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RESEARCH INTO TEACHING



**TEACHING AND LEARNING  
RESEARCH EXCHANGE**

**Building  
Attachment:  
Refugee Students'  
Reflections on English  
as a Second Language  
Integration**

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# Introduction

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The seed for this project was planted a year and a half before I put pen to paper. The project began when my English as a second language (ESL) students began openly reflecting on their education in Canada. They had suggestions and criticisms for me, the school administration, their parents, and themselves. It seemed very important to me to record these thoughts and share them with other ESL teachers and students. These young people had the unique experience of being in a classroom with only students from their country. Later, they studied in an integrated ESL classroom where there were students from thirteen countries. Their reflections indicated evolving insight as they gained maturity and a better understanding of the Canadian education system.

The purpose of this study was three-fold. First, I wanted to explore how the integration of students in a multiethnic ESL classroom affected the students' attachment to school. Second, I wanted all teachers to be aware of the underlying factors that affect language learning for refugees, particularly those who have suffered post-traumatic stress. Third, I wanted the world to know our success story. Although our story began with difficulties, it has had many happy endings. Despite the turmoil, trauma, and terror experienced by these students, we have a group of successful young people who have become independent, hard-working Canadians.

The study has several sections:

1. A description of the participants and background information regarding their arrival in Canada,
2. My reflections on the students' Canadian educational experience including anecdotal references,
3. A review of the literature, which helps to explain what we experienced, and
4. The students' reflections after their fourth or fifth year in Canada.

I strongly believe that this type of participatory research adds a powerful component to quantitative, statistical research methods. Rather than seeing these young people as an entity to be studied, they are viewed as a valuable source of knowledge. People from the margins of society are often voiceless. They do not have the English language skills, the confidence, or the political power to make their needs and opinions heard. Although I will include my observations and reflections of the students' learning experience in Canada, I believe their perspective is the most important one. The reflections of these young people can only serve to enhance the education of refugee youth in the future.

# The Participants

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I must state very clearly at the outset that the protection of my students' identities is of utmost importance. The scholarly quality of this paper may have been somewhat compromised because I am unable to provide specific background information on their culture or the political situation in their country of origin. Since their arrival in Canada, the students have been very concerned that they will be misjudged by Canadians. They are very reluctant to give details about their education or the education of their parents in their home country.

The participants in this study belong to the same cultural group. All but one of the families resided in small towns or rural communities in their country of origin. Many of the families had chickens or a cow in the yard, and some students spoke of planting fields by hand. Due to the precarious political situation in their country, more specifically, reports of ethnic cleansing, this group of people was forced to flee to refugee camps in a neighbouring country. However, there were few resources available there to sustain such a large group, so they were invited to immigrate to Canada. Instead of the typical situation in which people often wait seven years in a refugee camp before being accepted for immigration, these people were moved out of their own homes and re-established in their Canadian homes in approximately six months. Carla Burke, an employee of the Saskatoon Open Door Society, has stated that she had not seen the arrival of such a large number of people from one cultural group in her previous fourteen years with the settlement agency.

Although most of the people came as complete families, some were not so lucky. Three teenage brothers arrived without their parents. One young man, who had been the victim of torture, came without any immediate family members. A father and son lived in Canada for six months without any knowledge of the mother and daughter they had been separated from as they fled their country. Fortunately, the family was reunited; however, the trauma experienced during this period of time made adjustment very difficult.

The language of the participants is basically the same; however, there are regional dialects and differences. The students have told me that people from their neighbouring country "speak good (language)" while a translator from that country reported that she must keep her language very basic when translating for members of this community. Some students use words from the cultural group that dominated their country. Some adults have retained more of these words than the youth. Perhaps this seems like a small issue; nevertheless, the connection between language and culture domination is very strong. When I taught the adult members of this community, a great dispute arose when a man in his sixties and a man in his thirties argued over the correct word for "dart". Several uncomfortable situations also arose when one family would teach me a phrase, I would repeat it at another home, and the second family would be quite offended that I had used a word from the language of their oppressors. The difference in dialect was also apparent when one family would teach me a phrase and another family would correct me, making changes to my pronunciation.

At their request, most of the families were initially placed in the same part of the city. The parents also requested that their high-school aged children attend the same school away from children of the opposing cultural faction. One family chose to make a forty-five minute bus trip across the city rather than attend the high

school in their area. Because of the sudden arrival of these students and the large number in the group, it was decided that all the students would be placed in one ESL classroom.

Since the students arrived with no documentation or school records, we relied entirely on their reports of grade completion and academic abilities. Several weeks after the students were placed in classes, a settlement worker reported that many of the schools in their country had been closed for years, and it was quite possible that some of the students had never attended school as we know it. This was later confirmed by a parent who told me that the dominant cultural group had closed the ethnic language schools several years before the war started, insisting that students be taught in the language of the dominant group. Most of the parents refused and chose to send their children to rotating underground schools in private homes. On the other hand, some children from rural communities reported attending school until shortly before the outbreak of war. Consequently, there were huge variations in the first language education of this group of students. While one fifteen-year old student claimed he couldn't live if he did not have a book to read at night, a student of the same age held a pencil like a foreign object and did not know what to do when he got to the right edge of the paper. The students from the city talked about a chemistry laboratory, but most of the students found textbooks both a novelty and a source of confusion. One student's frequent comment of, "Teacher, too much paper." made more sense when another student told me that they usually worked on slates. During a map-reading lesson, a seventeen-year old student explained that he had never learned about directions because his teacher had to go fight in the war. This student had no idea where north was on a map, and most of the students could not find their country of origin on a map of the world.

The consequences of grouping the students together were beyond our imagination. Although the students were bound together by a common ethnic background, the differences in regional language, previous education, and clan status created tension within the group. They also withdrew from the school as a whole, stopped going to classes, and became very isolated.

The second year, we were integrated with the existing ESL class. Despite the students' great resistance to the move, the situation became very positive. Students attended classes, made friends, and seemed much happier. It was when the students began to openly reflect on this change, I decided we must record their thoughts in a more formal way.

A second group of students was interviewed to compare the experiences of each group. In this group, there were five students from the same country as the first group. Both groups arrived in Canada at the same time. They settled in a similarly sized city in the same province. Three students in the second group were between thirteen and fifteen years of age upon arrival. This was the age of many of the students in Group One. Two students in the second group were nine and ten years old when they arrived. Although they were much younger than Group One at the time of arrival, they were present during the interview with their siblings, and they were very anxious to participate. Therefore, I included their responses to the questions. In their country of origin, the parents were employed as a doctor, an accountant, and a teacher. The second group was interviewed four and a half years after arriving in Canada.

# Collecting the Data

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Much of the data in this report was collected through action research (anecdotal records and memos to administration) over a four-year period. Despite the fact that my notes and school records provide a picture of the academic growth and developmental stages of this group of students, I wanted to include their opinions as well. I am a strong advocate of participatory research, research that includes the voices of those who have been voiceless. The action research data reflect my interpretation of the event. In addition, I want to include the opinions and reactions of the students who shared my classroom, yet viewed many of the situations through a different lens.

Although collecting the data seemed like a simple task, since the students had spoken about their experiences so openly in class, their attitudes changed when it came time to formally begin the data-gathering process. When I called one of the older girls to make an appointment for an interview, she said, "I don't think I want to do that anymore." When I spoke to three siblings from another family, they, too, had changed their minds or were too busy. Knowing that this group of youth comes from a culture based on clans and a strong hierarchical system based on age and gender, I was not surprised that the opinion of one person would influence the others, but I was confused about why they had changed their minds. I dropped the subject, and gave up on my idea of doing research.

Six weeks later, when we returned to school, I brought the topic up again. The school counselor also discussed the project with two of the oldest girls. We gave them the option of completing a survey rather than participating in interviews. They were noncommittal, so I again dropped the subject for several weeks. When I met with the girls again, the reason for their discomfort became clearer. One girl asked me several times if I would get paid for this. Another girl asked if the report would be in the newspaper. I explained about the research funding and clarified that the report would be in what I had previously referred to as "a magazine for teachers". They seemed to be more comfortable, and chose to return to the interview format rather than a survey. When I spoke to the other students, each one asked what decision the others had made. Finally, six students had agreed to participate.

The first student to agree to an interview was Liz\*, who began her Canadian education in grade eight. She seemed the most confident and comfortable. When I arrived at her house, Anna, one of the older girls, was visiting. I started the interview with Liz while Anna continued to work at the computer seemingly ignoring us. As the interview progressed, Anna began making comments, and eventually she joined us. The girls talked openly, sharing feelings they had not told me before. I was impressed with their maturity and candor. During our conversation, Liz's brother who was in grade eight came home from his paper route. He had a completely different attitude and begged to be included. When I told him this study was for high school students, he asked if I could "ask him the questions" when he got into high school. The visit lasted two hours, and I believe it ended on a very positive note. The next day, two students came to my classroom and said I could "ask them the questions" any time.

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\* All student names in this report have been fictionalized.

For me, this experience was a good reminder that the acculturation process is very slow. Although these students seem to have adapted to Canadian society very well, the invisible scars of war and cultural degradation are slow to heal. Despite the fact that these youth are working, driving legally, and becoming quite independent, their misunderstanding of situations sends them back to the survival behaviours I thought had disappeared. These students would not stand out in our school crowd; they have adopted the clothing and hairstyles of their Canadian peers. However, the ability to trust is still a test.

The student interviews were an emotional experience for me as well because I thought that I was the one person they had complete trust in. At that point, I had known this group of people for more than four years. In addition to teaching the high school youth for four years, I had taught their parents, aunts, and uncles. I had visited every home on numerous occasions. When they needed help with a private document, they came to me. When there was a medical emergency, they called me to accompany them to the doctor. The parents and students came to me for advice on very personal matters, and yet in this situation, they did not quite trust me. What a difficult but powerful reminder that the suffering experienced by people in war-torn countries is something that I will never truly understand!

# My Reflections on the Refugee Students' Experiences

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## THE FIRST YEAR

Our year began in a flurry of activity. We began with fourteen students ranging in age from fourteen to eighteen. Two older students joined our class in mid September. The students had attended ESL classes for a few weeks when they first arrived in Canada as well as a summer program organized by the Open Door Society. With only this instruction, the students had gained an amazing amount of conversational English. They were able to make their needs known and participated in class scheduling. In hindsight, this was a double-edged sword. Because of the students' ability to speak very well, we over-estimated their ability to read and write English. Since we had no school documents, we also accepted the students' reports of grade completion. As stated earlier, we later learned that many of the students had been out of school for quite some time. Some of the older boys had been at work for two or more years. As time went on, we could see that many of the students had very low math skills, and it appeared that many had low first language literacy skills. Some of our clues were the inability to use a dictionary, unfamiliarity with textbooks, and difficulty in following instructions, taking notes, or attending classes on a regular basis. Appendix A shows the high rate of absenteeism in the first year. Consequently, due to these complications, some students had been placed in classes where they could not possibly be successful. Students began dropping classes very quickly, which were replaced with more hours of ESL.

Socially, the year began on a very positive note. I was thrilled to see that our Canadian students had so eagerly welcomed this group of students into our school. It was not uncommon to have twenty or thirty youth congregate in our classroom for a noon-hour dance session. The atmosphere was wonderful. However, some of

the girls in our class found it difficult to join the group. While the boys quickly made friends and were invited to the first school dance, two of the girls remained on the sidelines unwilling to become involved. Anna was particularly distrustful of the entire situation and kept a safe distance from the action.

Our peer support group volunteered to spend some time chatting and visiting with the new students. The first few meetings seemed to go well. The ESL students did much of the talking and the Canadian students were good listeners. However, perhaps the conversations were too one-sided, and little by little, the Canadians withdrew from the situation. From my perspective, it appeared that the ESL students were too socially aggressive, and this pushed the Canadian students away.

As the semester progressed, our situation seemed to become less positive. Students started skipping classes, some refused to attend classes at all, the older students started to drop out, and I had little success in promoting literacy. Several of the students stated that they were only interested in learning to speak well because they wanted to be interpreters when they returned home. The Canadian government had given this group of people the unique opportunity to stay in Canada for two years on a Minister's Permit. After two years, they could decide if they would become Canadian citizens or return home compliments of the Canadian government. Because of this two-year window, many of the families were undecided about their future. It seemed that this uncertainty was one of the major factors in keeping the students unsettled and unattached to school. One family made the decision to stay as soon as they arrived, and their children were more willing to attend classes. Although these children had a difficult time when their peers did not attend, they both attended classes on their own in the first year.

On October 9, 1999, I sent the following report to the school principal:

*Brent (18 years old) attends Visual Art 20 in period one and Boys' Wellness in period five. His attendance has been very poor, and his language level has remained at a basic beginner level. He becomes frustrated easily...Brent has not taken responsibility for his learning. Rather, he finds small excuses for not attending school, not speaking English in class, and not being successful. Although he states he doesn't attend because the other students laugh at his mistakes, he seems to enjoy getting the class off task and giggling uncontrollably...Brent reports he is looking for full-time employment.*

*Anna's (16 years old) attitude toward school has greatly improved since the arrival of A.J. (a female student). Anna no longer complains about going to Girls' Wellness 10, however [the teacher] frequently reminds her that she must participate more. Essential Math 10 in period one is very difficult for Anna. She refuses to go if she arrives late or if A.J. is not at school... In ESL, Anna also has trouble retaining information, and she depends on A.J. for translation. In a small group, Anna enjoys talking about their five-year stay in Germany and the trauma she experienced in [her country]. She likes hands-on activities, and she talks about her enjoyment of cooking and cleaning at home. Occasionally, she engages in behaviour that is inappropriate for someone of her age level. She has slapped her younger brother and chased him around the class while I worked with other students. Because she is very intimidated by the older boys, I encourage her to work in small groups with A.J. and Tyler. On a very positive note, at parent-teacher interviews, one of the sponsors commented on the amazing progress Anna and Tyler have made.*

*Trevor (17 years old) is enrolled in Computer Science 20 in period one. His attendance is good despite the fact that he is reported to be far behind the class in knowledge and skills. He is also enrolled in Drama 20...he participates well in class, works well with other students, and understands directions. He often uses ESL time to practice drama presentations, clarify pronunciation, or ask for term definitions. When possible, I ask other students to participate in his dialogue practice, which has been enjoyable for participants and observers....He is eager to learn the subtle nuances of Canadian culture, so he often introduces these topics for class discussion.*

*Sonny (15 years old) arrived at [our school] with very low English language ability. He is not highly motivated to learn, and he often engages others in [first language] conversation. He does not have the skills to work independently. However, with one-to-one attention, he does quite well. He can now read six to eight word sentences. He can follow instructions for listening activities, and he can initiate simple English conversation.*

*Andy (approximately 18 years old) lives with two older brothers. He began the term at [a community college] but moved to our class during the second week of September. He is very unsettled and often talks about moving to Winnipeg. Although he looks very mature, Andy's sponsors report he does not have the skills to live independently. Getting to class on time is very difficult for him, and he has not attended for about three weeks. He is enrolled in Visual Art 20 in period one and Boys' Wellness in period five. He seemed to enjoy his workout in the gym and often returned to class smiling.*

*A huge detriment to Andy's learning is his over estimation of his English ability. He thinks he has enough English to work in Canada. Although his speaking skills are at an intermediate level, his writing skills are very low, and he needs a great deal of guidance in learning how to learn. This is probably because he had been out of the school system for several years. After frequent, lengthy conversations with Andy's sponsors, I have learned that he feels a duty to return to [his country]. It appears that he has dropped out of school although he has missed two appointments to be formally taken off role.*

*Landon (16 years old) is a well-mannered, delightful young man. He is a bright, eager learner who participates well and eagerly helps the other students. He is making a great effort to improve his reading skills....[The Essential 9 Math teacher] has told me that Landon is very helpful in class and guides Tyler and Sonny through the concepts. Landon also enjoys bodybuilding at lunch and frequently talks about joining the wrestling team. Landon's attendance is quite good. He was having a problem with sleeping in class, but after a phone call to his father to say Landon was being sent home for sleeping in class, he appears much more rested.*

*Mike (17 years old) appears to have dropped out of school perhaps in anticipation of his eighteenth birthday in November. This is very unfortunate since he is an extremely capable and sociable young man. Mike attended three classes and was reported to be doing well in English A21 and Math 10. He also attended Computer Science 20 in period two, but he did not have the basic skills to be successful at this level.*

*Jack (approximately 18 years of age) moved from [the community college] with Andy. Jack's attendance has been extremely poor. He attended Essential Math 9 in period one only a few times and reluctantly accompanied Andy to Boys' Wellness 10. He is also here without his parents and lives with a slightly older cousin, so he does not have the adult support he needs. I have spoken to his sponsors many times, and we have come to the conclusion that Jack is not physically or mentally well enough to attend school at this time. According to his sponsor, Jack suffered severe beatings in [his country] which have left him with poorly healed wounds, emotional anxiety, and depression. His behaviour in class confirmed this. Jack has not attended for almost three weeks, but he has not returned to school to formally go off role.*

*A.J. (14 years old) is an enthusiastic, bright girl. She arrived with her mother in mid September after a six-month separation from her father and brother. She has become a wonderful role model for the other students. She learns so quickly and frequently helps with explanations in [her language]. Despite her reluctance to take Essential Math 9, she has started to enjoy the class and proudly displays what she has learned. She is also becoming more comfortable in Girls' Wellness 10 and independently goes to class.*

*Jason (15 years old) is a clever, capable boy who seems to be going through a restless time. His reading and writing skills are somewhat higher than the other students, and he needs more of a challenge....He has talked about taking more integrated classes next semester, and I think this is the challenge he needs. He would probably enjoy English A21. His parents are very supportive, and they have agreed to help him decide what class would be appropriate. Jason is playing on the [school] soccer team, which is an ideal way for him to make friends and become more integrated into society.*

*Due to Robert's (15 years old) shy, quiet demeanor, it has taken me six weeks to discover what his language ability is. His vocabulary is higher than most of the students, and his reading and writing skills are at a low intermediate level. He is gaining confidence in his speaking skills and offers answers more often.... At the beginning of October, I discovered that Robert has not been attending Boys' Wellness. Unfortunately, the teacher had given up hope and stopped marking his attendance. During parent-teacher interviews, his parents told me that Robert does not want to attend Boys' Wellness, but he has not given any reasons. I suspect that he does not want to go alone.... Although his sponsor has suggested that Robert be allowed to withdraw from the class, I am afraid that this would set a dangerous precedent for the other students who would rather stay in the safety of our classroom.*

*Tyler (14 years old) is an enthusiastic, happy fellow. He is extremely small for his age, yet he is not intimidated by the older boys. However, he does not have the confidence to go to class alone if he arrives late or [the other boys] do not attend. I have had to accompany Tyler to class on many occasions to prevent him from wandering the halls or loitering near our classroom. He is enrolled in Computer Applications 9, Boys' PED 9 and Essential Math 9. In ESL Tyler follows directions well, and he is always very respectful. He is eager to learn and willing to participate. My present goal is to help him gain*

*enough confidence to eat in the cafeteria since he often misses lunch and later asks to eat in class.*

*Barb and Sam returned to [their home country] at the end of September. Their departure caused a great deal of emotional turmoil for the other students. We greatly miss Barb and Sam's enthusiasm and leadership in class.*

*Learning in a formal classroom environment has been a huge adjustment for most of the students. They are learning to use a dictionary, put words in alphabetical order, work quietly, politely ask for help, and respect the rights of others. They are also becoming more independent in remembering their class schedules and getting to class on time.*

*There is still a concern about regular attendance. On two occasions, [the vice-principal] and the interpreter have talked to the students about the consequences of missing school. Although attendance has improved somewhat, it might be necessary for me to make weekly attendance reports to the sponsors and parents.*

*The teachers and staff have been extremely supportive of the [new] students. Many people asked for more information about [their country], introduced themselves to the students, brought small gifts, and made efforts to involve the students in school activities. The students were invited to participate in the Grade Nine SRC election, which was a wonderful learning experience about our rights and freedoms in Canada. The cafeteria staff has been very supportive in helping the students feel more comfortable. The health nurse made suggestions regarding a health curriculum.*

Although I have enough stories to fill a book, I would like to highlight a few that illustrate the emotional state of the students during our first year together.

With Halloween approaching, I decided to use this theme to introduce new vocabulary as well as prepare the students for what often appears to be a North American celebration of evil. After several days of in-class lessons, we went for a walk around the school. Although my suggestion was to look at decorations, I was always looking for a way to justify a school tour in the hope of helping the students feel comfortable in the school. As we passed a display case decorated for Halloween, Anna stopped, pointed, and said, "Look. Just like in my country." To my horror, I saw a papier-mâché severed head as part of a Halloween display. We were all quite upset by this experience, and we returned to class.

My most vivid memory of the first year is sitting around a table listening to the horrific stories of living in a country at war. I heard stories of children fleeing to the mountains as the army approached and returning to find their cousin dead. They told me about children keeping guns, so their personal possessions wouldn't be stolen. I heard about young people being threatened at gun point, parents threatened with the death of their children, and a horror story about soldiers going into a young girl's bedroom and stealing her bed in the middle of the night. One family told me how they had hidden all night as air raids shook their home. I was shocked, horrified, and I cried openly. Later I joked with my friends that I was suffering from "second-hand post-traumatic stress". I had no idea that there really was a condition called secondary trauma and there are "layering effect[s]" of continuously working with children and families who experience stressful,

abusive, violent and/or traumatic situations" (Division Services Bulletin, November, 1999).

The students were often very reluctant to become involved in reading and writing activities, but they were always enthusiastic about "sitting down and having a chat". Our lessons were easily driven off track. A student arrived with photos from home, and everything stopped. Although he was reluctant to give many details about the battered buildings, other students from the same village pointed out destroyed landmarks. One boy received an army hat from home, and our classroom routine was in turmoil for days. The boy spoke of his responsibility to return home and fight, and his words greatly affected the other students' ability to settle and study. The boy came to school looking like he had not slept or bathed in days. It took about two weeks before he could return to our usual routine.

Another particularly moving situation occurred when I attempted to create a teachable moment. We were discussing height, and I thought I could subtly work some math into the conversation. I asked them if they had heard the theory that our arm span is about the same as our height. I volunteered to be the first one to be measured, and I stood against the wall with my arms outstretched. To my disbelief, one girl visibly shuddered and said, "Just like Jesus." Little did I know that the symbol of the cross was often painted on their decimated holy sites by the opposing faction. When I later learned this information, I had to ponder how difficult it must be for them to live in a society where so much of our culture is based on Christian symbolism. It must have been a difficult paradigm shift to see Christians as something other than oppressors.

Planning for the future was a very difficult concept for the students. When I talked about choosing classes for the next semester, one of the boys showed great reluctance to be involved. He said, "In four months, I might be dead." Since this group had so recently been living a day-to-day existence, it was difficult, or perhaps impossible, for them to begin thinking about the future. We spent a great deal of time reflecting and playing "what if?" Some students began making plans for the future, but they had no idea how to achieve their goals. One boy stated that he wanted to become the manager of a company, but he had little interest in learning to read and write.

Feelings of safety were very slow to form for some students. Most of the boys were going out at lunch and recess, but the girls had difficulty leaving the classroom. It took us eight months to get one girl to go into the cafeteria. We finally convinced her by making a quick visit during class time when there were few students in the cafeteria. Accompanied by a second, more confident student, we took the backdoor route through the kitchen and peeked into the cafeteria. Our wonderful cafeteria manager was waiting with a plate of cookies to offer the girls on their hasty retreat back to the class.

Little by little our initial success began to deteriorate. We started the year with sixteen students. Two went home to their country of origin, and eight students dropped out. I was left with six students at the end of the term. Most of the students dropped their classes and spent most of the day in the ESL classroom. One advantage to this was that we could take numerous field trips. My goal was to help the students feel more comfortable in our city and perhaps find some interesting activities to occupy them over the summer. On one occasion, I had a sharp reminder of the stress a field trip could cause some of the students. We were invited to a cultural fair hosted by another high school. We planned to go by city

bus and then walk to my house for an international lunch. One girl seemed particularly hesitant to go to a new school. However, we convinced her that it would be a wonderful time, and she reluctantly boarded the bus. When we arrived at our destination, the girl lost her courage and refused to get off the bus. They had been in Canada for a year, but the fear of new situations was still very strong.

Another planned outing was to the university hockey tournament. Despite my attempt to inspire enthusiasm, the students seemed very reluctant to go. The guest speaker was the famous football player named Rudy who was featured in a movie of the same name. We watched the movie, we talked about what the day would be like, but the day of our field trip only Sonny and Tyler came to school. Undaunted, I was prepared to make the day a success. However, when the yellow school bus stopped in front of our school, I thought Sonny would not have the courage to go through with the plan. Although he was a burly boy of 16, he seemed so frightened to get on the bus. He finally regained his courage, but he sat against the window with the much smaller Tyler taking the aisle seat. I could only imagine what horrific memories were attached to a bus that would cause a young man to react in such a way.

The happy ending to this story is one of my favourites, and I have retold it to the students on numerous occasions. At the tournament, I bought the boys a 50/50 ticket to show them how this quintessential sports activity was played. Much to our delight, Tyler's number was called. We went to collect his prize, which was an authentic university hockey jersey. The man distributing the prize suggested we ask Rudy to autograph it. Hiding my uncertainty, I knocked on the VIP box door and made the request. We were invited in, joined Rudy in the VIP box and were treated with pop and a souvenir puck. Our guardian angel was with us that day. I believe I was more thrilled than the boys. I told everyone I met about our good fortune. One of the boys commented quietly, "Teacher, you talk too much."

One of my great frustrations during the first year was finding counseling services for the students. No one was quite sure who had the responsibility of providing services for this group. The situation was deteriorating, and Robert in particular was showing signs of post-traumatic stress. He had thrown a pair of scissors across the classroom, pushed chairs, yelled, and threatened to burn down the school. The Open Door Society managed to find funding for ten hours of counseling. The counselor visited our class on a weekly basis and managed to make a good connection with the students. However, just as the students were beginning to feel comfortable, the funding was finished and there was no hope of continuing the sessions.

The classroom became a safe haven, but perhaps to the point of a self-imposed ghetto. In the spring of the first year, the students covered the windows in the doors with paper, kept the classroom doors closed, turned the lights off at lunch, and secluded themselves from the rest of the school world. The situation became more negative when three of our students were involved in a confrontation with a student from the other ESL class. Although administration thought our program might have to be moved to a different location, the students were adamant that they wanted to stay in our school. This surprised me because it seemed that they were not comfortable in the school. However, it became apparent that they had some attachment to the school, which seemed very positive.

About one month after the altercation, I sent the following report to the principal:

*Tyler's positive attitude has been a shining light in the often gloomy atmosphere of our classroom. He enthusiastically joins most activities and usually manages to withstand the negative peer pressure of the older boys.*

*Anna's attitude has improved somewhat in the last few months. She is a little more positive about life and a little more willing to participate in activities. She is still extremely fearful of men and very slow to trust*

*Considering that Sonny's attendance continues to be erratic, it is quite amazing how much he has learned this year.... Now he can read at about a grade two level. His vocabulary has increased, and his listening skills are very good. Writing is still very difficult because he has not grasped the English spelling system, and he has trouble actually writing the letters or copying without errors.*

*The last month has been very difficult for A.J. She often mirrors her brother's anger and negativity. She is very protective of Jason, and she often becomes angry with me when I discipline him. Usually her moods do not last long, and she cannot help becoming involved in learning activities.*

*Jason has been extremely moody since his suspension. Almost every morning he comes to class in an angry mood.... Jason is reluctantly attending [English] class. Every morning, I have to cajole, encourage, and sometimes ask for help from [the vice-principal] to get Jason to class. However, he usually comes back in a much better mood.... Jason said his father threatened to send them back to [his country] if his behaviour did not improve. A.J. said she would be happy to go back.*

*Robert is somewhat calmer than he has been in the past. However, his moods are often extreme. He sits lethargically or runs around the class. He has accomplished very little in the last month. Although his attendance is very poor, he occasionally comes to school by himself, which shows he has gained some confidence, and he feels comfortable on his own.*

Since I had been hired on a one-year contract made available by special funding from the Federal Government, I thought I should prepare the students for the coming year. It seemed likely that I would not return, and they would be moved to the original ESL classroom. The students' response to this probability was far from positive. In a memo to the principal on June 12, 2000 I wrote:

*I have talked to the students a great deal about integrating with the other ESL class next fall. Most of them are very reluctant to do that. Tyler said he would attend other classes, but he would not go to ESL. Robert said he will go to [a different school].... I also mentioned to the students that perhaps [the other ESL teacher's class] would move to our classroom. Several of the students became quite upset. A.J. said that it was her classroom, and she would say who could come in.... We have talked about getting together with [the other ESL students], but this has been met with great resistance.*

Fortunately, at the end of the year, we learned that my contract would be extended for another year, so I would be able to accompany the students to the integrated classroom and help with this stress-causing transition.

## THE SECOND YEAR

Despite all our misgivings, the move to the new ESL went very well. It quickly became apparent that the atmosphere was quite positive. The students were attending classes and starting to make some friends. On October 11, 2000 I wrote a memo to the principal describing the students' reaction to being relocated to an integrated ESL classroom:

*The relocation to an integrated class has gone much better than I had anticipated. Although there was some initial tension, the students appear more comfortable in our new classroom. Some students continue to travel in pairs for bathroom breaks or library visits, but they are moving around the school more independently to buy bus passes or go to the cafeteria. As we all knew Mr. Johnson has endeared himself to the students. He has been quite successful in getting Jason and Tyler to try some math. Considering some of the girls' fear of men, they have adapted very well to having a man in the class.*

*Having the students in an integrated classroom has been very positive for several reasons:*

- The other students are good role models. [My] students see that it is acceptable to ask for help; it is okay not to know.
- They see other students work independently and attend class regularly.

The feeling of safety seemed to increase. Although it had taken us eight months to get one girl to enter the cafeteria, she was now taking Commercial Cooking and did the required shifts in the school cafeteria. This was a major accomplishment for her, and we celebrated with a photo session of the student in full cafeteria garb serving French fries to the masses.

As the year progressed, our successes began to outnumber the setbacks. One story, in particular, is very heart-warming. The students loved to hear this story, and they would ask, "Tell the story about when you wished you had your camera." "My" ESL students had come from a country where there were few people of colour. When we joined the existing ESL classroom, they had the opportunity to meet people from many countries. This was a great learning experience as they learned about similarities between countries and religions. Jason became good friends with Mohamed, a boy from Somalia. Mohamed was taking Art and struggling to finish all the required assignments. Jason had shown great artistic ability but refused to go to Art class saying he didn't know how to do anything but draw cartoons. Mohamed often returned to ESL class to do his assignments, or he used his ESL time to catch up on homework. One day, Mohamed was working on a mirror image assignment and chatting with Jason. Eventually, Jason could stand the temptation no longer and he began to paint the opposite site of Mohamed's work. There they sat, bent over a small, low table, heads gently touching, painting and chatting. I thought this would be a good time to teach the phrase, "This is a Kodak moment." The story has become one of our favourites. It demonstrates how the opportunity to meet people in a safe environment had many

positive results. The students began to take risks, which helped to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

There was still much progress to be made. Anna still kept herself very protected. In other classes, she sat against the wall with a girl from her country sitting next to her. She walked down the hallways next to the wall or in between two other people. Two of the students, who had moved up from elementary school, showed great confidence and attended classes alone without encouragement. One boy, however, was still struggling with appropriate behaviour, academic skills, and attendance. He was suspended for fighting on several occasions and eventually dropped out of school.

## THE THIRD AND FOURTH YEARS

The next two years were a mixture of success and great frustration. Most of the students attended more classes (see Appendix A) made new friends, and gained confidence. However, Robert still showed severe signs of depression, and he attended school less and less. After being away for several months, Robert called me to ask if he could come back to school. I was delighted that he was going to take this huge risk, and I made arrangements for him to register for the second semester. The day of the appointment, Robert's brother came into the school to say that Robert was sitting in the car in the school parking lot, but he refused to get out. I went to talk to him, his friend went to talk to him, but we could not convince him to come into the school. When Robert did gather enough courage to attend school, he would arrive after classes started, and leave before his final class was dismissed so that he could travel the hallways alone.

Anna is my greatest success story. After the great turmoil she suffered in the first year, she gained enough courage to get a job at a fast food restaurant. Also, Anna, A.J. and Jason walked across the graduation stage four years after arriving in Canada. There had been a great deal of discussion about whether or not they would attend the ceremony, so I wasn't sure if they would attend until I actually saw them at the auditorium. Despite the fact that each of them needed one more class to officially graduate, the day was a wonderful celebration.

## THE FIFTH YEAR

The next year, Tyler from the original class, as well as Liz and Ian who came to high school in their second year in Canada, also graduated. It was another great day of celebration.

# The Literature

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In an effort to understand why these students acted as they did, I explored the literature on several topics. Information on post-traumatic stress was enlightening and described many of the behaviours I witnessed. Research on the acquisition of language helped me understand the connection between first language education and the acquisition of a second language. Statistics on early school leaving in both Alberta and Saskatchewan helped put this situation into perspective. In addition, Suzanne Zwarych's dissertation on school attachment outlined the affective dimension experienced by students in school.

## POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

Lawrence Hrubes wrote about his experiences with people from this cultural group when they first arrived in Canada. In an article entitled "Teaching Refugees With Special Needs" Hrubes (1999) writes:

*Many of the [people] came with members of their extended families who had also fled, though it was common to see families with certain relatives missing: a father or brother who had been separated as they fled, or forced to remain behind; a daughter or aunt who had been killed or fallen ill in a camp overseas. Many people simply did not know what had become of loved ones. Were they alive? Were they hiding, trapped inside [their country]? Had they escaped to a refugee camp somewhere, or been airlifted to some distant country? On the Canadian army bases, efforts were made to locate missing relatives. Evidence and testimony were also recorded about the unspeakable atrocities the people had experienced, requiring them to relive the violent nightmares of the previous months and weeks. (p. 1)*

Susan McDonald (2000) outlines the effects of trauma on second language learning. She writes, "Refugees may have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, rape, and torture, and when they arrive in Canada, they may have suffered trauma." (p. 690) As previously stated, this group of refugees was given the unprecedented opportunity to stay in Canada for two years before making a decision to apply for citizenship or return to their country. Although this option was undoubtedly provided with the best of intentions, it was another factor in the struggle to settle. As McDonald writes, "An indefinite immigration status adds to the stress of daily living." (p. 690)

The writings of Hrubes also helped to explain what I saw as a backward situation. When the students arrived, the majority seemed in good spirits, started making friends, and were quite out-going. However, as time passed, they regressed, and became more withdrawn. Hrubes explains that "studies on the effects and stages of trauma have shown that refugees who reach a place of safety will sometimes experience an initial 'euphoria' period" (p.1). The author continues to elaborate that "some therapists have warned that serious depression and anxiety may surface months or even years after the traumatic events" (p. 2).

A manual distributed by the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture outlines many of the challenges faced by people experiencing post-traumatic stress. "Low self-esteem is one of the greatest barriers to the daunting task of learning a new language. Victims of torture and warfare have often been systematically stripped

of their dignity, identity and self-worth." (p.11) This theory is reiterated by MacDonald (2000), who writes:

*Trauma erodes one's sense of self, self-esteem, and confidence; there are feelings of blame, and responsibility for the traumatic event. All these feelings can work to prevent an individual from becoming a successful learner. (p. 691)*

Our terrible experience with the severed head at Halloween made the suggestions from the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture very realistic. When teaching body parts, they suggest, "Keep bodies whole: in other words, don't show body parts in isolation. Many refugees have seen actual severed body parts, and may react negatively to this. Show real people, labeling body parts accordingly." (p. 10) This information would have been very helpful for the developers of a language learning software package we purchased. One of the activities for beginners was to reconstruct a Frankenstein-like character lying on a table. Above him was a shelf holding jars containing different body parts. Needless to say, this was not a popular language lesson, and most students avoided it.

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Hetty Rosessingh, from the University of Calgary, investigated the variability of ESL learners' acquisition of cognitive academic language. Rosessingh (2003) states, "The crucial learner variables identified by numerous researchers in the field include level of first language (L1) proficiency and age on arrival." (p. 4) Using the Dual Iceberg Model created by Jim Cummins, Rosessingh describes how the tip of the iceberg is the conversational skills that are less cognitively demanding. The surface features such as pronunciation and fluency are different for each language. However, the underlying features, such as cognitive and academic proficiency, are common across languages. These underlying proficiencies are compared to the part of the iceberg that is not seen, yet gives the iceberg stability. The tip of the iceberg, representing basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), can be gained after only two years of study in a second language. These tasks require about 2500 – 5000 words of English. However, Rosessingh points out that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) requires 40,000 words of English. Referring to the research of Collier (1995), Rosessingh writes, "Collier suggests a grade equivalent (GE) of 4 as the linguistic threshold required in L1 for smooth transfer to L2 of underlying concepts understanding central to cognitive development, and that this level can be attained (and sustained) after 4-5 years of schooling in both languages." (p. 7)

Rosessingh reflects on the situation experienced by students who must learn a second language before the features that provide the stability under the surface are fully developed. Quoting research from her previous research with Kover (2002), Rosessingh states:

*ESL students of this profile are at high risk for academic failure. The impoverished levels of both L1 and L2 means there is little beneath the surface transfer, and the higher order thinking skills of reasoning, integrating, synthesizing, hypothesizing, analyzing and imagining for example are left under developed. And sounding good only compounds their problems at school, since so many of these students' teachers will attribute their academic failure to a cognitive impediment (i.e. little beneath the surface). (p. 9)*

Rosessingh quotes Oakes (1993) who states that because of this misunderstanding, a disproportionate number of students are placed in non-academic tracks or Special Education Programs.

Although Rosessingh uses this theory to explain the experiences of young arrivals who have not developed these underlying proficiencies in either language, I would like to suggest that it also explains the situation of some refugee youth who arrive with little first language education. If a child's education is interrupted due to war, poverty, or political unrest, the young person does not have the opportunity to develop the underlying skills outlined previously. As Rosessingh states, the student's ability to "sound good" confuses our estimation of the student's skills. It has been my observation that students with a high level of BICS can retell a story, yet when it comes to the higher level questions, which require making inferences or hypotheses, the student is unable to move beyond the retelling stage. It has also been my observation that some students began to develop higher level thinking skills during their religious education. Despite having only one or two years of formal academic education, students who were given a religious education based on metaphors and symbolism seemed to be able to make the transition beyond retelling a story more easily than those students who did not have a strong religious training.

Rosessingh explains that much of CALP is based on an understanding of culture. She writes:

*It becomes important to understand that literacy and academic proficiency do not operate in a vacuum. Everyday, we are called upon to perform within the context of the demands of the dominant culture: The values, beliefs and assumptions that are privileged to those who "have it"; these may be inaccessible to those who do not. These are part of the everyday unconsciousness of dominant culture members – the internalized ways of knowing and understanding the world that are represented by way of metaphor. (p. 29)*

In conclusion, Rosessingh states that students who arrive in Canada without well-developed CALP in their first language remain at prolonged risk for academic failure. She writes, "Thought processes that involve reasoning, synthesis, integration, analysis – in short, the higher order thinking skills that are located in the depths of the iceberg model – may take much longer to develop in L2 for these learners." (p. 30) Although Rosessingh is relating this model to students who arrive at an early age without the development of CALP in their first language, I would like to reiterate that I believe this model is also representative of students who arrive at a later age but have low first language literacy skills. In addition, students who quickly gain a high level of basic spoken language give educators a false impression of the level of concept development they have achieved.

## ATTACHMENT TO SCHOOL

Zwarych (2004) provides the following summary describing the components of attachment from the perspective of high-attached students:

- 1. Academic: feeling that school is relevant, respect for learning, which is not tied to academic performance, and an appreciation that school performance impacts their future.*
- 2. Relationship: all students are attached to friends, teachers, and almost all to other personnel and the social environment of the school.*
- 3. Activities: most attached students participated in activities of some kind and considered these activities to be extremely important for interest, realization of future goals, and as a method of meeting other people.*
- 4. Family values: many attached students believe that parents contribute to the development of attachment and belonging to a family where education is emphasized and school attendance is important fosters attachment to school. (p. 25)*

Zwarych's research on school attachment in high school helps to explain some of the behaviours demonstrated by this group of ESL students. "Children who lack security may have negative feelings about their own worth, may withdraw and make fewer demands" (Zwarych, p. 13). The lack of attachment may explain why three of the boys became involved in a confrontation with another ESL student and why one boy made threats to me and the school facility. Zwarych writes, "One of the reasons attachment to others reveals itself as a definite concern is because attachment has an impact on the level of violence one individual may impose upon another" (p. 19).

Despite these negative aspects, the students seemed to show attachment to some extent. I believe I became a parent replacement for them since many of the parents were struggling with their own issues. The male Vice-Principal also became a trusted adult figure in their lives. Over time, the students felt comfortable enough to go directly to him when problems arose. As Zwarych explains, "Attachments may be formed to parent replacements such as relatives, teachers, coaches, and counselors in order to provide adolescents with necessary security." (p. 22) In addition, the students often threatened that they would change schools when they were faced with challenges. However, over the five years I worked with this group of students, no one permanently changed schools. Students were relocated to special programs, but they all returned to our high school. One family moved out of the city twice, and when they returned, they requested that their children be enrolled in our school. One boy has re-enrolled three times. This behaviour leads me to believe that some sense of security developed for these students.

During our first year in the school, the students were unable to develop peer relationships outside our class. "Peer support may be one of the necessary attachment relationships needed by both securely and insecurely attached youth" (Zwarych, p. 23). Over the second year, the students began to develop relationships within our multiethnic classroom and then within the general school population. In my opinion, this factor has been the most important in positively changing the behaviours and attitudes of the students.

Pointing out three of the main factors influencing attachment, Zwarych writes, "Factors which contribute to attachment to school include feelings of importance,

appreciation for the value of education, and a feeling of acceptance or belonging to the school community" (p. 23). I would like to hypothesize that these three important factors did not develop during the students' first year in Canada. It is my observation that the students were very aware of their refugee status, which they interpreted as a position of little importance in the community. It is also my belief that since many of the students had very low first language education, they had not grasped during the first year the importance of education in Canada. Finally, from the interviews with students, I came to understand that the students did not feel accepted by their Canadian peers. For some of the students, this feeling continued throughout their high school career. "To be attached to school, a student must feel safe, welcomed, and have a sense of belonging." (Zwarych, p. 42)

## The Students' Perspective

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In Group One, six students from the original class were interviewed. An additional two students agreed to participate, but when I tried to make an interview appointment, they were either busy or not at home. I began to wonder if this was their way of refusing to be involved. One student agreed to answer the questions in writing, but he never returned his comments to me. In the interviews, four questions were asked: What did you like about being in a class with only students from your country? What didn't you like? What did you like about being in an ESL class with students from other countries? What didn't you like? There were no restrictions if the students chose to discuss other topics. Their responses were grouped together according to the categories that emerged from the interviews.

### GROUP ONE

#### **ADVANTAGES OF BEING WITH STUDENTS FROM YOUR OWN COUNTRY**

When I asked Sonny which class he liked being in best, he responded by saying:

*I think I like it better the first time when we were together in the same class because there were not other people there – mixed. I felt more comfortable learning English with people from my own country. There was nothing I didn't like about it. The first time when we came here, we didn't know any English. If you have different people in the class and the teacher asks you question and you don't know, you feel embarrassed.*

Jason stated, "What I like was talking with my friends from my country. You have fun, but you won't learn that much." Jason also talked about the comfort of being with people of the same culture. He said, "When you meet [people from our country] like it doesn't matter who it is as long as he's [our ethnicity] you know you still know what kind of culture he has. You know how to act with him, but with Canadians it's all different. You have the same jokes, not like in Canada. We're multiculturalism."

A.J. pointed out what she liked about being with students from her country:

*I liked being with my people, people from my country. I met all those people. I didn't know those people before. I felt comfortable telling my friends from my country. I felt closer with them. We know. We're from the same country. If I had a Canadian friend, I would stay with her and talk with her, but I wouldn't get close to her.*

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK ENGLISH**

Although Liz started her Canadian education in grade eight, she also experienced a homogeneous ethnic ESL classroom when all the students from her country were withdrawn from class to take ESL lessons. When I asked Liz what she liked about being in a class with only students from her country, she answered, "Nothing." But later she said, "For the beginning of the class it was OK because we didn't have other friends, but at the end it turned out worse because we were just talking our language. We were talking our language; we didn't learn much. The teacher tried to stop us, but she couldn't. It didn't work out, so our parents pulled the plug on the teacher, and she just [taught] one person at a time. That was good because we got to speak only English. There was no one from my language to talk to."

Jason explained why it was difficult to speak English with the other students from his country. He said, "Cause you get distracted and you never speak English. You just feel weird talking to them. Like even still now, when we go out we won't talk English." When I asked him if it feels weird talking with someone else in English, he answered, "No...Like even with [the translator]. I never speak [my language] with her. I look at her like Canadian."

A.J. saw that having Canadian friends gave her more opportunities to speak English. She stated, "I don't care if I don't have Canadian friends, but I want someone to talk to, to say, 'Hi.' I had my friends, but when I go to classes, I'd like to talk to Canadians about school and teenager stuff."

## **BEING ACCEPTED BY CANADIANS**

The students had very strong opinions about how they thought Canadian students perceived them. Jason stated, "Until we got into Mr. Johnson's class it was kind of weird. A lot of people thought we were crazy. They see us all the time together, and you know, they think we don't want anyone else [to meet]." When I commented that some of the Canadian students might have been too shy to introduce themselves, Jason reasoned:

*Well a little bit us and a little bit them. Some people got us the wrong way. The only reason they thought we couldn't speak English, but if I don't know [him], what I'm going to say? People thought we don't want to hang out with them.*

A.J. observed, "The other thing is the Canadian students. They wouldn't help us. Back when I was in school [in my country], we helped one another you know. They didn't really help, tried to explain how to do this. You had to ask them if you want help." When I asked A.J. if she would have been more comfortable if the Canadian students had offered help, she replied, "In the beginning, they wanted to talk to

us, but we really didn't want to talk to them. After that they didn't really care. It was our mistake."

Anna had a much stronger opinion. She stated, "First of all, I didn't like school. Second, I didn't like the students. The way I feel, I think they just like you if you drink, do drugs, party and dress sexy. But in that way, it wasn't me, so they didn't like me." Anna thought for a while and then clarified her statement. She said, "I think I'm wrong about that. When we came, they came to talk to us. They did like us. I didn't know English, so I couldn't talk to them. I wasn't free enough."

Anna reflected on the situation in our classroom at the end of the first year. Three of the boys had been in a fight with a student from the other ESL class. They were suspended, and there was a discussion about moving our class out of the school due to concerns of more violence with the general school population. She recalled, "Remember when we put paper over the windows. The boys didn't want anyone to see us. We had the music very loud." She continued, "After the fight you guys made a mistake." Anna stated that she did not want to return to the same high school, but her younger brother convinced her that returning would be best. He told her that the Vice-Principal wanted them to come back, so she agreed. Anna concluded, "Some girls still don't like us. I have a feeling that they still hate us."

Liz had very definite ideas and perceptions of how she was perceived by Canadians. She stated, "I think Canadians don't like you if you don't speak English. When I do a presentation, every student stops and listens. They don't listen to the other kids." She added, "They stare at us when we walk down the hallway." Although Liz seemed quite upset when she related the following situation, she seemed to be quite secure knowing her rights as a landed immigrant. She remembered:

*Someone told the Canadian kids that we are refugees, and they started swearing at us. They were swearing at us in front of the school. They said, 'F\_\_\_ you' and 'Go back to your country.' This is a free country and you can do anything you want. It was different for my brother because he was little. He started out in grade four. He fit in with those kids because they don't care where he comes from. For me it was different because lots of the Canadian kids, I didn't have their style of clothes. I didn't have money.... Mostly because they were asking me to teach them swear words in my language, and I wouldn't tell them, so I didn't fit in with them. Another girl was teaching them swear words, so she fit in with them.*

## **CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS**

Reflecting on why some Canadian students got the wrong impression of this group of students, Jason said, "We didn't know. We have different culture too. It's not the same when you come from the war to the peace. The place in war all the time."

A.J. spoke of the shock she experienced when coming to a high school three days after she arrived in Canada. Because of the war, A.J. was not able to finish grade eight. When she arrived in Canada, she started at the age-appropriate high school grade, but she was emotionally unprepared for the change. She said, "It was scary for me. The school was so big, and the students were so tall. It was weird you know. For us it was everything new. We just came to a new city and new country. Like we didn't have any friends. Like Anna and Tyler and the others, we didn't even know them, and then new classes, different classes, different from our

country." Jason concurred by saying, "They said when I went to high school it was going to be different, but it was worse."

## REFLECTIONS ON MOVING TO THE INTEGRATED ESL CLASS

When I reminded Jason that he and the other students were very resistant to moving to Mr. Johnson's class, he commented, "Ya, well we didn't know it was going to be better.... From now on, whoever comes to this country, you do that. Get them mixed up with other people. I don't think it's good to let them stay together all in one class." Jason described why it was better for him to be with students from other countries:

*Like even if they're from your same country, but there's other people from other countries then that's different. You will be able to speak your own language a little bit, but not all the time with your own people from your own country, you're going to talk your own language. You don't have to worry about other people getting offended when you're with different people from different country. You have to speak English. And being with other people from other countries, it's better because you're practising English specially when you're with Chinese. They're pretty smart, so they help you lots.*

Danny talked about the positive social changes that occurred when they moved to the integrated ESL class. He said, "As soon as we got with the other people we met lots of friends. When we were by ourselves we didn't meet lots of friends. Some, but not lots. After, we met people different nationality." A.J. compared the learning environment in each type of ESL classroom. First, she remembered how it had been in a classroom with only students from her country:

*And we [the students from my country] weren't jealous of one another. No one studied good. We were all the same. No one had better marks than the other one; no one spoke English better than the other one, so we were just all the same. We didn't care much. If you see someone better than you, then you're jealous and you try to work harder and harder.*

I asked if that changed when we went to Mr. Johnson's class. A.J. replied, "Ya, I was jealous of Christine and the other ones. Not jealous, but I wanted to work like them."

Although Danny had not attended a full semester in either of the classrooms, he had some very strong opinions. He stated, "Actually, I did like [the integrated classroom]. That was a big help actually. Because we didn't understand everything in the other classes. Mr. Johnson told us how to do it and gave us an idea." He stated emphatically, "Not students from same country in the same class. I don't agree with that. Except one hour a day." When I asked why the students shouldn't be together, Danny explained, "Cause they speak the same language, and they don't pay attention to the teacher and they spoken their own language. Also they will do a crazy stuff."

Despite Sonny's preference for being in a class with only students from his country, he did enjoy the socializing that occurred in the integrated classroom. He spoke positively of the international potluck lunches which he called "parties". Sonny also commented, "Canadians came too." Liz shared her feelings about an integrated class, "I like it because there were all different culture kids, different

countries. We learned lots of new things from them, and we told them things. We talked English; we practised lots." A.J. summed up, "Once we moved to [the integrated class] we went to classes."

Liz and A.J. had some criticisms of the integrated class. Liz stated, "It was tougher, more work for English." The format for the integrated, multilevel classroom was similar to a resource room where students worked on homework and assignments. The first year, the lessons had been more teacher-directed since most of the students had a similar language level, and they were not attending classes that had homework. A.J. stated, "One thing I like about the first year was having lessons. The English I learned, I learned from you."

## **ADVANTAGES OF GOING TO CLASSES OTHER THAN ESL**

Danny reflected, "When we first started going to other classes, we didn't feel comfortable until we got use to it." Jason reflected on the advantages of attending classes other than ESL and his strategies for feeling comfortable:

*Well, that beginning, it was a little hard. We didn't speak that much. We needed a lot of help. But still it was a better idea to go to classes. At least one or two or three classes and couple in ESL to do homework and practise what you do. We should have [done] that from the beginning. Go to all the classes. It doesn't matter if you don't know. But you feel uncomfortable because when you don't speak you think people might laugh and stuff, but it doesn't matter if they do because they should try to speak our language. They can't even say one word. First I thought of that, but after that I didn't care. Whoever laughed, I told them, "You try to speak my language." They just turn red.*

I asked Jason if he thought it helped to see ESL students from other countries go to class even if their English was very limited. He replied:

*Ya, its supposed to be like that. Just go and try your best. Like the way we did we didn't learn anything. All we did from you. We did learn from each other, but when we were with other people, we learned new words everyday, and you practise them. And like English class. It's the one to take always because you talk about it and write.*

*Even if you don't want to go to other classes, at least take English. Easy classes at first and later you get used to it. You see Mechanic we took and Phys. Ed. and English. They were easy you know. Mechanics we didn't know how to write much, but we had a chance to talk to people. And you make friends for sure.*

A.J. began by saying, "First semester they shouldn't take any classes because they should just learn English because they come first time. Second semester they can take classes because it's hard for them. Because they don't speak English at all. Like they go to English class. The teacher's talking, but they don't get it." Jason clarified, "That's what I'm saying. They can take ESL class too, some ESL, some other class too." A.J. added, "But easy class like Phys. Ed. and Art...and also Math because Math doesn't have anything to do with English." Jason continued, "You know, even if you don't speak or know anything just go. You don't have to write or

do anything. Just listen. If you fail it doesn't matter, you can take it again next semester. But if you go like take hard subject it's going to be hard for both, even for the teacher too."

When I reminded Jason how Canadian students started "hanging out" in our integrated ESL class, Jason reflected, "You meet them in other classes, so they come. Like when they see what kind of person you are and they like you and they come. But if you stay [alone] no one is going to know you." I mentioned to Jason and A.J. that it must have been difficult when students from their country quit school for various reasons, Jason positively added, "That's why when you go to class, you meet other people and then you don't care. Then you meet other friends." Jason told me proudly, "I was the one who started going first to classes and then everyone started going there. I took English and other class and they started doing that too." When I commented that it had been a good experience, Jason replied:

*Ya, and I learned lots. [The teacher] understood me. He knew I didn't know English much and stuff. After the class was done, because I didn't have other classes, I was in ESL, he used to say, "Every time just stop and I'll tell you anything you want. Anything you didn't understand."*

A.J. explained, "When you go to class, you learn more things, but when you first come you need to know how to introduce yourself."

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Anna was the only student who talked about parent involvement. She said:

*I just wish my mom and dad had come to school to see what we were doing. On the other hand, they didn't know what was going on in here. It wasn't their fault. How come [the settlement worker] understood us? She asked, "What classes are you taking?" I said, "None." and she said, "I'm going to phone your teacher."*

## **LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

A.J. talked about the friendships she has made outside of school. She said, "When I worked, I have teenage friends and we get along so fine. They say, "You're so funny." and joke around. Now we're leaving, [they say], 'Don't go.' They're eighteen and nineteen."

Jason showed a great deal of confidence when he talked about his comfort in learning English at work. He explained:

*I told them at work, people I hang out with, "If I don't say it right, tell me." But they say it doesn't matter. "We understand." But I just want to say it proper way.... You shouldn't be ashamed of like not knowing."*

## ADVICE TO NEWCOMERS

A.J. commented, "We were kind of shy. We weren't very open in the beginning." Jason advised, "One thing, never be shy. Always stick your nose in. When you're shy you won't be able to do anything."

## GROUP TWO

I made contact with one family through a resettlement agency. I was so surprised by the reaction I received. Although the mother who answered the phone did not know me at all, she was very supportive of my project. She said she was very thankful to Canadians and she would be happy to give something back to society. When I spoke to her husband, he was so eager to help, he asked if I would like to speak to his children that very moment. I graciously declined saying that I must have the parents' written permission before interviewing the students. When I went to visit this family, I was quite thrilled that they had made arrangements for me to visit another family. In both homes, I was met with great willingness to share and contribute.

Mushihan was fourteen, and Mo was thirteen when they came to Canada. Both were placed in grade eight. Mushihan described his first educational experience in Canada:

*We came here during summer too, and our sponsors asked us if we wanted to go into ESL or go straight to school, and we didn't want to waste a year in ESL, so we decided to go straight to grade eight with Canadians and stuff. And it was a good experience. In the beginning it was kind of hard because we didn't really understand, but after that it was really good and then you get to make friends with Canadians, and it just becomes easier. You get to know people and they can help you out and stuff like that.*

When I commented that other ESL students had told me how much they wanted a Canadian friend to help them learn English, Mo responded by saying:

*It's like we spend most of the day like from eight to three we spend speaking English, so we pick it up really fast because we're talking all the time. You know when you're in ESL class and you have like a partner from your country, it's hard to speak with him English, so I think ESL can help you, but it's also a little bit harder. It seems you have to speak with them in your own language.*

I asked Mushihan and Mo to describe their second year in Canada when they moved into high school. Mo explained, "We started high school, grade nine for a month, and then we moved to another city [in eastern Canada] and that's where we actually joined ESL class. We had that offer and we said we would try it. It was good." Mushihan continued:

*What happened was after we finished grade eight here, the teachers actually thought we could handle Canadian classes without ESL and we did, but then when we went to [eastern Canada] when we went they gave us a test and the teacher said that we still needed ESL...so for that year we did have ESL classes. It was easier, so much easier than here because they help you and try to explain things.*

Mo explained the structure of the classes:

*We had like two ESL classes that you could get, you know, like special help and the other classes would be normal. You would go with Canadian students and you would get the same homework. Some of the teachers were like you [resource room ESL] and the classes were easier classes.*

Mushihan described what are often referred to as "sheltered classes", in which a subject area is taught to ESL students only. Mushihan stated:

*I didn't really like it there cause the classes that I had, I had Social Studies was ESL, English was ESL and I remember Math was with Canadians and that was second semester and some technical class, so out of five classes, I had four ESL and one Canadian, so they kind of separate you until you're done that, and I didn't like that. I had only one class with Canadians, so I didn't really like ESL*

Mushihan and Mo's family returned to western Canada where the students re-enrolled in their original high school to start grade 10 without ESL. Mushihan explained:

*When we came back here again, they just said you can come. We didn't have to take a test or anything. We went back to the same school and took our classes just like regular Canadians. We don't have to do anything special.*

When I asked how they managed with essay writing without ESL support, Mo replied:

*Actually, essays are a little bit hard. Especially in-class essays. I'm not even taking it home, but other than that, the teachers are really good. Most of my teachers don't even know I'm from a different country, but if I ask them for help, they'll help you. Cause if you don't know what are you suppose to do?*

Mushihan responded by saying, "There's lots of teachers who don't even know because we speak good." Mo agreed, "Ya, they don't even recognize it." Mushihan added, "It's only the English teachers I tell that I'm not from this country, and I'm just new here and when we ask they help us. They double check it."

I asked the students how they managed to make friends, and Mo responded by saying, "They just sort of came." Mushihan stated, "For me it wasn't hard at all because I played on all the school sports teams and like city soccer ... and skateboarding you make friends." I asked if they spent time with their Canadian friends outside of school, and Mo replied, "Oh ya! You get to know them really good." The children of these two families were the only ones in this age group. The children of other families from their country were either older or younger.

Michael explained that he was nine years old and in grade four when he came to Canada. He continued, "I didn't take ESL even in [eastern Canada]. Like there were ESL classes, but I didn't want to take them. I have good marks at school." James described his experience:

*When I first came here I was in grade five, and I took ESL for a year or whatever, and I only had one class for ESL, and it was English. It was the class that just helped us learn English. I never did French. I only went to ESL for a year then I switched schools because I didn't really need it. I didn't really like my school. At my second school I made lots of friends. I didn't really know English that well, but I learned more and more.*

When I asked the students what would make school better for them, the first comment was no essays. Then Mushihan seriously made several comments:

*Maybe try not to separate people as much. Give us more freedom of taking classes like when we went there [eastern Canada] I couldn't even choose what classes I want to take. Like the teacher gave me classes and when I was here I got so much freedom like I'd like this one, I'd like this one. She was, "No, you have to take this, this, this." I wanted computer class ....I think we were only allowed to take two classes, maybe one.*

Michael stated, "They shouldn't have ESL classes at all because you'll learn faster if you have to learn and in ESL everything would have to go slower. They take it slower with you and they try to teach you as slow as possible. But in actual classes, you just have to learn." Mo suggested:

*Be with more students, like actual Canadians because it's way easier because you pick it up, the language with whoever you speak with, especially if you're young. Say you're with someone who speaks French for two months. I'm going to learn because there's nothing else, so if you have ESL classes with all students speak different languages not the same one I think it's harder because the teacher has to like teach one language to all those where as if the students speak the same language they pick it up faster even if its like the grammar. All I remember in ESL is doing grammar.*

I asked James if he had a chance to make any Canadian friends, and he replied, "Ya, like I kinda did, but I don't know. I never had my main friends, and I moved to my new school. I made lots and lots of new friends." When I reflected that James and his sister were the only two people from their country, James clarified, "Ya and my brother, but he wasn't in ESL. Ya, he started from kindergarten."

I asked the students if they had any suggestions for helping students make friends and gaining the confidence to speak to Canadians, Mo replied:

*That's what they do in [eastern Canada]. I remember in my English class, they would never put, like if there was another student from our country, they would never put them together because they were going to talk the whole time, so always put the student with, you know, like if you were in a Canadian class, like they'd put you with the Canadians, or if you're in an ESL class they would put you with somebody from other countries. And then if they're from another country and you don't know their language you have to speak English.*

When I asked Mo if she was involved in sports too, she responded, "No, not that much. No, but even in gym class, like don't be shy to ask people questions.

"Reflecting on why some students are not comfortable speaking to new people, Michael stated, "I guess they're scared they'll be made fun of."

To my great astonishment Michael explained how few immigrants there were in his school and how well he was treated by his peers. He said, "I was the only one from my friends in school and there was no one else from different countries except me. They were all Canadian." Michael's advice to new immigrants was, "You shouldn't be shy at all. You should just open up. You shouldn't be scared." James continued, "I think it gets easier for you when you make more friends, talk to more people and make more friends. Like, let's say one person is nice to you and you have more courage to make other friends."

Mo and Mushihan who are siblings were also the only immigrants in their school. Although they had one class together, they did not socialize together. Mo explained her theory of developing friends:

*It just depends who you get closer to, who you really want to hang out with because even if I had somebody from my country in the same school. If I don't feel comfortable hanging around with her, I wouldn't do that.*

I met with Eve, who was suffering from a sore throat and a cold. Unfortunately, the tape recorder did not work during our first interview. We tried it again, but Eve's throat was very sore, and we had lost the spontaneity of the first conversation. I tried to fill in the blanks wherever I could. First, I asked Eve to tell me about her first educational experiences in Canada. She remembered, "Well, we were a lot of kids from other countries and we started taking English, and we had those classes and other ESL classes." I asked her to repeat her statement that it was good to have ESL in the beginning because she made some friends. Eve answered, "Ya. They didn't know English and neither did I." Eve spoke about how she felt comfortable to talk, and other ESL students didn't laugh if she made a mistake. Some Canadian kids did. When I clarified that the other ESL students were more understanding, Eve responded by saying, "Ya they were. It wasn't a big deal, because of course they made the exact same mistakes too. And they would know where you're coming from because [English is] new and different." Eve said the teachers taught her things other than English grammar. She expanded by saying, "Ya, like traditions, well not exactly traditions, more like customs."

Eve was only in ESL from September until March. Then the second year in Canada she went to a different elementary school and she didn't need ESL. During the first year Eve was in ESL there were a few kids from her country, but she didn't spend much time with them. Eve explained, "I didn't spend much time with them at school except recess and stuff." Eve explained how students were divided by grade. Each grade sat at a different table. Other students from Eve's country sat at different tables, so she didn't have much contact with them during ESL classes. Eve reflected, "There were kids from my county, and they were my friends at that time, but I needed to make new friends."

The first time we talked about how difficult it was to go to a school and not have any friends. Eve explained:

*You don't know why you're not fitting in. It's so hard ...if you have the wrong clothes, hair, makeup or whatever. It's hard when you're a teenager and you haven't figured out who exactly you are yet and you knew at home I guess*

*you knew more who you are because it's just who everyone else is: your parents, your siblings all speak the same language and I guess act the same way and suddenly you're so confused.*

Eve observed that some kids were trying to pretend they were something they weren't. She explained:

*They felt that in order to fit in, they have to be who everyone else is. They have to like the same music, dress the same way, speak the same way, just forget where they came from like I know people who are ashamed of their parents because they have an accent or something, but like I'm not. I'm proud of it because that's who I am. I love my country. I love my people. That's where I was born. That's where I grew up. I mean, I love it here too. It's not that I don't like it here, but you know both places are part of me and I like them both.*

When I responded that people don't have to give up one culture to accept another, Eve continued:

*Exactly, a lot of people don't feel that because everyone else here didn't have to do that because they were born here, so they only knew one thing. They pretend they're not who they are. They have to be who everyone else is. They have to be part of the group.*

From the first interview I had understood that when Eve went to high school she had some friends from grade eight, but she clarified:

*A few but I can't really say I was really friends with them. I talked with them and stuff, but it's not like I was best friends with them. I guess I was friends with them in the sense that I saw them at school and I talked to them and went out with at school and they were really nice to me. They weren't like jerks if I made a mistake or anything. They're all like, "you're from a different country. That's cool." Because I guess they didn't have kids from different countries, and I learned a lot from them. I learned a lot of English like slang I guess, and that was a good thing.*

I asked Eve if I had understood her statement in the first interview that that's the best way to learn English. She agreed:

*Ya! Just talk to people and like have friends. You know that you can be accepted even if you do make those mistakes. If you don't know what something means. Even if you don't ask them, you just assume and you use that and you can use the same word. It feels nice to learn that you know something.*

I stated my observation that slang is important for young people because they do not want to talk like the textbook. Eve answered:

*Ya! True, but also, I've noticed that a lot of people who come from other countries feel like they just have to speak, speak slang to fit in like the other kids, but that's not true. When you think if a teenager, we do use a lot of slang, we use things like "like" for example. You know it's just there, but you*

*don't necessarily have to speak that all of the time. You don't have to act like some moron who doesn't know how to speak, like I hate when people use double negatives like, "I don't have nothing." I hate that, and I know so many people do that like especially people from other countries. It's not that they don't know how to say, "I don't have anything." It's just that they think that's how you're supposed to speak and I hate when they don't speak English right because they think they have to speak slang.*

## Conclusion

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A recurring theme in many of the interviews in both groups was the positive aspect of making friends outside of their cultural group. Although the students stated that having a friend was a way to practice English, there seemed to be an underlying theme of wanting to be accepted. Eve spoke positively about being accepted by her Canadian peers despite her mistakes in English. Liz and Anna described their perception of not being accepted which seems to demonstrate how important this factor is in students' attachment to school. A.J. and Jason proudly talked about the friendships and the sense of security they developed at their places of employment, which encouraged them to learn more English, practice what they had learned and feel comfortable enough to ask for correction.

As James so wisely summarized, when a student makes one friend, it gives her or him the courage to make more friends. Although it seems that the second group was able to develop successful relationships very soon after arriving in Canada, the first group remained isolated for their first year in a Canadian school. By integrating the students into a multiethnic ESL class, the students began to make friends, gain confidence and develop relationships with Canadian students.

The first group also experienced positive academic success after being integrated with students from other countries. My interpretation of this situation was that other ESL students provided positive role models for the first group of students. A.J. described it as a constructive feeling of competition that had not existed when her group remained alone. Jason recognized that by developing friendships outside his cultural group, he could withstand the emotional pressure of seeing his country-mates drop out of school.

Several of the students commented on the opportunities to share their culture as well as learn about other cultures when they were integrated in a multiethnic class. It is my observation that there were at least two positive benefits to this. First, the students discovered that there might be differences across cultures, but we also have much in common. A multicultural atmosphere gave people the opportunity to meet people of cultures that were shunned or discriminated against in their home countries. Their world-view expanded, and they began to explore different ways of knowing. Second, when the students shared their cultural beliefs, traditional food, and customs with others who showed an interest and accepted their differences, they began to feel accepted. The feelings of attachment were enhanced, and a sense of security developed.

I believe this is a very important factor for students who have been persecuted because of their ethnic differences. When they realize that they are accepted outside their cultural group, their feelings of safety grow. This in turn allows students to

let down their guard, relax, and feel less defensive. It seems that the degree to which this sense of security develops is directly related to the trauma experienced in the country of origin. The students who suffered great trauma made huge progress in taking risks outside their cultural group, yet a feeling of distrust remained five years after their arrival in Canada.

There are many factors that influence how ESL students will adjust to the Canadian education system: the level of first language education of both the students and their parents, the choice to immigrate, the degree of post-traumatic stress, as well as all the personal factors which influence a person's desire and ability to learn. This study focused only on the factor of integration with students of other cultures. All of the students interviewed spoke positively about their experiences with ESL students from other countries. Many of the students in the first group recognized the benefits of integration to their social life as well as their academic experiences. It seemed that the participants in the second group were able to integrate quicker due to several factors. There were fewer students from their cultural group. Students from their country were not delegated to one school, but rather attended several schools around the city. The older students in the second group who were aged thirteen to fifteen upon arrival were placed in elementary school. Several students in the first group were the same age, but they were placed in the high school program. I would like to suggest that generally speaking, the students who started in elementary school were able to adjust quicker. Perhaps this is because elementary school students spend the majority of their time with the same students, and they are more likely to develop relationships with students outside their culture.

Returning to the components of attachment of high-attached students outlined by Suzanne Zwarych, improvement was made from the first to the second year for Group One.

1. Feeling that school is relevant: During their first year in Canada, the students in Group One seemed to find little relevance in school. First, most of the families had not decided to stay; therefore, there was little reason to gain an education in this country. Second, students who had received little first language education did not see the connection between education and employment. It was only after learning the values of the new culture that a change in attitude occurred.
2. Attachment to friends, teachers, and other personnel: After moving to the integrated classroom, the students in Group One began to make friends outside their cultural group. This helped to develop a feeling of acceptance and safety, which, in turn, encouraged the students to take positive risks by attending classes and making more friends.
3. Participation in activities that are considered important for interest, realizing future goals, and meeting people: Although the boys seemed to make the most progress in this area by becoming involved in intramural sports, the girls made progress outside of school. The three girls interviewed in Group One all worked part-time while attending high school.
4. Family values of education: Since Anna was the only person to discuss her feelings about parent involvement in school, it is difficult to know how the other students felt. However, it has been my observation that

parents who have a low level of education in their first language have great difficulty in becoming involved in their children's Canadian education. As Anna reflected, her parents did not understand how school works in Canada, so they were unable to give her the support she needed.

In contrast, the second group seemed to have a very different Canadian school experience. Although I am making these judgments based on a very brief encounter with the students and their parents, I had the impression that their education here had been very positive. I believe the major factor was that the parents are well-educated professionals. They have a very different attitude toward education. They showed an interest in research, improving education, and giving back to society. The second factor was that the students in the second group attended elementary schools in their neighbourhoods rather than being placed together in one school. They talked about making Canadian friends very quickly, and maintaining contact with their country-mates only at recess and noon.

## Recommendations for the Future

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After five years of working closely with the first group of students, it is my strong belief that integration into a multicultural ESL classroom enhances students' attachment to school. During this project, I was able to collect the opinions of the students, who shared the belief that making friends outside their cultural group was very important. Why is this information important for future ESL students? Through the settlement agency workers, I have learned that groups of people from one refugee camp will be settled together in the hopes of creating community and support. If this does happen, will we be faced with enrolling a large number of students from one country in one school? Will school administrators be faced with the choice of creating a separate ESL class because there are enough students to do so? It is my hope that administrators and settlement agencies can learn from our experiences. As Jason so succinctly stated, we must get the students "mixed up" with others right away. Although the development of a cultural community is very important, there is a fine line between community and segregation. The students in this project spoke very positively about making friends outside their cultural group, and I believe that teachers and administrators can assist the students by integrating them in regular classes and multiethnic ESL classes. We can encourage parents to settle their children in their neighbourhood school rather than traveling across town to be with people from their own country. I believe that integration greatly benefits students' education, but more importantly, the students believe it. They are the experts, and we can learn from them.

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# Appendix A:

## CLASSES TAKEN BY STUDENTS IN YEARS ONE TO FOUR

NAME	AGE AT TIME OF CANADIAN SCHOOL ENTRANCE	CLASSES TAKEN IN YEAR ONE	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Trevor	17.5	Comp Sc 20	0	27
		Drama 20	0	16
		ESL x3		21
Danny	16.5	Wellness 10	0	11
		Comp Sc 20	0	21
		ESL x3		records show 0
Sam	15.5	Returned to home country Oct.1/--		
Barb	17	Returned to home country Oct.1/--		
Sonny	14.6	PED 9	NM (no mark)	6
		PED 9	NM	7
		Comp App 9	NM	16
		Essen Math 9	NM	11
		Essen Math 9	NM	34
		ESL x2	S (satisfactory)	20-41
Anna	16	Comp App 9	NM	
		Essen Math 9	withdrew	17
		Essen Math 9	NM	26
		Wellness 10	NM	17
		ESL x6	S	14-42
		Girls Wellness 10	NM	17
Brent	18.5	Withdrew 2nd month		
Tyler	14.5	PED 9	NM	6
		PED 9	S	14
		Comp App 9	NM	15
		Essen Math 9	NM	5
		Essen Math 9	NM	12
		ESL x5	S	6-24
Robert	16	Wellness 10	NM	14
		Essen Math 9	NM	32
		Visual Art 10	NM	40
		ESL x5	S	29
Andy	19	Withdrew 10/--		
Jack	18.5	Withdrew 2nd month		
Landon	16	PED 9	NM	6
		PED 9	NM	7
		Comp App 9	NM	13
		Essen Math 9	NM	8
		Essen Math 9	NM	10
		ESL x5		2-34

NAME	AGE AT TIME OF CANADIAN SCHOOL ENTRANCE	CLASSES TAKEN IN <b>YEAR ONE</b>	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Jason	16.5	Wellness 10 Essen Math 9 English 11 Visual Art 10 ESL x5	NM NM 1 NM	8 10 23 25 5-15
A.J.	14.5	Essen Math 9 Essen Math 9 Girls Wellness 10 ESL x6	passed  1	12 8 5 5-31
Mike	18		Withdrew 3rd month	
Liz	13.5	Elementary		
Ian	14	Elementary		
Marie	12	Elementary		
Gina	12	Elementary		
Roger	12	Elementary		
John	14.5	Elementary		
Jackie	11	Elementary		

NAME	CLASSES TAKEN IN <b>YEAR TWO</b>	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Sonny	moved		
Anna	Comp Apps 9 Com Cooking 10 Drivers' Ed Eng LA 11 ESL x 5 Girls' Wellness 10 Info Proc 10 Math 11	passed 1 withdrew 1 S did not pass 1 1	2 12  13 0-12 13 7 25
Tyler	Art 9 Wellness 10 Comp App 9 Comm Cooking 10 Drivers' Ed Eng 11 ESL x2 Math 11 Math 11 Mechanics 10 Technology 9	passed 1 no credit earned 1 withdrew 1  withdrew 1 1 1 passed	9 11 7 11  16 0-7  19 9 6
Robert	Eng. LA 21 ESL x3 Math 11 Woods/Const 10	no credit earned  no credit earned 1	39 8-58 23 12
Hannah (arrived Year Two) 18 years old	Comp Apps 9 Com Cooking 10 Drivers' Ed Eng LA 11 Essen Math 9 ESL x3 Girls' Wellness 10 Math 11 Visual Art 20	NM did not pass withdrew did not pass passed S did not pass withdrew did not pass	20 29  56 11 9-42 13 30 31
Landon	Eng LA 11 ESL x2 Math 11	1 S 1 withdrew semester 2	15 11-19 25
Jason	Comp Apps 9 Eng LA 11 Eng LA 21 ESL x4 Math 11 Math 11 Mechanics 10 PED 20 Woods/Const 10	did not pass 1 1 S withdrew 1 1 1 1 1	6 8 34 0-7  16 6 11 7
A.J.	Comp App 9 Com Cooking 10 Drivers' Ed Eng LA 11 Eng LA 11	passed 1 withdrew 1 1	1 9  9 7

NAME	CLASSES TAKEN IN <b>YEAR TWO</b>	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Liz	Comp Apps 9	passed	1
	Drivers' Ed	withdrew	0
	Eng LA 9	passed	5
	Essen Math 9	passed	0
	ESL x3		0-6
	PED 9	S	5
	Home Ec 9	passed	2
	Info Processing 10	passed	6
	Math 9	passed	0
	Math 9 Mod	withdrew	8
	Soc St 9 Mod	passed	4
	Drivers' Ed	NM	
	Ian	Art 9	did not pass
PED 9		NM	3
PED 9		S	12
Comp App 9		NM	2
Drivers' Ed		withdrew	
Eng LA 9		passed	4
ESL x4			1-8
Math 9 Mod		passed	17
Sci 9 Mod		passed	5
Technology 9		passed	2
Wellness 10		1	7
Marie	Elementary		
Gina	Elementary		
Roger	Elementary		
John	Art 9	did not pass	28
	Art 9	withdrew	24
	Boys' PED 9	withdrew	29
	Boys' PED 9	withdrew	9
	Comp Apps 9	NM	14
	Essen Math 9	did not pass	30
	ESL x2 Sem 1	S	6-12
	ESL x2 Sem 2	withdrew	16-38
	Science 9	passed	35
Technology 9	passed	23	
Jackie	Elementary		

NAME	CLASSES TAKEN IN <b>YEAR THREE</b>	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Anna	Eng LA 21	1	18
	Eng LA 31	1	16
	ESL Sem 1	S	19
	ESL Sem 2	S	7
	History 11	1	17
	Math 21	NM	5
	Science 21	1	15
	Visual Art 20	1	14
	Work Ed 20	1	12
	Work Ed 20	1	14
Tyler	Drivers' Ed	withdrew	
	Eng LA 11	1	16
	ESL Sem 1	S	0
	ESL Sem 2	S	7
	Math 11	withdrew	
	Math 11	1	19
	Mechanics 10	1	9
	Technology 9	passed	6
Robert	ESL Sem 1	S	13
	ESL Sem 2	S	6
	History 11	1	33
	Math 11	NM	34
	Science 11	did not pass	24
	Science 21	1	11
	Woods/Const 20	1	17
	Woods/Const 30	1	11
Hannah	did not return		
Jason	Eng LA 31	1	18
	ESL Sem 1	S	12
	ESL Sem 2	S	1
	History 11	1	18
	Math 21	NM	5
	Mechanics 20	1	3
	Mechanics 20	withdrew	3
	Mechanics 30		0
	Science 11		7
	Visual Art 20		11
	Welding 10		10
A.J.	Drivers' Ed	withdrew	
	Eng LA 11	1	0
	Eng LA 21	1	8
	Eng LA 31	1	6
	ESL Sem 1	S	5
	ESL Sem 2	S	1
	History 11	1	7
	Math 21	NM	4
	Science 10	1	2
	Art 20	1	3
	Work Ed 20	1	5
	Work Ed 20	1	5
	Liz	Eng LA 11	1
Eng LA 9		passed	14
ESL 10A		1	12
ESL Sem 1		S	10
Girls' Wellness 10		1	7
History 10		1	10
Math 10		1	7
Math 20		1	14
Science 10		1	11
Science 9		passed	12

NAME	CLASSES TAKEN IN <b>YEAR THREE</b>	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Ian	Eng LA 11	1	1
	ESL Sem 1	S	4
	ESL Sem 2	S	0
	History 11	1	3
	Math 11	NM	3
	Mechanics 10	1	8
	Mechanics 10	did not pass	5
	Science 11	1	6
	Science 21	1	4
Marie	.5 year in Elementary	67	2
	Art 9	S	2
	ESL x2	S	1
	PED 9	NM	2
	Home Ec 9		
Gina	Elementary		
Roger	PED 9	NM	0
	PED 9	NM	16
	Eng LA 9 Mod	did not pass	34
	ESL Sem 1	S	24
	ESL Sem 2	U	0
	Alternate program Sem 2		
John	did not return		
Jackie	two weeks at high school, then moved to alternate program		
Sonny	Boys' Wellness 10	1	
	Eng LA 11	1	
	Eng LA 11	withdrew	
	ESL Sem 1	S	
	ESL Sem 1	S	
	ESL Sem 2	withdrew	
	Science 11	1	
	Science 21	withdrew	
	Woods/Const 10	withdrew	

NAME	CLASSES TAKEN IN YEAR FOUR	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Anna	Eng LA 31	1	6
	ESL 10A	1	5
	ESL 10B	1	4
	ESL Sem 1	S	5
	Gen Math 30	1	6
	History 31	withdrew	19
	Info Proc 20	did not pass	6
	Info Proc 30	NM	7
	Science 31	1	9
	Visual Art 30	1	15
Tyler	Eng LA 21	1	11
	ESL 10A	1	4
	ESL 10B	1	3
	History 21	did not pass	10
	Math 21	NM	5
	Mechanics 30	1	10
	Science 21	1	10
	Woods/Const 20	1	17
	Work Ed 10	1	3
Robert	did not return		
Jason	Eng LA 31	1	10
	ESL 10 A	1	4
	ESL 10 B	1	1
	Gen Math 30	NM	1
	History 21	1	8
	History 31	1	11
	Math 21	1	19
	Mechanics 30	1	4
	Science 21	1	4
	Woods/Const 20	1	6
A.J.	Eng LA 31	1	
	ESL 10A	1	
	ESL 10B	1	
	ESL Sem 1	S	
	History 21	1	
	History 31	1	
	Info Proc 20	did not pass	
	Info Proc 30	NM	
	Math 21	1	
	Phys Ed 20	1	
	Science 21	1	
Liz	Biology 20	1	7
	Eng LA 11	1	10
	Eng LA 21	1	8
	ESL 10B	1	5
	ESL Sem 2	S	
	Gen Math 30	NM	
	History 21	1	
	Info Proc 20	did not pass	
	Science 31	1	
	Work Ed 10	1	

NAME	CLASSES TAKEN IN YEAR FOUR	CREDITS EARNED	ABSENCES
Ian	Eng LA 11	1	1
	Eng LA 21	1	8
	ESL 10A	1	2
	ESL 10B	1	3
	ESL Sem 2	withdrew	2
	Gen Math 30	NM	0
	History 21	1	3
	Math 11	1	4
	Math 21	1	0
	Science 31	1	2
	Woods/Const 20	1	2
Woods/Const 30	1	7	
Marie	Band 9	passed	4
	Eng LA 9 Mod	passed	1
	Eng LA 9 Mod	passed	2
	ESL Sem 2	S	3
	ESL Sem 2	S	0
	Girls' Wellness 10	passed	4
	Info Proc 10	passed	4
	Math 9 Mod	passed	1
	Sci 9 Mod	passed	2
	Soc St 9 Mod	passed	1
Gina	Art 9	passed	
	Drivers Ed	NM	
	Drafting 9	passed	
	Drama 9	passed	
	Eng LA 9	passed	
	Eng LA 9	passed	
	Girls= PED 9	S	
	Lifestyles 9	NM	
	Math 9	passed	
	Math 9	passed	
	Math 9	passed	
	Math 9	passed	
	Science 9	passed	
Soc St 9	passed		
Roger	alternate program		



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