iPads promoted creative linguistic expressions without boundaries imposed by teachers’ agendas. In the case of a student with a communication learning disability, Rowsell and Gallagher found that interactions with an iPad allowed the student to evaluate familiar web-based videos and verbally express her previous knowledge about the content through the use of the relevant and creative modes. Such benefits have the potential for being applicable to ESL instruction by allowing ELLs to demonstrate their knowledge via
technological platforms, such as iPads, making students feel more comfortable making
language errors, while more accurately representing their content knowledge.

Using technological tools in ESL education is also beneficial for educators,
particularly in the area of assessment. Turgut (2011) found that “teachers were also able
to identify student needs more rapidly and provide necessary support quick[ly]” (p. 40).
Findings from Liu et al.’s (2016) study of teachers’ iPad usage indicate that as a group,
elementary teachers with 20 years or less experience had the highest comfort levels in
using technology in general instruction. While there is a vast amount of literature
exploring the effects of technology infused instruction, as well as how technology is used
to support ESL education, few studies have examined teachers’ understandings and
apprehensions in the context of collaborative efforts to tackle challenges encountered in
the use of digital resources to support literacy instruction for ELLs.

**Teacher Collaboration Using Technology**

A contemporary investigation on how teachers collaborate to support and motive
their ELLs is timely. Over a decade ago, Ushida (2005) highlighted the importance of
teacher collaboration to implement technology to increase student motivation for
language acquisition. More current research finds that meaningful learning tasks motivate
students, and current pedagogy focuses on facilitating student motivation through the use
of technology within ESL instruction (Bahrani & Tam, 2012).

Turgut (2011) found that educators who use laptops in ESL instruction reported
motivational benefits for students from the use of visuals to transcend language barriers
for new vocabulary and the use of online literacy based games. ELLs also engaged more
with their peers as a function of working with technology, as they “became more active and
engaged in their learning process [when] complet[ing] the projects” (Turgut, 2011, p. 44). Teachers perceived ELLs’ learning strengths when working on computers, and thus reported a shift in attitude in instructional planning, “based on students’ strengths, rather than weaknesses” (p. 45). An additional benefit to using laptops was allowing educators to track and share student progress and assessment artifacts. The study found that teachers could more effectively trace student progress and share ELLs’ work with other educators. Thus, collaboration has the potential of being facilitated through digital tracking of student progress and sharing assessment data with other educators. The current research project included ESL teachers' experiences sharing student data with other educational professionals as a means of collaboration in ESL education.

Teacher collaboration in using technology often does not come without challenges. Educators express practical concerns regarding their comfort levels in addressing technical issues that arise when facilitating learning activities on laptops, which impeded the use of devices to their full potential (Turgut, 2011). In conjunction with establishing educational goals for ELLs as well as planning resources to use in addressing these goals, Turgut (2011) calls for professional development opportunities for educators to target the effective establishment of teacher leadership roles, effective methods for teacher partnerships, and ways of professionally addressing conflicts that occur in the collaborative process. Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) highlight the importance of the fostering of teacher collaboration, “with carefully planned and sustained training and long-term planning that get all stakeholders on board, [as] schools will be better able to establish a new culture over time, which supports collaboration ... and allows teacher leadership to emerge” (p. 19).
From a social constructivist perspective, the current study documented how educators collaborate to plan for ELLs learning and social participation in the classroom and whether technology plays a factor in motivation. This study references theories regarding student motivation in learning a new language and how ELLs benefit from an integrated teaching approach as well as technology use as an educational tool.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 2 has provided a theoretical framework and literature base to buttress the research questions for the current study. The chapter began with the guiding theoretical perspectives: social constructivism in relation to the importance of communication and language use in social settings, and digital connectivism as it considers the impact of technology on learning. These theoretical standpoints have included seminal work of corresponding theorists in conjunction with modern perspectives. The current study will look at how educators collaborate to create learning experiences for ELLs, professional support for educators, and teachers’ understandings and apprehensions about using digital and/non-digital to support ESL instruction.

An overview of language acquisition theories with respect to L2 acquisition has been presented as it relates to ESL education stemming from a psycholinguistic theory. The ways in which language is processed and represented by ELLs is important to consider in the educational goals and resources used in collaborative instruction. Characteristics of ELLs have been summarized within the Ontario context, as well as the complexities involved in the acquisition of a new language for this group of learners. Ways in which motivation is linked to L2 acquisition have been discussed, particularly links
between literacy achievement and culture. This link is relevant to the current research project in terms of the underlying priorities involved in collaborative planning for ELLs.

Next, literature that relates to educators of ELLs was explored. It is necessary to understand the individual roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers and ESL teachers, in order to study how these professionals collaborate to support ELLs. The current study sought to find how ESL teachers support classroom teachers, teacher collaboration, professional support for educators, and teachers’ understandings about using digital and/non-digital tools in literacy instruction. In framing the current research project, there has been a review of the literature on how educators' knowledge complements and supports collaborative initiatives, as well as challenges associated with co-planning.

The literature presented in chapter 2 includes studies of non-digital resources used in ESL instruction, as well as directives from OME documents on effective resources to use with ELLs. Educators’ expressed needs and lack of resources available were discussed to indicate the realities of ESL education. Then, teachers’ use of digital technology was presented in discussing the potential benefits of using technology in ESL instruction, as well as limitations on this research in the current literature. Finally, the chapter concluded with a section on teachers’ use of technology in co-planning to motivate students, and the challenges associated with this practice.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter outlines the research design of the current research project. The methodology and procedures presented in this chapter address the following guiding research questions: (a) How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs? (b) What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment with other in-school professionals? (c) How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELL? The participant and site selection, data collection and analysis, methodological assumptions, and ethical considerations are included in this chapter along with the steps that were taken to establish credibility and improve the quality of data collected.

Research Design

The current research project utilized a qualitative research approach to investigate collaboration in ESL education, professional support for ESL educators, and ESL teachers’ understandings and experiences using digital and non-digital to support literacy instruction. A qualitative approach allowed for a rich understanding of participants’ personal experiences, gave participants a voice, as well as bracketed the researcher’s biases. Creswell (2013) refers to qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (p. 43). Thus, qualitative research seeks to make visible an individual’s experiences and the meanings derived and attributed from these experiences (Creswell, 2013). To study the meanings that people have about their experiences, an “emerging qualitative approach to inquiry” is used, both inductively as well as deductively, to understand these meanings (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). For the purpose of this
research project, an inductive methodology was used to allow for trends to emerge from the research data collected (Thomas, 2006). Creswell (2013) states that one of the benefits of using qualitative research to study a phenomenon is that it empowers participants to share their personal experiences, which may ultimately shape the body of literature on the particular subject. The benefits of capturing people’s unique experiences using qualitative research are that the diverse viewpoints of participants are illuminated and these viewpoints often do not fit the problem that the research originally sets out.

A case study research design (Merriam, 1988) was used to explore collaborative practices among educators working with ELLs, as ESL teachers support, and work with in-school teams of educators. Merriam (1988) defines case study methodology as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 16). In this way, the current project focused on collaborative practices described by ESL teachers in planning instruction for ELLs. Additionally, Stake (1988) provides a framework of case study design as “a study of a bounded system, emphasizing the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time” (p. 258). Thus, the intent of utilizing a case study methodology is not to generalize the results, but rather to provide insight into the current educational practices of professionals working with ELLs, and potential implications for professional development in the area of ESL education.

Stake (1995) makes note of four qualities of case study methodology: holistic, empirical, interpretive and emphatic. The current study applied all four of these qualities to its design. Holistically, a consideration was made of the interrelationships among ESL practices and collaborative efforts made by educators within the school climate, as well as the administrative supports discussed by ESL teachers. Empirically, contextualized observations were conducted within the field, namely the classroom to observe
collaboration in action. Interpretatively, there was an understanding that this research is a function of a researcher-participant interaction. Empathically, the examination of the data has been analyzed from an emic standpoint based on experiences shared by educators (Yazan, 2015).

**Pilot Study: ESL Internship**

Seeking to understand more about ESL education, I enrolled in an internship course as part of my Master of Education coursework. Part of this internship included job shadowing an ESL teacher and an ESL itinerant for one day a week for the duration of the Winter term of 2017, in an elementary school in Southern Ontario with a diverse ELL population. During this time, I kept reflective fieldnotes as the experience provide me with an authentic learning opportunity to observe the collaborative efforts that educators engage in to create a cohesive educational plan in addressing the multimodal learning skills of 21st century ELLs. In addition, the internship allowed me to understand the process of ESL instruction from initial student assessment, to the ways in which ESL teachers support ELLs in the primary and the junior division. Observations were made about how teachers are professionally supported to integrate technology within classroom instruction, as well as teachers’ understandings and apprehensions about using technology to support literacy instruction for ELLs.

In regard to teacher collaboration, this internship allowed me to see how the nuances of personal teaching styles influence collaborative efforts. One of the ESL teachers worked with primary ELLs, while the other ESL itinerant worked with junior ELLs. The primary teacher emphasized phonics instruction in a pull-out model. This teacher worked with individual or small groups of ELLs in the ESL room on phonics related tasks and games. The junior ESL itinerant spent more time in the classroom
assisting ELLs with classroom tasks. At the time of my internship, this ESL itinerant was
involved in co-planning a history unit in conjunction with the classroom teacher. She
focused on creating accommodations and modifications for the ELLs in the class.

These observations encouraged me to pursue the topic of collaboration in ESL
education, and explore the ways in which ESL teachers talk about and implement
collaboration in their teaching, and how they discuss the supports and resources they have
access to in regards to collaboration with in-school teams of educators. These
observations informed the overall focus of the current research project which will now be
described in detail.

**Selection of Site and Description of Participants**

The current study was conducted in four publicly funded elementary schools in
two different school boards within Southern Ontario. Upon receiving research ethics
clearance from the Brock University Research Ethics Board and the Educational
Research Committee of the participating school boards, an Area Superintendent was
contacted to make recommendations for invitations to participate (see Appendix A: Letter
of Invitation for ESL Teachers). These letters and consent forms were dropped off in hard
copy format at prospective ESL teachers’ respective schools, and were posted on an
online bulletin that was accessed by ESL teachers. The researcher collected the consent
forms in person. Upon receiving signed consent forms from participating ESL teachers
(see Appendix B: ESL Teacher Consent Form), plans were made with these educators
regarding suitable times for participation in the study, as well as times that the researcher
could visit the school and conduct observations.

Purposeful sampling was used in selecting educators who valued collaboration in
ESL education, which was a key aspect that was emphasized in the Letter of Invitation. It
was presumed that these individuals would be able to draw on their experiences to address the research questions central to this project (Creswell, 2013). Four ESL teachers who work with ELLs between Grades 1-8 were involved in this project (see Table 1). Two of these ESL teachers were part of a public school board, while the other two were part of a Catholic school board in Southern Ontario. The researcher shadowed the teachers as they worked and engaged with other educational professionals as well as with ELLs. Observations were made with three participating ESL teachers as they worked in the classroom with various ELLs, and professional planning artifacts were collected. These forms of data collection will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

**Instrumentation**

The current study sought to triangulate results (Creswell, 2013) by collecting and analyzing several forms of data: information shared by ESL teachers in interviews, professional planning artifacts shared by ESL teachers (e.g., daybook plans, lesson plans, professional readings, instructional resources), and classroom observations of collaboration between ESL teachers and other educators.

Audio recorded, semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers took place at the end of the Fall Term. Interview questions (Appendix C) were designed to collect data to: contextualize the teaching background and student demographics that participating educators work with; obtain information regarding instructional strategies; discuss concerns and accommodations/modifications that participating educators utilize; explore the professional development and resources available for educators; and inquire about teacher collaboration practices. These interviews took place in a private space in each of the respective schools.
## Table 1

**Characteristics of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Assignment-Number of ELLs</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Years of experience in ESL education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Junior-Intermediate (grades 6-8)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-28</td>
<td>Primary-Junior (grades 1-7)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>Primary (grades 1-6)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Primary (grades 1-6)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional planning artifacts were shared by ESL teachers and examined by the researcher. Specifically, a Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP; Echevarria et al., 2013) was used as a guide when viewing the daybook plans, lesson plans, professional readings, and instructional resources used by educators (see Appendix D). The SIOP protocol was designed as a research-based protocol to structure observation notes regarding lesson preparation elements. These elements include: pre-planning aspects such as lesson preparation; teaching related components such as teaching strategies and application; and post-lesson reflections such as review and assessment (Echevarria et al., 2013). This protocol was used as a guide when artifacts such as daybook plans, lesson plans, professional readings, and instructional resources were viewed and analyzed. Notes were made in regards to artifact components in relation to how ESL teachers described collaboration strategies to support ELLs. For instance, notes were made in relation to the ways the artifact components utilized collaborative teaching strategies in the artifact component of building background in the lesson by linking ELL’s learning goals to link past learning to new content, and emphasis new vocabulary. Another example is in the artifact component learning strategies, notes were made about ways ESL teachers planned to incorporate collaborative teaching methods to create opportunities for ELLs to use strategies, how learning would be scaffolded, and the types of planned prompts to promote higher-order thinking skills. This protocol was beneficial as it structured analysis of professional artifacts in relation to lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, learning strategies, interaction, and review and assessment. Collaboration between ESL teachers and other educational professionals on establishing teaching techniques to address these topics had been discussed in interviews.
between the research participants and the researcher. Thus, this protocol made parallels between data collected in the interviews, and how these pedagogical strategies were included in the artifacts collected. A limitation to this protocol is that it was not specifically designed to observe collaboration and teaching styles. Modifications to this protocol regarding individual teaching styles and personality types in relation to collaboration may tailor the protocol to better suit notes regarding ways in which collaboration between educators is reflected in artifacts.

Structured observations were made to document how ESL teachers collaborated with classroom teachers in the classroom settings. The *Classroom Quality for English Language Learners (CQELL) in Language Arts Instruction Observation Protocol* (Goldenberg, Coleman, Reese, Haertel, & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2012; Appendix E) and the *CIERA Classroom Observation Scheme* (Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2004; Appendix F) were used as guides during the classroom observations. The *CIERA Observation Scheme* consists of a series of codes to code classroom observations. These codes related to educators involved, groupings of students, the major literacy task, the lesson focus, materials used in instruction and teacher interaction styles. The *CIERA Observation Scheme* was used to code levels of classroom collaboration, particularly in terms of the educators involved, the groupings of students, the literacy activity, specific literacy focus, materials used and teacher interaction styles. While this protocol was beneficial as it provided the researcher consistent and targeted observational markers, a limitation of this protocol is that it was not specifically designed to observe collaboration and teaching styles. A modification made to this protocol to include the collaboration which occurs during planning between educators prior to lesson delivery and post-lesson
reflection between educators may allow researchers to consider collaboration between educators as occurring outside of the scheduled instructional period.

The *CQELL* was used during classroom observations to identify generic lesson elements based on pre-established criterion such as use of assessment, links to ELLs’ previous knowledge, use of language objectives, language adaptation strategies and opportunities for student interaction. The *CQELL* is designed to observe and record instructional modifications made specifically for ELLs (Goldenberg, Coleman, Reese, Haertel, Rodriguez-Mojica, 2012). The *CQELL* guide allows researchers to observe and record the prominence of generic as well as ESL specific teaching strategies. This guide was effective for the current research project as it allowed the researcher to record the prominence of each of the previously mentioned sections, as well as record comments. The sections outlined in this protocol corresponded with collaborative pedagogical strategies mentioned by ESL teachers during the interviews. As with the other protocols used for data analysis, a limitation of the *CQELL* protocol is that it has not been specifically designed to observe collaboration and teaching styles. Modifications made to this protocol as pertaining to collaboration in ESL instruction may include additions to the criterion regarding whether the strategies implemented are a result of collaboration between educational professionals. Strategies used by educators to achieve these teaching strategies may then be explored further in interviews with the educators.

**Data Collection**

Data collection occurred between December 2017 and January 2018. The present study included the following methods in the order presented: (a) audio recordings of interviews with ESL teachers; (b) structured classroom observations; and (c) analysis of
professional planning artifacts (e.g., daybook plans, lesson plans, professional readings, and instructional resources).

Interviews with all four of the ESL teachers occurred in December of 2017. Three of the four participating ESL teachers were observed as they supported classroom teachers and other educational professionals who work with ESL students. These observations of classroom instruction were intended to collect information about how ESL teachers collaborate to support instruction for ELLs. The researcher spent between 1-3 hours observing each of the three ESL teachers as they rotated between different classrooms and different schools to visit their allocated ESL students during the day that classroom observations occurred. Professional planning artifacts were also collected throughout the term of the study.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected (interview transcripts, fieldnotes, observation protocols, artifacts) have been coded for emergent themes using an inductive analysis approach (Ezzy, 2002). This process is considered to be inductive, because the codes are not pre-established prior to engagement with the data (Ezzy, 2002). Axial coding of these data utilized the sequence of steps in thematic analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This systematic approach allowed for focused coding and emergence of robust themes (Ezzy, 2002). The benefits of this method are that it allows for rich analysis, and for the data to take form without preconceived themes held by the researcher. The inductive analysis was facilitated with a qualitative data analysis program, NVivo 10.0 (QSR International, 2014).
Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (Appendix C) were conducted with each of the ESL teachers. The topics addressed in these interviews were focused on the three guiding questions for this research project: (a) How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs? (b) What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment? (c) How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs? All interviews were uploaded to the data analysis software NVivo 10.0. The interviews were coded by the researcher in accordance to the emergent themes that addressed the guiding research questions. These codes included classroom teacher collaboration, collaboration with other educational professionals, professional development, resources, unplanned collaboration. Nodes pertaining to each theme were compiled, and direct quotes from the participants were used in the analysis of these qualitative data. Nodes included background and demographics, teaching ELLs, teacher collaboration, professional development context, professional resources, future directions.

Classroom Observations

Observation ranged from one school period (with a duration of 50 minutes) to three periods of the school day with each of the ESL teacher participants. These observations included several different classrooms that ESL teachers visited, as well as transitions to different schools. During classroom observations made by the researcher, semi-structured notes were compiled using the CIERA Classroom Observation Scheme
protocol (Taylor et al., 2004) and CQELL (Goldenberg et al., 2012). The code levels used on the CIERA Observation Scheme protocol complemented the generic lesson elements observations made on the CQELL protocol. These notes were then also uploaded to the data analysis software NVivo 10.0. Emergent themes from these observations were drawn using the same coding process employed for the interviews.

**Artifacts**

Copies of professional planning artifacts shared by ESL teachers that pertained to the research questions of the project were collected. These included: ESL student/teacher support plans; ELL best practice strategies; unit plans; learning goals and instructional strategy plans; STEP progress tracking forms; and sample teaching tools. Notes were made in regards to the ways in which these artifacts corresponded with components of the SIOP protocol. For instance, coding occurred for examples of professional collaboration in regards to lesson preparation, learning strategies used and notes regarding how these were established, et cetera. These notes were uploaded to NVivo 10.0, and were coded for emergent themes that corresponded with the guiding research questions.

Peer debriefers were used to establish credibility of the emergent themes. These debriefers included the researcher’s faculty advisor and myself; a graduate student researcher and an Ontario certified teacher. During the debriefing process, themes were discussed and data samples were reviewed. The researcher was provided with affirmation with respect the appropriateness and the reasonability of the established themes within the data (Creswell, 2013). Resonance is pertinent to the sample size of this thesis project, particularly as "resonances allow us to put forward an analysis of meaning that goes beyond the apparent materiality of data and the inevitable reductionism that studying
various forms of data [...] imposes on the multiplicity and complexity of human communication” (Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2014, p.353-354). While the findings of the current research project cannot be synonymous with all ESL settings and practices, triangulation of data provides credibility through the multi-site, multi-participant data collection, and the diverse data sources.

**Methodological Assumptions**

As Creswell (2013) states, there are numerous challenges in the process of obtaining access to participants as well as sites for data collection. A pertinent methodological assumption relevant to the current research project corresponds to the location and time of interviews conducted between educators and the researcher. Specifically, these interviews were expected to occur in quiet locations, and it was optimal for ESL teachers to have time to thoroughly answer interview questions. This may not always reflect educators’ realities in schools, as educators often have multiple commitments and tasks to accomplish. The location of all interviews did not take place in quiet spaces, as there were several educators who shared the spaces and resources. Therefore, interruptions may have impacted the momentum of the interviews.

There is also a methodological assumption that the artifacts collected are reflected in the delivery of the observed instruction. The scope of collecting teaching artifacts and observing classroom instruction was to see educator collaboration as well as the implementation of pedagogical plans. The reality of teaching is that plans are flexible, and instruction is delivered and modified to suit the needs of the student(s). Thus, the observations may not adequately reflect the teaching artifacts, as changes to the plans were not always to be anticipated.
There are also methodological assumptions related to the classroom observations. An intention of conducting the observations was to understand how collaboration between ESL teachers and other educators occurs. These observations provided a snapshot of the ways in ESL teachers collaborated with certain educators, during specific classroom tasks. Thus, these observations are not generalizable to all of the ways in which ESL teachers collaborate with educators.

Additionally, as Creswell (2013) notes, there are methodological challenges involved in conducting observations. Creswell highlights some of these challenges such as “remembering to take field notes, recording quotes accurately for inclusion in field notes, keeping from being overwhelmed at the site with information, and learning how to funnel the observations from the broad picture to a narrow one” (2013, p. 172). To mitigate for some of these challenges in taking observations, structured protocols were used. This strategy helps ensure that observations are targeted to the scope of the project, and focus is maintained on addressing the research questions for the current project.

Limitations

It is imperative to create transparency in regards to the researcher’s stance within the research as dimensions of personal experience related to the research topic have the potential to influence data collection and analysis. Specifically, personal experiences, “may keep him or her from acknowledging all dimensions of the experience” (Creswell, 2013, p. 171). As a former ELL, I have experience in the ESL program, which may influence the lens through which I interpret the results of the present study. While my experience reflected a pull-out model of ESL instruction that was practiced at the time, I was curious to explore how practices have changed over time. In addition, as a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, I have some experience working with ELLs. These
experiences influence the stance taken in the design, conduct, and analyses for the current project. In aiming to reduce the potential threats that these experiences pose, data are triangulated and inductive analysis methods facilitate the emergence of robust themes which were not pre-established (Ezzy, 2002).

Due to the small sample size of educators, there is potential for the emergence of distinct patterns in the experiences and pedagogical practices of a particular group of educators. A larger sample could provide more generalizable results and broader themes and anomalies regarding how in-school teams of educators collaborate to provide support for ELLs and use instructional resources. However, a small sample allows for more time to develop a relationship between the researcher and educators, and to obtain a rich, contextual picture of the practices of this targeted group of educators, as well as to establish credibility. In addition, having collected data from two different school boards allows for variety in the educational aims that ESL teachers have, which inevitably influence the ways in which they interact with other educators and develop their pedagogy to serve ELLs. In addition, the research participants are positive exemplars of collaboration, as they all described themselves as interested in learning about and incorporating collaboration into their practice.

It is also prudent to clarify researcher bias in relation to the current project to create transparency in the data analysis and presentation of the future findings (Merriam, 1988). While the nature of case study design within qualitative research sheds light on individuals’ experience, reliability is important in the portrayal of an accurate representation of educators’ experiences (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability is established by using re-developed protocols to structure observations, and to funnel the observations from the broad to a narrow perspective (Creswell, 2013).
Power asymmetry is a potential barrier to open dialogue between participants and the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, Creswell (2013) suggests use of “collaborative interviewing, where the researcher and the participant approach equality in questioning, interpreting, and reporting” (p. 173). Finally, member checking has been used to consult with participants by sending them their transcripts, quotes, and codes for accuracy verification (Creswell, 2013). Clarifications suggested by participants have been made in seeking to accurately portray the experiences that they have shared with the researcher.

**Ethical Considerations**

The current study has followed the Tri-Council Policy Statement conventions for ethical research. Applications were submitted to the Brock University Research Ethics Board (File # 17-011 – GALLAGHER; Appendix G), as well as to the ethics boards of the participating school boards. The risks and benefits of research participation, confidentiality and right to informed consent as well as voluntary participation were communicated verbally and in writing to each participant. Pseudonyms have been randomly assigned to each participant in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

**Restatement of the Area of Study**

The purpose of my study was to explore the processes of co-planning between ESL teachers and other educational professionals, as well as to investigate how in-school educators use resources (digital and/or non-digital) to enhance oral and written language skills and support ELLs as they acquire English skills. This research has explored the collaboration between ESL teachers and other educators who are attempting to address ELLs’ needs. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs?
2. What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment?

3. How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs?
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the collaboration between ESL teachers and other educational professionals, as well as to investigate how in-school educators use resources (digital and/or non-digital) to enhance oral and written language skills and support ELLs as they acquire English skills. This research has documented the relational and situational collaboration between ESL teachers and other educators in addressing ELLs’ needs. The following research questions guide this study:

1. How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs?
2. What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment?
3. How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs?

Data were gathered from four ESL teacher participants. The researcher conducted interviews with ESL teacher participants and observed ways in which ESL teachers collaborated with other educational professionals in the classroom; professional planning artifacts shared by ESL teacher participants were collected and analyzed. Two of the ESL teachers worked for a public school board in Southern Ontario, while the other two worked for a Catholic school board also in Southern Ontario. An inductive analysis process was used to interrogate the transcribed interviews, structured notes made about the professional planning artifacts, and the classroom observations. Coding and clustering the data into themes were facilitated with a qualitative data analysis program, NVivo 10.0.
This chapter will provide details on the themes that emerged from the investigation of the collected data. The first section of this chapter addresses the first research question in regards to how ESL teacher participants describe collaboration with other educational professionals. Classroom observations and interview responses inform the response to the second research question about the opportunities that ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how ESL teachers are supported in creating a collaborative environment. Finally, in response to the third research question, the last section presents how the ESL teachers talk about collaborating with educational professionals to use instructional resources to promote oral and written instruction with ELLs based on data from observations, interview responses and professional artifacts.

**Research Question 1**

This first section addresses the first research question: How do ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs? ESL teacher participants in the current study regard collaboration in ESL education to be multi-faceted, and to include a community of educators in addition to classroom teachers. ESL teacher participants expressed efforts made to collaborate with educational professional colleagues as intended to support ELLs.

All four of the ESL teacher participants in this study divided their time between several different schools, at which they spent between half of a school day, to an entire school day. The ESL teachers were active members within the environments of various different schools accessing resources, including physical spaces such as classrooms as well as pedagogical resources such as technology. The ESL teachers worked with classroom teachers and other educators such as resource teachers, math coaches,
educational assistants, and settlement workers in schools [SWIS]. Collaboration was situational and varied based on the environment, resources and educators.

**Collaboration as a Pedagogical Tool**

The central goal expressed by ESL teachers is to support ELLs, and one strategy toward achieving this goal was to use collaboration as a pedagogical tool. Nicole, one of the ESL teacher participants, talked about how collaboration is facilitated by the educators who share a physical space:

> Being with somebody in a room, it just is natural collaboration. You just kind of ask it. If you’re thinking something, and you want another brain, you can ask. And in this room, we have the coach, the two ESL teachers, and then, it used to be last year that the resource teachers would come in, but she doesn’t actually have a space in here. So the resource teachers and the ESL teacher actually 2 years ago, did a joint project where they were helping with small groups in here. Now this year, the resource teacher is working in a grade 5 classroom with one of my ELLs, and building up his vocabulary. So she’s doing small group instruction with him, and with other kids that are not ELLs, and then I’m in the classroom supporting what’s happening in the classroom as well. And that just sort of happened. She’s doing a group, and she was like, I’m going to take him, and she does the same thing with the grade 6 language, she works with a small group, she works with a couple of my ELLs, and then, so she’s there for a period before I’m there, and then I come in and I take over. So I'd like optimizing the support.

(Nicole, Interview, December 12, 2017)
Beyond the classroom interactions, other educators echoed the sentiment of connecting and collaborating with colleagues to support ELLs. ESL teachers expressed fluidity and flexibility in the ways they navigated collaboration with other educational professionals; this made collaboration unpredictable. Encounters in various spaces within the school such as the hallways and the staff room were used by ESL teachers to strategize or confer with their educational colleagues in relation to current circumstances experienced by ESL teachers. Shared spaces facilitated dialogue and collaboration among educators.

ESL teacher participants also talked about other members of the school community who they valued as important collaborative partners:

With the school, the people in the school, I would say it also involves, like lunchroom supervisors. Because of those students that I was telling you about [a group of seven siblings from Africa who had been living in a refugee camp and had no experience in school, ELD], that are new that have been in a refugee camp for 7 years, they don’t know even how to, you know, they’re learning how to sit properly, how to eat, to not leave the classroom, so, I have to talk a lot with the lunchroom supervisors. (Nicole, Interview, December 12, 2017)

Similar to Nicole’s experience collaborating with other educators to support ELLs, three of the ESL teacher participants also talked about working with settlement workers in schools [SWIS]. Lauren highlighted the importance of these professionals:

Another important group that we collaborate with I would say, they’re just as important as the classroom teacher, is we have SWIS workers. So the SWIS workers help settle newcomer families into the area. One of my schools, a SWIS worker comes in on a weekly basis, and it’s so important to collaborate with the
SWIS workers because often they’re one of the first people the family makes contact with. So the SWIS worker, sometimes before they even get to the school, already has so much information on the family history that they will share with me and with the classroom teacher. (Lauren, Interview, December 6, 2017)

Other participants talked about ways of collaborating with SWIS workers to aid them in translating educational materials, as well as acting as translators during parent-teacher interviews. In this way, these professionals aided ESL teachers in facilitating communication with ELLs.

**Collaboration with Classroom Teachers**

ESL teacher participants expressed the strongest collaborative relationship to be the one with classroom teachers. Within this collaboration, the emergence of the central finding is evident in that ESL teachers engage in collaboration with other classroom teachers in unique ways, depending on context, ELLs, presence of other educators, tools and time available. Therefore, the model of collaboration is contextual, and must be more fluid in its application. The goal for ESL teacher participants to establish a collaborative relationship with classroom teachers was to support ELLs. ESL teachers spoke enthusiastically about the prominent relationship with classroom teachers and ways that they negotiated in further developing collaborative relationships with these educators. Some ESL participants regarded collaboration with classroom teachers as critical and beneficial for both themselves, as well as for classroom teachers:

Collaboration I think is essential for survival as a teacher right now. And ESL collaboration, I mean, the number of language learners that are coming into our schools it’s just growing. It doesn’t seem to be getting smaller. So I think
collaboration is essential. I love collaborating with teachers because I feel like it’s taking a little bit of stress off of them, initially, but it’s also giving them a toolkit so they’re prepared the next time around. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

Echoing this sentiment, other ESL teacher participants talked about successful collaborative relationships with classroom teachers that develop over time. Professional relationships between ESL teachers and classroom teachers that were described as authentic extended beyond situational conversations in regards to particular events in the classroom. These collaborative relationships were rooted in a sense of reduced role differentiation between the ESL teachers and classroom teachers. Within these relationships, ESL teachers expressed a genuine sharing of expertise by both educators, and as Nicole stated, “seeing that all the kids are capable and competent. And what do they know, and how can we move them forward, instead of looking at them as having a deficit” (Nicole, Interview, December 12, 2017).

**Research Question 2**

The second research question guiding this research project is: What opportunities do ESL teachers have for collaboration, and how are ESL teachers supported in creating a collaborative environment? This research project has explored opportunities that ESL teachers had for collaboration, as well as how these opportunities are actualized. ESL teacher participants were asked questions in regards to their collaborative practices with educational professionals such as classroom teachers, resource teachers, literacy coaches and school administration. They were also asked to comment on professional development opportunities in facilitating collaboration in ESL education and perceived
barriers to collaboration. In addition, observations were conducted with ESL teachers as they worked in classrooms with educational professionals to support ELLs. The major finding is that ESL teachers collaborate differently depending on context, ELLs, presence of other educators, tools and time available. Therefore, in the current integrated climate of ESL education in Southern Ontario, the model of collaboration must be more fluid in its application. The findings from these data sources are presented below in relation to the second research question guiding this research project.

**Integrated Approach in ESL Instruction**

The transition from a pull-out model of instruction to an integrated approach that took place in the two school boards in which this study was conducted was credited by all four ESL teacher participants as a factor that facilitated a sense of authentic collaboration with classroom teachers. The original pull-out model of ESL instruction was individualized for ELLs, and occurred with one or a small group of same-level ELLs and ESL teachers outside the classroom. The ESL teachers used this time with ELLs to work on phonics instruction that was unrelated to the pedagogical tasks occurring simultaneously in the classroom. While the pull-out model is still used under certain circumstances, such as with ELLs who are working at a lower STEP level (OME, 2011), or do not have literacy skills in their L1, the majority of ESL instruction now occurs through the integrated approach. The integrated approach is one in which the ESL teacher supports the ELL as they engage with pedagogical tasks within the classroom. The shift from a pull-out model to an integrated approach encourages to ESL teachers being active and visible educators to all students in the classroom.
ESL teacher participants also talked about how the integrated approach influenced collaboration with the classroom teacher to modify learning tasks for ELLs using an assessment as learning approach. Grant talks about how assessment as learning occurred as a result of the integrated approach to ESL education:

Sometimes, you might think the student should be okay, and then we start working with them, and we’re finding it’s a lot more of a challenge than we thought. So with the classroom teacher there, I can say, “you know, what, we’ve got to approach this a different way, because it’s way more of a challenge than we thought. We need to try something different.” And it might go the other way too, it might be the teacher says, “This is something I think the student can do, or they might need a little bit more help than usual,” and we find the student does really well, and I’d stop and say, “We can adjust this down, because they have done it, we can beef it up a bit, or move on from it.” (Grant, Interview, December 7, 2017)

Other ESL teachers expressed that while they actively observed and interacted with ELLs in the classroom, there were modifications to instruction that occurred spontaneously and were facilitated by either the classroom teacher or themselves. The integrated approach to ESL education provided ESL teachers and classroom teachers with opportunities to conference before, during and after instructional time to discuss and make necessary adjustments to support ELLs.

Nicole talked how she blended the integrated approach with the pull-out model and facilitated collaboration between herself and some of her ELLs. In this way, the collaboration with the ELL created an environment that promoted assessment as learning. For example, Nicole discussed when a student took responsibility for his learning:
I have, for example, a student in grade 7 at a different school, where I will go, and I will say, okay this day, day 4 when you have French, because he speaks Creole, so he’s doing really well in French, I’m going to come, and I’m going to say to you, “How are things? Where are your needs?” so it’s that metacognitive piece. So, “Tell me what you’re finding that is a challenge right now, and that’s what I’ll help you with.” So, the last time it was geometry. Because he’d come from Haiti, and there, they didn’t have a lot of instruction in geometry, so he didn’t know a lot of that vocabulary, so therefore we were able to go, and we were able to talk about what that was, and what the words were, and how I could help. (Nicole, Interview, December 14, 2017)

This is an example of the trust that was developed in the relationship between the ESL teacher, the classroom teacher, and the ELL as a result of the integrated approach. Nicole had knowledge of the student’s strengths, and was not concerned that withdrawing the student from French class would hinder his learning in this particular subject. Nicole encouraged the ELL to take responsibility for his own learning. She maximized her time and encouraged him to consider areas in which he required individualized support. Additional factors contributed to this collaboration, such as the fact that the ELL was older (in grade 7), and was working at a higher STEP level (OME, 2011), Nicole negotiated the most effective ways of supporting her ELLs, and she highlighted the important balance between a pull-out model and the integrated approach:

They do need to still be in the classroom though, even if they’re just being engaged in a conversation, or sitting there and listening to conversational norms. So that’s why that taking them out and put them into a class all by themselves
really isn’t affective, cause they’re not immersed. [It’s like] French immersion, that kind of thing, they’re not immersed in the English language, they need to have that as well, so it can’t be full pull-out, or even half a day, it’s just a little bit here and there. (Nicole, Interview, December 14, 2017)

This shows Nicole’s commitment to ensuring that her ELL was integrated in the social sphere of the classroom while using her pedagogical and ESL knowledge to establish the most sound educational approach. These decisions are rooted in the trust and accord between herself, the classroom teacher as well as the French teacher to creating a routine that benefits this ELL.

**Assessment as Tool to Facilitate Collaboration**

Assessment as learning, as well as assessment for learning (OME, 2010) were considered to be fundamental in collaborating with classroom teachers to develop long-range plans for ELLs. Lauren, Nicole, and Caroline talked about using ELLs’ *observable learning behaviours* (OLB; OME, 2011) checklist as a basis from which they collaborated with classroom teachers to develop unit and lesson plans. Teachers talked about taking on the responsibility of conducting pre-assessments with ELLs to identify students’ current literacy skills and mapping these onto the OLBS. The observations teachers made as they engaged with students on these pre-assessments required teamwork with classroom teachers as they collaborated to create long-range learning plans.

The ESL teachers believe that collaborating with classroom teachers to develop long-term learning plans for ELLs was beneficial as it provided them with opportunities to plan ahead and prepare supplementary learning resources. However, there was
consensus that it was ultimately the classroom teachers’ responsibility to establish learning plans for ELLs:

Right now we have, with our ESL policy, and *Growing Success* [OME, 2010], ultimately, the classroom teacher is in charge of programming for that student. And we’re there as their support for that student. So, in a way, there is a policy that does mandate, okay, ESL students are entitled to these accommodations or modifications, depending on the *STEP* they’re on, so in a way there is a Ministry mandate saying ESL students are entitled to these accommodations or modifications. Again, it’s just how our colleagues would go about using this to help them with those accommodations and modifications might be a little bit different. (Lauren, Interview, December 6, 2017)

Building on this sentiment, Grant added, “the classroom teacher is still responsible to provide for that [ELL] student, like if a student was on an IEP, the classroom teacher would be responsible for providing a way for that student learning that same material at their level” (Grant, Interview, December 7, 2017). ESL teacher participants were aware that their primary responsibility was to assist ELLs as they engaged with learning tasks in the classroom. However, some ESL teacher participants expressed that there were long-term benefits of planning with classroom teachers to forecasting what the class would be working on during the ESL teacher’s scheduled support time.

Caroline also talked about the importance of developing a foundation of trust to facilitate collaboration:

Collaboration is easier when you have that foundation of trust and when they [the classroom teachers] know that you really are there to help as opposed to pretend,
like I don’t know everything! And I never let on that I know everything. This is, I do have a strong foundation and ESL strategies, and I do have a foundation in upper grades, upper elementary curriculum, but I don’t know everything. And a lot of times I’ll say, “Hey, let’s try this. This is the big experiment, I don’t know how this is going to go,” because that’s where the learning happens. And yeah, it takes you out of your comfort level, and it takes you out of, maybe it takes you in a direction where maybe, that was a really poorly structured question, because none of the kids got the right question. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

All ESL teacher participants were humble in admitting that regardless of the amount of experience they had in ESL education, it was important for them to approach collaboration as a learning opportunity. In doing so, teachers refined their instructional approaches and were able to develop a strong foundation with collaborating partners in deriving beneficial learning strategies for students.

The ESL teacher participants with several years of experience in ESL education talked about how the integrated approach created opportunities to co-teach with the classroom teacher. The integrated approach was regarded as influential for ESL teachers to co-teach classroom lessons, as they were visible and their role generally well-known by all students in the class:

Maybe I’m teaching that section, and that teacher [the classroom teacher] is out walking around, and gets to see, “Oh, these kids really don’t know what sustainability means, or these kids really have no idea what sufficient means,” so that they get to see, “Oh, she’s not just a crazy ESL lady, they actually do need this extra time on this vocabulary stuff.” So when you’re integrated [into the classroom], you get to kind of see if the collaboration is actually working in ways
that you can tweak it, so it just kind of brings that collaboration up a little bit.

Whereas, if you are not able to be integrated, maybe the collaboration might have happened, those strategies are going on, but maybe there are things that need to be tweaked a tiny little bit. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

Flexibility and a shared commitment to improving pedagogical practices to support students were considered key features in collaborative relationships with classroom teachers.

In co-teaching relationships, another goal shared by ESL teacher participants was to maximize support for students in the absence of the ESL teacher:

There have been instances too where I have actually modeled a lesson on how to use a certain strategy for a teacher as well. From using a brainstorm, a certain graphic organizer, so there have been times when I have taken the lead and modeled a lesson as well, and collaborated afterwards with the teacher on how to continue using the strategy in future lessons and activities in the classroom.

(Lauren, Interview, December 6, 2017)

**Informal Collaboration**

ESL teacher participants talked about struggling to meet the needs of their assigned ELLs as they traveled between several different schools. The expressed inner conflict resulting from the necessity of prioritizing the needs of their ELLs during the limited time that ESL teachers spent in classrooms. The assignment of several ELLs to each ESL teacher meant that it was essential for ESL teachers to strategize ways of meeting all ELLs’ needs. In time, ESL teachers developed a repertoire of ESL specific techniques that they could tailor and apply on a situational basis. Thus, sharing
knowledge with classroom teachers became an important stake in developing collaborative relationships to supporting classroom teachers as well as ELLs.

Collaboration for the purpose of sharing expertise extended to discussions with other ESL teachers:

It also means collaborating with other ESL teachers, that was something that I really pushed for this school because you don't want to become an entity of your own. So, this school we have had a full-time position shared between two ESL teachers, so that we can cross paths, we can ask each other questions, “What would you do? Can you help with this? How can I adjust this? Have you ever done anything like this before?” So it’s really ideal to be able to have that, not all schools have that. It also means collaborating with the principal, the resource teachers, and more so, I’d like to be more involved with the parents. (Nicole, Interview, December 14, 2017)

This type of collaboration was expressed to be informal, and often a result of coincidence or convenience of proximity. The ESL teacher participants who identified some of their pedagogical strengths to include strong interpersonal skills were more inclined to discuss collaboration as occurring on a continuum, and involving the expertise of several different educational professionals.

Teaching Experience

All four ESL teacher participants talked about the professional benefits of having past experience as classroom teachers for developing collaborative relationships with educational professionals. Participants talked about relying on their knowledge of curriculum expectations and experience planning units in various subjects as beneficial to
the knowledge they could contribute to partnerships with classroom teachers. Nicole talked about attending math planning meetings between classroom teachers and math coaches. Drawing on her previous experiences as a classroom teacher, and knowledge of curriculum expectations in the subject to helping her contribute with an ESL perspective in relation to math planning. Caroline talked about how her experience as a classroom teacher in the junior grades facilitate her collaboration with junior classroom teachers:

I tend to gravitate towards the older students, cause that’s where I’m the most comfortable with the curriculum. So it’s very easy for me to look at, grade 7 or 8 science, cause I taught that on rotary for, a bazillion years in ESL site school. So if I’m comfortable with that, then I’m more than happy to step in and co-teach a lesson, or I’m more than happy to collaborate, because I feel confident that I understand what the needs of covering that curriculum is, and what the needs of those students are. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

Lauren and Nicole believed that classroom teachers with more experience working with ELLs approached collaboration to create authentic learning tasks that included ELLs in the classroom, as well as modifying inquiry learning tasks to making them inclusive for ELLs. Caroline accredited her strong interpersonal skills to facilitating collaboration with classroom teachers regardless of their hesitations. She recalled barriers with some experienced classroom teachers who were hesitant to change their 'tried and true' pedagogical strategies, and less experienced teachers who were overwhelmed by the diversity of student needs in their classroom. Caroline’s approach was to support teachers with their immediate concerns and illustrate how modifications and levelled educational tasks could benefit all learners.
Barriers to Collaboration

The participants spoke about barriers they encountered in regards to collaborating with other educational professionals to support ELLs; lack of planning time was the number one factor that participants identified. It was evident that time affected various other aspects of both planning and teaching, such as infrequent classroom visits and a lack of scheduled times to meet with classroom teachers or other educational professionals such as resource teachers, coaches or other ESL teachers.

When asked about practices of collaboration with classroom teachers, ESL teacher participants said that there is a mutual will to collaborate between themselves and classroom teachers, but the time to do so is insufficient. ESL teacher participants said that time is not budgeted into their days to collaborate with other educational professionals:

I try to invite myself to those collaboration meetings [laughs], because then you can put an ESL perspective on the table. We have a half day each term that we’re allowed to use ... to meet with teachers, but a lot of teachers find that just not enough time to meet with all the teachers they need to meet with. ... I do a lot of my meetings unofficially. ... But, we have schedules of things that we need to meet, like accommodations checklists, and modifications, and making sure their *STEP* [OME, 2011] continuum, their OLB is updated, and that’s done in collaboration with the teacher. But there isn't really time set aside for it, we kind of have to do it either on a teacher’s prep, or try to find a time on a lunch. I found like a lot of times, ... I knew when certain teachers had preps, and ... if they were working in the staff room, I would go sit down with my computer, and be like, “Hey, what are you working on? ... what can I do?” ... and it’s unofficial. And I always am apologetic for using their time, because I know that that prep time for
them is so precious. But a lot of time ... in the end, it’s beneficial for both of us, because I can do a lot to help support them. I might co-teach a lesson, and they might get some time though that, or I might, you know, plan a lesson based around something that they’re working on so that they don’t have to plan that lesson, and now they have time to do something else. (Caroline, Interview, December 6, 2017)

This is a testament to the struggle experienced by all ESL teacher participants, in meeting Ministry mandates to complete required documentations for ELLs with classroom teachers, creating opportunities to meet and complete these tasks, and feeling apologetic for consuming classroom teachers’ time. Grant talked about the condensed time to collaborate with classroom teachers:

It’s something that we kind of have to create, in our daily schedule. And I think the challenge is, not taking from the students’ time, so, a lot of times it can be like I mentioned, recess times, lunch times, before/after school. And it might be, instead of an hour for a whole month, it might be 15 minutes touch base. (Grant, Interview, December 7, 2017)

**Classroom Observations**

During observations it was evident that the collaboration between ESL teachers, classroom teachers and other educational professionals who were in the classroom was unplanned and established at the time the ESL teacher entered the classroom. The next section will include findings based on the three observations of the ESL teacher participants as they worked with ELLs in the classroom. To structure the observations that were recorded in the field, two protocols were used: the CQELL (Goldenberg et al., 2012) and the CIERA (Taylor et al., 2005) protocols. Each observation occurred for at
least the duration of one 75-minute instructional period with each of three of the ESL teacher participants.

The observation with Nicole occurred in a grade 6 classroom. During the course of the observation, Nicole had two ELLs to whom she was assigned as they engaged with a math related task for a unit called, “Representing and Comparing Decimals.” Prior to the start of the school day, Nicole visited the classroom teacher for about 10 minutes to discuss the upcoming task for ELLs during the time that Nicole was scheduled to be in the classroom. The classroom teacher provided Nicole with a booklet outlining the math task, and mentioned the embedded literacy skills she wanted the Nicole to work with the ELLs on. The two educators briefly updated each other on progress that occurred with the ELLs since the last time Nicole had been in the classroom. Later in the morning, upon entering the classroom, Nicole debriefed with the classroom teacher in regards to the structure of the instructional period.

Collaboration occurred between Nicole, the classroom teacher, and the resource teacher as students worked in small groups on leveled instructional tasks. The major activity was a math task that involved literacy skills such as comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and an ESL focus on phonics, in particular on onsets and rimes of math vocabulary.

During the time Nicole spent in the classroom supporting the two ELLs, the collaboration that occurred was a reflection of the established relationship between the Nicole, the classroom teacher and the resource teacher, who were working with all students in the class. Nicole had informed me that she had worked with the two ELLs to co-establish learning goals. This process involved the teacher and the students creating learning goals to encourage literacy growth and development. One of the
student’s goals was to be able to read and understand the math question. These goals were shared with the classroom teacher as well as the resource teacher and embedded within the ways that ELLs were engaged in their learning. As the classroom teacher read the guiding question with the group of students, she paused, recalling the ELLs’ learning goal, and asked all learners to rephrase the question. Throughout the instructional period, Nicole and the classroom teacher maintained active dialogue regarding the required language adaptations that Nicole made while working with the ELLs. Such strategies included: use of questions as prompts that were differentiated based on the ELLs’ language proficiency, teaching basic vocabulary when necessary, and using common words to clarify and modeling correct grammatical forms. As the teachers conversed about the required adaptations of pedagogical strategies, a sense of collaboration was maintained. Nicole debriefed with me following the lesson about the importance of creating consistency in educational strategies to benefit the ELL, as well as aid in informing the practice of the classroom teacher.

Classroom observations with Lauren occurred during two different instructional times, in two different classrooms at different schools. Both of these observations were instances in which Lauren worked with an ELL at a higher 3/4 STEP level (OME, 2011). Collaboration in the first classroom involved the ESL teacher, the classroom teacher and a student teacher as the students completed an individual literacy activity in a grade 4/5 classroom. Lauren focused on vocabulary and comprehension strategies with the ELL as the student was completing a writing activity. All three educators used a combination of modeling, coaching/scaffolding, and checking ELLs’ learning strategies. The observation that took place during the second instructional period occurred in a grade 1/2 classroom with an ELL who was working at a 3/4 STEP (OME, 2011) level. Lauren assisted the
ELL in completing work that was unfinished while the rest of the class was involved in a reading activity. The specific focus that Lauren worked on with this ELL was vocabulary, meaning of text for writing, writing and word identification. Lauren’s instructional approaches were task specific and included recitation, coaching/scaffolding, reading aloud, and checking the student’s work.

During the first observation, there was informal collaboration between Lauren and the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher had more time available, as the student teacher was leading the learning activity. The classroom teacher informed Lauren of the ELLs’ progress on the task, and wanted Lauren to focus on vocabulary used on the writing activity. The goal of this collaboration was to discuss recent progress of the ELL, and ensure the student was not falling behind on the literacy task.

The second observation with Lauren was an example of a combination between the pull-out model of instruction and the integrated approach. During the time that Lauren spent in the classroom, the classroom teacher requested that the ELL have the opportunity to catch up on unfinished work with the individual support of the ESL teacher. There was minimal communication between Lauren and the classroom teacher, as the ELL explained the scope of the task and his progress to date. At the end of the instructional period, Lauren briefly conversed with the classroom teacher about her observations as she worked with the ELL, and gaps in his subject specific vocabulary, as well as the strategies she employed to address these gaps.

The third observation occurred with Grant, an ESL teacher who was new to the role. This observation occurred in a grade 5 classroom as students worked in small groups on constructing habitats. Minimal collaboration was observed between the Grant and the classroom teacher. Grant aided in facilitating the exchange of ideas and oral
production of language between the ELL and his group mates. The interaction styles used by both Grant as well as the classroom teacher included modeling, facilitating discussion between the students, and coaching and scaffolding.

Grant’s approach to collaboration was to support the ELL with the tasks that the classroom teacher had designed. Grant was comfortable walking into a situation with minimal prior knowledge of the learning tasks that were scheduled to occur at the time. During the interview, he talked about the pitfall of planning too far in advance. He approached teaching as occurring on a fluid continuum which was likely to change course at any given time. During the observations, it was evident that this pedagogical approach influenced the level of collaboration between Grant and the classroom teacher. This collaboration seemed to be situational, removed from long-range plans and task specific. Grant worked with the ELL as well as with other students that the ELL was engaging with to scaffold group work and mediate any conflict that resulted from language barriers between the ELL and other students.

Overall, during the observations, opportunities for collaboration between ESL teachers and other educational professionals occurred spontaneously during instructional time. Educators spent a few minutes to debrief at the start and the end of the instructional period. The scope of these conversations was to discuss ELLs’ progress, as well as suggestions of ways that classroom teachers could incorporate successful strategies with ELLs in the absence of the ESL teacher. The level of communication between educators and the implementation of pre-established teaching strategies with ELLs was dependent on the nature of the relationship between educators. Overall, the ESL teachers who sought collaboration opportunities to develop long-range educational plans for ELLs with their educational colleagues were more consistent and synchronized when applying
similar teaching techniques when working with ELLs.

During interviews, ESL teacher participants expressed creative ways for finding windows of time to meet and plan with educational professionals. Participants reflected on arriving at their designated schools prior to instructional times, or staying after school to meet with classroom teachers. The challenges this created were logistical as often ESL teachers transitioned between various schools and would not be able to meet with classroom teachers. As well, classroom teachers might have other tasks to complete during these times.

Another barrier experienced by ESL teachers in creating a collaborative environment was a perceived misunderstanding of their role on the part of other educational professionals, particularly classroom teachers. Participants talked about some of the misunderstandings on part of classroom teachers associated with the transition to an integrated approach:

There’s still this mindset of “I have a language learner in my class, can you just take them and teach them English?” And you’re kind of like “Yeah, that ... it doesn’t really work like that.” And I think part of that comes from, like I said, when you have nine schools, that’s kind of what you’re doing, right? You’re walking in on a situation, you’re like, here’s this one little person in a classroom of 30, I can’t come here every day, so I’m seeing them once in 10 days. I’m going to pull them and try to do as much as I possibly can. I think we’re getting away from that now, but it still exists. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

ESL teachers talked about clarifying their role of supporting ELLs in the classroom to classroom teachers in order to facilitate dialogue and commence
collaboration. These misunderstandings were expressed as initial barriers to developing collaborative relationships with classroom teachers.

I think that more people are open to having you come into the classroom, as long as they understand what you’re doing. I think a lot of people are like, “Are you evaluating what I’m doing, are you going to report to someone ... that I’m not using all the strategies that I should be using, or I had a bad day? No!” ... And I think that comes down to when I said having that interpersonal skills. So, if you can communicate to that person, like, “I’m here to support you. And this is what I can do for you.” And I think that’s where I have found most of my success when I have had resistance, in collaboration, when people are like, “No, you can just pull so and so, and work on, you know, what you want to work on.” I think, just gently, finding out from the child, “Okay, what are you working on in class?” and then “Look, I have this reading that’s at the students’ grade level, maybe you can use it for other students in your class that are not, you know, reading at grade level.” Or, “I created this graphic organizer, you know, this is going to help so and so answer these questions, would it be useful for the other students? I can share it on Drive.” Then they start, “Oh, wow, I have this awesome extra set of hands that can create this graphic organizer, ... I’m going to be doing this unit next.” ... And so then you’re more welcome into the classroom, and they see you more as “Okay, this person does want to work with me, they’re not here to, get in the way.” And once you have established that, I think that it becomes a much more comfortable. And I find too, that once you can get into one classroom, and they start talking about all of the amazing things that other people are like, “Come
into my room!” So ... it kind of opens more doors, once they see what you’re actually doing is helping not only the language learner, but helping the teacher and helping other students in the class as well. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

This is an example of a time when ESL teachers interacted initially with ELLs to determine their needs, and then they called on their resources and knowledge to demonstrate how classroom teachers might implement them. Once classroom teachers understood that the scope of the ESL teachers was not to be critical of their teaching practices, classroom teachers began regarding ESL teachers as knowledgeable colleagues. Overcoming this hurdle was an important step to building collaboration from a foundation of mutual respect for the knowledge and experiences that each educator could contribute.

ESL teacher participants talked about their desires to collaborate, and how their theoretical knowledge and ESL specific instructional strategies translate to the practical knowledge they infused in developing collaborative relationships with other educational professionals. Teachers expressed a gap in the professional development opportunities that are available to encourage and support collaboration. Caroline said, “there’s never really been a beneficial, sort of like, this is a resource or, this is some PDs specifically for you [as ESL teachers].” All four ESL teacher participants talked about the emphasis placed on professional development opportunities in the curricular areas of math and language instruction, and the lack of an ESL focus on educator collaboration within these areas.
Caroline attributed the lack of awareness of the support that ESL teachers provide to a lack of focus on collaborative workshops in ESL education. She was hopeful that increasing collaboration with educational professionals would heighten awareness of the importance of the roles of ESL teachers, and would in time translate to availability of professional development opportunities. In the absence of professional development opportunities, ministry documents such as *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom* (OME, 2005) were used to structure the pedagogical direction by ESL teachers, and collaboration occurred in implementing these policies when working with ELLs in the classroom.

Lauren talked about professional development that occurs when a new ministry document is put into effect. She recalled the introduction of the *STEP* (OME, 2011), program in ESL instruction. To familiarize classroom teachers with the *STEP* resources, ESL teachers facilitated introductory workshops. These workshops were successful, and created a sense of collaboration among educators in implementing this resource into lesson planning. ESL teachers then facilitated these workshops with educational resource teachers and educational assistants. Lauren believed that facilitating these workshops with educational resource teachers and educational assistants was essential for these educators to employ their *STEP* (OME, 2011) knowledge and create consistency for ELLs in the absence of ESL teachers in the classroom.

In the light of limited professional development for ESL teachers, Caroline talked about how the ESL team was more compelled to collaborate and create their own independent professional development resources and share these amongst all the ESL teachers. Caroline believed that by creating professional development opportunities
focused on collaboration in ESL education, fellow educators would value collaboration and focus on ways of working with ESL teachers more closely.

Participants were also asked about future directions they consider pivotal to improving collaboration in ESL education:

Having time to actually meet with teachers, that’s not just on the fly. I mean it works, but you often feel guilty because you’re taking time that is their time, like they have things that they need to get done as well, and if you’re actually given the time to collaborate. Like I said, I’ve been trying to get in on those collaboration meetings, and it’s been really, really helpful. But if I were given that time, without having to sneak in, not that I do. But when I find out about them, I'm say, “Hey, is it possible that I can join you?” instead of saying, “You have this time,” or “There are funds available for you to use.” I feel like more collaboration would happen if there was more time and more, like if teachers could be released. Even if it was just for a block of time, just to kind of get things started, cause that's where I’ve had most of my success, is when teachers are given that, they have that time to actually look at it, and then they don't feel like their one prep that day has been eaten up by, someone talking about ESL strategies. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

Nicole also talked about the benefits of having opportunities to attend professional development workshops with classroom teachers. She experienced collaboration arising out of these opportunities in the absence of distractions that would otherwise occur in the school setting.
Lauren recalled her involvement in a previous ESL symposium during the summer hosted by the school board. The symposium was focused on ESL instruction, and included ESL educators from various boards. Lauren found this experience to be beneficial for refining her ESL pedagogical knowledge by sharing experiences with different ESL teachers. Her recommendation was for more ESL teachers to be aware of such initiatives, and be involved in large-scale events for a chance to interact and collaborate with various educators. Both Caroline and Lauren talked about the benefits of partnering up with other school boards to collaborate and share strategies. These ESL teachers recognized that collaboration is required to improve and incorporate strategies that have been successful for other educators.

**Research Question 3**

The following section will address the third research question: How do ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs? To elucidate the collaboration among educators to use instructional resources with ELLs, ESL teacher participants’ interview data and information derived from professional artifacts (lesson plans, support plans, Best Practice Strategies, unit plans, worksheets) were used as the main data source. ESL teacher participants discussed ways of sharing resources with other educational professionals, ways in which ELLs’ *STEP* level (OME, 2011) had an influence on the level of collaboration, and collaboration to develop and implement digital and non-digital learning tools for ELLs.
Sharing Resources

All four ESL teacher participants talked about collaborating with classroom teachers to share resources for ELLs. Caroline, Nicole, and Lauren sought to supplement ESL specific resources to accompany the unit plans that classroom teachers had designed. Ongoing collaboration at the start of a unit was essential in allowing ESL teachers to see the envisioned unit progression that classroom teachers had in mind. From this baseline, ESL teachers spent time researching resources that could aid ELLs in achieving the curriculum expectations and support their literacy development.

ESL teacher participants distinguished that the resources necessary for ELLs were dependent on the *STEP* level (OME, 2011) that the ELL was working at. ESL teachers beliefs about infusing ELLs’ pre-existing literacy skills within the development of literacy knowledge in English align with the intended goal of the *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom* (OME, 2005):

They’re thinking in their first language, so just let them write it in their first language, and then, we’ll worry about translating it after. And giving the kids the freedom to do that I think is a huge strategy. Like, “oh, I’m allowed to do that?!?” And some of them will resist for a period of time, but then they actually think, okay, this is going to help me, cause then I’ll have time to have a good solid answer, as opposed to like, two sentences. Right, that I can bumble out after struggling trying to use translate the whole time. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)
Caroline talked about motivating ELLs to use their L1 to show literacy competency and boost morale and make ELLs aware of their strengths and literacy skills, albeit these being in a different language.

ESL teacher participants believed that ELLs’ STEP level (OME, 2011) had an influence on the level of collaboration. Nicole talked about the time required to determine the ELLs’ literacy skills in all areas of reading, writing, and oral skills for students at lower STEP levels. Lower STEP level indicators are associated with a limited ability to demonstrate understanding of written or oral literacy. For Lauren, collaboration was essential with classroom teachers and resource teachers using the integrated approach to support ELLs in who were at these lower levels. Nicole was concerned with aligning her teaching goals with those of the classroom teachers and resource teachers. Once all educators had established how the ELLs’ learning goals fit into the unit plan, Nicole would work in conjunction with these educational professionals to create learning tasks for the ELL. Further, the ESL teacher participants commented on the influence that ELLs’ STEP levels (OME, 2011) had on collaboration:

If there are students that are of higher needs, you’re most likely to find that time to collaborate because you know those kids are not going to survive if you don’t. The bonus is there’s probably kids in there that are those higher levels that are going to benefit from that collaboration. Whereas, if they are students that are, it’s this really tricky zone of, okay, these kids are sort of middle of the spectrum, they’re not STEP 1, they’re not STEP 6 which would be native speaker, but they’re STEP 3. So they can kind of bumble through, that’s kind of where you need that academic vocabulary support. Because they can hold a conversation,
they can listen to what’s going on in the class, and know and be aware and sort of make like they know what’s going on, but their reading and writing is still really not at grade level. They’re still really need a lot of support, but they're not getting that support, cause we have to focus on those STEP 1s and 2s. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

Caroline talked about the inner conflict that arose from needing to prioritize time spent on collaboration for ELLs based on their academic level: “So it's this, to comes back to, you know, you never feel like you’re doing the job.” Caroline was hopeful that collaborating with educational professionals was a way of maximizing support for ELLs who did not receive the most attention in ESL education:

There’s not enough of us. And so, you kind of hope that when you’re collaborating with the teacher for these other language learners, and the tools and strategies that you're using, these other kids are going to benefit. It’s just ... you have to try and be optimistic, otherwise, you would leave the job rather quickly. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

ESL teacher participants talked about mixed level ELLs, who often demonstrated stronger observable language behaviours (OME, 2011) in oral language than in reading or writing. This created an interesting dynamic in which ESL teachers collaborated with classroom teachers on ways of incorporating ELLs’ strengths into designing learning opportunities within ELLs’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) to bridge oral, reading, and writing literacy skills. Lauren talked about collaborating with classroom teachers who had ELLs working at lower STEP levels (OME, 2011) by providing them with tools such as apps,
websites, and dictionaries to assist in basic communication with the ELL. Lauren recalled an example of collaborating with a classroom teacher:

She got a brand new STEP 1 student who knew absolutely nothing. My next visit, I had told her about the translate App, and she put the translate App on her own phone, so she was able to communicate with the student. (Lauren, Interview, December 6, 2017)

This type of collaboration was beneficial for the classroom teacher as it provided her with tools to address an immediate concern, and the ELL became more comfortable in the classroom. The visibility of the ESL teacher in the classroom through the integrated approach also created opportunities for ESL teachers to support several learners in the class. This primarily included ELLs, but also extended to other struggling students.

Several participants discussed ways of maximizing support, as Lauren said: “There have been instances where I’ve worked not only with my ESL student, but I’ve worked with other students that have that same need” (Interview, December 6, 2017).

In this way, ESL teachers also acted as educational assistants and collaborated with other educators in finding and sharing resources to support numerous learners:

I think, just gently, finding out, “Okay, what are you working on in class?” and then “Oh, look, I have this reading that’s at the students’ grade level, maybe you can use it for other students in your class that are not, you know, reading at grade level. Or I created this graphic organizer, you know, this is going to help so and so answer these questions, would it be useful for the other students? I can share it on Drive.” Then they [the classroom teachers] start, “Oh, wow, I have this awesome extra set of hands that can create this graphic organizer, can find, you
know.” And then they start like, “Oh, you know, I’m going to be doing this unit next.” And then you’re like, “Sweet, I'm in!” (Caroline, Interview, December 12, 2017)

Collaboration was encouraged by demonstrating to classroom teachers how beneficial the support of the ESL teacher could be.

ESL teacher participants talked about collaborating with classroom teachers as well as other ESL teachers to find and share digital and non-digital learning tools for ELLs. Overall, the majority of these tools provided either visuals, or levelled modifications to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs. ESL teachers also talked about collaborating with other ESL teachers to develop and share resources for ELLs:

As a team [we worked] to create this list of strategies. These goals come from the OLB that direct our program and our support. ... There has been some collaboration as an ESL team to also do documents and programming that we think is needed, for example the support plan, because we found this would be helpful to record part of the student’s background, to record modification that we being used, and the goals that we collaborated with the classroom teacher that we would work on. (Lauren, Interview, December 6, 2017)

Both Lauren and Grant shared a list of ELL best practice strategies resource as an artifact that modeled collaboration within the ESL team. These strategies included oral, reading and writing accommodations that could be used with ELLs. Lauren also talked about using these strategies with non-ELL learners who benefited from individualized
accommodations. After developing these strategies together as an ESL team, the teachers collaborated with administrators to share progress made in ESL education.

ESL teacher participants addressed the taxing demands of the teaching profession. All participants talked about having a desire to share instructional resources that aided in the promotion of oral and written skills for ELLs with other education professionals to abate some of these demands for classroom teachers:

With the teachers that I’ve had the opportunity to work with, it’s getting together and planning out units together, me thinking about how the language learners are going to manage this, and then providing resources that are going to help those language learners and other learners in the class that maybe aren't reading at grade level, or you know, have some other learning difficulties. So it comes down to those tools and strategies that teachers all want to get to, and be able to do by themselves, but there’s not enough time in the day to do all the things that you need to do. Um, so collaborating I think, it’s just that it's a lot of fun, but at the same time, it’s, you know that it’s needed. You are doing things that you would love to do in the classroom if you were in the classroom and had the time to it. And it’s opening up doors for all of these little people, right? And like I said, once you do that a few times, your tools and strategies become tools and strategies that the teachers are just using without really thinking about it anymore. Not that maybe they weren’t using them before, but maybe they weren’t highlighting it, or maybe they were using it but not understanding how essential it was for these learners. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)
Nicole talked about the challenge of finding literacy resources that addressed grade specific curriculum expectations in language that was appropriate for ELLs. As an ESL teacher, she had access to the *Big Ideas* series of books (see Freeman, Freeman, & Cummins, 2014), which provided important visuals and addressed subject specific content in ways that were more accessible for ELLs. This was a resource she encouraged classroom teachers to utilize.

**Technological Resources**

ESL teacher participants made use of technology as a resource in working with ELLs. Grant talked about taking a Chrome Book to every one of his assigned classrooms to help with translation as well as providing visuals for ELLs. This was consistent within the observations of all four of the ESL teacher participants, as technology was used either as a translation device, or to provide visuals. Technological tools for ELLs such as Apps or websites were not observed during data collection. Observations were not made on the CIERA protocol (Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2004) for the codes relating to digital materials used in instruction for ELLs.

Google Drive was a frequently mentioned resource teachers used to collaborate in sharing resources with other educational professionals. Grant talked about an ESL specific resource folder:

It’s a Drive that’s shared with our ESL team; we can see initial assessment, parent resources, Ministry docs, some slideshows. These are ways of supporting students. So that would be something we would collaborate with the classroom teacher on, helping them with the tips, and the reality is, for me at this school, I’m here twice a week, between 3-4 periods, the classroom teacher has that student for
the rest of that time. So, it is a lot of sharing, shared resources. We worked
together, with the Scope and sequence to distinguish between the different STEPS
[OME, 2011], the different levels. Our schedule is on the Drive. (Grant,
Interview, December 7, 2017)

Caroline talked about substituting physical copies of learning material with
electronic copies on Google Drive:

If they have a quiz or a test they’re going to be giving, they can send that to me in
drive, I can make a copy of it, alter it for the language learner, share it back, and it
saves me driving all over, and it’s, I find using Drive has been amazing for
myself, and I think for supporting teachers that I don't get to see all that often.
And it’s also great for sharing resources, like I shared this graphic organizer with
three teachers here, even though it was in Persian, I did one in Arabic and then I
shared it with, and said, “Add onto it as needed.” (Caroline, Interview, December
5, 2017)

Caroline talked about a collaborative relationship with a classroom teacher which
occurred mostly on Google Drive. Rather than arranging time to meet in person, Caroline
and the classroom teacher began by developing a skeleton of a unit plan. From there,
Caroline took the initiative of creating leveled activities to support her assigned ELL in
the class, as well as other learners who required literacy accommodations. In the process,
Caroline had developed an ongoing bank of resources that she was willing to share with
any teacher that could use them:
The beautiful thing about Drive is, once you kind of get it organized, um, it’s there for you. So next year, I don’t necessarily have to that again, I can just pull it out and add or adapt what I need to do. (Caroline, Interview, December 5, 2017)

Lauren also utilized Google Drive as a tool to help her provide instant and meaningful resources to classroom teachers. She talked about the benefits of accessibility by being able to draw on any resources she had saved on Google Drive to supplement ELL instruction.

**Informal Collaboration**

The majority of the professional planning artifacts shared by ESL teacher participants reflected the nature of the spontaneous collaboration that occurred between educators. Some of these artifacts were tools that ESL teachers had saved on their Google Drives, such as graphic organizers and sentence frames. Grant provided copies of accommodations that he frequently used with ELLs which had been developed from the best practices resource—a checklist of pedagogical strategies aimed at oral, reading and writing strategies co-developed by ESL teachers—as well as a template for ELL/teacher support plan regarding ELLs’ literacy benchmarks. These tools were readily available and easily adaptable to fit students’ task specific needs.

Lauren provided a copy of a unit plan that she had collaborated with a classroom teacher to create. This was a community helpers unit composed of several learning tasks and modifications established for the ELL. This artifact exemplified the less frequent long-term collaboration that occurs between ESL teachers and classroom teachers. Such planning is beneficial in allowing the ESL teacher to be more implicated in classroom activities, and to have opportunities to find resources for the ELL.
Overall, ESL teachers collected and saved instructional resources to promote the oral and written language instruction in ESL education, and were eager to share these with other educational professionals to support ELLs. However, on the whole, the ESL teacher participants did not use digital tools often, but when digital tools were employed, they were mostly used to provide visuals and to aid in translation of material. The artifacts collected reflected the spontaneous collaboration among educators and the relative lack of long-term collaborative planning for ELLs.

**Summary of Findings**

The analyses of the data derived from interviews with ESL teachers, professional learning artifacts, and classroom observations illustrates the relational and situational collaborative processes between ESL teachers and in-school teams of educators to support ELLs.

The first research question intended to explore how ESL teachers describe collaboration to provide support for ELLs. Overall, the participants talked about the dynamic role of supporting ELLs, and ways that they collaborated with several educational professionals, including; math coaches, administrators, resource teachers, SWIS workers, other ESL teachers and lunchroom monitors, and the fluidity of collaboration that was dependent on context, ELLs, presence of other educators, tools and time available. Of all of these collaborative relationships, the consensus among participants was that the strongest collaborative relationship was with classroom teachers. The second research question sought to identify the opportunities perceived by ESL teachers for collaboration, and how ESL teachers are supported in creating a collaborative environment. The transition to an integrated approach in ESL education
resulted in ESL teacher participants experiencing and describing a stronger current intention for collaboration with in-school teams of educators. This approach led to several collaborative practices ranging from co-planning to co-teaching in the classroom. Observations and interviews with ESL teacher participants shed light on ways that educators use assessment in collaborative ways to inform planning for ELLs. The theme of trust as a core value in collaborative relationships emerged from the analyses. While collaboration was prevalent at various levels, several barriers were influential in mitigating collaboration; these included: insufficient time built in for collaboration, misunderstandings of the role of ESL teachers by other educators, and a lack of professional development opportunities aimed at collaboration in ESL education. The major finding is that ESL teachers engaged in collaboration with other educational professionals in unique ways, depending on context, ELLs, presence of other educators, tools and time available. Therefore, the model of collaboration is contextual, and must be more fluid in its application.

The third research question intended to investigate how ESL teachers collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs. Themes that emerged indicated that collaboration was used to create consistency in educational approach by utilizing strategic resources to meet ELLs’ literacy needs. Thus, collaboration was often dependent on ELLs’ STEP level (OME, 2011). ESL teacher participants identified a more dire need to support ELLs working at the lower-levels. In developing support plans, collaboration occurred with classroom teachers to provide resources such as accommodation strategies and websites to support ELLs. At times,
these resources were co-developed by educators, and shared with in-school teams of educators through Google Drive. Technology was used infrequently, and when it was implemented, it was often for translation purposes, or to provide ELLs with visuals. The professional planning artifacts shared by ESL teacher participants reflected how collaboration was initiated from assessments in the form of checklists and a tracking form. In addition, professional planning artifacts shared by ESL teacher participants provided a snapshot of the resources curated by ESL teachers. These included activities that could be adapted and modified for diverse literacy tasks. ESL teachers talked about the benefit of having these resources at their disposal when collaboration occurred upon entering a classroom with minimal foresight of the scheduled learning task.

The most salient finding is that educators have a desire to collaborate, but at times have limited resources to support them in developing consistent collaborative practices. ESL teacher participants strive to fully utilize the resources available to them and collaborated to create opportunities for effective practices to maximize support for ELLs. ESL teachers engaged in collaboration with other educational professionals in unique ways, depending on context, ELLs, presence of other educators, tools and time available. Therefore, the model of collaboration is contextual, and must be more fluid in its application.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Collaborative teaching practice has been advocated for in the teaching profession for some time (Davison, 2006). In particular, when ESL teachers/itinerants and classroom teachers collaborate, there is potential for consistency and efficiency in pedagogical planning of targeted learning strategies for ELLs. Effective collaboration between the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher can be a strategy to support ELLs’ academic needs. It is imperative for research to explore the current practices as well as opportunities for collaboration within ESL education from the perspective of the educators in the field to provide a framework for future directions.

Collaboration is espoused but balked at in the light of more traditional practices, and is often an overlooked by teachers, administrators, and policymakers as a pedagogical strategy. Time is a valuable commodity in the teaching profession, and while educators have a desire to collaborate, juggling numerous responsibilities leaves few opportunities for the time required for collaboration. This study has explored avenues for collaboration in ESL education, as well as the perceived barriers to collaboration by ESL teachers. This investigation is timely because professional collaboration in addressing challenges associated with ESL instruction has the potential for creating authentic, ongoing, and supportive relationships between educators to support ELLs (Russell, 2012).

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how ESL teachers describe collaboration in ESL education, to examine the opportunities that ESL teachers have to collaborate with other educational professionals, as well as to investigate how in-school educators
use resources (digital and/or non-digital) to enhance oral and written language skills and support ELLs as they acquire English skills.

Collaboration in education has the potential of offering educators a support system and a wide breadth of pedagogical methods to mitigate for the learning needs of diverse language learners in an otherwise isolating professional environment. Haynes (2014) states that there are five elements necessary in authentic educator collaborative relationships: allotted time built into schedules for collaboration; working with ELLs in a pull-out model of instruction; co-teaching in the classroom as a way of sharing pedagogical expertise; a mutual sense of equal status; and professional development designed to support collaboration. The suggestions in regards to these elements that were offered by the participants in the current study for improving collaboration in ESL education will now be discussed in more depth.

ESL teachers struggled to find time to collaborate with other educational professionals. They discussed feelings of guilt associated with taking too much of the preparation time allotted to classroom teachers to collaborate with them as this time is limited on a daily basis. Participants mitigated these feelings after witnessing the positive and time-saving results of collaboration in planning for ELLs. Overall, ESL teacher participants expressed a desire to collaborate, and took initial steps to facilitate collaboration with educational professionals, but expressed that the challenge in the current climate was that they had not been provided with sufficient resources for deep-rooted and authentic collaboration. Informal collaboration occurred more frequently than formal or scheduled collaboration. This was attributed to a lack of coinciding planning time allotted for educators, as well as ESL teachers traveling between several different
schools, and not having the possibility to be present at each school before or after instructional time. In addition, ESL teachers are not always scheduled to be in a classroom during the instructional time that ELLs require the most support. While ESL teachers said classroom teachers were aware of their schedule, it was not always possible for instructional activities to be rearranged around the ESL teachers’ schedule. These instances were examples of ineffective collaboration, whereby ESL teachers were physically present, but were not able to support instruction. In keeping with Davison’s (2006) findings, ESL teachers require time for effective long-term planning with classroom teachers in more formal ways. Without these priorities, collaboration falls to the wayside, and situational demands take precedence over long-term planning. These priorities must originate from the top-down—that is, from school administration down to the educators.

An important finding of this study in regards to collaboration in ESL education were the stages of collaboration that ESL teacher participants navigated in working with other educational professionals to support ELLs. Davison (2006) has outlined five stages of collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers to include: passive resistance, compliance, accommodation, convergence, and creative co-construction. During the current study, it was evident that ESL teacher participants regarded collaboration as a valuable pedagogical practice, and integral to supporting ELLs. In light of the findings of this project, ESL teacher participants navigated these stages with fluidity in accordance to situational demands. Caroline, Grant and Lauren discussed a level of compliance and accommodation in collaboration with other educational professionals. Data collected in interviews and classroom observations illustrated a
perception of the benefits of collaboration with other educational professionals and use of both planned and impromptu methods of collaboration. Participants discussed these collaborative practices as being inconsistent when faced with barriers to collaboration, such as a lack of planning time and a lack of professional development opportunities aimed at collaboration in ESL education.

While the consensus among participants was that the pull-out model of instruction was not conducive to collaboration, at times, it was deemed to be the best practice for both teachers as well as for ELLs. When working with ELLs at low \textit{STEP} levels (OME, 2011), ESL teacher participants combined a passive resistance practice—whereby ESL teachers worked with ELLs on basic literacy skills independent of the tasks that were planned by the classroom teacher—with creative co-construction and convergence of differentiated learning activities that were similar to other learners in the classroom. This practice was regarded as maximizing support for ELLs by providing them with a literacy foundation while collaborating with the classroom teacher on effective ways of supporting students in the classroom. Nicole discussed the importance of collaborating with classroom teachers to implement situational use of the pull-out model of instruction to maximize support for ELLs. She discussed this as occurring during lessons in which the ELL was very competent, and would not be deprived of missing in-class time. In relation to Davison’s model, this method of using the pull-out method of instruction in collaboration with classroom teachers shares aspects of passive resistance. While the resistance is not a reflection of a negative regard towards collaboration by Nicole, it is similar to passive resistance in that the ELL is not integrated into the classroom and therefore, there is no dialogue between the ESL teacher and other educational
professionals *during* instruction. The collaboration occurs *before* and *after* instruction to determine the ELL’s literacy growth and the best practices for supporting ELLs. Overall, the five stages of collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers outlined by Davison (2006) has been utilized as a model for the current research project. The main finding is that ESL teachers collaborated differently depending on context, ELLs, presence of other educators, tools and time available. Therefore, in the current integrated climate of ESL education in Southern Ontario, the model of collaboration must be more fluid in its contextual application.

Co-teaching in the classroom was a strategy that Lauren, Caroline and Nicole talked about as an effective collaborative practice. In this context, co-teaching was a strategy focused on bridging instruction with assessment, and it allowed the classroom teacher to observe ESL specific strategies in practice. In addition, the practice of co-teaching created an equal status relationship not only between the educators, but also made this visible to the students. An important factor in achieving a stage of collaboration where co-teaching occurred was for educators to have mutual regard for each other's pedagogical knowledge, and a willingness to embrace new teaching techniques. While not explicitly stated in interviews, it was apparent that the participants had awareness of each other’s experience, confidence in their own teaching skills, and respect for the other member of the collaborative relationship. Co-teaching methods of instruction are gaining traction in research, however, this project points to the benefits of the pull-out model in the face of situational demands. While the pull-out model appears to counteract collaboration, it provides ELLs an opportunity to approach language acquisition through an individualized approach. The resulting collaboration of both co-
teaching and pull-out methods is an area to explore in the future. The hybrid model of integrating co-teaching approach and the pull-out methods should be explored in relation to establishing a starting point for collaboration amongst educators.

Commitment to collaboration with the goal of supporting ELLs underscores a key feature of authentic pedagogical relationships. The ways in which ESL educators discussed current practices positioned the structure of collaboration as occurring on an individualized basis, and negotiated between educators. An integrated educational approach in ESL education requires collaboration to develop and implement consistent pedagogical practices for ELLs. One finding from the study was a desire on the part of ESL teachers to collaborate and establish effective practices in working with ELLs that other educational professionals could employ in the absence of the ESL teachers. This is consistent with the findings of Meyers (2006), who has identified that ELLs require individualized support as they are integrated into the classroom in order to develop literacy skills. The recent adaptation of the integrated model of ESL instruction in schools across Southern Ontario may contribute to positive experiences of collaboration on the part of ESL teachers. As ESL teachers work with many ELLs within several different schools, collaboration was regarded as a tool in developing effective strategies to support both ELLs as well as classroom teachers. The synergy that occurs in collaborative relationships holds the potential for developing a starting point for creating tailored education plans for ELLs.

Within some Ontario school districts, schools with a large ELL population might be designated site schools with one or more full-time ESL teachers on staff (Van Viegen et al., 2015). A finding of this research project was that ESL teacher participants
observed the numbers of ELLs increasing, and the designated site schools becoming less distinct. As a result, ESL teacher participants traveled between several different schools as they worked with numerous ELLs. The challenges this posed related to keeping up with the progression of educational plans for each of their assigned ELLs. While this was an anticipated finding, the ways that ESL teacher participants navigated this challenge demonstrated their commitment to collaboration. Flexibility was a key feature, as ESL teachers were happy to walk into a classroom, briefly converse with the educational professionals in the room, and work with ELLs regardless of changing plans. This is a testament to the informal collaboration that is necessary in the teaching profession, with unpredictable shifts in the delivery of educational plans.

Previous teaching experience and familiarity with grade specific curriculum expectations was discussed as necessary to facilitate collaboration with other educational professionals. Risko and Bromley (2001) argue that the act of collaborating “reduces role differentiation among teachers and specialists, resulting in shared expertise for problem solving that yields multiple solutions to dilemmas about literacy and learning” (p. 12). ESL teacher participants talked about drawing on their content knowledge in addition to their ESL specialization as beneficial when collaboration with classroom teachers. This finding is in harmony with the research by Baltus and Belhiah (2013), who call for enhancements to collaborative practices by relying on the ESL teacher’s role as a resource within the classroom. The emergent theme within this research project is that collaboration is facilitated by educators sharing expertise in collaborative relationships. Houtz and Watson (2001) found that collaboration between science teachers and special education teachers resulted in individualized educational plans that utilized pedagogical
practices to enhance learning in accordance with the unique characteristics and learning styles of students. The ESL teacher participants in the current research project who had specific specializations talked about an increased desire to further their content knowledge in these areas with an ESL specific focus. The resulting collaboration had an influence on developing accommodations which were leveled for ELLs and utilized specific ESL strategies. Thus, it was apparent that the combination of content specific knowledge, ESL specific pedagogical strategies and the knowledge that each educator had about individual ELLs resulted in unique strategies to meet ELLs’ needs. In light of this finding, future research may explore how ESL teachers with and without pedagogical content knowledge describe opportunities for collaboration in ESL education.

ESL teacher participants talked about collaboration that extended beyond the partnership with classroom teachers to include a variety of other educational professionals. This is an important finding of the research project, as it portrays ESL teachers’ desire to collaborate with other educational professionals to develop a holistic perspective of ELLs’ experiences in school. Collaboration included conversing with lunchroom monitors, resource teachers, and principals. Huberman et al. (2012) wrote about the importance of establishing “professional learning communities (PLCs) with collaboration between general and special education teachers” (p. 65). In Huberman et al.’s project, all teachers in the selected school boards received professional training which resulted in classroom teachers being better equip to identify gaps in students’ understandings and there was a collaboration with special education teachers to decide on a best approach to addressing gaps. The current research project found that despite a lack in professional development to establish PLCs, the participants perceived that the
collaboration amongst various educators working with ELLs resulted in educational plans that facilitated ELLs’ individual learning needs.

The OME policy documents recommend collaboration between educators working with ELLs. The OME’s (2008b) *Supporting English Language Learners With Limited Prior Schooling: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators* states that “ESL/ELD and Special Education teachers need to work collaboratively to design an appropriate program for English language learners” (p. 19). Echoing these directives, the OME’s (2005) *Many Roots, Many Voices* emphasizes that the collaboration between classroom teachers and ESL teachers aids ELLs to develop new English literacy skills. While there are Ministry mandates promoting a whole school approach to supporting ELLs, a finding of the current research project is that while ESL teachers valued the benefits of collaboration for supporting ELLs, the consensus among participants was that government documents are vague in outlining how collaboration may occur.

In terms of exploring ESL education from a cross-linguistic perspective, linguists have informed key aspects of ESL programming. Ortega (2007) suggested that five key areas are intricately connected within ESL education, namely “the nature of second language knowledge, the nature of interlanguage development, the contributions of knowledge of the first language, the linguistic environment, and instruction” (pp. 225-226). These perspectives are consistent with recommendations made by the OME in that ESL education should integrate ELLs’ existing knowledge as a resource to aid them in L2 literacy acquisition (OME, 2008b). The findings of the current research project align with this research, as ESL teachers talked about collaborating with other educational professionals to add dual language resources into instruction. In addition, displaying dual
language resources in the classroom resulted in all learners becoming more culturally responsive and aware of the linguistic strengths that ELLs had in their L1.

Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) find that educators who are “committed to social justice and inclusive practices” (p. 4) are more likely to seek collaborative opportunities to support ELLs. However, there are gaps in knowledge as reported by classroom teachers in regards to ELLs, which include their “sociocultural, linguistic, academic, or emotional need(s)” (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010, p. 5). Collaboration among educators holds the potential for addressing gaps that educators have that repress the potential support that they might provide to ensure ELLs’ overall success.

ESL teacher participants talked about approaching new literacy skills by drawing on ELLs’ existing L1 literacy knowledge. Such practices align with Vygotsky’s (1962) concept of the ZPD, where ELLs’ literacy development is scaffolded by teachers. The OME’s (2005) *Many Roots, Many Voices* emphasizes the use of educational tasks for ELLs that draw parallels between students’ pre-existing knowledge and the development of English literacy skills. Clark (2008) highlighted how multicultural pre-service teachers actively negotiated the fluidity of belonging to various cultural groups based on their experiences. In the current research project, while it is likely that educators' personal beliefs, and experiences regarding the importance of using ELLs’ L1 influence how language development is scaffolded, it is possible that the amount of ESL teachers’ experience in ESL education influences these pedagogical practices as well. In turn, the importance that ESL educators place on incorporating ELLs’ pre-existing knowledge into instruction has the potential to influence the pedagogical practices used by the educational professionals they collaborate with. ESL teachers who value collaboration
and perceive the benefits of utilizing dual language resources, are more apt to share these tools with classroom teachers, who are more likely to use them in their own teaching. A finding of this research project is that ESL teachers have a desire to be resourceful in creating teaching tools to include in their practice such as graphic organizers that integrate ELLs’ L1. However, creating these learning tasks occurs outside of the classroom teaching hours during preparation time. It is time-consuming for educators to create these individualized resources and challenging for educators to ensure validity of material in a foreign language. Future directions may include developing a repository of reliable and culturally appropriate resources for ESL teachers to access.

While ESL teacher participants discussed professional development opportunities in the areas of literacy and math, the consensus amongst all participants expressed a lack of professional development in the realm of collaboration in ESL education. Turgut (2011) calls for professional development opportunities for educators to target the effective establishment of teacher leadership roles, effective methods for teacher partnerships and ways of professionally addressing conflicts that occur in the collaborative process. Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) highlight the importance of the fostering of teacher collaboration, “with carefully planned and sustained training and long-term planning that get all stakeholders on board, [as] schools will be better able to establish a new culture over time, which supports collaboration ... and allows teacher leadership to emerge” (p. 19). It is plausible that the lack of professional development opportunities targeted at collaboration in ESL education perpetuate the notion that collaboration is not a top priority. In addition, professional development opportunities may change some educators’ beliefs about teaching ELLs, facilitate a desire for integrating ELLs into the
classroom, and promote meaningful and long-term relationships with ESL teachers.

Participants in this research project concurred that it was beneficial to utilize the STEP resource (OME, 2011) as a resource to facilitate collaboration. This resource provided educators with a common vocabulary, aided in creating unified goals that aligned within the ELLs’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), and contributed to the creation of cohesive educational goals. Participants were fond of the STEP resource, and discussed the professional development opportunities they participated in while facilitating workshops to familiarize educational professionals with this resource. Future research may look at how similar targeted professional development opportunities among ESL teachers and a variety of educational professionals working with ELLs could foster collaboration using this resource. In response to the current study’s findings about the using Ministry documents within collaboration to plan ESL instruction, future research may consider investigating educational professionals’ (e.g., classroom teachers, resource teachers, administrators) familiarity with how Ministry documents aid in recording and assessing ELLs’ literacy progression, and how these resources can be used collaboratively by educators.

A salient finding from the current research project is that while successful collaboration does occur, it is fraught with numerous challenges. These include a lack of administrative support, lack of time for preparation and professional dialogue with educational professionals, a perceived misunderstanding of the ESL teacher role in the classroom, and insufficient contact time with ELLs. Risko and Bromley (2001) argue that the act of collaborating “reduces role differentiation among teachers and specialists, resulting in shared expertise for problem solving that yields multiple solutions to
dilemmas about literacy and learning” (p. 12). The findings of this research align with this perspective, as ESL teacher participants identified a misunderstanding of their role in the classroom by classroom teachers as the initial barrier to collaboration. This misunderstanding may be attributed to the shift from a pull-out model to the integrated approach. In the past, the pull-out model did not facilitate collaboration, as ESL teachers focused on literacy skill development with ELLs that was independent of classroom activities. As this model has been phased out, and ESL teachers are now working to support ELLs in the classroom, the misunderstanding of ESL teachers’ role may be a manifestation of the lack of professional development in the area of collaboration. Future research may seek to explore the perspectives of all educators working with ELLs, to consider ways of sharing responsibilities of planning and facilitating targeted accommodations for ELLs in ways that are not possible by an individual classroom teacher.

**Implications for Theory**

The findings of this project reveal the state of current collaborative practices amongst educators, as well as the opportunities to strengthen collaboration between ESL teachers and other educational professionals. While the experiences of ESL teacher participants highlight instances of successful collaborative practices, it is evident that changes are required in how collaboration is approached from a top-down perspective of administrative support. Prioritization of collaborative practices is needed as is an increase of instructional resources, time, and space for collaboration to flourish at a whole-school level. Despite the limited size and scope of the current research project, the findings are important in relation to the implications of theory onto practice.
Social constructivism is rooted in the co-constructed production of knowledge through processes of social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivism adheres to the key element of constructivist learning theories as it values experiential learning in which “individuals learn best when they actively construct knowledge and understanding in light of their own experiences” (Santrock et al., 2010, p. 282). This study sought to explore how ESL teachers co-constructed their ESL educational approach with other educational professionals. Teachers in the current study discussed and through their practice illustrated, ways in which they combined their ESL specific strategies and experiences with the educational goals of classroom teachers to craft and provide resources for ELLs. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that all learning occurs within social, cultural, and historical spheres. Social learning theory is a cornerstone of social constructivist theory, in which dialectical processes consider language as a tool to co-constructing socially shared meanings (Vygotsky, 1978). This theoretical position was present in the analysis of the research data, particularly in regards to the approaches used by ESL teachers to facilitate collaboration with other educational professionals. ESL teachers emphasized the benefits of collaboration when educational professionals were hesitant to collaborate, both for teachers as well as for ELLs. ESL teachers also used familiar language derived from the observable language behaviours (OME, 2011) to guide collaboration for planning and evaluation of ELLs, thus situating the tools of collaboration within the social and cultural practices of ESL education.

The underpinning Social Constructivist theoretical perspective of the current study considered the interplay of social and mental processes in relation to “immaterial entities such (discourses, beliefs and values)” (Rowsell & Gallagher, 2017, p. 14) as
negotiated through active discourse occurring through teacher collaboration, and resulting
to diverse pedagogical practices within ESL education. By capturing the perspectives of
ESL teachers in relation to collaboration to support ELLs, it is evident that teachers value
collaboration for the purpose of creating consistent and educationally sound learning
plans for ELLs. However, the ways in which these teachers approached collaboration was
often dependent on how collaboration was perceived by their educational colleagues.
Thus, the attitudes held by classroom teachers, resource teachers, and administration may
be considered in future research to aid in understanding the discourses held by all
members of collaboration in ESL education. Scardamalia and Bereiter (1989) write about
the deep cognitive learning processes that occur through acts of explaining one’s thinking
to a peer. This holds true for students, but also for teachers, as the results of this research
project indicate teacher learning occurs during collaboration with other educational
professionals.

In regards to integration of digital resources, findings of the research indicate that
these were used on a surface level, often to provide visuals, for levelled modifications to
promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs, or for translation purposes.
Tablets and iPads were not used to promote critical inquiry in ESL instruction. The lens
of Digital Connectivism shares some aspects of social constructivism, namely the notion
that learning does not occur in isolation, but rather through interacting and navigating
through webs of information on technological platforms (Siemens, 2005). Technology
has the potential of providing self-determination in ELLs learning, as well as learning
resources that expand learners’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) by expanding ELLs’ learning with
the aid of an appropriately challenging activity. When educators select technological
resources to use within ESL education, these tools offer the possibility of providing individual support or scaffolding in accordance with ELLs’ level of language learning.

Moreover, technological platforms such as Apps on tablets, may be used to promote critical thinking and problem solving skills in ESL instruction. Thus, there is an apparent disconnect between the potential that digital resources hold for ELLs to be motivated and engaged in learning, and the current practices of using digital tools in ESL education. The data collected indicates that ESL teachers used digital platforms such as Google Drive to share resources with other educational professionals.

**Implications for Practice**

The findings from this research project suggest that education researchers, practitioners, and policymakers should give greater consideration to the diversity within collaborative relationships in ESL education. Due to limited resources to facilitate collaboration, informal meetings dominated the most frequently used methods of collaboration among ESL teachers and other educational professionals. ESL teachers are mandated to collaborate with classroom teachers to review and document ELLs’ assessment data. Aside from this, limited time, teaching resources, and professional learning opportunities are available for ESL teachers to collaborate with other educational professionals to discuss and plan for ELLs learning outcomes. To promote collaboration, other areas must be prioritized and mandated, such as curriculum mapping with an ESL specific focus (OME, 2005), goal setting for as well as with ELLs’ (OME, 2010) and co-planning and developing resources for instruction between educators. Some of these topics of collaboration may be addressed in pre-service as well as in-service teacher training for both ESL teachers, as well as other educational professionals. Future research may seek to explore the levels of knowledge about ELLs among classroom
teachers as well as resource teachers. Based on these findings, school district support staff might consider how to facilitate collaboration intended for the long-term success of ELLs, rather than providing educators with immediate resources to address situational concerns.

ESL teacher participants in this research project recognized that collaborating with educators within as well as across the other school boards, may expose them to innovative practices that they had otherwise not considered. Implications for facilitating collaboration in practice would be to connect educators working with ELLs across the province to develop flexible tools that can be adapted and utilized in ESL education. Such implications might be shared digitally in a repository or provincial site such as EduGAINS (n.d.).

Literacy is an interdisciplinary skill which is omnipresent in the daily academic and social lives of learners. Student motivation in relation to literacy learning activities is driven by a multitude of factors including: levels of interest, the difficulty of the task in relation to the student’s current knowledge, and the student's level of confidence (Ushida, 2005). ESL teacher participants sought collaboration with other educational professionals to enhance ELL’s literacy learning motivation, facilitate the progression of ELLs’ literacy skills and to bridge ELLs’ literacy gaps in various subjects. They highlighted that other educators who worked with an ELL during a particular task or subject area, observed motivating factors that are situational or context specific. Thus, collaboration among various educators working with ELLs is important for sharing pedagogical techniques to keep ELL students engaged and motivated.

This research project sought to document how ESL teachers might collaborate with in-school teams of educators to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-
digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs. It was found that ESL teachers supplemented non-digital resources with pre-established resources created by classroom teachers. In this way, collaboration was not focused on the tools, but rather the goals of educational plans for ELLs, and resources to support ELLs in achieving these goals. When discussing non-digital teaching resources that ESL teachers used with students, an emergent theme was that over time, ESL teachers had created a repository of tools that could be adapted to fit individual ELL’s learning needs. One aspect of collaboration that these teachers considered valuable was sharing these resources with any educational professionals who might benefit from utilizing them. ESL teachers valued their role in sharing these resources with classroom teachers and resource teachers as a way of optimizing the time of educators. Consistent with the results of the present study, Baltus and Belhiah (2013) find that teachers express the ongoing need for teaching resources from the OME to assist in the planning of curriculum modifications for ELLs. The second important finding was that some surface level collaboration occurred in relation to the use of technological platforms in ESL education. Dagenais et al. (2013) state the importance of exploring the interaction between human and non-human resources in how they shape meaning-making experiences of ELLs. Exploration of teacher discourses in regards to technological tools used in ESL education was a part of the inquiry within the current project. The majority of collaboration in regards to sharing technological resources was limited to sharing websites and pass codes for translation or leveled texts. ESL teacher participants perceived the benefits of using technology to aid ELLs, but the collaboration with other educational professionals about utilizing technology in planning for ELLs occurred infrequently, and at surface level. The
implication that this finding has for practice, is to seek ways for educators to collaborate on integrating technology in instruction in ways that promote critical thinking and problem solving to guide students to meaningful learning through the means of technology (Kivunja, 2014). Research indicates that it is imperative that technological tools chosen by educators provide students with immediate feedback to prevent students from making schematic integrations of incorrect responses (Cumming & Draper Rodriguez, 2013). In this way, students gain an awareness of where errors are made, and are able to apply this new learning in the future.

Inquiry-based learning incorporates several skills and competencies, including critical thinking and active problem-solving (Kivunja, 2014). This research project did not document any inquiry learning opportunities for ELLs. Taking into account the specific needs of ELLs, inquiry-based learning opportunities, both digital and non-digital, hold potential for the development of language learning as well as academic language driven by students’ individual interests. The implications for practice could be improved if teachers of ELLs perceive inquiry learning as a means of benefiting ELLs during instruction, and have the tools, such as knowledge and time, to collaborate to incorporate inquiry based instruction.

**Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

This project raises the question of how administration can encourage voluntary collaboration in ESL education, and how educators can be further supported in their collaborative practices. There is value in documenting ESL teachers’ experiences in creating successful collaborative opportunities in ways that feel authentic without overstepping boundaries of educational professional colleagues. ESL teacher participants
passionately talk about collaboration and the resulting educational progress made by ELLs. The ESL teacher participants in the current research project self-identified as being interested in, and seeking collaboration in ESL education. Future research may incorporate quantitative methods to seek the perspectives of a large number of ESL teachers and include the perspectives of ESL teachers who prefer an individualized approach to working with ELLs. These research prospects may provide a more conclusive portrayal of various levels of collaboration.

Future longitudinal research in the area of collaboration in ESL education may seek to capture how collaboration changes over time between groups of educators. The knowledge that teachers accumulate over time in regards to working with ELLs, as well as the natural evolution of collaboration with other educational professionals, may provide a more conclusive account for the development of collaboration. It would be interesting to explore the ways in which collaboration is influenced by progress made by ELLs in relation to observable language behaviours (OME, 2011), and how educators collaborate to set learning goals and gather resources for ELLs on a continuum.

The data collected contributes to the research describing how collaboration in ESL education occurs in Ontario schools. Collaborating with ESL teachers from various boards may provide a window of opportunity to consider different approaches to collaboration. Because this research captured the perspectives of ESL teacher, more research is required in combination with classroom teachers, resource teachers and administration, to capture diverse experiences with collaboration. ESL teachers who negotiate the situational demands of supporting ELLs, and collaborating as a means of doing so, have the experience to provide direction for change. Future research may seek
to explore the perceived value on the part of school leaders, particularly principals and administration, as these views may be reflected in the priority that collaboration in ESL education receives.

The findings of the current research project indicate that ESL teachers negotiate collaboration at the level of compliance (Davison, 2006), though a desire to collaborate and a belief that collaboration is important in ESL education, however encountering barriers such as a lack of tools to facilitate collaboration and limited time, which at times, resulted in surface level collaboration. This stage is combined with one of convergence of collaboration, in which teachers had a desire to facilitate collaboration and an understanding of the impact of collaboration on lesson plans, as well as the perceived benefits for ELLs and other learners in the classroom, however these practices are inconsistent. Future research may pursue an exploration of factors that contribute to creative co-construction model of collaboration, whereby teaching roles amongst educational professionals are fluid, and co-teaching and co-planning occur within ESL education. The types of supports and resources received by educators who use this model are important to uncover in understanding how this level of collaboration is reached. The ways in which a co-construction model of collaboration influences the types of educational resources (digital and/or non-digital) with ELLs is another avenue to explore in future research.
References


Dieker, L. A. (2001). What are the characteristics of “effective” middle and high school co-taught teams for students with disabilities? *Preventing School Failure, 46*(1), 14-23. doi:10.1080/10459880109603339


Letter of Invitation for ESL Teachers

Date: September, 2017

Title of Study: Collaboration to Support ESL Instruction

Principal Investigator: Dr. Tiffany Gallagher, Department of Teacher Education, Brock University

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Ana Vintan, Faculty of Education, Brock University

You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to explore the collaboration between educators to support ESL instruction. One of the purposes of this research project is to explore your perceptions and experiences about in-school teams of educators collaborating to provide support for English Language Learners (ELLs). A sample of ESL teachers will be invited to participate in the study.

During the school year of (2017-2018), as a participant, you will be asked to complete an audio-recorded interview that will take approximately 45 minutes. As well, the researcher, Ana Vintan, will attend and record open-ended field notes during classroom observation in exploring planning strategies for ELLs. The focus of these notes is on any collaborative practices, and will in no way be evaluative.

In the interest of the educational planning process, copies of professional planning artifacts you are willing to share will be viewed (i.e.: daybook plans, lesson plans, instructional resources).

The information obtained from your participation in this research may provide future directions for what educators need in order to successfully collaborate and implement consistent learning experiences for ELLs. Your participation in the research data collection is voluntary. There are no other known possible risks/side effects associated with participating in this research. If you choose to participate your identity will be kept confidential in reporting the results.
school board personnel will be aware of your decision to participate in this research project.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, reb@brocku.ca)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher. **If you are willing to participate, please email or call the researcher.**

Thank you,

Ana Vintan, Brock University, (905)691-1803 av10rf@brocku.ca
Dr. Tiffany Gallagher, Brock University (905)688-5550 Ext: 5114 tgallagher@brocku.ca

*This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University’s Research Ethics Board (file # 17-011 - GALLAGHER).*
Appendix B

ESL Teacher Consent Form

Teacher's Name: _______________________________________

Date: _______________________________________

Project Title: Collaboration to Support ESL Instruction

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Ana Vintan
Master of Education Student, Brock University
Email: av10rf@brocku.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Tiffany Gallagher
Associate Professor
Brock University
Dept. of Teacher Education
Phone: (905) 688-5550 ext. 5114
e-mail: tgallagher@brocku.ca

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to explore the collaboration between educators to support ESL instruction. One of purposes of this research project is to explore your perceptions and experiences about in-school teams of educators collaborating to provide support for English Language Learners (ELLs), as well as how in-school teams of educators collaborate to use instructional resources (digital and/or non-digital) to promote oral and written language instruction with ELLs.
A sample of ESL teachers will be invited to participate in the study.

WHAT’S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to participate in the following way. Below is a description of the research component of the project.

1. Interview
With your consent, the researchers request an audio-recorded interview which will take approximately 45 minutes. The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding about your teaching practice in regards to ELLs, and your experiences with collaboration in ESL education. Interviews will be conducted on an individual basis.

Interviews will be transcribed by a researcher and will be kept confidential. The transcriptions will be returned to you for verification (member checking) which will take you approximately 15 minutes to read. If transcripts are not returned to the researcher with feedback, the assumption will be that there are no necessary changes to be made.
2. Classroom Observations
The researcher will observe classroom lessons and take structured field notes in exploring how educational plans are carried out in the classroom. The observations are focused on differentiate strategies for ELLs.

The researchers are NOT observing students in the classroom. The researcher, nor the school board is not evaluating you (or the ESL teacher), she is documenting practices and/or resources discussed in meetings between yourself and the ESL teacher. These observations are confidential and will not be reviewed by anyone employed by the school board. The researcher will be using an observation protocol for this process to determine the prominence of various aspects of the lesson. The protocol can be provided to participants for review by request. There are no requirements of time on your part as this is a normal function of your work with the coach. Field notes are destroyed following the completion of the study.

3. Professional Learning Artifacts
Copies of professional planning artifacts that educators are willing to share will be viewed (i.e.: daybook plans, lesson plans, professional readings, instructional resources). Data extrapolated from learning artifacts will relate to sections of the lesson planning process, including lesson preparation, learning strategies used, interaction, review and assessment.

Participation will take approximately six months (September 2017 – January 2018). In total your participation will take approximately 1.5 hours.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
The project will support teachers’ professional learning to enhance ELLs instruction and learning. With respect to participating in this research, the potential benefits to you as a teacher, is enhanced awareness your instructional practices. There is a minimal risk that unique identifiers may be recognized. To mitigate this, efforts are made to protect the confidentiality of data and participants’ identity through use of pseudonyms and exclusion of location and names.

Your participation in the research data collection is voluntary.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Confidentiality will be respected and no information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your consent. The data are not anonymous, but no identifiers will be used. Access to this data will be restricted to Ana Vintan and Dr. Tiffany Gallagher. Data collected will be stored on the principal student investigator's computer, thus limiting access to identifiable information. This computer will be password protected, and will be stored solely in the home of the principal student investigator. Data will be destroyed by deletion of files and shredding of hard copy documents no later than December 2018. Your school board personnel will not have access to your data and will not be aware of your participation (or lack of participation).

Confidentiality may be limited due to fact that researcher (who is not an employee of the School Board) will be onsite. Anonymous quotations may be used in the reporting of the data. Potential identifiers collected during the research will be changed in the reporting of the results to mitigate potential identifiers.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline participation by simply not signing this consent form. This research is being conducted independent of any school board projects and your decision to participate or not will in no way affect your employment standing within the school. No one in your school board will know whether or not you participated. You may withdraw at any time by indicating so to the researchers. To withdraw, you would indicate your desire to the researchers in person or through the contact information provided. In the event that you withdraw partway through the interview, it will be at your discretion whether you wish all prior responses destroyed, or kept for the purpose of the project. In the event that one teacher of
the pair chooses to withdraw, the researcher will consult the remaining partner participant about whether his/her data is still admissible.

**PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published in research project form, professional journals and presented at conferences. You will receive feedback on the study results at the end of the academic year (June, 2018) via the contact information you provide. Participants will not be identified individually in written reports. All data will be disposed of within two years of collection.

**CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Ana Vintan.

*This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (file # 17-011 - GALLAGHER). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca. Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.*

**CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in the following components of the research study based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. Please sign confirming your participation in the research study.

Teacher’s Name: _________________ Signature: _________________

Date: _______________

**CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in the following components of the research study based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. Please check and sign confirming your participation in the research study.

**Interview**

I agree to participate in an interview at the request of the researcher.

☐ YES  ☐ NO

**Observations**

I agree to have the researcher observe classroom lessons.

☐ YES  ☐ NO

**Professional Learning Artifacts**

I agree to allow the researcher view my professional learning artifacts.

☐ YES  ☐ NO

Teacher’s Name: _________________ Signature: _________________ Date: _______________

(please print)
Appendix C

Pre-Interview Script—ESL Teacher Interview

Pre-Interview script to be followed by the researcher conducting the interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study, “Collaboration to Support ESL Instruction.” We are interested in your insights with respect to your experiences as a teacher.

I appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with us. Before we begin this interview, we would like to remind you of your right to withdraw from this study. As outlined in the information letter and consent form that you signed, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study or any part thereof at any time, for any reason, without penalty. In addition, you may choose not to answer any question, or part thereof during this interview, for any reason without penalty. Should you wish not to answer a question, or wish to end the interview, please tell me, and I will abide by your wishes without question.

As outlined in the information letter and consent form for this study, this interview will be audio-recorded for transcription and review. By signing a confidentiality agreement, the transcriber has agreed to respect your privacy and to keep all information about this study and your responses to all questions during this interview strictly confidential. Following completion of the transcription process, you will be provided with a copy of your interview transcript for review and verification of accuracy.

Additionally, to protect your privacy and ensure that the information you provide is confidential, you will be provided with a pseudonym that will be used in collecting, analyzing and reporting information during this research project.

Do you have any questions or concerns? May I start the audio-tape?

Background and Demographics

Tell me a little bit about your background as a teacher.

What are your greatest strengths as a teacher? What are your greatest challenges as a teacher?

Teaching ELLs

How many ELLs are you working with this year? Can you briefly describe the ELL’s (origin, language, personality) without naming them by name?

What strategies, have you used for teaching ELLs? What have you found to be effective?
Teacher Collaboration

What does collaboration in ESL education mean to you?

What is the current climate in regards to collaboration?

In your experience, what level does collaboration occur at?

In your experience, what are some barriers to collaboration?

Is there a difference between the collaboration between educators in the elementary and secondary divisions?

Is there allocated/designated time to meet with classroom teachers to discuss progress of ELLs?

Is the level of collaboration between ESL teachers and classroom teachers influenced by the STEP that the ELL is working at?

What types of questions do you frequently ask by classroom teachers in regards to planning for ELLs?

Are there any strategies you use to share resources with the classroom teachers for ELLs?

What are your thoughts/experiences with the pull-out model or the integrated approach?

Do you think that there is a difference between collaboration and the integrated approach?

Professional Development Context/ Professional Resources

What kind of professional learning and/or resources have you been provided with to assist your practice working with ELLs?

Are there standardized resources or a database that ESL teachers can access to use with ELLs?

Are there professional development days in which both ESL teachers and classroom teachers participate in?

Are there technological tools available specifically for your ELLs?

Have you included any technological tools for your ELLs? If so, what benefits/challenges have you experienced?
Future Directions

Do you think that the level of experience an ESL teacher has influences levels of collaboration?

What future directions/initiatives do you think are necessary in regards to collaboration in ESL education?

Is there anything you would like to add?
### Appendix D

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)**

(Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact Components</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Lesson Preparation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clearly define content objectives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Select content concepts that are appropriate to learners’ age and educational background</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use a variety of supplementary materials to make the lesson clear and meaningful (computer programs, graphs, models, visuals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adapt the content to all proficiency levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use authentic and meaningful activities and integrate them into lesson concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Building Background</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Explicitly link concepts to students’ background experiences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Explicitly link past learning to new content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasize key vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Comprehensible Input</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use speech that is appropriate for students’ proficiency level</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clearly explain academic tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use a variety of techniques to make content clear (model, use visuals, demonstrations and hands-on activities)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Learning Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide ample opportunities for students to use strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consistently use scaffolding techniques throughout the lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Include a variety of question types that promote higher-order thinking skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Interaction

- Provide students with frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher and student and among students and encourage extended student discourse about the lesson concepts
- Carefully configure the grouping of students to support language and content of the lesson
- Provide ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in their native language

6. Review and Assessment

- Include a comprehensive review of key vocabulary
- Include a comprehensive review of key content concepts
- Provide regular feedback to students on their output
- Conduct assessments of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson
Appendix E

Classroom Quality for English Language Learners (CQELL) in Language Arts

Instruction Observation Protocol

(Goldenberg, Coleman, Reese, Haertel, & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2012)

Teacher Name: _________________________________________________
School:______________________________________________________

Date of Observation: ____________________ Time Out: ______________________

Grade: ________ Total # Students Present: _______ # of ELLs: _______

Reading/Language Arts Domain:     Reading__________  Listening/Speaking__________
Writing __________  Media Literacy __________

ELL levels: Beginning_____ Early Intermediate _____ Intermediate _____ Early Advanced_____ Advanced_____ 

Lesson objective:
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

1 Class is heterogeneous (i.e., mixed ELL levels; class composition not based on ELL levels).
   _____yes     _____no     _____unknown

2 Class is homogeneous (i.e., formed according to ELL levels: 1s-2s together, 3s-4s together, etc).
   _____yes     _____no     _____unknown

3 Classes at this grade level are heterogeneous then regrouped across classrooms by ELL level
   for language arts instruction (1s-2s together, 3s-4s together, etc).
   _____yes     _____no     _____unknown

4____Uses whole group instruction with no evidence of differentiating by ELL proficiency level.

5____Uses whole group instruction; differentiates by ELL proficiency level during whole group.

6____Uses small groups but these are not based on ELL proficiency level.

7____Uses small groups according to ELL proficiency level.

8____ELL instruction is based on English language proficiency assessment.

9____Independent groups work on differentiated version of related objective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Criterion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comments</strong></th>
<th><strong>Prominence rating scales</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In blanks, indicate O observed being used in the lesson Or N, not observed</td>
<td>Record specifics of the lesson observed and any needed explanations of ratings from the first two columns</td>
<td>These ratings apply to the OVERALL prominence for the section, recognizing that some components may be more or less prominent than others. A section in which all the elements receive an N will be rated as not observed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Generic Lesson Elements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>C. The teacher/lesson explicitly links new concepts to students’ background experiences and past learning.</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1_____ Taps the students' prior knowledge.</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2______Relates to students' personal experiences.</td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Slightly used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very prominent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>F. The teacher uses assessment as part of instruction</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1_____Instruction is based on formative assessment</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2_____Monitors students' performance during instruction</td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Slightly used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3_____Checks for understanding before having students apply/practice skills and concepts taught in the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4_____Provides instructional feedback and, as needed, reviews for students having difficulty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5_____Provides opportunities for students to summarize/consolidate learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6_____Uses assessment to see whether students have accomplished the lesson objective.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>I. The teacher provides instruction on the language objective.</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1_____Provides information/input relevant to the language objective</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2______Models the language objective</td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Slightly used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3_____Provides opportunities to</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very prominent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
practice the language objective
4. Checks for understanding
and monitors students' performance on the language objective

J. The teacher uses strategies to adapt instruction for students with limited English proficiency

**Teacher Adapts Language**
1. Uses questions and prompts to students that are differentiated by their English language proficiency
2. Teaches basic vocabulary when is necessary for fluent English speakers
3. Adjusts rate of speech
4. Uses more commonly used words (in English) in order to clarify
5. Uses sentence frames or sentence starters
6. Models use of correct grammatical forms
7. Purposefully models expressive fluid speech
8. Provides opportunities for students to practice fluid speech
9. Uses chants, rhymes, rhythms

**Teacher Adapts Strategies**
1. Uses meaningful contexts
2. Uses picture walks/pre-read texts
3. Teacher uses gestures/facial expressions/mime to clarify new vocabulary, skills, concepts
4. Engages role-play/mime/physical movements by students
5. Clarifies words and passages from texts to facilitate comprehension (includes summarizing, paraphrasing by teacher)
6. Prompts students to summarize or paraphrase
7. Provides demonstrations
8. Provides opportunities to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapts Language</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very prominent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapts Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very prominent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
demonstrate their thinking process
9. Prompts students to visualize concepts
10. Provides a common experience to build language before speaking and/or writing

L. The teacher/lesson provides opportunities for interactions that encourage student language production in English

1. Prompts students to speak/write in complete phrases/sentences as appropriate to proficiency levels
2. Students engage in cooperative group work (2 or more students)
3. Student-to-student interactions are open-ended
4. Student-to-student interactions encourage use of specific linguistic features or structures
5. Teacher-to-student interactions are open-ended
6. Teacher-to-student interactions encourage use of specific linguistic features or structures

Not 1 2 3 4
Observed Slightly used Very prominent
## Appendix F

### CIERA Classroom Observation Scheme

(Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1—Who</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading specialist</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td>se</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other specialist</td>
<td>sp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teacher</td>
<td>st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2—Grouping</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole class/large group</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3—Major literacy activity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition/writing</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/not applicable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 4—Specific focus</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading connected text</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to text</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of text, lower</td>
<td>m1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of text, higher</td>
<td>m2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of text, higher</td>
<td>m3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>m4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanging ideas/oral production</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word ID examination</td>
<td>wi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight words</td>
<td>sw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p1 = letter sound</td>
<td>p1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p2 = letter by letter</td>
<td>p2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p3 = onomatopoeic</td>
<td>p3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p4 = multisyllabic</td>
<td>p4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word recognition strategies</td>
<td>wr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic awareness</td>
<td>pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter ID</td>
<td>pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5—Material</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbook, narrative</td>
<td>tn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook, informational</td>
<td>ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative trade book</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational trade book</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student writing</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board/chart</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>op</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video/film</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/not applicable</td>
<td>o9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 6—Teacher interaction styles</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling/giving info</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recitation</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching/scaffolding</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening/tracking</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading aloud</td>
<td>ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check work</td>
<td>cw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 7—Expected pupil response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading turn-taking</td>
<td>r-tt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orally responding</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral turn-taking</td>
<td>or-tt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulating</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/not applicable</td>
<td>o/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Certificate of Ethics Clearance

Brock University
Research Ethics Office
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: December 14, 2017

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: GALLAGHER, Tiffany - Teacher Education

FILE: 17-011 - GALLAGHER

TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project

STUDENT: Ana Virtan

SUPERVISOR: Tiffany Gallager

TITLE: Collaboration to Support ESL Instruction

---

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: MODIFICATION

Expiry Date: 8/1/2018

The Brock University Social Sciences Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement.

Modification: Due to lack of participation, project will now focus solely on ESL teachers, rather than the original plan of working with classroom teacher/ESL teacher dyads.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 8/1/2018. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved:

[Signature]

Ann-Marie D'Isaie, Chair
Social Science Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.