

ESL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC HELP SEEKING AND HELP AVOIDANCE:
AN EXPLORATORY MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY IN SECONDARY CLASSROOMS

by

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Abstract

Help seeking (HS) is an important resource-management strategy in self-regulated learning (SRL). Although investigations on HS and help avoidance (HA) by first-language or fluent speakers in a single context have been plentiful, not enough is known about the impact of language and culture on second-language learners' HS/HA across contexts. This study aimed to fill this knowledge gap by employing a case study design to produce holistic understanding about the dynamic and complex HS phenomenon in natural settings. The study was grounded in a sociocultural model of strategic HS in context within an SRL model. I adopted a comparative multiple-case design to examine the HS/HA of 9 secondary ESL students simultaneously enrolled in ESL and Humanities classes. Multiple sources of data were collected to construct rich profiles of individuals' HS across classrooms. Cross-case patterns suggested important implications for practice and theory. For example, to facilitate student use of adaptive HS strategies, teachers need to foster students' perceptions of HS benefits, diminish HS deterrents in classrooms, establish classroom norms favorable for HS, and provide help in ways that scaffold learning based on students' current levels of knowledge and understanding. Theoretically, this study evidenced the potential utility of a sociocultural model that represents the complexity of factors involved in self-regulated learning and HS by students who are situated within socioculturally- and historically-delimited settings.

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ESL students' academic help seeking and help avoidance:

An exploratory multiple-case study in secondary classrooms

Chapter One

Introduction

In recent years, help seeking (HS) has been recognized as an important learning strategy commonly utilized by self-regulated learners in order to keep engaged in learning tasks and attain academic success (Karabenick, 1998; Karabenick & Newman, 2006; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986, 1988). While learning in the classroom, self-regulated students will employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies to tackle the challenges and confusions arising in learning activities, monitor their learning effectiveness, and adjust their learning strategies accordingly (Butler & Cartier, 2004; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). When they realize that they are unable to overcome challenges or confusions through their own cognition and metacognition, adaptive learners will reach out for help by mobilizing appropriate resources in the environment such as teachers, capable peers, and tools to acquire what they need in order to achieve better learning (Newman, 1994; Newman & Goldin, 1990; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). Students can immediately benefit from using HS adaptively (Newman, 1994). They can cope with academic difficulties successfully when they are at their wit's end and can avoid disengaging from tasks or even giving up completely. With less frustration and more positive

outcomes, they will achieve success at school in the long run. Thus, deep understanding about how and why students do and do not seek help in learning contexts is needed for educators when they endeavor to foster students' adaptive and strategic HS in classrooms for better academic achievement.

In addition to being recognized as a resource-management strategy in self-regulated learning (SRL; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986, 1990), HS is traditionally regarded as a socially interactive coping strategy (Karabenick, 1998; Nelson-Le Gall, 1987; Newman, 1994). To seek help from others in the classroom indicates dynamic interactions between the help seeker's requesting and the help giver's responding in a sociocultural context (Sandoval & Lee, 2006; Volet & Karabenick, 2006). As far as the individual help seeker is concerned, to carry out HS successfully requires the learner be equipped with adequate communication competence such as language proficiency and verbal and nonverbal strategies (Holtgraves & Yang, 1992; Sandoval & Lee, 2006) and adequate cultural knowledge about the social norms in a particular context (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Ryan, Pintrich, & Midgley, 2001; Sandoval & Lee, 2006). As far as the classroom context is concerned, teaching practices and interactions between and among the social members of the class, including the teacher, peers, and friends, create explicit and implicit social norms in relation to HS. Thus, how well students are equipped with communication competence and cultural knowledge in particular

contexts and how they perceive and interpret relevant contextual variables in light of their individual backgrounds have great impact on their attitudes toward HS and, in turn, perceptions of HS costs (e.g., showing incompetence) and benefits (e.g., understanding of learning tasks), and finally decisions to conduct help avoidance (HA) or HS and choices of help resources (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

Researching linguistic and cultural influences on the use of HS strategies in academic settings is of practical significance in Canada. Canada is an increasingly multicultural society and subsequently has a huge population of English as a Second Language (ESL) students from various linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds studying in Canadian classrooms. In British Columbia (BC), ESL students are those whose primary languages (or languages spoken at home) are other than English, and who may require ESL services in order to develop their potential in school (BC Ministry of Education, 1999c). In many school districts in BC, ESL students constitute a significant subgroup. For example, within the school district where this study was conducted, 28.8% of the public school students were receiving ESL services in the school year of 2006-07 (BC Ministry of Education, 2006c), when this study was under way. As newcomers to the country, ESL students will conceivably encounter numerous language and cultural barriers on top of academic challenges when studying in English-speaking and Western-culture-centered contexts. How to facilitate their strategic and adaptive use of HS to

overcome barriers and challenges at school and to eventually flourish in a new land is an urgent and crucial issue for educators not only in BC specifically but also in North America broadly, where hundreds of thousands of ESL students are learning in English-speaking and Western-culture-centered settings.

Academic HS occurs in a learning context, typically in a classroom, which is nested within multiple layers of sociocultural context (e.g., country, province, city, school, community). When self-regulated learners engage in tasks and strategically seek help to cope with difficulties, they interact with immediate contextual factors in the classroom as well as overarching sociocultural factors (e.g., language, culture, educational systems; Butler & Cartier, 2005; Tang, Butler, Cartier, Giammarino, & Gagnon, 2006; Volet, 2001). Cross-cultural studies have found that language proficiency and cultural knowledge about social norms impact international students' overall learning, including HS choices, in foreign countries (Holmes, 2005; Purdie & Hattie, 1996; Volet, 1999; Volet & Ang, 1998; Volet & Karabenick, 2006). HS research has found a number of contextual factors in classrooms, predominantly in mathematics classes, that influence students' HS and HA, such as subject areas, activity structures, interpersonal relationships, helper attributes, and HS norms (Barnett, Darcie, Holland, & Kobasigawa, 1982; Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Scheib, 1985; Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984; Newman & Goldin, 1990; Newman & Schwager, 1993; Ryan et al., 2001; van der Meij, 1988). However, no previous research has

investigated language and culture as factors in both sociocultural and learning contexts at the same time. To fill this gap, this study investigated how language proficiency and cultural knowledge impacted ESL students' HS and HA in different sociocultural contexts (in home and host countries) and in different language- and culture-laden courses in Canada (which differed in class demands as well as other relevant contextual factors).

Overview of Adaptive Help Seeking and Key Mediators

To understand the academic HS process, previous research has extensively investigated how local students, first-language (L1) speakers, seek help from others (Karabenick, 1998; Karabenick & Newman, 2006) and have categorized different HS behaviours as adaptive versus nonadaptive (Newman, 1998a, 2006), also termed as instrumental versus executive (Butler, 1998; Karabenick, 2003; Nelson-Le Gall, 1985), autonomous versus dependent (Butler, 1998; Nadler, 1998), or appropriate versus dependent (Ryan, Patrick, & Shim, 2005). A number of defining features for adaptive HS have been identified as follows (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Newman, 2006). First of all, the request for help is necessary, for example, when independent attempts have failed to solve a challenge (Aleven, McLaren, & Koedinger, 2006; Nelson-Le Gall, 1987). Second, the purpose of seeking help is for learning or independent mastery. For example, a student may request indirect help (e.g., hints) to support autonomy rather than ask for direct help (e.g., answers) to avoid expending effort (Butler, 1998; Nelson-Le Gall, 1987; Nelson-Le Gall &

Glor-Scheib, 1985). Third, the choice of helpers is appropriate and is primarily based on the expertise or competence of potential helpers rather than on factors irrelevant to the request content such as helpers' attributes (e.g., niceness) and social relationships (Barnett et al., 1982; Karabenick, 2003; Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984). To apply and extend these previous findings, this study examined the key qualities of adaptive (or nonadaptive) HS by ESL students learning in different contexts.

Empirical evidence has shown that students' HS-related perceptions mediate their decisions on HS or HA. Perceptions of HS benefits motivate students to seek help, whereas perceived HS costs or concerns restrain them from doing so (Butler & Neuman, 1995; Newman & Goldin, 1990; Ryan, Gheen, & Midgley 1998; van der Meij, 1988). Students may avoid asking questions if they perceive embarrassment or threats to their self-esteem such as laughing or negative judgments of being dumb or not paying attention. They may also be reluctant to seek help if they are concerned about expedient or timely task completion when HS takes time, or if HS norms suggest that they should not ask for help with easy tasks or independent work or when the teacher is busy. In recognition of the importance of mediating factors, this study investigated how HS-related perceptions influenced ESL students' decisions on HS and HA in different learning contexts.

Studies have found that motivational and affective factors also play a mediating role in the

HS process, such as achievement goals, perceived competence, task value, and anxiety (Butler, 1998; Butler & Neuman, 1995; Karabenick, 2003; Newman, 1990, 1998b; Newman & Schwager, 1995; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Tang et al., 2006). Motivational and affective factors mediate students' perception of a need for help, perceptions of HS benefits and costs, decisions about whether or not to seek help, and the types of help requested. Thus, this study also investigated how motivation and affect influenced students' HS in different contexts.

Conceptual Limitations in the Literature

Although we have had substantial understanding of students' academic HS, there are still knowledge gaps in the literature due to conceptual and methodological limitations which require further attention. First of all, HS researchers have traditionally considered HS as a social coping strategy that involves asking others for help in order to tackle a challenge or difficulty encountered (Karabenick, 1998; Karabenick & Newman, 2006). They have overlooked self-help with tools, that is, seeking information from nonsocial/impersonal resources such as text/reference books, dictionaries, and notes, which students often utilize as a learning and coping strategy (Dillon, 1998; Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Sheib, 1985). However, SRL researchers have found evidence and deemed both seeking information from nonsocial resources and seeking social assistance from others as resource-management strategies within students' SRL tool kits in addition to cognitive strategies such as organizing, linking, and memorizing (Butler & Cartier,

2005; Purdie & Hattie, 1996; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986, 1990).

In this study, I defined seeking help as seeking external aid (Newman, 1994) from social or nonsocial resources, namely, people and tools. Accordingly, I termed seeking help from people as other-help seeking and seeking information from tools as self-help. Furthermore, I distinguished self-help, using external tool resources, from self-reliance, using internal cognitive resources. Building from a similar perspective, Warr and Downing (2000) also recognize both seeking information from written materials (termed written HS) and seeking help from people (termed interpersonal HS) as HS strategies.

My inclusion of self-help as a HS strategy can solve two conceptual confusions in the HS literature. First, in the online learning context, researchers have recently investigated how students use computer-based help facilities such as computer-assisted instruction and tutoring software as a form of academic HS (Aleven & Koedinger, 2002; Aleven et al., 2006; Wood & Wood, 1999). This kind of online HS features seeking information from a user-controlled help system with mechanical interactions between the user's requests and the system's programmed responses. It is confusing to regard such online HS between a person and a machine as a traditional form of a social coping strategy. In this study, I conceptualized online HS without interpersonal communication as self-help with tools and examine how students use it as one of their resource choices.

A second confusion lies in the conceptual association between self-help and HA.

Researchers have viewed social HS as beneficial and HA as maladaptive (Karabenick, 2003; Newman & Goldin, 1990; Ryan et al., 2001). However, self-help (not seeking social help) may look like HA but actually be adaptive when students use self-help strategies to solve challenges. Besides, students who work alone for autonomy may perform adaptive/instrumental HS later when they perceive a need for social help (Butler, 1998; Nadler, 1998). Thus, in this study, I distinguished self-help and self-reliance from HA and conceptualized HA as a maladaptive avoidance of seeking help from people or tools even when a need for help is perceived. A key purpose of this study was thus to understand whether students regard self-help with tools as a HS strategy and how they use it.

Another limitation in the HS literature is that most researchers have overlooked the importance of language and culture as contextual as well as individual factors in HS and have consequently under-investigated these two factors. In terms of learning context, previous research has favoured Mathematics (e.g., Aleven & Koedinger, 2002; Butler, 1998; Newman, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Webb, Ing, Kersting, & Nemer, 2006) and no research has investigated HS in courses which demand language proficiency and cultural knowledge heavily such as Humanities. In terms of individual backgrounds, most studies have invited only L1 or fluent speakers of the instructional language (local students; Butler, 1998; Newman, 1990; Ryan

& Pintrich, 1997; van der Meij, 1988; Webb et al., 2006). Few studies have purposely investigated HS by second-language (L2) learners (e.g., ESL students), who are unfamiliar with the language or culture addressed in the educational system. Hence, another purpose of this study was to understand how language and culture as contextual and individual factors impacted individual students' HS and HA across different contexts.

Methodological Limitations in the Literature

Methodologically speaking, few comparative designs have been employed in previous research to investigate students' HS and HA across different contexts. Researchers have favoured examination of students' HS in a single context at one time (e.g., Aleven & Koedinger, 2002; Karabenick, 2003; Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Scheib, 1985; Webb et al., 2006). Because HS is a context-sensitive strategy, students may employ different HS strategies in different contexts. Therefore, knowledge about students' HS in one learning setting may not help us understand their HS in other learning settings. Furthermore, knowledge about individual HS across contexts can facilitate understanding of crucial contextual factors that shape academic HS during individual-context interactions. Thus, an additional purpose of this study was to understand students' HS and HA across different classrooms. Accordingly, this study adopted a comparative design to serve this purpose.

Another methodological limitation in previous HS research is a shortage of (multiple) case

study designs that might be used to produce a holistic understanding of students' HS in natural settings. Experimental studies (e.g., Butler & Neuman, 1995; Butler, 1998; Nelson-Le Gall, 1987) provide limited knowledge with respect to holistic understanding of phenomena in natural settings because experimental findings are often derived from artificial, controlled laboratory contexts. Further, for data collection, researchers have predominantly drawn upon one (sometimes two) of three methods: survey (e.g., Newman, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997), interview (e.g., Newman & Goldin, 1990; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986), and observation (e.g., Good, Slayings, & Emerson, 1987; Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Sheib, 1985). Although each method has its own strengths, using a single method can neither support triangulation of data nor produce a complete picture and in-depth understanding of individual HS in context. Students' HS in classrooms is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, which involves numerous interacting and interwoven variables in relation to teaching and learning and social interactions. Hence, this study adopted a multiple-case study design with complementary methods for data collection, which made a holistic and in-depth understanding of the complex phenomenon in natural settings possible.

In sum, this study aimed to answer the main research question of why and how students seek or avoid seeking help across contexts, giving particular attention to some important knowledge gaps in the current literature. Specifically, the study was designed to investigate HS

within a naturalistic context to inform understanding about how language and cultural factors impact student HS, other factors associated with individuals' decisions to seek help or not, and how students use self-help as a form of HS. To achieve these goals as well as to fill the methodological gaps in previous HS research, this study adopted a comparative multiple-case study design to explore holistically and in depth how and why/not secondary ESL students might seek help across different contexts.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was based on a sociocultural model of strategic HS in context, which was developed from previous studies (Butler & Cartier, 2005; Tang, 2005; Tang et al., 2006) and was based on empirical SRL and HS literature. This model depicts a dynamic and cyclical HS process within a model of SRL in context (Butler & Cartier, 2005).

An Overarching Self-Regulated Learning Model

The strategic SRL model developed by Butler and Cartier (2005; see Figure 1) suggests that how students engage in academic work depends on the interactions between individuals and contexts. Individuals bring what they have acquired and experienced to classrooms such as language proficiency, cultural background, learning history and experiences, strengths, weaknesses, and interests. With the assets and liabilities they bring into learning settings, individuals directly or indirectly interact with multiple, nested, and overlapping layers of sociocultural, historical, and geographical context from nation, province/state, and municipality to district, neighbourhood, family, and school, to the immediate learning context (i.e., classroom), including domain/subject and tasks.

The overarching SRL model stresses the importance of mediators in the SRL process.

When students face and engage in a task, their engagement in learning is mediated by a number of factors in terms of knowledge, motivation, conceptions, and affect. To be specific, students' SRL engagement is mediated by their (a) extant knowledge about the subject under study and effective learning and self-regulating strategies, (b) motivational aspects such as personal goals, perceived task competence, task value, and attributional beliefs about the causes of academic successes and failures, (c) conceptions about the learning activity and task at hand; for example, whether a reading task requires understanding main ideas and/or memorization of facts and details, and (d) emotions which students experience while facing and engaging in a task, such as being stressed or relaxed.

This strategic SRL model posits that self-regulated learners engage flexibly and reflectively in a dynamic and recursive cycle of cognitive and metacognitive activities. In a nutshell, when presented with a learning task, self-regulated students interpret task demands, set goals, plan how to best use time and strategies, enact selected cognitive strategies, self-monitor and self-evaluate outcomes based on task criteria, and adjust learning and self-regulating strategies accordingly in order to perform tasks successfully. Meanwhile, students use HS strategies to cope with challenges or difficulties they encounter so as to keep engaged and finally accomplish tasks. That is, within the SRL framework, HS is conceptualized as an adaptive learning and coping strategy.

A Sociocultural Model of Strategic Help Seeking in Context

Building from Butler and Cartier's model of SRL, my research was grounded in a sociocultural model of strategic HS in context (see Figure 2). According to this model, help seeking typically occurs in a learning context (classroom) which is embedded within and influenced by a sociocultural context with multiple layers (see Figure 2; Butler & Cartier, 2005). A classroom context comprises its unique instructional and HS environments which shape the learning and HS of the students within it. The instructional environment consists of a variety of linguistic, cultural, academic, and social factors such as demands on language proficiency and cultural knowledge (Holmes, 2005), learning activity and structure (Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Sheib, 1985), and class composition (e.g., inclusive or ESL-only class). The HS environment comprises (a) HS norms, that is, expectations and etiquette in relation to proper questions, time, language, and manners for seeking help (Holtgraves & Yang, 1992; Newman & Goldin, 1990; van der Meij, 1988), (b) the classroom atmosphere, for example, whether the environment is supportive, collaborative, competitive, or independent/individualistic (Kempler & Linnenbrink, 2006; Ryan et al., 1998; Sandoval & Lee, 2006), (c) interpersonal relationships with the teacher and among peers (Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984; Newman & Schwager, 1993; Ryan et al., 1998), (d) resource availability, for example, the availability of or easy access to the teacher, friends, capable peers, and tools like reference books, dictionaries, and computers

(Newman & Goldin, 1990; van der Meij, 1988; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986), and (e) helper attributes such as the helper's communication language and skills, help-giving attitude, knowledge/competence, and ethnicity (Barnett et al., 1982; Karabenick, 2003; Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984; Newman & Schwager, 1993; Webb et al., 2006).

Students bring their backgrounds and experiences into the classroom that directly interact with the instructional and HS environments in the learning context and indirectly with the sociocultural context. At tasks, students generate motivational perceptions such as personal goals, perceived competence, and task value (Butler & Cartier, 2005; Karabenick, 2003; Newman, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997), emotions such as relaxation and anxiety (Butler & Cartier, 2005; Karabenick, 2003; Tang et al., 2006), and perceptions of HS costs and benefits (Newman & Goldin, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; van der Meij, 1988). These factors mediate students' decisions on HS or HA and choice of resources (see discussions of the HS process below; Newman & Schwager, 1992; Ryan et al., 1998; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

The focal part of the sociocultural HS model applied here is a cyclical and recursive HS process (see Figure 2). Note that, for the sake of simplicity and clarity, I discuss and describe a complete HS episode in a linear way below. But it is important to recognize that, as HS is a dynamic and recursive process, students might enter or exit HS episodes at multiple points and in complex ways (see some possible ways in Figure 2).

When self-regulated students engage in tasks, they monitor their engagement, effectiveness of strategy use, and progress (Butler & Cartier, 2005). When they encounter challenges (difficulties or confusions) and exhaust cognitive resources, they may perceive a need for external help (Dillon, 1998; Newman, 1994). Perception of need for help is mediated by motivational-affective factors (e.g., perceived competence, anxiety; Nadler, 1998).

When perceiving a need for help, students may consider resources (Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Scheib, 1985) and their expectations of help (what they want) and decide whether or not to seek help. Students' decisions on HS (and choice of resources) or HA are directly mediated by their attitude toward HS (e.g., an effective learning strategy or disclosure of incompetence) and perceptions of HS costs and benefits (Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984; Newman & Goldin, 1990; Newman & Schwager, 1993) and indirectly by motivational-affective factors (Karabenick, 2003; Newman, 1990; Ryan et al., 1998; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Tang et al., 2006). When perceived benefits outweigh perceived costs, students are willing to seek help. If students perceive costs (under the influences of individual and/or contextual factors) to be greater or preferred resources are not available, they are reluctant to seek help (Newman, 1990; Newman & Schwager, 1992; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

When students avoid seeking needed help to cope with challenges, for example, after weighing HS costs and benefits, they may try to keep on engaging in tasks. But when unsolved

challenges deter students from further task engagement, unmotivated students may become disengaged (Butler, Cartier, Schnellert, & Gagnon, 2006; Webb et al., 2006). Motivated students may feel anxious and stressed and perceive a stronger need for help when they are stuck (Tang et al., 2006; Warr & Downing, 2000). Then they have to manage to get help in order to engage again. Hence, the HS process recurs.

When students decide to seek help, they either select tools to perform self-help or choose people to seek other help (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). Self-regulated students ideally monitor and evaluate the process and outcomes of their HS actions (Butler & Cartier, 2005; Nelson-Le Gall, 1985), including the help-giving attitude of the helper, the effectiveness of their HS strategy, and the adequacy of the help or information obtained (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985). Students can use the HS evaluation to adjust their existing perceptions of the HS environment for subsequent HS attempts (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Scheib, 1985).

If HS result is satisfactory (challenges are resolved), students can engage in tasks again. If challenges remain (dissatisfaction) or reoccur, students may seek help again (reattempts or another HS episode), and the HS process recurs (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Sheib, 1985; Webb et al., 2006). However, students may not persist in seeking help till challenges are solved. If they are discouraged in earlier attempts, they may quit reattempts and become disengaged (Butler et al., 2006; Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Webb et al., 2006).

Literature Review

This study of HS as situated in context was grounded in research literature on key variables in the HS process, self-help, HS reattempts and disengagement, HA, and sociocultural contexts. Relevant literature in each of these areas is discussed in the sections to follow.

Key Variables in the Help-Seeking Process

In adaptive HS as defined in Chapter One, a request for help should be necessary. Thus, the starter of the HS process in the sociocultural HS model drawn upon here is that students have to perceive a need for help with challenges they fail to resolve with their inner, cognitive resources. In this model, students' perception of a need for help, decision on HS or HA, and choice of resources are proposed to be mediated by motivational-affective factors and perceptions of HS benefits and costs. Previous research has uncovered relationships between these key variables in the HS process. For example, Newman and Goldin (1990), using a structured interview, investigated elementary students' perceptions about HS and HA when doing math and reading in class and at home. Participants were students with at least average English proficiency from intact classes in Grades 2, 4, and 6 in California. The authors found that perceptions of benefits and costs mediated students' willingness to ask questions and choices of helpers. They found that perceptions of HS benefits (asking questions of teachers and peers "helps me learn") were positively correlated with students' liking to ask questions. In comparison,

students preferred to ask teachers over peers because they perceived that teachers were more likely to benefit their learning and less likely to think they were dumb (i.e., perceived cost or threat to self-esteem).

The authors also found that 6th graders with lower achievement scores in reading perceived a greater need for help but also were more reluctant to seek needed help. The phenomenon that those most in need may be most reluctant to seek help might be explained by the relationships between perceived competence, perceived costs, and likelihood of HA which were found in the following survey studies on HS and HA in math, conducted in the United States. Newman (1990), who investigated 3rd, 5th, and 7th graders with at least average English proficiency, found that perceived competence had a significant negative association with perceived costs across grades. But only for 7th graders, perceived costs had a significant negative association with HS intention. Ryan, Gheen, and Midgley (1998), who investigated 6th graders, of whom 48% were Caucasian and 44% were African Americans, found that academic self-efficacy (individual judgment of their capability to complete schoolwork successfully) was a significant predictor of HA; that is, students who felt less efficacious were more likely to report reluctance to seek needed help. Ryan and Pintrich (1997), who investigated 7th and 8th graders, predominantly Caucasian, found that those who perceived less cognitive competence were more likely to perceive threat to self-esteem from teachers and peers and in turn were more likely to report HA.

Researchers have also uncovered indirect relationships between HS/HA and other motivational factors such as personal goals and task value through perceived benefits and costs. For instance, Ryan and Pintrich (1997) found not only a significant positive association between task goals and perceived benefits but also significant positive associations between extrinsic and ability goals and perceived threat. In turn, perceived benefits and costs well predicted HS and HA separately. Karabenick (2003), who investigated undergraduate students in chemistry classes in the U.S., using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, found that those who endorsed mastery-oriented goals were likely to seek adaptive help (to understand). In contrast, those who endorsed performance-oriented goals were likely to seek nonadaptive help (to avoid work). In addition, those who endorsed higher task value were more likely to seek adaptive help.

Previous studies have shown mixed findings about the relationship between anxiety, an affective factor, and HS or HA. Karabenick (2003) found that those with higher course-related anxiety were more likely to perceive threats and to report HA. However, Tang, Butler, Cartier, Giammarino, and Gagnon (2006), who investigated ESL versus non-ESL secondary students in Canada using a Learning Through Reading Questionnaire found different results. For both ESL and non-ESL students, those who felt more stressed and worried at reading tasks in different subject areas reported more use of HS strategies. Warr and Downing (2000), who investigated adult technical trainees in the United Kingdom using the Learning Strategies Questionnaire, also

found positive associations between learning anxiety and two forms of HS (i.e., self-help and other help). The sociocultural HS model applied in this study suggests that perceived HS costs might mediate the decision on HA. The conflicting findings described above might be attributable to the fact that Karabenick (2003) found a positive relationship between course-related anxiety, perceived threats, and HA, whereas the other two studies did not examine the mediating factor of perceived HS costs. Findings from the present study, described below, might also assist in explaining and elaborating the above mixed findings.

When students consider seeking help, they have to consider choice of resources. In classrooms, possible resources include the teacher, peers, and tools. Research findings have shown that students have different perceptions of and preferences for helpers. For example, Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Scheib (1985) observed 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders in math and reading classes in the U.S. They noticed that students sought more help from peers than from the teacher. Newman and Schwager (1993), using a questionnaire, found that generally students in Grades 3, 5, and 7 in the U.S. preferred teachers over classmates as helpers in math classes because students believed that teachers were more likely to facilitate learning and less likely to have negative perceptions of them (being dumb; see support by Newman & Goldin, 1990, discussed above). In terms of choice of teachers, across grade levels, students' HS intention was associated with their perception of a friendly relationship with the teacher. Similar results were found by

Nelson-Le Gall and Gumerman (1984), who used vignettes depicting task settings to interview preschoolers and 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders in the U.S. The reasons students reported most frequently for their choices of teachers and peers as helpers included competence, good attributes (e.g., niceness), and role duties for teachers and competence, good attributes, and friendship for peers. Barnett, Darcie, Holland, and Kobasigawa (1982) also used vignettes to interview preschoolers and 3rd and 6th graders in Ontario, Canada. They investigated children's perceptions of attributes associated with good helpers. The authors found that, across ages, children took into account global traits (niceness, kindness) most frequently. In comparison with younger children, upper graders also often consider competence, willingness to assist, and awareness of people's needs as necessary attributes of good helpers.

In this study, I built from prior research on key HS constructs to examine in depth and holistically how ESL students' decisions on HS or HA and choices of resources were mediated by variables such as motivational factors, affect, and perceptions of HS costs and benefits. To extend past findings, I also examined variables that have been missed out in the literature such as help expectations and perceptions of HS consequences.

Self-Help

Previous HS research has not paid attention to self-help with tools because researchers have conceptualized HS as a social coping strategy with people as helpers rather than as an SRL

strategy, using adequate resources to cope with challenges. Even when investigators found that students did use tools in classrooms to help themselves, they did not give it due attention. For instance, Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Scheib (1985; discussed above) noticed that in addition to seeking help from peers and teachers, elementary students sometimes used tools in math and reading instead (e.g., metric conversion tables, dictionaries). But the authors excluded self-help with tools from analyses involving helpers. Instead, they categorized using tools together with copying peers' work as executive, nonadaptive HS, because students avoided problems that might arise in soliciting help from people.

Although the HS literature is short of investigations on self-help with tools, the SRL literature is not. For example, Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986) investigated how high school students in the U.S. would use SRL strategies in context. The authors interviewed 10th graders, predominantly White, using the Self-Regulated Learning Interview Schedule with six vignettes about learning contexts in and outside classes. They found 14 SRL strategies from students' reports, including four self-help strategies (i.e., seeking information from nonsocial sources like libraries and reviewing tests, notes, and textbooks) and three seeking other-help strategies (i.e., seeking social assistance from peers, teachers, and adults). The authors also found that high achieving students indicated greater use of 13 strategies than low achieving students (only self-evaluation was not significant). Among the 13 strategies, seeking information from

nonsocial sources was the best predictor of achievement group membership and seeking teacher assistance was fourth. Reviewing notes and textbooks also predicted better than seeking assistance from peers and adults (usually parents). In comparison between overall uses of self-help and other-help, students in both achievement groups indicated greater use of self-help than seeking social assistance. The above evidence shows that both forms of HS can benefit academic achievement and that self-help may be preferred by high school students as a coping strategy and may be more instrumental to learning in the long run.

To fill the knowledge gap about self-help as a form of HS, in this study, I examined how ESL students coped with challenges by using tools, namely, self-help strategies in addition to social strategies.

Help-Seeking Reattempts and Disengagement

Self-regulated students monitor their HS process, evaluate the outcomes, and accordingly adjust their existing perceptions of the HS environment for subsequent HS attempts. Research has found that students may make requests again after unsuccessful HS attempts, but some students may be discouraged, quit reattempts, and become disengaged. For instance, Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Scheib (1985) found through class observations that one third of the participating elementary students made reattempts after unsuccessful outcomes which the authors classified as receiving some kind of help but not the type requested, the helper expressing incompetence,

being referred to someone or something else, being ignored, and being rejected. Webb, Ing, Kersting, and Nemer (2006) also observed how 7th graders, proficient in English, interacted in help seeking and giving in small groups in math classes in Los Angeles. The authors found that some students repeatedly received low-level help (no explanations), ignoring, and even insults (“You are a fool; he’s stupid; shut up”). Those students eventually resorted to copying others’ answers, stopped participation, or stopped working altogether. In the SRL literature, the profile of disengaged students can offer insight into HS as part of SRL. Butler, Cartier, Schnellert, and Gagnon (2006) used the Learning Through Reading Questionnaire to assess use of SRL strategies by secondary students in Canada. The authors found a disengaged cluster who were high in stress and worry and disengagement (e.g., reports of reading as little as possible and giving up in the face of obstacles) but low in perceptions of competence and control, HS, positive motivational-affective factors, and use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Help Avoidance

Students may not seek social help or work on their own for a variety of reasons, personal and contextual. For example, R. Butler (1998) conducted a survey in Israel, using a vignette about some pupils who did not ask the teacher for help with math problems. She discovered three types of HA orientations among 5th and 6th graders: autonomous HA for independent mastery, ability-focused HA for masking incompetence, and expedient HA for fear that HS would delay

task completion. Newman and Goldin (1990), using interviews, found many types of reasons for elementary students' not asking teachers and peers for help in math and reading classes. The three most important reasons students reported were fear of negative perceptions or reactions (e.g., "The teacher will think I'm dumb; the kids will tease me; the teacher will be mad"), unavailability of preferred helpers (e.g., "The teacher is busy; the teacher doesn't want to be disturbed), and independence (e.g., "I'd rather work out the problem on my own"). Other reasons included bother or expedience (e.g., "It's too much trouble; the question isn't that important; it takes too much time"), negative affect (e.g., "I don't feel comfortable; I'm shy; I'm nervous"), expectations of competence or knowledge (e.g., "I should already know how to do the problem; the teacher explained the story before"), and norms (e.g., "We have a 'red-light' rule that says we can't talk").

Likewise, van der Meij (1988) interviewed 3rd and 5th graders from Dutch classrooms, asking them why they were hesitant to ask the teacher and peers for help during seatwork and whole-class instruction in math. Findings were consistent with those by Newman and Goldin (1990). To tease apart the interaction between choice of helpers (the teacher and peers) and type of activity formats (seatwork and instruction), the author found the following restraints on students' HS intention. Desire for independence was most likely with respect to teacher help during seat work, and shyness was most likely with respect to teacher help during instruction.

Concern about the helper's incompetence was most likely with respect to peer help during seat work. Concerns about the helper's negative reaction (e.g., a rebuke for not paying attention), business, unwillingness, and loss of time were most likely with respect to teacher help during seat work. In addition, students had concerns about norms (e.g., "If it's an easy sum, you are not allowed to ask for help; if you have already asked it once, you are not allowed to ask it again; nobody else seeks help"), which were most likely during seat work. Students were also concerned about mocking by peers (e.g., "Others laugh at you; during lunch time or so, they say you are stupid not to know those sums").

Sociocultural Contexts

The above studies as well as many others in the HS literature have made valuable contributions to our understanding of academic HS in learning contexts by L1 or fluent speakers. But researchers have paid little or insufficient attention to the impact of language and culture as contextual and individual factors. For example, we do not know whether those findings obtained in or referring to math or chemistry contexts still hold for students' HS in other learning contexts such as Humanities, whose class demands and activities, for example, differ from those in math and are more demanding in terms of language. Similarly, we do not know how students seek help across contexts. We do not know whether those findings obtained through L1 or fluent speakers still hold for ESL students in a host country.

Thus, the last part of this chapter is to discuss literature in relation to sociocultural contexts to support my argument for the importance of linguistic and cultural factors in student HS. In my sociocultural model of strategic HS in context (see Figure 2), HS typically occurs in a classroom embedded within a sociocultural context with multiple layers. Cross-cultural studies have found that sociocultural and linguistic factors have an impact on students' learning and use of HS strategies. For example, Holmes (2005) explored Chinese students' interpersonal communication in learning contexts in New Zealand, using classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and informal meetings. Participants were ethnic Chinese students coming from Southeast Asia to study in the business school in a New Zealand university. Findings evidenced a phenomenon that foreign students usually face linguistic, cultural, and academic challenges because of unfamiliarity with the language, culture, and educational system of the host country. Those challenges were also hindrances to the Chinese participants' learning in New Zealand in general. Academically, they were not familiar with the dialogic teaching approach in a Western educational system where the teacher and students co-construct knowledge, and instruction is student-centered, discussion/argumentation-based, and inquiry-oriented. Linguistically, they perceived their English competence was inadequate. Culturally, they perceived that they had limited knowledge about New Zealand social norms. Thus, lack of confidence in language and cultural knowledge not only limited the Chinese participants' interactions with New Zealand

students but also led them to same-culture grouping and friendship with other Chinese students for the sake of easy communication and mutual understanding.

Linguistic and cultural challenges those Chinese participants faced in class included lack of background information about the issue in discussion, discomfort with challenging others' opinions in public, which contradicted the Chinese cultural value of social harmony, and worrying that people would laugh at their poor English and that their question might be too simple (all the other students knew the answer). Thus, to cope with difficulties or confusions, they would turn to Chinese friends whom they knew well, to a class tutor who they perceived would not judge whether the help seeker was smart or not, or to self-help after class.

These findings are in line with those by studies on international students' preferred choice of helpers or group members in higher education from the perspective of an ingroup versus outgroup distinction (Volet, 1999; Volet & Ang, 1998; Volet & Karabenick, 2006). Volet (1999) found that both international and local students in universities in Australia and the U.S. preferred to seek help from their ingroup peers, who spoke the same first language and had the same or similar sociocultural background and experiences. They disliked approaching outgroup peers, who did not share the same linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. Reasons for international students' ingroup bias included cultural connectedness, language proficiency, emotional comfort, and stereotypes about local students (Volet & Karabenick, 2006).

Purdie and Hattie (1996), using the aforementioned Self-Regulated Learning Interview Schedule, investigated how upper secondary students in Japan and Australia used SRL strategies in context. Participants included students from intact Australian classes, students from intact Japanese classes, and students who came from Japan and studied in different Australian schools. Findings evidenced that the current sociocultural and learning context and what students brought along (backgrounds and experiences) all influenced students' learning and HS at present. The authors found similarities, differences, and cultural assimilation in patterns of SRL strategy use by the three groups. They shared two of the three most frequently used strategies, that is, self-checking and environmental management. The other one was goal setting and planning for the Australian group, reviewing notes for the Japanese/Australian group, and memorizing for the Japanese group. Overall, the Australian group was quite different from the Japanese group, and the Japanese/Australian group was more similar to the Australian group. There were 13 differences in strategy use frequencies between the Australian group and the Japanese group, nine between the Japanese group and the Japanese/Australian group, and only four between the Japanese/Australian group and the Australian group. In comparison of preference for HS strategies, Australian students preferred reviewing notes and seeking teacher assistance, Japanese/Australian students preferred reviewing notes, and Japanese students preferred reviewing textbooks.

Although cross-cultural research has focused attention on linguistic and cultural factors in broad sociocultural contexts (i.e., countries), it has missed out on studying factors in classrooms. Besides, academic HS is not the focal interest of many studies so that we do not yet have a complete, clear picture of international students' HS in foreign classrooms. Methodologically, we still need in-depth and holistic investigations on academic HS and HA across sociocultural and learning contexts in order to understand how and why ESL students or L2 learners do or do not seek help across classrooms and across countries. To fill the knowledge and methodological gaps discussed above, the present study adopted a comparative multiple-case design with ESL students as cases across different contexts.

Research Questions

Building from the theory and prior research, as outlined in this chapter, this study investigated the following main research question: Why and how do students seek or avoid seeking help in different classroom contexts? More specifically, I sought to advance understanding about how language and cultural factors might impact student HS, other factors associated with individuals' HS and HA decisions, and why and how students use self-help as a form of HS. In the upcoming chapter, I explain how this study adopted a comparative multiple-case study design to explore holistically and in depth how and why/not secondary ESL students might seek help across different contexts.

Chapter Three

Method

In order to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of students' HS in natural settings and the impact of linguistic and cultural factors on students' academic HS across different sociocultural and learning contexts, this study adopted a comparative multiple-case study design (see Figure 3). The cases were nine participating students who enrolled in two types of classes at the same time: an ESL classroom and a Humanities classroom (see Table 1 for participants with pseudonyms in each class). I collected data from multiple sources, including class observations to observe students' HS behaviors and their learning settings, semistructured student and teacher interviews to understand students' perspectives on HS across a range of settings and their HS in research settings from teachers' perspectives, and a variety of documents such as HS logs, activity sheets, and questionnaires to capture students' thoughts and actions in classes and background information. Following are discussions of the research design, research contexts, participants, procedures, and the multiple sources of data.

Research Design

I chose the case study approach as the basis of my study design because it could serve the study's purpose and questions well. According to Yin (2003) and Merriam (1998), the case study approach has unique strengths: investigation of phenomena in natural context, long-time contact

with cases, and, best of all, methodological flexibility to deploy a variety of complementary methods to collect and analyze data in order to triangulate and produce convergent evidence. This approach was thus best for an investigation which aimed to explore in depth and holistically a phenomenon or a process which involved many variables in a real-life situation (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). In terms of types of research questions, the case study approach is especially appropriate when the investigator proposes how and why inquiries (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Hence, this approach was the best choice for my study, which was a holistic and in-depth exploration of the complex HS phenomenon with inquiries of how and why ESL students do and do not seek help within real-life classrooms.

On top of the case study approach was a comparative design to achieve the goal of understanding students' HS across different contexts. I intended to compare the same students' HS across different contexts, some of which were shared across students (i.e., ESL and Humanities contexts). By making comparisons of individual students' HS across different sociocultural contexts (in home and host countries) and across different Canadian classrooms at present (ESL, Humanities, and another class of the student's choice) and with attention to language proficiency and cultural knowledge as factors, I examined students' use of HS strategies (e.g., stable or situational) within different contexts so as to advance understanding about the role that individual-context interactions play in the HS phenomenon.

Research Contexts

This study was conducted within a secondary public school in a multicultural and multiethnic city in BC, Canada. The school district where this study was conducted provides a five-level system of ESL services to students whose primary languages (or languages spoken at home) are other than English, based on the assessments of their English abilities (BC Ministry of Education, 1999d; Carrigan, 2005). Generally speaking, students at Levels 1 and 2 are beginners and low intermediate English learners, whose ESL support focuses on basic interpersonal communication skills. Students at Levels 3, 4, and 5 are upper intermediate, advanced, and near-fluent English learners respectively, whose ESL support focuses on cognitive academic language proficiency (Carrigan, 2005).

In BC, schools follow the inclusive and integrated policy of the Ministry of Education for students' learning. In the participating school district, ESL students attend school-based pull-out ESL classes (see other ESL delivery models in BC Ministry of Education, 1999b). They are also integrated into age-appropriate regular classes for the remaining blocks of the day, based on their English and academic competences (BC Ministry of Education, 1999d).

In order to investigate the impact of linguistic and cultural factors on students' HS, I chose two types of classes as research settings, including one pull-out ESL class and three regular Humanities classes. Following are discussions about comparisons between ESL and Humanities

contexts, based on sources of data collected during the study.

ESL Class

According to the BC Ministry of Education (1999b, 1999c), ESL classes function as transitional services. Their aim is to assist students to acquire needed linguistic, academic, and sociocultural knowledge and skills in order to succeed in regular classes in schools and eventually thrive in Canadian society. Unlike regular courses, ESL classes have no provincially prescribed curriculum. Instead, the Ministry has set up ESL Policy Framework and Guidelines, A Guide for Classroom Teachers, and A Guide for ESL Specialists (see BC Ministry of Education, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d). Thus, ESL teachers can either programme their courses or adapt prescribed curricula of relevant subjects in order to help ESL students prepare for those subjects.

Within the participating school, an ESL-4 class was selected as the ESL research context because it had an enrollment of all participating students (see Table 1). Although this ESL class served as a preparatory course for Humanities, ESL and Humanities courses differed in several ways. For example, in terms of the instructional environment in ESL 4 in relation to language proficiency and cultural knowledge, I observed that the teacher used reading with simpler English, short passages, and introductory content about Canada. She taught language skills (e.g., pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing), Canadian customs (e.g., national holidays), history, and geography as well as academic skills. Using less

sophisticated activities, the ESL-4 teacher familiarized students with academic skills that were required in Humanities classes. For instance, for poster making, library and online research, and oral presentation, she asked students to draw a poster as an advertisement for Canada to attract immigrants and to do and present a research report regarding a famous Canadian.

In terms of the HS environment in ESL-4, the teacher gave students sufficient time for HS and encouraged them to ask questions, saying that they could ask as many questions as they wanted. From time to time, she checked whether students had questions and circulated around the classroom after giving lectures. She provided support directly most of the time. For example, during a whole-class reading activity, a participating student stopped reading aloud and said that he did not know how to read the word *municipal*. The teacher said compassionately, “It’s a hard word for you,” and then read it out for him. I also observed that the teacher patiently answered another participating student’s questions, big or small, on or off topic. When students performed the poster activity, I observed that the teacher offered background information, examples, ideas, and supplies and taught students useful drawing techniques. It seemed that she aimed to have students engaged in tasks as she said, “If they don’t have it [what they need], the productivity, they’re not producing anything. . . . I want people to have the necessary resources with them to go to do their work.”

Because of the way the teacher managed her class, overall, the atmosphere and the

interpersonal relationships in ESL-4 seemed to be relaxed and friendly, which had the potential to facilitate HS between students and the teacher and between peers. For instance, she asked a very active boy (the participant she helped with pronouncing *municipal*) to “stop being annoying” when he dramatically complained to his partner about his work or to concentrate on work a few times without imposing any kind of punishment. When the boy did concentrate on his poster project, the teacher praised him openly in class. She let students decide whether they wanted to work alone or with others and where to sit, which had the potential to facilitate HS from friends. Further, she put seats together in rows in the centre of the classroom, which had the potential to facilitate students’ getting to know one another and created easy access to peers. Also the teacher worked against perceptions of HS costs by telling students that laughing at others was not right. Indeed, I observed that there was no laughing from peers when students asked small questions about pronunciation, spelling, or lexical meanings. It seemed that the ESL-4 teacher established a safe place for HS.

Humanities 7, 8, and 9

In BC, Humanities is an interdisciplinary subject, integrating English language arts and social studies for the purposes of developing students’ English proficiency for daily life, academic, and career uses and cultivating thoughtful, responsible, and active Canadian and world citizens (BC Ministry of Education, 1997, 2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). Humanities classes are

offered at different grade levels and follow provincially prescribed curricula. Hence, prescribed learning outcomes guide class content, instruction, and evaluation.

In this study, I selected Humanities 7, 8, and 9 as research sites; each class had an enrollment of two to four participating students (see Table 1). The aggregated Humanities context differed from the ESL-4 context in several ways. For example, in terms of instructional environment in relation to language proficiency and cultural knowledge, the three Humanities teachers did not teach English language skills directly. Nevertheless, learning activities and information sources such as textbooks, reference books, and academic websites, which contained long passages and sophisticated content, all demanded good English ability for engagement. Students were also required to do their project research and reports in a formal, academic way, that is, using polished academic skills. Instructional topics such as world religions (e.g., Judaism, Islam, Buddhism), world history (e.g., Vikings, the Middle Ages), and sometimes relevant geography (e.g., the Middle East) required richer background knowledge about world cultures than was required in the ESL-4 classroom.

Further, activities in Humanities were sophisticated in that teachers required deeper thinking and expected more independent working than was the case in the ESL-4 class, which had the potential to deter students from seeking teacher help. For example, the Humanities-9 teacher asked his students to do textbook research and make notes on Vikings. The Humanities-8

teacher asked her students to do a collage on personal beliefs, using old English magazines, and to do a work sheet with questions about whether or not Buddhism was a religion, using the textbook and a handout. She also asked her class to do research, make notes, and design a triptych on topics in relation to the medieval European society (e.g., crusades, weapons and armours, rights and responsibilities of nobility and monarch, commerce and trade, farming and agriculture, legal system, church architecture). Overall, the instructional environment in Humanities was more demanding and challenging than in ESL 4.

What the Humanities-8 teacher valued and believed well represented part of the teaching goals set by the three Humanities teachers, which in turn shaped the HS environments in their classes. To stimulate students' thinking seemed to be one of the teaching goals as the Humanities-8 teacher said to students during a class discussion about world religions, "I'm challenging your thinking." She added during her interview, "For me, it's the quality of their thinking that's important." To develop independence in students seemed to be another teaching goal as the Humanities-8 teacher said in her interview, "Part of my role is helping them to become independent and recognize the value." For instance, when students sought help from her, she often asked them back, "What do you think?" Accordingly, Humanities teachers helped students indirectly more often than did the ESL-4 teacher. Based on teacher interviews about help-giving practices, respectively, the Humanities-8 and -9 teachers reported that they would

provide indirect answers/help to 10 and 7 types of student HS, whereas the ESL-4 teacher reported that she would give indirect answers/help to only 2 types.

In terms of HS encouragement and availability, the three Humanities teachers also checked whether students had questions now and then and walked around during seat work. But teachers were unavailable when they were busy, for instance, when they were assessing students' reading performance.

In terms of atmosphere and interpersonal relationships, overall, the environment in Humanities was more serious and less friendly than ESL 4. The three Humanities teachers aimed to exert more control over their classes than did the ESL-4 teacher. For example, the Humanities-7 teacher punished students for talking and playing by seating a boy in "the box" (a corner seat with boards around to block the view) and detaining four boys (including the aforementioned, very active participant in ESL 4) after class. He asked students to report who was lazy during group work. I saw girls in the group that I observed pointing at two boys happily with big arm movements. The two boys were called out to stand in front of the class and hold hands for seconds.

The class size and seating arrangements in Humanities made it somewhat difficult for students to become familiar with all peers, which was unfavorable for HS in a way. Seats were arranged line by line, spreading the whole classroom floor as in Humanities 8, or in separated

groups, as in Humanities 7 and 9. Usually, students were asked to sit with their groups or in assigned seats, which had the potential to limit the choice of peers as resources. In addition, the Humanities-8 and -9 teachers stated in their interviews that laughing did occur in their classes and had negative effect on some students' HS even though they were trying to build up a safe space for students to ask questions.

Participants

Students

The participating students were selected from a pool of interested students with informed consent (see the Procedures section). The most important criterion was that students had to simultaneously enroll in ESL and Humanities classes whose teachers were both interested in the study. Additional considerations included ethnic diversity, gender balance, and mixed grade levels. A final group of nine students were invited as participants (see Table 1).

Because of multiple selection criteria and lack of equal numbers of interested girls and boys in each grade level, gender balance was kept in the total number of participants. There were four girls and five boys in Grades 7, 8, and 9. Amy, Betty, Carol, and Dave were in Grade 7. Betty and Carol were identical twins. Eva, Fred, and Gary were in Grade 8. Hugh and Ian were in Grade 9. They were all ESL Level 4 students and eligible to take Humanities in their respective grades, that is, to be integrated into age-appropriate regular classes (see Table 1). Eva

was an exception, who exited ESL services when data collection began.

In terms of ethnic backgrounds (see Table 2), Betty, Carol, Dave, Eva, and Ian were Chinese and all came from Hong Kong. Fred had Chinese and Filipino origins from parents and came from the Philippines. Amy and Gary were Filipino, coming from the Philippines. Hugh had Colombian and Brazilian origins from parents but came from Saudi Arabia, where he was raised and educated. The languages which the students spoke with family members and friends included English, Cantonese (the spoken language in Hong Kong), Mandarin (the official spoken language in China and Taiwan), Filipino/Tagalog, and Arabic.

In terms of education history (see Table 2), seven of nine participants had previously received schooling in other sociocultural contexts, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. Betty and Carol, the twins, did not receive schooling outside Canada. Instead, they went to private Chinese classes here in Canada on Saturdays for a few years. The participants came to Canada at different ages, and their time lengths of education in Canada ranged from 2 years (for Fred) to 8 years (for Amy, Betty, and Carol).

Teachers

The selection of teachers occurred concurrently with that of the students with interrelated selection criteria. From among all interested teachers, four teachers who enrolled selected students were ultimately invited to participate (see Table 1). They were Humanities-7,

Humanities-8, Humanities-9, and ESL-4 teachers. I implemented an array of data collection activities with these four teachers, including class observations, and teacher interviews. But I did not interview the Humanities-7 teacher due to logistical challenges.

Procedure

This investigation was a follow-up study to a large-scale, longitudinal research project which investigated student SRL in learning through reading tasks in a variety of subject-area classrooms (see Butler & Cartier, 2005). This investigation basically followed the inquiry line on student SRL when learning through reading, but with a focus on HS and HA by ESL students. I gratefully drew upon the resources of the major project (district consultant, schools, teachers, and students) to complete data collection successfully. The site work started by looking for a secondary school with interested teachers in January 2007 and was finished at the end of data collection in June 2007.

Collaboration and Informed Consent

After the school site was ascertained, meetings with interested teachers were held. In collaboration with interested teachers, data collection materials were finalized, including a think-pair-share sheet, a class observation protocol, a log sheet, a student interview protocol, and a teacher interview protocol (see Appendixes A to E). Then consent/assent letters with information for parents, students, and teachers were sent out (see Appendixes F to H). Letters in

Chinese for parents and students were available, because many ESL students in the district where the study was conducted were Chinese. After consent forms were collected, decisions on participating students were made collaboratively, and the final set of participating teachers was identified as those who enrolled the selected students in their classrooms.

Timeline of Data Collection

On-site data collection took place for six weeks from May through June. I first contacted participating teachers and students to gather available and preferred times for data collection. Then I set up a data collection schedule around participants' times with an ideal timeline in mind (see Table 3). Unexpected incidents at school also altered this schedule. The first group of data collection activities centred on class observations along with a think-pair-share activity, log writing, and after-class chats. The scheduling of multiple class observations in the four research settings roughly followed the order of ESL 4, Humanities 7, Humanities 8, and Humanities 9. The second group of activities included administration of student questionnaires and student interviews. The data collection phase culminated in teacher interviews, which lasted till the last school day of the year.

Multiple Sources of Data

Based on the sociocultural HS model (see Figure 2), I collected data from multiple sources (see Table 3). In order to better understand students' HS behaviors in context, I implemented

multiple observations in the classrooms with participating students. In order to understand students' perspectives on their relevant thoughts, actions, and preferences in different contexts, I collected student self-report data through: (a) think-pair-share sheets on which students recorded notes concerning their general thoughts and ideas about HS/HA in class (see Appendix A), (b) help-seeking logs in which students described their in-class challenges or confusions, HS actions, and reasons for HA (see Appendix C), (c) after-class chats between students and me to clarify their notes in HS logs, (d) cultural background and HS questionnaires (see Appendices I and J), and (e) semistructured interviews (see Appendix J for interview questions). In order to understand class environments, teacher help-giving practices, and teacher perspectives on students' HS and learning, I observed classrooms (see Appendix B) and conducted semistructured interviews with teachers (see Appendix K). Discussions of data sources and implementation procedures are presented below.

Think-Pair-Share

This activity was intended to serve as an introduction to the research, make students aware of the use of HS in class and come to a shared definition of academic HS, and gain an understanding of students' general thoughts and ideas about HS in class. It was led as a class activity so that the participating teachers could understand their students' challenges and use of HS strategies in class. Furthermore, by including all students in the activity, the nine

participating students were not singled out. At the beginning of my first class observation in each classroom, the teacher, who was provided with data collection introduction protocol (see Appendix L), introduced the study and me to the class and used approximately 15 minutes to do a think-pair-share activity on HS as a prelude to my data collection. The teacher followed the questions on the think-pair-share sheet (see Appendix A) and first asked students to think on their own and write down their thoughts on their sheet. Then students were paired up for discussion and wrote down their partners' ideas. Finally, the teacher led a whole class discussion and wrote down students' combined ideas for students to copy. The teacher collected all the sheets, reviewed students' notes, and gave them to me. In total, I obtained think-pair-share sheets from four classes. I used only the participating students' data for analyses. The participants did this activity twice (in ESL 4 and Humanities) so that I could gather information about their HS-related perceptions which might differ in different contexts.

In order to understand students' HS perspectives and strategies, three key questions on the think-pair-share sheet asked them why they needed help in class, what kind of help they needed, and how they could get the needed help. They were provided with plenty of space to write their notes for each part of the activity, that is, thinking on their own, pair discussion, and class discussion.

Class Observations

In order to observe and document the participating students' HS behaviors and classroom environments, I quietly observed the participants, their interactions with other class members (i.e., peers and the teacher), and class activities (see Appendix B for the class observation protocol). I sat at a front corner for the first observation in order to get a good view of the whole class. For subsequent observations, I sat near the participant(s) in turn. When they became used to my presence, occasionally, I asked them quick questions at free moments like "What did you ask the teacher just now?" or "What slip [a research topic] did you get?" to help me understand their HS or tasks in that context. At the beginning of each observation, I drew a simple sketch of the classroom to show seating positions of the participants and important objects in the room.

During observations, I made running, descriptive notes chronologically with time recorded for each entry. I took notes of the teacher's and students' speech and behaviors in relation to HS and help-giving, such as the teacher's encouragement of and responses to student HS, teacher positions (standing or moving), participating students' task engagement in terms of concentration and participation, their HS requests and behaviours, peer responses and reaction to their HS, and the participant's reaction. I also took notes of the learning context, including teaching content, format, and activities, seat arrangement, student interactions between the teacher and students and between peers, and classroom atmosphere. After each observation, I typed the field notes and

my comments, filled in what I did not have time to write on site, and made files. I made a total of 17 class observation files (five for ESL-4 class and four for each of the three Humanities classes, see Table 3)

Logs

In order to understand students' HS during learning activities, a log-writing activity was implemented with all students whenever I observed that class. The teacher used 5-10 minutes before the end of the class and asked all students to recollect their HS in the class session and write short answers to the questions on their log sheets (see Appendix C). Then the teacher collected all the log sheets before students left the room, reviewed their notes, and gave the sheets to me. I had a total of 16 sets of HS logs.

The log sheet had a short explanation on the top. A column of boxes contained questions and space for answers. There were three identical columns prepared for three learning activities. The questions in the boxes included: *What challenges or confusions did you have? Did you want help? What kind? Did you seek help? From whom/where? and If you didn't get help, why not?*

After-Class Chats

In order to better understand the participants' log notes, I chatted with them individually about their logs after each class observation when time permitted (a long recess). Such chats were possible after 12 classes. While chatting, I added my notes onto the log sheets. These chats

supplemented or clarified my observations and student interviews.

Student Questionnaires

In order to obtain information concerning the students' language and cultural backgrounds and their HS-related concepts, preferences for resources, and HS/HA reasons in contexts, I developed two questionnaires during data collection: the cultural background questionnaire (see Appendix I) and the HS questionnaire (see Appendix J). The questionnaires were based on student interview protocol (see Appendix D), the results from the preliminary data analyses conducted during class observations, the Learning Through Reading Questionnaire (Butler & Cartier, 2005), HS literature, and my personal experience. Near the end of class observations and before student interviews, I gathered the nine participants in a tutorial block (for self-study) and asked them to answer the two questionnaires. I told them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, that I wanted their own thoughts and opinions, and that they could ask me if they did not understand the questions.

The cultural background questionnaire (see Appendix I) asked students to fill in information on five topics, including ethnic background (e.g., *My father is from _____ & my mother is from _____*), language background (e.g., *I can speak _____ & can read _____*), previous schooling (i.e., *I used to go to school in (country) _____ from age _____ to age _____*), cultural practices at home (i.e., *We celebrate _____ holidays in my home, e.g.,*

Canadian, Chinese, Filipino, Arabic), and perception of cultural identity (e.g., *I feel I am _____* [with an explanation and examples]).

The HS questionnaire (see Appendix J) had eight items with lists of answers for the students to select. For example, Item 1 asked them about their concepts and behaviours of HS, saying *Personally, I think we students are seeking help when doing these*, with a list of 16 types of actions (e.g., *asking for explanation or clarification, asking for examples, asking whether I did the work right, borrowing notes for copying, asking to do assignments for me with reasons, asking for supplies, using tools*). The students ticked their responses into two columns of boxes with one column for students in general and the other for themselves.

The rest of the items related to other HS factors, including (a) occasions when the participants would like to get help (e.g., *when I don't understand something, when I missed some important information, when I want to get good marks*), (b) HS strategies that the participants liked to use to solve difficulties when doing assignments or studying for tests (e.g., *working on my own, using the Internet, asking teachers, asking friends, asking capable classmates, asking my parents*) and the top three strategies that they preferred to use in ESL, Humanities, and a third class (of the student's choice), (d) reasons why they did not seek help in class when needed (e.g., *I like to work on my own, I didn't want to interrupt the teacher, I was afraid to be laughed at by others, I had too much to ask, the teacher was not helpful because he/she didn't answer directly, I*

didn't want to work hard), (e) motivational beliefs in relation to task value (classes are important) and personal goals (learning well and getting good marks) that the participants held in general and for particular classes (i.e., ESL, Humanities, and a third class), and (f) difficulties in learning through reading activities (e.g., *vocabulary, text, getting main ideas, note-making, making a mind-map, making connections*) in general and in particular classes (i.e., ESL, Humanities, and a third class).

Student Interviews

In order to clarify the data that I had collected, probe the participants' perspectives, and understand their HS experiences in past and present learning contexts, I interviewed the nine participants in English, which was their unanimous choice (I offered another choice in Mandarin). I utilized the available time when they had no class, that is, study blocks, lunch breaks, and after school. Because available time and students' backgrounds varied, interview time ranged from about 15 minutes for the first two interviews to about an hour for the last one. The other six interviews took around 25 minutes each. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

During the semistructured student interviews, I asked every student my prepared and open-ended questions and also followed up on student responses. I first asked the students to clarify some of their responses to the two questionnaires. Then I asked them six focus questions

(see Appendix J). My first two focus questions concerned student interpretation of the key words and questions in the log (i.e., *challenges*, *confusions*, *Did you want help?* *Did you seek help?*) with reference to their log notes. My next two questions concerned the situations where the student was most and least likely to seek help in class. And the last two questions concerned the student's HS differences among classes now and between the past and the present.

Teacher Interviews With a Questionnaire

In order to obtain information on teacher help-giving practices and perspectives on students' HS and HA in their classes, I interviewed three teachers as the last stage of data collection (the Humanities 7 teacher, was not available). After students' interviews, I developed a teacher questionnaire (see Appendix K) to be completed during the semistructured teacher interviews, based on the student HS questionnaire (see Appendix J) and the initial, prepared teacher interview protocol (see Appendix E). The teacher questionnaire comprised both focused and general questions concerning student HS and HA and teacher help-giving practices. The teachers first answered the focus questions fully and then the general questions either fully or briefly, depending on how much time was available.

Each teacher interview took from 40 minutes to an hour. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. After transcription, I emailed the ESL-4 teacher about some important parts in her interview which were covered by school announcements in the

recording. She kindly replied and thus helped fill in the blanks.

As my first focus question, I asked teachers to evaluate whether or not student HS actions in class (the 16 HS actions listed in Item 1 of the student HS questionnaire; see Appendix J) were valid and positive for learning, to specify the types of help-giving responses they gave to those HS actions (i.e., giving direct answer/help, giving indirect answer/help, directing to other students, and other type), and to exemplify and talk about their help-giving responses. My second focus question consisted of two parts. I first asked the teachers to comment upon seven types of hindrances to student HS in class, derived from the 23 reasons for HA in Item 4 of the student HS questionnaire. Then I asked the teachers how they would intervene if those situations happened.

Five general questions followed the focus questions. I asked the teachers about participating students' HS and learning in their classes, whether and how the teachers responded differently to student HS, whether and how they encouraged students to work independently, whether and how they encouraged students to ask for help, and whether and how they encouraged peer help. I also asked the ESL-4 teacher about student eligibility for ESL services.

Data Analyses

For case studies, data analysis is not only simultaneous with data collection but is also on-going and becomes intensive after data collection (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). For a

comparative study of this complexity, I performed stages of data analyses in order to address my main research question with particular attention to three issues: the impact of language and culture on academic HS, other factors associated with student HS and HA across contexts, and self-help as a form of strategic HS. My analysis strategies were guided by the sociocultural HS model, which I developed based on the literature (see Figure 2), in that I looked for and interpreted evidence related to the relationships among the main constructs as identified in the model.

In the first stage of data analyses, I conducted preliminary analyses during data collection in order to monitor the study process and make necessary adjustments accordingly. In the second stage, I drew across the complete set of data to construct individual portraits describing HS within and across contexts for each of the participating students. In the final stage, I looked for patterns across cases that were relevant to answering my main research question with the above three foci. Across phases, I followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) guidelines for constructing data displays (see Tables 4 to 10) that allowed me to observe patterns both within and across cases.

Overall, my approach to the data analyses combined what Yin (2003) called a descriptive framework in the development of individual HS portraits and an interpretation of HS patterns observed across cases. When I constructed individual portraits, my focal topics included: (a)

what difficulties ESL students encountered in classes, (b) in what situations they sought help, (c) why and how they sought help, (d) what resources they preferred and used in classes, (e) why they did and did not seek help when needed, and (f) whether and how students used self-help with tools as an HS strategy. In interpreting patterns across cases, I drew on the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998) as my analytical strategy. I first reviewed data from all sources intensively and looked for themes. Then I established databases by categorizing (coding) data under the themes found. Finally, I utilized the databases to triangulate and link data and looked for convergent evidence, relationships, commonalities, and differences as the foundations for findings. In sum, I drew upon techniques of comparison and synthesis to attain findings at both case and cross-case levels.

Establishing Credibility and Warranting Conclusions

According to Merriam (1998), internal validity concerns how research findings match reality. In qualitative studies, researchers cannot access reality itself but rather collect data through people's interpretations of the world. Consequently, researchers represent the data and interpret the meaning of the data as results. Merriam (1998) recommended multiple strategies to enhance credibility of the results from data collected in qualitative research, namely, internal validity and reliability. I adopted several of the recommended strategies in this study.

First of all, I specified my theoretical framework clearly so as to clarify the interpretive

lens from which I made meaning of my data. Then I adopted a number of strategies to ensure that I was adequately representing the meaning ascribed by participants to their HS in classrooms. For example, I used triangulation by carefully gathering data from multiple sources. I also made multiple observations of students' HS in each research context, which enhanced the possibility and my ability to observe HS patterns and paint a fuller portrait of students' HS thoughts and actions in classrooms. I conducted member checks during data collection to monitor my interpretations of participants' thoughts and behaviours. For example, during interviews and after-class chats, I asked students about their responses to the questionnaires administered, their notes written on logs, and what I observed in classrooms. Further, during interviews, I often paraphrased what participants said to check on and enhance my understanding.

I also used a number of strategies to ensure the dependability of my analyses, which means that, according to Merriam (1998), my interpretations made sense, given the data collected. Again, I drew upon triangulation as a useful strategy to warrant conclusions by comparing different sources of data in analyses to confirm emerging findings. I also created an audit trail by describing in detail my data collection and analysis methods and by keeping records of interpretive steps through my data analyses. I cited and displayed data as completely as possible from multiple sources so that readers could trace the link between my data and findings. Lastly, I used peer examination by asking an expert researcher to comment on the links between my data

and findings as they emerged.

Chapter Four

Findings About Cases: Students' Help-Seeking Portraits

In order to advance understanding about how and why ESL students do and do not seek help in different contexts, I conducted nine in-depth case studies of students' help-seeking across different kinds of classrooms (including classes in and outside of Canada). In reporting my findings about cases, I provided descriptive portraits of the nine students' HS and HA within and across these learning contexts. I structure my report based on the study's framework, namely, the sociocultural model of strategic help seeking in context (see Figure 2). In each HS portrait, I represent each student's background, motivation, challenges, requests, resource choices, and reasons for HS and HA decisions. Throughout my presentation, I triangulate data from multiple sources and provide evidence to support my inferences and findings. To be succinct, I use tables to reveal patterns within and across cases.

Amy

The nine participants' self-reports provided on the cultural background questionnaire and in their interviews disclosed their linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds and experiences (see Table 2), that is, what they brought into learning contexts.

Amy's responses revealed that she was a Filipino girl who came from the Philippines to Canada when she was four. While Amy communicated with family and friends using both

Filipino and English, she stated that she preferred to speak in English because “it’s easier.” She said that in the Philippines, she “used to be in the daycare” where she “learned a lot.” At the time of the study, Amy was 13 years old and in Grade 7. She had lived in Canada for nine years.

Amy was a motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented student. She responded to the HS questionnaire that education in general and the specific courses of Humanities and Math-Science were important for her (see Table 4). She aimed to learn well in general and to achieve good grades in “all classes” she was taking. She added in her interview that she wanted to do work well overall whether she was interested or not.

Amy was an active learner in terms of participation, HS, and help giving. I observed that she participated in activities enthusiastically in both her ESL and Humanities classes. For example, Amy raised her hand in both classrooms to answer teachers’ questions and to offer opinions and ideas. In her ESL class, Amy actively shared her personal stories, for example, about how her family immigrated to Canada. She also volunteered to read before instruction and to report on behalf of her group during a class discussion in the ESL class. I also observed that Amy sought and gave help actively. She asked teachers questions about tasks and requested and offered information in groups. Her activeness extended to running errands. In her Humanities class, she volunteered to collect and submit work sheets for her group and to pick up school memos to parents for the class.

From her ESL teacher's perspective, Amy was an intelligent and attentive student. She did not need too much help. When she did, she asked good questions for clarification. The ESL teacher said:

[Amy] is a very bright girl. She listens in class. So she doesn't have a lot of questions. If she does have a question, she normally asks a very good one, a valid one, probably a point or something I missed, I haven't mentioned in class. And she wants to clarify. . . . She never asks questions that are repeated already because she always listens.

The teacher also praised Amy for her positive and active attitude toward HS, saying "Normally, she's not the one to hesitate. She doesn't fit in the details of being uncomfortable, afraid of being laughed at. She's not. She's motivated. If she doesn't understand something, she'll ask right away. Hand goes up."

Amy reported that she sought help in order to understand, perform tasks well, and achieve well. On her Think-Pair-Share sheets, Amy indicated her HS purposes (see Table 5) as "understanding the assignment, preparation for upcoming projects" and tests, and writing well with "grammar help." On the HS questionnaire, Amy also stated that she would seek help when she wanted to achieve good marks. With regard to challenges (see Table 6), Amy stated in her interview as well as on the HS questionnaire that she needed help with projects and writing tasks most. Sometimes she encountered challenges in making a mind map in reading activities or

getting the main idea out of hard reading. Sometimes she needed important information like instructions, facts, and details that she had forgotten or missed.

Amy liked to utilize both people and tools as resources to cope with challenges (see Table 7). With regard to her top three strategies in class, Amy stated in her interview that she preferred to turn to friends first and then teachers and then to work on her own across her ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8). Data combined to indicate that Amy made a variety of HS requests (see Table 9). For instance, she indicated on the HS questionnaire that when she did not understand something or did not know how to do the work, she asked for clarification/explanation, examples, or instructions. In a log entry about a poster project (constructing an advertisement about Canada) in her ESL class, Amy wrote “I had a confusion on was I drawing something from the past, present, or future.” She then sought “teacher help” to get clarification. In another log entry about the PIM chart in Humanities (an assignment to write opinions about a movie the class watched in a format of plus, interesting, and minus points), she stated that she did not know “what to do with ‘interesting’” and then sought help “from my friends and they helped me understand more of what to do.”

Amy cared about her achievement and asked teachers and peers for confirmation about her grades or work. I observed in her ESL class that Amy once asked her teacher about how her written report was marked. She also stated in her interview that she would check answers with

peers to make sure she was correct although she did not need help with her work. Amy reported on the HS questionnaire that she requested materials which she needed for tasks, such as notes, copies of handouts she lost, and supplies. As I observed in her Humanities class, she participated in a group discussion and in the end borrowed and copied notes written by the group “manager.” I also noticed her borrow a fine liner from Dave when drawing the poster in her ESL class.

Amy also drew upon self-help tools to find information, such as the computer, books, and dictionaries (see Table 7). She stated in her interview that among the tools she might access, the Internet was her favorite. Although Amy preferred social coping strategies when she needed help on tasks across her ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8), she also seemed to prefer doing projects by herself. For example, I observed in her ESL class that she chose to work alone on the poster project rather than work with her good friends, Betty and Carol. The trio always sat together in both of their ESL and Humanities classes.

Amy reported that she was not as active in HS during elementary school. She was deterred from HS by perceptions of costs such as peers’ laughing at her and thus was reluctant to seek help in public (see Table 10). She remarked in her interview, “In the past I was like scared to raise my hand before in front of the whole class. . . . I wouldn’t put up my hand a lot during class.” She also indicated on the HS questionnaire that one of the reasons for her reluctance to seek help in class was fear of being laughed at. But, with a new realization about the

commonality of HS among students, Amy seemed to overcome her negative perceptions and became an active help seeker in secondary classrooms. She described how her attitude had changed during her interview, saying “Now I can do it [asking in public] because I’m comfortable with my class. . . . I found that everyone needs help at some point, right? So I ask a lot.”

Besides fear of seeking help in public (to disclose inability openly), Amy reported other reasons why she was reluctant to seek help in class (see Table 10). She stressed in her interview that she did not approach mean teachers or peers. She explained, “I’ll ask the nice teachers. I’ll ask the teachers who are willing to help me. But if they are the mean teachers, no.” As for peers, she said that if her friends were not available, she would “ask the smarter ones or the ones who are finished their work already.” If they were mean, she declared, “No, I don’t go to them.”

Motivation affected Amy’s HS and HA in intriguing ways. She reported on the HS questionnaire that she did not seek help if she was not interested in a task or topic or did not want to learn. But in her interview, she expressed willingness to seek needed help in those circumstances. Amy said, “I would like to go for a one, it’s not interesting for me because like I probably wouldn’t pay attention as much for the one I’m not interested in. So that’s what I would need help in.” In other words, initially, Amy did not have the intention to ask questions because of lack of interest or motivation to learn. But she aimed to achieve well in every class. Thus,

eventually she had to ask for the information she missed in order to get good marks.

Amy also had concerns about appropriate times for questioning. She reported on the HS questionnaire that she did not ask for help in some cases because she did not want to interrupt the teacher's instruction or because there was no time left for questions. Thus she indicated on a Think-Pair-Share sheet that one kind of help she needed in class was "more time to ask questions." She was also reluctant to seek help when the teacher or peers were busy. On the HS questionnaire, Amy expressed reluctance to ask for help when she had too many questions. Perhaps she did not want to look stupid, interrupt others, or use too much of their time in such cases. She also reported reluctance to seek help when she did not know how to frame her questions. Here, it could have been that she lacked necessary language skills for effective communication or that she was unable to pinpoint her confusion. The final reason Amy reported for not seeking help when needed was that she could ask parents at home. Perhaps this was a strategy she used to cope with challenges or confusions in elementary school when she was afraid to ask for help.

In sum, Amy was a highly motivated and active student in Canada. In order to enhance her learning and achievement, Amy well utilized HS strategies to cope in activities, among which projects and writing were most challenging for her. In terms of use of coping strategies, Amy was quite stable across her ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes. She preferred social

strategies to self-help. Her positive attitude toward HS evolved during her education. In the elementary school, she was afraid of asking for help in public. Later on, she realized that needing and seeking help was common among students. Hence across secondary classrooms, she did not hesitate to seek social help from friends and teachers. She also used self-help tools to seek information. However, she was reluctant to ask for help in some circumstances. She did not approach the teachers or peers she perceived to be mean. She was concerned about appropriate times for asking questions. She also failed to ask when she was unable to formulate her questions due to lack of either topic knowledge or English proficiency.

My main research question in this study focused on why and how students seek or avoid seeking help in classrooms, with particular attention to how linguistic and cultural factors as well as other factors played in their HS and HA and attention to whether and how students used self-help with tools as a form of HS strategy.

In Amy's case, I found that perceived language proficiency did interact with many other individual and contextual factors to influence Amy's HS and HA decisions. Writing was the type of activity where Amy needed help most due to linguistic challenges. Among individual factors, Amy's personal goal to perform well and her belief that HS was common among students seemed to play a stronger role in her HS decision. On the other hand, HS norms (e.g., not to interrupt when the teacher or peers were busy), perceived HS costs (e.g., the teacher and peers

were perceived as mean), and linguistic challenges (e.g., being unable to formulate her questions) seemed to be associated with Amy's HA in some contexts. In terms of the way Amy sought help in classrooms, she preferred other-help (from friends or teachers) across contexts. Nevertheless, as expected within the sociocultural HS model applied in this study, Amy also drew on self-help with tools (e.g., the computer, books, and dictionaries) as learning and coping strategies.

Betty and Carol

Betty and Carol were identical twins. Although I treated them as two cases during data collection and analysis, I decided to represent them together for two reasons. The first reason was for efficiency. They shared background information, and the ESL teacher commented on the two sisters together. They always sat together in classrooms, so that their interactions in HS often overlapped. The second reason was that a combined report allowed for a close comparison. The twin participants provided a bonus opportunity to investigate how and why siblings with the same background do and do not seek help across common learning contexts.

The twins had a Chinese background (see Table 2). They came from Hong Kong to Canada when they were one and a half years old. For both, Cantonese and English were their primary languages, which they used to communicate with family members and friends. However, they both preferred to speak English because of better proficiency. Betty and Carol stated respectively on their questionnaires, "I am more fluent" and "I know and can speak better" in English.

Neither Betty nor Carol had any educational experiences outside of Canada. However, they had both attended a local Chinese school on Saturdays for about five years. At the time of this study, the twin sisters were 12 years old and in Grade 7. They had been in Canada for ten and a half years.

Both of the twin sisters were motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented students (see Table 4). They both indicated on the HS questionnaire that in general, they valued education and also aimed to learn well and achieve good grades. In terms of specific courses, Betty indicated that she valued and aimed to achieve good grades in “every class” she was taking. However, she aimed to learn well in her Humanities and Math-Science classes but not in her ESL class. Similarly, Carol valued and aimed to achieve good grades in both of her ESL and Humanities classes but only aimed to learn well in her Humanities class, not her ESL class (no comment here about other classes). In Betty’s opinion, ESL courses did not matter as much as other provincially prescribed curricula. She explained in her interview why she did not need “to learn well” in her ESL class, saying “I think other classes are a bit more important. . . . Because it’s not necessary to go to ESL unless we have to.”

Betty and Carol’s differential involvement across their Humanities and ESL classes seemed to reflect the presence or absence of this to-learn-well goal. I noticed that during lectures and class discussions, the twins participated actively in their Humanities class. They paid

attention and raised hands to ask the teacher questions as well as to answer his queries. But in their ESL class, both of them were passive and distracted. They listened quietly and only responded to the teacher's requests (e.g., to answer questions, to make a group report). During my 3rd observation, the twins were often not looking at the teacher or the items she was showing the class (immigration ads from an old magazine). Instead, Betty was drawing a house nicely on a small piece of paper, and Carol was cutting and playing with her eraser and later was making a paper plane.

Betty and Carol drew upon HS strategies for the purposes of understanding, task engagement, and good achievement (see Table 5). On their Think-Pair-Share sheets, Betty indicated that she sought help in order “to understand something, to help look for information, to get new/more ideas, to help with assignment[s], to help study, [or to do] preparations.” Carol indicated that she sought help because she “didn’t understand things, [was] not clear on instructions,” or “need[ed] help of getting ideas.” They both stated on the HS questionnaire that they would seek help when they wanted to achieve good marks.

With regard to challenges (see Table 6), the twins stated in their interviews that they needed help with writing tasks most, on which Betty had to cope with confusions or spelling challenges. Carol said likewise, “When I have to write essays, paragraphs, I may have a lot of problems.” She needed “explanation, help with explaining things.” She elaborated, “Like things,

I never learned about. . . . Like activities that I usually don't really get." In reading activities, as stated on HS questionnaires and in interviews, sometimes Betty found vocabulary or getting main or important ideas challenging in her ESL and Humanities classes but had "not as much" challenge in other classes. Carol indicated that she had challenges in her Humanities class in both higher-level cognitive activities such as making a mind-map and making connections and lower-level cognitive work like remembering facts and details. She indicated that she needed help with math sometimes but had no difficulties in her ESL class.

To cope with challenges, Betty and Carol liked to use both other-help and self-help (see Table 7). In terms of preference of resources in class, both of the twins preferred teachers and friends across their ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8). They stated in their interviews that in their ESL and Math-Science classes, they liked to ask the teacher first and then friends. In their Humanities class, they said that they would choose friends first and then the teacher. As for the third choice, Betty preferred getting help from tutors for her ESL and Math-Science classes and from dictionaries in her Humanities class. Carol preferred nice peers in her ESL class and nearby peers in her Math-Science class (no comment for her Humanities class).

Their choices of helpers were primarily based on a reliable social relationship. Betty said in her interview that she turned to "approachable teachers. They are not too mean or busy." This

criterion can explain why she gave tutors as her third choice of resources. As for classmates, she said, “Probably the ones I know well,” including her sister. Carol made similar comments, saying “[I ask] the teachers I trust. And they are nice.” As for classmates, she added, “Usually [I ask] my friends and my sister because I know them well. Usually I trust them more.” If her friends were not in the same class, Carol said that she asked nice classmates.

Sources of data indicated that Betty and Carol made a variety of HS requests (see Table 9). For example, they sought clarification or explanation. In their Humanities logs about the lecture on world religions, Betty stated that she was “confused with the symbols of religions” and got help from the “teacher and students.” Carol also stated that she “couldn’t understand symbols” and got “explanation” from the “teacher.” In their logs about the PIM chart, Betty stated that she did not know “what points goes under what category” and got “student” help. Carol wrote “I did not know how much were we suppose[d] to fill” and got “explaining” from “friends.”

On their Think-Pair-Share sheets and HS questionnaires, the twins explained that they sought help to get ideas. On an ESL log sheet about a reading activity, Betty indicated that she got ideas from peers about opportunities in Canada. The twins also asked for materials which they needed for tasks. As I observed in the ESL class, Betty borrowed a fine liner and took an index card from the teacher, and Carol asked for a glue stick from the teacher when they made posters.

Betty and Carol also sought teacher confirmation about their marks and work. The ESL teacher perceived that the twin sisters constantly made unnecessary requests for confirmation or reassurance due to insecurity. She said:

Both are very academic girls. . . . In a sense, they have to ask every step about what to do. . . . I think they understand everything I say. But every time they ask me, it's all about simple confirmation of marks, some sort of 'Am I doing it right? . . . Is this what you want?' that kind of thing. . . . For me, their question is kind of very simple, so simple that maybe I don't need to answer, that kind.

When I suggested that it sounded as if the two girls sought confirmation because they were not secure, the ESL teacher agreed with my analysis and exclaimed, "Exactly, they are not secure." She said that they already knew the answers but "they still ask the same thing, to re-ensure themselves that they are doing correctly. . . . They always need their reassurance that they are doing well."

I also observed Carol ask such questions for reassurance. In my 3rd observation in the ESL class, the teacher told the class what she wanted them to do in the poster project, which was "How do you sell Canada?" She also instructed them that they should have a slogan to express the message for their poster. In the next class, I observed Carol ask the teacher, "Should we have a slogan?" In contrast, after the teacher answered "Yes" to Carol, Amy asked the teacher,

“Should it be catchy?” That was a question related to a potential point that the teacher had not mentioned in class. Later, Carol asked Amy a question for reassurance, likely to confirm her understanding about what the poster was for because Amy answered, “It’s an advertisement.”

Overall, I did not see the twins seek as much teacher help in the ESL class as the teacher described. She explained:

Maybe they are afraid they are asking about the average for themselves or ask me something that would put them down. I think maybe that’s a hindrance. Yea, there are many times when you were not here, they would ask questions.

In addition to seeking other help, the twins also used self-reliance and self-help to cope on tasks. For example, they drew upon dictionaries as resources to solve spelling problems. Betty said in her interview that she used “dictionaries and good thesauruses” in the classroom, and then asked the teacher to help with spelling “if it is nothing in a dictionary.” Carol depended on herself and used tools to tackle less challenging work. She responded in her interview, “If the problem I’m having is not that difficult, I would try to figure it out myself, using like computers and books. I would work out it.” Carol also stated in logs about the poster and about the Plus 4 chart, the second part of the PIM chart, that she found ideas on her own although initially she perceived a challenge with “thinking of ideas” and a need for help. With regard to favorite self-help tool(s), Betty said that she used “computers [and] dictionaries” most. Carol said that she

liked to use the “computer, books” as well as dictionaries.

Both Betty and Carol seemed to prefer doing projects alone although they were together in life and in classes. According to the ESL teacher, the competitive relationship between the twins played a role in their common choice of working on their own. She explained:

They don’t share work. . . . They never choose each other as partners. They are highly competitive. . . . They don’t like to work with each other. For some reason, like those posters we did, I assumed they would work together. No. First thing was, “No, I’m doing on my own.”

Similarly, when they asked about their marks, the teacher said, “Individually, they come up at different times. I try to pinpoint who’s who. Who’s been asking those simple questions? . . . They are not coming together as a pair.” Although they competed with each other as students, the twins were still close sisters and friends. The teacher said, “I don’t see them fight. . . . They like to sit next to each other.” They referred to each other as a resource that they liked to turn to (see Table 7). I also observed in the ESL class that Betty asked Carol and received the correct answer about the spelling of *immigrant*.

With respect to why they were reluctant to seek help in class (see Table 10), the two sisters were mainly restrained by time concerns and negative helper attributes. On their HS questionnaires and in their interviews, they both indicated that they did not want to interrupt the

teacher's instruction or ask for help when the teacher or peers were busy. Betty added that she avoided seeking help when she herself was busy and when there was no time for questions. The twins were also reluctant to ask teachers who they perceived to be unkind. Betty referred to such teachers as "not approachable" or "mean." Carol described them vividly, saying "The ones I usually don't go because they are scary." The availability of desired resources was also related to the twins' reluctance to seek help in class. Among their reasons for HA, Betty reported that she did not have the tools/resources she needed in class, and Carol reported that she could get help at home.

Both twins utilized the same HS approaches across elementary and secondary schools. In interviews, Betty said that her HS behaviour was "mostly the same" across different classes in the secondary school and "kind of the same, too," in the elementary school. Carol described the ways she sought help in different secondary classes as "they are basically the same thing." She provided no particular reasons for her first choice of teachers or friends and deemed them all helpful because "all of them, they'll learn what to talk to me to do, to help." Carol also responded that in terms of HS, there was "not really" any difference between what she had done in the elementary school and what she did at the time of the study. The only difference was in quantity as she added, "Just this year because there are like more work and activities, I needed help more than I did before."

In sum, although Betty and Carol were motivated students in Canada, they had differential learning attitudes toward ESL and provincially prescribed courses. Among the challenges they encountered, writing in English was most challenging for both of them. They drew upon both other-help and self-help strategies in a stable manner. Across contexts in elementary and secondary schools, they both preferred trustworthy people to other resources. They were reluctant to seek help when they were concerned about appropriate times for questioning, when they perceived a possible helper to be mean, and when preferred resources were not available.

The relationship between the twins consisted of sibling rivalry and support. On the one hand, they were competing with each other and needed reassurance, which drove them to ask simple confirmation questions to which they were supposed to have already known the answers. They always sat together in the classroom. But when working on projects, they chose to work alone so as to materialize their own ideas and exercise their abilities independently. On the other hand, they were dependable resources for each other when they coped with challenges.

In terms of addressing my research questions focused on factors associated with students' HS and HA, the cases of Betty and Carol revealed that linguistic factors related to their perceived challenges and need for help. Like Amy, they regarded writing as the most challenging activity and thus needed help most there. Other individual and contextual factors also affected their HS and HA decisions. In particular, their personal goal to learn well seemed to relate to their learning

attitudes and efforts made at tasks, including their use of HS strategies. Their HA seemed to be associated with HS norms (e.g., not to interrupt when others were busy) and perceived HS costs (e.g., teachers and peers perceived as untrustworthy). In terms of the way in which Betty and Carol sought help in classrooms, they preferred other-help (from people they trusted) across contexts. Nevertheless, as expected, Betty and Carol also drew on self-help with tools (e.g., the computer, books, and dictionaries) as learning and coping strategies.

Dave

Dave was a Canadian-born Chinese student (see Table 2). His parents were Chinese, and he was born in Canada. His family moved back to Hong Kong when he was four or so. Then they moved back to Canada again when he was eight. English was his primary language, which he used to talk to his family members and friends. He spoke “a little” Cantonese with his parents. He stated on the questionnaire that he liked to speak in English “because I know how to speak it better.” In Hong Kong, Dave finished Grades 1 and 2 in a Chinese school where English was the instructional language. He continued his education in Canada. At the time of the study, he was 13 years old and in Grade 7.

Dave was a motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented student (see Table 4). He stated on the HS questionnaire that in general, he valued education and aimed to learn well and to achieve good grades. In terms of specific courses, he valued ESL, Humanities, and The Ways

Things Work (TW, a course on environmental science). He aimed to learn and achieve well in his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science (on general science) classes. As I observed in his ESL and Humanities classes, Dave was active in participation, answering teachers' questions and offering his opinions. He also liked to help others actively. For example, when his Humanities teacher used the projector, he turned on and off the lights without the teacher's request. In the computer lab, when Dave found Fred did not know how to use the printer, he went to help without Fred's request. However, sources of data indicated that Dave was often distracted in class and thus needed and sought help often (see below).

Dave sought help in order to understand, perform tasks well, and achieve well (see Table 5). On his Think-Pair-Share sheets, Dave indicated that he sought help because he needed help with "hard questions, preparations for projects, spelling, [and] tests-studying." On the HS questionnaire, Dave also stated that he would seek help when he wanted to achieve good marks. With regard to challenges or help needed (see Table 6), Dave stated in his interview that the help he needed most was for teachers to repeat instructions for assignments when he had not been attentive. Sometimes, Dave experienced challenges with vocabulary in reading activities. For example, on an ESL log sheet, he described his challenge as "words I don't know or understand." As I observed that day, he was asked to read and stopped at *municipal*. He said to his ESL teacher, "I don't know how to read the word." On the HS questionnaire, Dave reported

difficulties in higher-level cognitive activities in his Humanities class, such as getting main ideas, making a mind map, and making connections. On two Humanities log sheets, he stated that he encountered challenges in the “mindmap” activity. He wrote respectively “can’t really make good inferences” and “don’t really know how to gather good information.” On another log sheet, he identified a challenge in making connections, writing “I don’t really know how to make good connections.” On the HS questionnaire and one log sheet, Dave also stated difficulties in note-making and remembering facts and details.

To cope with challenges, Dave utilized both other-help and self-help (see Table 7). With regard to his top three strategies in class, he stated on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that he turned to teachers or friends for help first and then to nice or nearby peers across his ESL, Humanities, and French classes (see Table 8). His preference for other-help was supported by his logs and my observations (see examples below). When Dave chose a helper, he seemed to take into account his help expectations. He replied in his interview that to prepare for projects, he would request supplies from the teacher and ideas from friends. He stressed that he would not ask the teacher for ideas. Probably he thought that the teacher would reject his request for ideas as some participants (Amy, Eva, and Ian) indicated in their interviews that students were supposed to think of their own ideas (like a norm or common understanding). One of them (Ian) had explained, “Usually that’s part of our homework or project, so we are not always allowed to

do it [asking for ideas].” Dave would also take HS consequences into account. He stated on the HS questionnaire that in his Humanities class, he preferred “asking people near me.” But in his interview, he changed his mind. With a slight sigh, he replied, “Teacher,” as his first choice in his Humanities class because he did not want to be punished for chatting. He said, “When you ask your friend, most like I’m talking to him. And Mr. [Humanities-7 teacher], I’ll get in trouble again.”

Data combined to indicate that Dave made varied HS requests (see Table 9). As I observed in his Humanities and ESL classes, Dave readily sought help from peers and teachers. In his Humanities class, for instance, Dave asked his group peer first and then the teacher for clarification about a work sheet on world religions. He borrowed and copied peers’ notes during a lecture on world religions and the group manager’s writing on her Plus 4 chart during a group discussion. He even asked a peer next to him for an answer during a pop quiz. In his ESL class, he asked peers around him for background information he lacked (about holiday dates and purposes) during a language activity. He borrowed supplies from peers when doing the poster project. And he asked his ESL teacher about vocabulary and asked for confirmation and approval about the poster he and Gary made together.

Dave seemed to like working with a partner so as to have easy access to assistance. The ESL teacher said in her interview that Dave sat with Gary all the time and asked him questions

frequently. As I observed, when the teacher asked Dave about the way he wanted to do the poster project, he replied immediately, “I’ll do it with [Gary].”

Both Dave and his ESL teacher recognized that Dave requested instructions to be repeated due to a lack of attention. She said:

He didn’t listen. He’s not focused. . . . He taps, he sings, he claps, he’s very full of energy, that kid, right? . . . He re-asks the same question I was asked one second ago. . . . He understands. It’s only when you repeat it for him like the instructions. But he understands everything.

She also praised his work when he focused his attention, saying “But when [Dave]’s working, he is working.” As I observed in both his ESL and Humanities classes, Dave had stretches of quiet, focused time, but he made noises and was restless in between. During these distracted moments, his activities included playing with a coin, his pen, and his cap, clicking his fingers, colouring his eraser and his arm with a pen, waving his arms and body as if he were dancing, making and shooting a paper plane, and using a flossy book cover to reflect sunlight. In my 3rd observation in his Humanities class, Dave was detained after class with three other boys. His teacher said, “[Dave,] you are not controlling yourself over there today.” Overall, I observed Dave to be quieter and more focused in his ESL class than in his Humanities class.

Dave also drew upon self-reliance and self-help as coping strategies (see Table 7). For

example, he wrote on an ESL log sheet “I don’t really get it” and “I wanted to figure out myself.”

In his Humanities class, I saw him using an electrical device (a calculator or electrical dictionary) to figure out something during a lecture on world religions. He said in his interview that among the tools he used, the computer was his favorite.

There were contexts where Dave was reluctant to seek other help (see Table 10). When Dave was in Grades 1 and 2 in Hong Kong, he did not seek help from the teacher due to fear. He said in his interview, “I’m usually scared of the teacher. He is very mean.” He did not turn to peers for help either because he was unfamiliar with them, which resulted from lack of language proficiency. Dave said, “I didn’t know any of them at that time” because “it’s strange talking to them.” Dave said that he knew only “a tiny bit” of Cantonese. He was uncomfortable using limited Cantonese to socialize with or seek help from peers. Dave thus had to work on his own. He said, “I just try figuring it out myself.” Consistently, Dave reported on the HS questionnaire that he was reluctant to ask when he did not know how to frame his questions.

In contrast, Dave used English to make friends with boys in Canadian classrooms and could turn to any of them for help. Although he had no problem with communication in English, he was uncomfortable with girls. He said, “I know everyone in my classes. . . . I ask everybody else, but not the girls” because “I am shy.” I observed that in his Humanities class, his teacher grouped him with four girls and that Dave sought help in his group. He explained, “I get used to

them. I'm always with them every day.” His discomfort with girls was overcome by familiarity achieved within a long-term partnership.

In addition to shying away from mean teachers, Dave did not turn to teachers he perceived as unhelpful because they gave indirect answers, aiming to help students think and find out answers themselves. In his interview, Dave gave his regular science teacher as an example and remarked, “I don't really go to teacher, so I ask friends.” In contrast, Dave said that he liked to ask his environmental science teacher “to repeat . . . the instructions . . . because I usually talk in TW.”

Dave was also concerned about appropriate times for questioning. He reported on the HS questionnaire that he did not ask teachers if they were busy or if there was no time left for questions. Dave also reported that sometimes he did not seek help in class because he could ask his parents at home.

In sum, Dave was a motivated and active student in Canadian classrooms. He actively participated, sought help, and helped others. When Dave was focused, he had good understanding. But he was distracted easily, more often in his Humanities class than in his ESL class. His distraction seemed to be his biggest challenge because the help he needed most was to repeat the information he missed. He preferred teachers and peers as resources. However, his HS decisions (choice of helpers or HA) might be influenced by some considerations, including his

help expectations (e.g., direct help), consequences (e.g., punishment), and helper attribute (e.g., niceness, gender). Although he was shy with girls, familiarity alleviated his discomfort.

When Dave studied in Hong Kong, he had to cope with challenges on his own. He did not approach the teacher for help because of his negative perception of him (being mean), nor did he seek peer help because of his lack of language proficiency in Cantonese. In Canada, on the contrary, Dave was comfortable speaking in English and willing to ask any boy for help.

In relation to my research questions about what factors might affect HS and HA across contexts and about use of self-help strategies, Dave's case showed that a number of salient, interacting factors played a role, including perceived language proficiency, individual characteristics, perceived HS costs, teaching and help-giving practices, and interpersonal relationships. For example, in Hong Kong, Dave was not proficient in Cantonese and found it difficult to develop friendships with peers. As a result, he avoided seeking peer help there. Although he could communicate with the teacher in English, he also avoided teacher help because he perceived the teacher as mean. Thus, Dave used only self-reliance and self-help strategies when studying in Hong Kong.

In Canada, Dave preferred other-help strategies because oral communication was not a challenge. He also used self-help adaptively when he wanted to be autonomous. However, he did encounter challenges that related to English proficiency such as unfamiliar vocabulary in reading

and note making. Being comfortable speaking in English facilitated Dave's development of friendships with peers. Hence, he sought peer help readily, but shyness with girls was a HS deterrent for Dave. On the other hand, regular grouping made him comfortable seeking help from familiar girls. The interactions between Dave's characteristics, help expectations, and perception of HS consequences also affected Dave's HS, HA, and choice of helpers. For instance, Dave mostly needed teachers to repeat instructions for him because of his short attention span. His choice of teachers or peers as helpers seemed to be associated with his help expectations, given teachers' help-giving practices, and perceived HS consequences, given teachers' classroom management practices.

There were times when Dave used other-help in a maladaptive way, which might have been associated with stress and anxiety. For instance, Dave had difficulty with note making. He copied peers' notes in order to complete tasks on time. With no preparation for a pop quiz and a hope of a better mark, Dave asked a peer for answers at the end of the quiz.

Eva

Like Dave, Eva was also a Canadian-born Chinese student (see Table 2). Her parents were Chinese and she was born in Canada. Her family moved back to Hong Kong when she was three or four. Then they moved back to Canada again when she was eight. Unlike Dave, Eva used both Cantonese and English as her primary languages. She spoke Cantonese at home and with friends

who spoke Cantonese. She mainly used English in school, especially when asking questions, and with friends who did not speak Cantonese. She preferred to use Cantonese “because it’s easier to explain things,” she stated on the HS questionnaire. With regard to her education history, Eva had preschooling in Canada, finished Grades 1 and 2 in Hong Kong, and then continued her education in Canada again. Like Betty and Carol, Eva had also studied in a Chinese school on Saturdays since Grade 3 or 4. At the time of the study, Eva was 13 years old and in Grade 8.

Eva was a motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented student (see Table 4). She stated on the HS questionnaire and in her interview that in general, she valued education and aimed to learn well and achieve well no matter whether or not she was interested. Specifically, Eva valued both ESL and Humanities courses and aimed to learn well in these two classes (no comment here about a third class). She stressed the importance of the ESL course in her interview, saying “Because it helps you with other stuff like Humanities.” She reported that she wanted to achieve good grades in her ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes.

In terms of learning in class, generally, Eva understood and did not request too much teacher help in her ESL and Humanities classes. Her Humanities teacher commented in her interview that Eva’s work was “fine. She understood. She’s a B student.” Both her Humanities and ESL teachers described Eva as a quiet girl who did not ask them much. Her Humanities teacher added, “[Eva] is most likely to ask a peer.” Eva also described herself as a “quiet person”

and said, “Like I don’t talk a lot.” As I observed in her Humanities class, Eva was quiet during lectures and class discussions. But she had frequent interactions with peers. I often saw her joyfully talking, joking, and playing with different girls who were sitting beside her.

Eva sought help for the sake of understanding and task engagement (see Table 5). On her Think-Pair-Share sheet, Eva stated that she sought help so that she could “understand what the teacher is trying to teach.” She also stated on the HS questionnaire and in her interview that she asked questions when she did not understand or did not know how to do the work. With regard to challenges (see Table 6), Eva stated in her interview that she needed and sought help with assignments in Humanities most. On the HS questionnaire and in her interview, Eva described occasional difficulties with vocabulary both in reading and in writing (e.g., making a good choice of words) and with higher-level comprehension (getting main/important ideas). She said, “Humanities is like a show [which] shows English. It’s like a writing thing. You get the meaning and write them into a paragraph and stuff.” Eva indicated that she did not have difficulties in other classes and perceived only the Humanities textbook challenging.

Eva drew upon self-help and other-help to cope with challenges (see Table 7). She reported that she preferred resources of teachers and friends (not unfamiliar peers) across all of her classes (see Table 8). She stated in her interview, “If I have any questions, I just ask” either the teacher or friends, depending on who might be available. She described the way she sought help, saying:

I usually ask teachers. Otherwise, I ask some friends because the teacher's really busy.

Like she goes around the classroom that stuff because like she helps everyone. But if the teacher's not busy, then I go to the teacher. . . . Like while we're doing the stuff on our own, I just go up to the desk.

Eva said that it did not matter whether or not the teacher was nice or the work was of interest to her. But she did not bother the teacher when he or she was busy.

Data combined to indicate that Eva made only a few types of HS requests (see Table 9). She said in her interview that, when confused, she would ask questions "to clear [clarify] something." She stated on the HS questionnaire that she asked for instructions about how to perform tasks. One log entry recorded her seeking confirmation from a friend. She wrote, "I just wanted to check if I'm right or not." She stated on the HS questionnaire that she would request important information she had missed and copies of handouts she had lost. Eva also requested supplies she was short of. For example, I observed her ask for a blank sheet of paper from the girl sitting beside her in Humanities. Eva sought lexical information from friends. On a log sheet, she wrote "asking what word means" of a friend.

In terms of self-help, Eva stated on the HS questionnaire that she liked to obtain information using the computer and books, between which she favoured online resources. Eva's choice between other-help and self-help and between self-help tools showed her preference for

and consideration of efficiency. Eva stated on a Humanities log sheet that she asked a peer “what word means,” and responded in the following after-class chat that she did not like to use a paper dictionary. She added in her interview:

I like computer. On the computer, there is like a dictionary.com and a thesaurus.com and those things. . . . I use [a paper] dictionary it’s like [only when] there’s not a computer nearby. But as long as I could [access] a computer nearby, I just use the computer because computer is faster than the paper.

When her favorite tool (the computer) was not available, Eva chose a peer (other help) rather than a paper dictionary (self-help) because peer help was faster than her use of an unfamiliar tool.

Although Eva was willing to seek help from teachers, she seldom did because she either did not have questions or got help from friends. In my observations, Eva did not ask her Humanities teacher any questions, even on an occasion when the teacher walked to her side to check whether she had questions. Eva explained in her interview, “Like mostly I don’t have any questions. . . . It’s not like I don’t like to ask for help. It’s just . . . because I don’t really need help.” On all of her Humanities log sheets, Eva reported no challenges or confusions at all, but at the same time, she recorded seeking help from peers, for instance, to check whether she completed a worksheet on Buddhism correctly and to ask about vocabulary in the textbook. It

seemed that Eva did not have major questions to ask the teacher but had minor needs to consult with friends.

With respect to reasons for help avoidance, Eva did not endorse any of the possible reasons listed on the HS questionnaire. She emphasized in her interview that she always asked for help when needed, so none of those listed reasons applied to her. She explained that her active attitude toward HS was cultivated by her parents: “Because my parents always told me to ask if I don’t understand. So I don’t see any reasons why not to ask people.” Eva had a positive attitude toward HS and managed to seek needed help across her secondary classes. However, based on her interview, Eva still avoided seeking help in some contexts (see Table 10). As discussed previously, Eva was quiet and liked to seek teacher help in private, which means that she was uncomfortable seeking help in public. She asked for help from available people, either the teacher or friends, which means that she did not want to bother others when they were busy. And she avoided using self-help because her favorite tool (the computer) was not available in the classroom.

Language challenges once deterred Eva from seeking help in class. When Eva was in Grades 3 and 4, a new immigrant to Canada, she did not seek help in class at all because she spoke little English and had no friends. She described in her interview how she was doing in classrooms then:

When I was here like in grade 3, I don't know any English. I'm like not really understanding what the teacher said in class as a student. So I don't seek help at all. . . . I just did it all wrong. . . . [A teacher-parent conference took place.] My mom told me to ask for help instead of just doing it yourself all wrong.

Eva's HS did not increase overnight after the conference. Instead, Eva waited until she was in Grade 5 when her English skills progressed (I estimate she was in ESL level 3 then) and when she made friends and could ask them for help. Eva explained her fear of asking unfamiliar peers for help, saying:

It's like I was afraid I guess because everyone was a stranger. But then I gradually get used to it. Like every year [I had] the friends in different classrooms and the stuff. . . . I did not ask until I was in Grade 5.

Further back when Eva was in Grades 1 and 2 in Hong Kong, where she spoke Cantonese, she could ask any peer for help. She explained, "The whole class is actually friend. Like we all play together. There's no [category of] classmates or friends. They are just all classmates or all friends. Something you just ask anyone." Similarly, Eva also sought peer help readily in secondary classrooms in Canada. But she stated clearly in her interview and on the HS questionnaire that she sought help from friends only, no other classmates.

In sum, Eva was a motivated and quiet student in classrooms. She listened in whole-class

activities, giving no answers or opinions, and sought teacher help in private. With regard to challenges, she needed help with Humanities assignments most. Eva had a positive attitude toward HS, which was cultivated by her parents. Hence, she asked for help whenever she needed it. She preferred teachers and friends equally as resources across all secondary classes. Most of the time, Eva turned to friends for help because of better availability. Friendship mattered greatly to Eva's willingness or reluctance to seek help. When she studied in Grades 1 and 2 in Hong Kong, she regarded all classmates as friends and thus could ask anyone of them for help. In secondary classrooms in Canada, she distinguished friends from other peers and sought help from friends only. But Eva did not seek help at all in Grades 3 and 4, when she knew little English and had no friends. From Grade 5 on, with her English skills progressing and friendships established, Eva fulfilled the HS lesson her parents taught to ask for help when she needed it.

In terms of answering my research questions, as in Dave's case, Eva's case also evidenced that the interaction between language proficiency and development of friendships affected her HS and HA decisions and resulted in different HS patterns in different contexts. For example, she sought peer help readily in Hong Kong because of her fluency in Cantonese and friendships with peers. But in the early years in Canada, because of limited English, Eva was unable to make friends and avoided seeking other-help (from teachers or peers). When her English improved and she developed friendships, coupled with her belief that HS benefited learning, Eva resumed

asking for other-help (her preference) across secondary classes. The interaction between perceived language proficiency and class demands also influenced Eva's HS in terms of challenges she encountered and needs for help she perceived. For instance, she regarded Humanities (which demands better English proficiency) as challenging, but not other courses. In particular, she described herself as needing the most of help in writing tasks.

In terms of how Eva sought help, overall, her quiet disposition (in public), her help expectations, and resource availability played a role in her way of seeking help and choice of resources. For example, Eva preferred seeking help from friends or teachers in private, depending on who was available at that moment. When using self-help tools, Eva liked to use online resources because of familiarity and efficiency. But when her preferred tool (i.e., the computer) was not available, Eva chose other-help instead.

Fred

Fred experienced life and education in three different countries (see Table 2). He was born in the Philippines. His father was Chinese and his mother was Filipino. Both Filipino and English were his primary and preferred languages. He talked to his parents and grandparents in Filipino and siblings and friends in English or Filipino. He could also use Mandarin to communicate with Chinese friends who were uncomfortable speaking English. When he was 11, his parents sent him to Taiwan to study. The next year, he returned to the Philippines. When he

was 13, he and his family moved to Canada. At the time of the study, he was 14 years old and in Grade 8.

Fred was a motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented student (see Table 4). He stated on the HS questionnaire that in general, he valued education and aimed to learn well and to achieve good grades. With regard to specific courses, he identified only ESL as important. However, he aimed to learn and achieve well across his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes. Fred was an active learner in terms of participation and HS. In my observations in his ESL and Humanities classes, he actively answered teachers' questions and engaged in tasks well in both classes. He sought help from teachers and peers (see examples below). His Humanities teacher also described him as an "active help-seeking student." I also saw Fred help peers when they asked him questions, for instance, about the spelling of *wilderness* in his ESL class and about an assignment on Buddhism in his Humanities-8 class.

From his teachers' perspectives, Fred had misunderstandings about tasks. His ESL teacher commented that he sometimes misunderstood the work and did not pay attention. She said, "[Fred] asks questions because he doesn't understand sometimes. He's also distracted. . . . His questions are repeating questions of what I said." She also suspected that Fred's long-time listening to his iPod may have hurt his hearing, which might have accounted in part for his misunderstandings. She said:

Most of the time, I think you know whether it [my instruction] goes in. . . . I think he has a hearing problem because every time I see him in the hall way or everywhere he always has his iPod on. Even in class time, he's asking to give him a chance to listen to his iPod while he's doing work.

His Humanities teacher commented that Fred often misunderstood and that his misunderstanding was "genuine," not a result of a linguistic challenge for ESL students. She explained:

Look at his assignments that he hands in. He is just way off often. . . . And we will work through an example together. He's motivated but he just misunderstands so much. There's more than just ESL, their language processing difficulty.

Fred sought help for the purposes of understanding, task-engagement, and achievement (see Table 5). On his Think-Pair-Share sheets, Fred stated that he sought help for "understanding the activities, understanding words, [and] knowing what to do on homework or projects." On the HS questionnaire, Fred also stated that he would seek help when he wanted to achieve good marks. With regard to challenges (see Table 6), Fred stated in his interview that he needed help with projects and science work most. He also stated on the HS questionnaire that he had difficulties in vocabulary and getting main ideas in his Math-Science class but not in his Humanities or ESL class.

Although Fred utilized both people and tools as resources (see Table 7), he preferred use of

social strategies across his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8). He stated in his interview that teachers were his first choice across the three classes, followed by friends and capable classmates. However, his Humanities teacher perceived differently and said, “[Fred] will usually ask a peer first and then ask me.”

Data combined to suggest that Fred made a variety of HS requests (see Table 9). On the HS questionnaire, he stated that he sought clarification/explanation, examples, instructions, and confirmation. His Humanities teacher provided examples of Fred’s requests in her interview. She said, “He wants clarification [confirmation] that he’s on the right track. ‘Can you give me an example? Can you re-explain something? What does it mean?’” Similarly, in his interview, Fred gave examples of his HS, “like [saying] ‘I don’t understand,’ [asking] ‘how do you do this,’ [or] asking ‘if I’m wrong.’” He asked teachers for approval as he remarked, “Sometimes, it’s kind like projects and stuff, I ask the teacher if it’s OK to do this and this and stuff.” Fred stated in his logs that he sought lexical information from teachers, friends, and dictionaries. His Humanities teacher confirmed that he made such kind of requests, saying, “Sometimes it’s direct, vocabulary term.” Fred also indicated on the HS questionnaire that he requested extra time and materials like handouts, supplies, and notes.

My observations were consistent with what Fred and his Humanities teacher described in relation to his HS requests and preferred resources (see Tables 7, 8, & 9). I observed Fred asking

his ESL teacher for help readily, mostly during seat work. For instance, when the teacher walked around, Fred raised his hand and then asked her for confirmation about his project layout. Later, when she checked the work done by the pair sitting beside him, he sought her feedback on his nearly completed poster. He asked her for the spelling of *wilderness* (to confirm what he told a peer was correct). He also sought help from peers in his ESL class. For example, he asked about holiday dates and purposes during a reading activity. He borrowed colour pencils when drawing his poster. In his Humanities class, Fred asked the teacher once for confirmation about what he had written on his Buddhism assignment sheet when she walked around to collect them. He talked to peers when doing assignments or projects, which might have included his seeking help from peers.

I also noticed other types of HS requests that Fred made (see Table 9). Because of interest, Fred requested further information beyond what the ESL teacher presented. During a class discussion, Fred raised his hand and asked whether there were Filipino workers in the construction of the Canadian Railway. He requested teacher permission in relation to tasks. For instance, he walked up to his ESL teacher and asked whether he could do his poster at home (probably for the sake of extra time or resources at home). He also used a social strategy to obtain a self-help tool. During seat work on the poster project, he approached his ESL teacher and asked, “Do you have a picture of a flag?” I inferred that he intended to copy the flag(s) onto

his poster. In his Humanities class, Fred did not like the research topic he drew on the European society in the Middle Ages. He tried to solve his problem by asking peers for exchange, but the peers he asked did not agree. Luckily, his Humanities teacher extended “trading” opportunities, and Fred got a topic he liked at his fourth draw.

Fred also utilized self-help as a coping strategy (see Table 7). I observed him seeking information about holidays from his school agenda. He described on the HS questionnaire that he liked to use such tools as the Internet, books, and dictionaries to get information. Among the tools he used, he said that the dictionary was his favorite “because it’s kind like easier. It explains stuff, explains the words.”

Back in the Philippines (his home country) and in Taiwan, Fred also sought help from others. However, his descriptions suggested that language proficiency affected his choices of resources and perceptions of helpers. Because he was not proficient in Mandarin, Fred faced a variety of frustrations when seeking help from teachers and peers in Taiwanese classrooms. First of all, asking questions itself was a challenge for him. He said in his interview, “In Taiwan, it’s hard to ask for help because sometimes I don’t know words that I want to say to the teacher.” Second, he thought that peers were not helpful because they did not help him directly with his assignments which were challenging for him. He remarked, “They always keep saying, ‘You should do it on your own because it’s your job to do it.’ I don’t understand Chinese. They are not

helping me, instead, teaching me to speak Chinese.” His Taiwanese peers may have helped him with his assignments indirectly by teaching him Chinese. On the HS questionnaire, Fred reported that he asked others to do assignments for him (see Table 9). To solve his problems, Fred said that he sought and got help from the teacher and that sometimes, he waited to ask his aunt at home.

In the Philippines, Fred did not ask teachers or peers for help in class. Instead, he used and was satisfied with the free tutor service provided by the school. In his interview, Fred explained the way he sought help back home, saying:

In the Philippines, there’s no problem. . . . After lunch, I go to tutor, ask them, and go back. . . . I don’t ask them [teachers] because I understand what they are saying. Because it’s in Filipino, I can understand. . . . I don’t ask them [classmates] because I know they are not gonna tell me.

In addition to linguistic difficulties and perceptions of peers as being unhelpful, there were other reasons why Fred was reluctant to seek help from teachers or peers (see Table 10). He reported on the HS questionnaire that he was uncomfortable asking help from teachers in public because he feared peer ridicule and did not want to be noticed. Similarly, he indicated in his interview that he preferred to ask teachers in private, such as when they walked around to his side so that “other classmates won’t be like bothering me.” He also said, “If I don’t feel like

standing up, I don't feel like going up, then ask the teacher, sometimes I just wait." Fred avoided asking teachers too many questions so as not to look stupid. He explained in his interview that he did not want them to think "I'm not smart." He expressed time concerns on the HS questionnaire. For example, he did not want to interrupt when the teacher was instructing and when peers were busy. He also said that he did not approach teachers when they were not nice. "Because sometimes they have the mood," he explained in his interview. Finally, he reported on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that he could get help from his parents, which sometimes accounted for his reluctance to seek help in class.

In sum, Fred was a motivated student and an active learner who preferred use of social coping strategies across contexts and made a variety of requests. In Canada, he perceived that his Math-Science class was most challenging for him and that his ESL and Humanities classes were not difficult. However, both his ESL and Humanities teachers pointed out his misunderstandings about tasks. Across his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes, Fred preferred resources of teachers, friends, and capable peers. Back home in the Philippines, he liked to use free tutor services on campus. He had no questions for teachers there because of good understanding, which he attributed to his proficiency in Filipino. He did not seek peer help either because of negative perception of them (being unhelpful).

When he studied in Taiwan, the Chinese language was a great challenge for him. He

encountered verbal challenges when seeking teacher help. He also encountered reading and writing challenges. But he was reluctant to seek help from peers because they refused to give him direct help with his Chinese work. He sought help at home instead. Fred was also reluctant to seek help in other contexts. He was uncomfortable asking questions in public or asking many questions because he feared peer ridicule or others' negative perceptions of him. He was concerned about appropriate times for questioning. And he did not ask teachers for help when they were in a bad mood.

In relation to my research questions, in Fred's case, I found perceived language proficiency, help expectations, and perceived HS costs as salient factors that influenced Fred's HS, HA, and ways of seeking help in contexts. For example, Fred perceived learning and seeking other-help challenging in Taiwan because of his limited language proficiency in Chinese, but he did not experienced the same struggles in the Philippines (his home country) or Canada, where he was comfortable with the instructional language. In Canadian classrooms, Fred perceived projects as challenging and needed the most help with such activities. But his challenges with projects seemed to derive, not so much from limited English language competency, but rather from a lack of task-related knowledge. His Humanities teacher suggested Fred struggled with work more because of "genuine" misunderstanding than from ESL students' common "language processing difficulty."

In terms of HS approaches, Fred perceived peers in Taiwan and the Philippines as unhelpful because they would not meet his help expectations. He thus sought help at home in Taiwan and from tutors in the Philippines. In Canada, Fred preferred other help across classes. His perception of HS costs (e.g., looking stupid, peer ridicule) seemed to be associated with his preference for seeking teacher help in private. But if he perceived a teacher to be in a bad mood, he was very likely to avoid seeking teacher help at that moment or choose friends as helpers instead. Sometimes, his HA could be attributed to HS norms he perceived (e.g., not to interrupt teachers when they were busy).

Fred seemed to utilize self-help adaptively. He also sometimes sought other-help instrumentally in order to access tools for independent work. But on some other occasions, Fred sought other-help in a way that did not support his learning (e.g., asking peers to do assignments for him), most likely when he did not know how to proceed or was not motivated to put effort into his work.

Gary

Gary was a Filipino student (see Table 2), who came from the Philippines to Canada when he was 11. Tagalog was his first and primary language, which he used to speak to his family members. He used English to talk to his friends. He said he preferred to speak in Tagalog because “it’s my first language.” Gary had six years of schooling in the Philippines, from

kindergarten to Grade 5, and three years in Canada from Grade 6. At the time of the study, he was 13 years old and in Grade 8.

Data combined to indicate that Gary was a motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented student across contexts (see Table 4). On the HS questionnaire, Gary reported that in general, he valued education and aimed to learn well and to achieve good grades. Specifically, Gary valued ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science courses and aimed to learn well and to achieve well in the three classes. Gary was a shy, quiet student from the perspectives of his ESL and Humanities teachers as well as my observations (see details below). Gary was also an attentive student with good achievement. His ESL teacher praised him highly, saying, “He’s an A student. . . . His work has A quality. He got an 80 or 90%.” She was also impressed with Gary’s attentiveness and great understanding, saying, “[Gary] is always very attentive. Everything I say he understands.” I also observed Gary being attentive and engaging in his ESL and Humanities classes. His Humanities teacher made a similar comment about Gary’s capabilities, saying, “I think for most assignments [Gary] understands.”

Gary sought help to enhance his learning, understanding, and achievement (see Table 5). He stated on his Think-Pair-Share sheets that he sought help because he wanted “to learn more better, better understand about topic, to be knowledgeable, [and] to have better grades.” Sources of data indicated that Gary sometimes encountered challenges or confusions at tasks and

perceived a need for help (see Table 6). For example, Gary indicated on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that sometimes he found understanding vocabulary in his Math-Science class challenging. In both his Humanities and Math-Science classes, he reported occasional difficulties with higher-level tasks such as getting main/important ideas, making connections, and taking notes and with lower-level memory work (remembering facts and details). On the HS questionnaire and in his interview, Gary did not report any difficulties in his ESL class. However, on his log sheets, he identified challenges and needs for cultural knowledge in both his ESL and Humanities classes. For example, he needed information about Canadian holidays and the Canadian Pacific Railway in his ESL class and had confusions about world religions in Humanities. Gary also pointed out in his interview that he needed help most with projects (see examples from his logs below) and mathematics. He reported a poor ability in math and stated straightforwardly, “I need help.”

Data sources indicated that although Gary may have accessed many different resources (see Table 7), he made limited types of HS requests (see Table 9). Based on his reports on the HS questionnaire and logs and in his interview, Gary only asked for clarification/explanation, instructions/demonstrations, and supplies. With regard to self-help tools, he liked to use the computer, books, dictionaries, and notes/handouts to obtain the information he needed. Among them, notes/handouts were his favorite.

Across his classes of ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science, Gary's first and primary coping strategies were self-reliance and self-help due to preference for autonomy. He said in his interview and a chat after a Humanities session that he liked to work on his own, use handouts, and find answers on the Internet. In one ESL session, I observed him listening to discussions for information about Canadian holidays without asking peers or the teacher in the classroom. On his log sheet for that session, he indicated that he "found on Wikipedia" information about Father's Day and St. Patrick's Day, the challenge he encountered, later when the class was in the computer lab. On his log sheet about the poster project, the challenge he encountered was "what to right [write] on the meaning of the pictures are" (the caption for the poster). The coping strategy he used was self-reliance as he wrote "I brainstormed about things concerning Canada." I did observe him thinking hard that day without asking his partner, Dave, for help. However, he used self-help to seek ideas and examples by viewing the work posted on the back wall done by another class. Similarly, on his log sheet about the collage project in his Humanities class, he stated a challenge as "didn't know what to do and where to start." Then he stated use of his cognition and handouts as coping strategies as he wrote "I finally got what to do by reading instructions."

In his ESL class, most of the time, Gary used strategies of self-reliance, self-help, and listening to the teacher and peers to cope with challenges and they served well. His ESL teacher

commented:

[Gary] is a shy one. But he understands. . . . [Gary] barely asks any questions. . . . I think if he doesn't understand, it's always repeated by another student. . . . He sits with [Dave]. He wouldn't ask but he would help because [Dave] always said to him, '[Gary], what did you do here?' I hear [Gary] explain to [Dave].

Occasionally when Gary could not cope on his own, he turned to others for help. I observed him approach and ask his ESL teacher once about the poster project. She talked to him and said in the end, "You have to decide." Then on the log sheet for that class, Gary indicated that he encountered the challenge of "what to draw" and got help by "talk[ing] to classmate [his partner, Dave]."

As for social strategies, data combined to suggest that Gary's use of social resources was affected by his confidence in his academic abilities, his language proficiency, and the quality of his interpersonal relationships. Gary stated in his interview that he was a good student with good marks in the Philippines. He said that he sought help from teachers and peers in Filipino classrooms "because I speak the language." Further, he described "classmates" as his first choice of resources there because "I know my friends more better at the Philippines."

Gary was willing to seek peer and teacher help in both his Filipino classes back home and his ESL class in Canada. There were two common factors that seemed to affect his HS in both

contexts, namely, his self-confidence and his friendly relationships with others. Gary was confident in his ESL class because he reported that this course was “easy” for him. I observed episodes that showed friendly relationships between Gary, his peers, and the ESL teacher. Gary and Dave always sat together in the ESL class, and I noticed Gary smiling as he and Dave chatted during group work. When Dave told the teacher that he wanted to work with Gary on the poster project, Gary looked a little startled. After a few seconds, Gary also told the teacher that he would work with Dave together (instead of working alone). One day when Gary got a sheet from the teacher, he uttered immediately, “There’s nothing on it.” The teacher replied affectionately, “It’s a quiz. It’s not marked yet. Of course, there’s nothing on it,” and then tapped him lightly on the head with the sheets. On another day, the class shared personal stories about getting a driver’s license and discussed different traffic regulations in different countries. Although Gary did not offer any of his stories, he smiled and laughed as he listened with interest and responded with “What! Oh! Yaaa!”

Gary reported on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that asking the teacher was his second preferred coping strategy across his classes of ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science. But he admitted that in fact he rarely sought help from his Humanities and Math-Science teachers even when his strategies of self-reliance and self-help failed. His Humanities teacher commented on Gary, “who’s so quiet. He never asks me. . . . [Gary] is the least likely of the three

[participants] to even ask a peer in this class. . . . [Gary] will just work on his own.” In my four observations in his Humanities class, I never noticed Gary ask the teacher or peers for help. Even when the teacher walked to his side twice and checked whether he had questions about projects, Gary either just said, “No,” or shook his head. In fact, on one checking occasion, Gary had an important question about the research project on the European society in the Middle Ages. On the log sheet for that class, he indicated confusion about the teacher’s note-making criterion, that is, “taking important ideas than interesting ideas,” and stated that he needed “clarification.” But in the end, he stated that he “didn’t ask anyone.” In the chat after that class, Gary said that he liked to work on his own and use the computer. In response to my follow-up question about what strategy he would use after his own efforts failed, he just smiled shyly and shrugged without a word.

Similarly, he worked on his own constantly in his Math-Science class. He said in his interview, “I look at the notes, and then look at the steps of how to do it, ya.” When his own efforts failed, he explained that sometimes he would put the math work away or “just write a random answer.” He also reported use of delayed HS by asking his mother at home to solve his math problems.

Gary was reluctant to seek teacher or peer help in some contexts for a variety of reasons (see Table 10). One reason was that he wanted to avoid embarrassment and peer ridicule. He

stated on the HS questionnaire that he was uncomfortable asking questions in public because he did not want to be noticed. He also said in his interview that he feared that classmates would laugh at him “for asking stupid questions.” In response to my question, he said that even if he thought his questions were good, he did not want to ask for help in public.

Gary’s reluctance to seek help was also influenced by his negative perceptions of helpers. He indicated on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that he would shy away from the teachers he perceived to be unkind. Also he did not approach teachers he perceived to be unhelpful because they answered indirectly so that students had to figure things out for themselves. In his interview, Gary described the indirect help his math teacher gave, saying “They teach me the steps how to do it and then she will say that I can do it now.” But he expressed that he was unable to solve the difficult math problem on his own. It seemed that he needed detailed instructions, not conceptual guidance, because he already understood the concept. He remarked, “When you are doing math, you get the steps, but they are challenging, really hard.” Since he did not perceive indirect answers to be helpful, Gary said, “I don’t ask in the beginning.”

Gary was also reluctant to seek help when he was not confident in his subject knowledge or English proficiency. Consistent with his responses to the HS questionnaire, Gary explained in his interview that “I don’t get a lot of it,” and “I don’t know how to put it in question.” Then he

feared the negative reactions the teacher and peers might have. He said that if he asked too many questions, “maybe the teacher will get mad at me,” and “they kind of feel boring [bored].”

Communication with teachers in English was also a challenge for him. He elaborated the difference between his HS in the Philippines and in Canada. In his home country, he was not shy or quiet. He remarked, “I asked more, getting help. Because I speak the language, so I understand more, better. But here I can’t kind like speak English. Like the teacher’s English is much more better. So I don’t get it.” He also feared that peers would laugh at him for his poor English as well as for asking stupid questions. Thus, he said that he was willing to seek teacher help after class “like when there’s no one there, just alone, ya.” In that circumstance, no peers would hear his questions and his English. But he did it only once because such alone occasions were very rare. In contrast, he expressed that he did not worry about communication or fear peer laughing in his home country.

Another reason for Gary’s reluctance to seek help was his concern about appropriate times for questioning. Gary expressed on the HS questionnaire that he did not want to interrupt the teacher’s instruction or use class time to ask his questions. He was also concerned about asking repeated questions. He explained, “The student ask the question. Then the teacher answer it. I don’t get it. So ya.” In connection to the reasons discussed previously, Gary probably worried that the teacher would be annoyed or feared that peers would laugh at him if he asked the same

question again.

To make matters worse, Gary did not socialize with peers and had no friends in some secondary classrooms due to his lack of confidence and sense of inferiority. This seemed to explain why, unlike other participants, Gary did not report asking friends as one of his preferred strategies in his Humanities and Math-Science classes. In contrast, he turned to friends for help first in the Philippines. He elaborated the difference in his interview:

I know my friends more better at the Philippines. But here I'm like shy. I don't mix [with] other classmates because they are smarter than me something. . . . Because like when they did something, the teacher show that things they do, and I can see it, ya.

What I observed in his Humanities class confirmed Gary's report. His Humanities teacher posted only good (not all) marked assignments on the wall. When comparing his work with the excellent work posted, Gary was likely to think that he had poor ability in Humanities and hence perceived his inferiority. In contrast, his ESL teacher displayed on the wall all the posters, good or not, done by another class. Gary used the displayed posters as examples to stimulate his ideas and did not seem to perceive them as a threat to his self-confidence. It is possible that he thought he could perform as well as or better than his ESL peers.

Gary had few interactions with others in his Humanities class. He was sitting alone in three of my four observations in that class. Throughout the four observations, Gary had no

spontaneous interactions with peers at all except for a little discussion with his partner in the Think-Pair-Share activity because the teacher required pair work. He always worked on his own or listened to the teacher quietly. In contrast, other students in the class chatted, played jokes, and asked questions of peers, even those sitting apart.

In sum, Gary was a highly motivated student across different contexts. His attentiveness gave him good understanding in classes. However, his self-confidence and HS approaches varied between his home country and Canada. In the Philippines, he was a good, achieving student, who was confident and comfortable asking friends and teachers for help in his first language. In Canada, he became a shy and quiet student, who preferred using self-reliance and self-help strategies to cope with challenges. Gary's HS also varied across Canadian classrooms in ways that reflected interactions between what he brought to those contexts (e.g., self-perceptions of competence, perceived language proficiency) and the features of various classrooms (e.g., interpersonal relationships, availability of private times to ask for help, the public display of work). In his ESL class, Gary was confident and comfortable seeking teacher and peer help when needed. But in his Humanities and Math-Science classes, he lacked confidence in his academic and English abilities and was uncomfortable making friends. In turn, he was reluctant to seek teacher or peer help even when he could not work things out on his own.

Gary avoided seeking other-help in some contexts for varied reasons. He feared that

teachers or peers might have negative perceptions of him (e.g., being stupid or inattentive) or negative reactions to his HS (e.g., annoyance, boredom, or ridicule). He did not approach the teachers he perceived to be unkind or unhelpful. He was also concerned about appropriate times for questioning.

With respect to my research questions, Gary's case disclosed that his HS, HA, and use of self-help strategies were affected by a number of salient factors in a complex way, including perceived competencies and performance (in language and subject areas), self- and help expectations, class demands, teaching and help-giving practices, interpersonal relationships, sense of inferiority, various HS-related fears and worries, and HS norms. First of all, as was observed for Dave and Eva, linguistic proficiency and interpersonal relationships were important in Gary's HS and HA. For example, in the Philippines (his home country), Gary sought other-help (from friends and teachers) because he was fluent in Tagalog and built friendships.

In Canadian classrooms, Gary preferred self-reliance and self-help strategies either because he wanted autonomy or because he intended to avoid other-help. His self-help strategies worked successfully in his ESL class. But if needed, Gary was also willing to seek other-help from the teacher or peers. As in the Philippines, Gary had few HS-related fears or worries in his ESL class, where he had established friendly relationships with others and was more confident in his ability to complete tasks successfully. He perceived the demands in his ESL class as less

challenging in terms of required language proficiency and task expectations (e.g., in cultural knowledge, academic skills, and conceptual sophistication). He was confident about his performance in ESL based on the displayed work (good or not) by all the students in this classroom.

But Gary was less confident in other classes (e.g., Humanities and Math-Science), which seemed to undermine Gary's willingness to seek other-help when his self-reliance and self-help strategies failed. Gary perceived Humanities to be more challenging in terms of both language proficiency and task expectations. He could easily observe the gap between his performance and that of excellent non-ESL peers through the exemplary work displayed. Although his Humanities teacher was satisfied with Gary's understanding and performance, it seemed that Gary's high self-expectations from his past academic achievements told him that he was not good enough. Gary's sense of inferiority to peers led to his avoidance of socialization, and in absence of supporting friendships, Gary avoided seeking peer help.

Gary's avoidance of teacher help in some contexts (e.g., Humanities and Math-Science) seemed to be related to his varied HS-related fears and worries (e.g., peer ridicule, teachers' being mad or bored), HS norms he perceived (e.g., not to ask repeated questions), and his perception of teachers as unhelpful (e.g., giving indirect help rather than direct help as he expected). In such circumstances, Gary avoided other-help when self-reliance and self-help

failed and was likely to give up or seek help at home.

Hugh

Hugh had a background with mixed socio-cultural influences (see Table 2). He was born in Columbia to a Columbian father and a Brazilian mother. His family moved to Saudi Arabia when Hugh was one year old. Then they moved to Canada when Hugh was 12. Both Arabic and English were his primary languages. He talked to his parents and grandparents in Arabic or English and to his siblings and friends in English. He liked to speak in English because he stated, “I’m used to it.” Hugh finished elementary schooling in Saudi Arabia and started education in Canada from Grade 7. At the time of the study, Hugh was 14 years old and in Grade 9.

Hugh’s motivational beliefs and learning attitudes differed across subjects (see Table 4). He stated on the HS questionnaire that in general, he valued education and aimed to learn well and to achieve good grades. But with respect to the three courses of ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science, he valued only Math-Science and aimed to learn and achieve well in that class. He explained in his interview:

Because this is based on my future which I’m gonna be back in Saudi Arabia. I’m not in anything like about the French Revolution, English or American [Revolution], like history of Canada. . . . What I need is the math and the science. Math is standard all around the world.

In addition to the consideration of future utility, Hugh also said, “I have good interest in math class.”

Hugh’s low motivation in his ESL and Humanities classes was reflected in his low marks in ESL and his Humanities teacher’s poor impression of him. I observed that Hugh asked his ESL teacher why he earned a low mark for his report on famous Canadians (he got 47/50 for Part I but only 8/20 for Part II). She replied that his work was of low quality. In his Humanities teacher’s opinion, Hugh was not a diligent student. He commented in his interview, “[Hugh] put very little effort into his work, just to get it done.” When comparing the performances by Hugh and Ian (another participant in this study) in his class, the teacher said that he saw thought and effort in Ian’s work, but he did not see such quality in Hugh’s work. The Humanities-9 teacher also had a poor impression of Hugh’s attitude toward learning and HS. He said:

Less often he seeks help in a productive way. More often I see that [Hugh] is off task and I go to him. And when I go to him, then he might have a question. If he doesn’t understand something, he just doesn’t do it, and he socializes.

In my observations in the Humanities-9 class, Hugh did not concentrate well on the tasks that were assigned. For example, when working in the computer lab and in the library, from time to time he shifted his gaze from the text he was reading to look around or watch what others were doing. He chatted with peers and teachers when they were beside him. Hugh explained in

his interview, “You know the library part, we went to the library. I felt it was a bit boring. I didn’t like it.”

However, interest gave Hugh momentum to be active and to make an effort. He said in his interview that he “mostly” had the ability to overcome challenges. He added, “I actually do interests. If you put your heart to it, you can do it.” For instance, Hugh seemed to be interested in aboriginals in Canada. In my observations in his Humanities class, he chatted with his teacher and co-teacher about many things, including First Nations’ artifacts and names, the Inuit, the Bering Strait, and his traveling experience in Alaska. He researched books and Websites on the Inuit and the Bering Strait. Furthermore, he asked the leader of his group for approval of what he intended to research and asked his teacher for approval of his idea of blending his experience in Alaska into his group’s presentation. In the ESL class, I observed that Hugh actively participated in class discussion on immigration history, answering and asking questions and offering opinions. His ESL teacher was impressed by the effort he put on his immigration poster and praised him, saying “[Hugh] really work hard today and asked good questions. He didn’t work as hard like this before.”

With regard to challenges (see Table 6), Humanities was the most challenging subject for Hugh. He stated in his interview, “The Humanities has something to do with English. That’s what I’m weak at. . . . My speaking is perfect. But my reading and my writing, it’s a bit low, not

so good.” Hugh indicated on a Humanities log sheet and in the following after-class chat that understanding the text in his Humanities class could be challenging for him, but the texts in other classes were easy. He also reported on the HS questionnaire that only in his Humanities class, he encountered such reading challenges as unfamiliar vocabulary, understanding (or finding) main ideas, making notes, and remembering facts and details. His ESL teacher also said, “His writing is very poor.”

Although Hugh utilized both people and tools as resources (see Table 7), he preferred use of social strategies. However, his attitude toward HS and his choice of resources differed across his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8). In his interview, Hugh compared the three teachers’ help-giving styles, which affected his HS approaches in the classes. He remarked, “Mr. [Humanities-9 teacher] is always serious. Anything’s like fighting. He ‘Ah, stupidity. Don’t be silly. Nobody acts that.’” He described his Math-Science teacher as “fun to ask” and said that he could ask him “anything.” He explained, “Even though you ask him like stupid questions, lame questions, he’ll give you a reasonable answer, something you’ll understand. He’ll deal with it in a nice way.” It seemed that his Humanities teacher’s seriousness deterred Hugh from asking questions freely; he seemed to worry whether his questions were silly.

Thus, Hugh stated on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that his first choice of

preferred resources in his Humanities class was friends, followed by the teacher and then by the Internet. In his Math-Science class, Hugh's first choice was the teacher, followed by the textbook and then friends. He explained why the math textbook was his second choice:

Textbook has all the information I need. It's like this is how you do it, this is how you do it, this is how you do it. Sometimes I choose my friends because I don't want to read or I don't even take my textbook.

For Hugh, the math textbook was easy to use because it was like a manual with clear and easy-to-find instructions. Furthermore, it was easy for him to understand because "Math and science is like worldwide language," he said. He could "convert" and apply the knowledge he had learned before. In contrast, he did not like to use reference books from the library for his Humanities class. His dislike of "reading books from libraries" had a connection to his poor reading ability in English and low value and interest in Humanities, as discussed previously. Thus, to find and select useful information from reference books could be challenging and boring for him.

Hugh liked to ask his ESL teacher questions in class. He described her as "half that" between his Math-Science and Humanities teachers. He said, "If she's like laughing, it's OK. If she's like serious, don't talk." He stated in his interview that his first choice in the ESL class was the teacher, followed by friends and then by dictionaries. He said that he used a dictionary when

the teacher and his friends were busy or when the teacher was in a bad mood. He remarked, “She’s like mad at something. And go grab a dictionary. Look it up myself.” In the ESL teacher’s opinion, Hugh was fond of knowledge and asked her frequently about all sorts of things. She commented:

[Hugh] ALWAYS asks questions. It doesn’t have to be on the topic. Could be any topic, anything he wants to ask about, any trivial things. Why is this, why is that? . . . He’s interested in knowledge. . . . He’s a smart, smart boy, lots of knowledge.

She thought that Hugh needed to talk to her in order to clear questions off his mind as a preliminary stage prior to performing tasks. She said, “He needs to talk in order to do his work, to get it off his mind.”

In both his ESL and Humanities teachers’ opinions, Hugh liked to conduct a casual, free conversation with them during which he asked questions. His ESL teacher described the way Hugh conversed with her, saying “Normally he’ll ask when I sit down. . . . He’s always sitting in front of me. He likes that seat because he knows he can talk to me. He can talk about anything.” His Humanities teacher also noticed that usually Hugh raised questions about tasks after he sat beside Hugh and started a conversation. But he perceived such a HS style as passive. The Humanities-9 teacher described the way they interacted and said:

Sometimes he might get help from classmates. But often I would come to him because he

is completely off task. And I would sit with him or talk to him. And then once the conversation is getting on to the task, I would say, “[Hugh], you are not doing your work.” He would say, “Oh, I didn’t understand it.” And I would say, “What didn’t you understand?” And then we would get there. But that’s me speaking to him to seek help, rather than he seeking help.

Data combined to indicate that Hugh made a variety of HS requests (see Table 9). In my observations in his Humanities class, Hugh asked teachers for general information in casual conversations about things in which he was interested. For instance, when one of the teachers sat down and chatted with his group, Hugh asked how the Inuit came to Canada and how the ice bridge of the Bering Strait had melted. Hugh also asked for specific information in relation to tasks. When doing the Think-Pair-Share activity in his Humanities classroom, Hugh asked the teacher, when he walked around, for clarification about the *Why* question in the *Self* section. One day, in the lab, the teacher saw Hugh copying online information and thus explained plagiarism for him. Hugh actively asked the teacher twice for instructions about how to use information correctly. I also observed that Hugh sought help from peers in his Humanities class. When doing the work sheet on publication information in the classroom, Hugh asked a boy in his group for information and then for confirmation about the author part. He asked their group leader for her notes to copy. He also asked peers in the library about the meaning of *elaborate* and *via*.

In my observations in the ESL class, Hugh sat near the teacher, talked to her, and sought different types of help from her in private. Their interactions during the two sessions for the poster project well represented their HS and help-giving relationship. That is, Hugh trusted her and turned to her when he needed help, and she did her best to meet his needs. Hugh chose to perform this project alone. When the class started working, he chatted with his teacher. Then he got an idea for his poster and said excitedly to her, “I have a good stuff.” He told her that he wanted to represent multiculturalism, and she told him to get some ideas from the backboard. After he checked things out there, he drew a maple leaf to represent Canada. Later on, Hugh approached her several times to request symbols for different countries and ways to draw them. She always gave him suggestions or instructions. For example, she told him to find a map of Canada in their school agenda handbook and to copy Canada’s shape against the window (sunlight made two sheets transparent). When she was uncertain or out of ideas, she turned to other resources for help. For instance, she asked other students and even me about China’s flag and symbols for Vietnam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. She also went to the resource room to fetch an atlas for Hugh after he asked, “Do you have flags of the world? Flag of India?” Like Fred, Hugh used other-help in order to obtain a self-help tool. Similarly, in another session, Hugh approached and asked his ESL teacher for permission to leave for the computer lab to obtain some information for his famous Canadian project.

As the ESL teacher explained, Hugh would get off the topic and ask questions when things came to his mind. The content of his conversation with her ranged from a broad, general discussion about a country to a specific question about a word. In the first session for the poster, for example, I observed that Hugh talked to the teacher about the poor and the rich and taxes in Canada. Then, he asked her about Australia and then asked whether Canada had a revolution in history like the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. After their conversation, he decided to present the idea of multiculturalism on his poster. Hugh also asked her and peers for specific information about vocabulary, for instance, the spelling or meaning of *peninsula*, *racism*, *symbolism*, and *wilderness*.

Sources of data indicated that Hugh sought help for the academic purposes of understanding, task engagement, and achievement (see Table 5). Beside the evidence given above, Hugh also stated on the HS questionnaire that he sought help when he did not understand, missed important information, or wanted to get good grades. In addition, Hugh sought help for three nonacademic purposes. One was for efficiency. Hugh elaborated in his interview that he liked to work on his own when the class was learning new things and everyone had limited knowledge about the subject matter such as math. He remarked, “When I work alone, it’s mostly the new thing, when I am in everybody’s level. For example, we learn something new in algebra. It’s new to everyone. . . . I’ll try to do everything myself.” But when peers knew better or more

than he did, Hugh liked to obtain the knowledge he lacked in an efficient way by asking others.

He continued, “If it’s something they are better than me at it, I’ll work with someone to get what they know. [It’s] easier and faster. [It] makes me understand something and miss [skip] something.”

A second nonacademic purpose was to attract attention and impress people by asking good questions. He stressed in his interview, “I show my positive side always.” Similarly, he stated on his Think-Pair-Share sheet that “trying to get attention” was one of his purposes to seek help (see Table 5). Hugh gave an example about his choice of his ESL teacher as his resource. He described, “Dictionary was right there. The world flag, I could’ve got it out of anywhere. But I wanted to ask her because it was a good question. So I do it with the teacher.” From his perspective, good questions were interesting or thoughtful questions or questions that could help other students too. He defined a good question as “a fun question, a smart question, a thick question; a question that everybody might want to know; it’s really important; other students can learn from my questions.” He summarized why he liked to ask his Math-Science teacher questions:

I like to do that more in Math class. First of all, the teacher is OK with any questions. The teacher is very nice. I know in Math, the questions I ask, they will be good questions.

Everybody will understand from the question.

On the contrary, he defined a stupid question as “a lame question; like ‘What’s *biannually?*’ Everybody knows that.” He said that he asked such questions of his friends but not of the teacher in public because “it makes you feel like stupid or small.” He wanted to protect his self-esteem. Hugh also stressed in his interview that he sought certain types of help from friends rather than teachers because those requests did not show his positive side. For instance, he asked friends for supplies or to repeat things that he missed. He explained, “I ask all of my friends because they know me. It’s OK like ‘What was it about?’ I don’t care if I missed anything because I know they missed a lot of stuff.”

But sometimes Hugh was embarrassed to ask anyone, even his friends, if he perceived his question was very stupid. He said, “If it’s like really really stupid, I just keep it inside and forget. . . . You have to go with peer pressure. That’s why.” Similarly, he wrote on a Humanities log sheet “I was emmbaresced [embarrassed] to ask certain things.” He explained in his interview that they were things “that everybody knows but I don’t understand. . . . It’s mostly in Humanities because Humanities contains the most English language. That’s why.”

Hugh also asked off-topic questions (see evidence above) in order to be knowledgeable, a third nonacademic HS purpose. His ESL teacher understood why he asked her about “anything.” She remarked:

It’s relevant to knowledge, like world knowledge, like trivial stuff. Things that he doesn’t

understand, things that bother him. . . . He's interested in knowledge. He has a lot of knowledge, but some of the knowledge may not be truthful.

Hugh's desire to impress people and to be knowledgeable might explain an apparent contradiction between his self-reports and my observations. As discussed previously, Hugh stated that he did not value Humanities because he did not see the subject as relevant to his future. He also said that he had no interest in things like "the French Revolution" or the "history of Canada." But I observed him chatting with the ESL teacher about Canada and asking her whether Canada had undergone a revolution like the French Revolution. It seemed that he knew it was a good question (connecting Canadian history to French history), which might impress the teacher. And she did praise him, saying "That's a good question." His intention to achieve his nonacademic goal was clear in his explanation about another HS episode. He said that he chose the teacher instead of a peer or a tool to get some information about China's flag "because it was a good question." Also he asked about Canadian history because he seemed to be interested in world knowledge, that is, to know all sorts of things even when he did not think they were important for his future.

Hugh's perception of challenges and his HS decisions seemed to be related to his perception of the average level of task performance among peers, which he called "my grade level." He judged whether or not he experienced difficulties based on whether his performance

was at or below the “grade level.” He explained in his interview, “If everybody, like if I’m below, that will be difficult. If I’m with them, it will be normal.” Thus, he did not refer to, for example, hard terms in Math-Science vocabulary as his challenge. He said:

If there are hard terms, I know even though I’m an ESL, the very very smart students will also have difficulties. So I feel I’m equal. . . . It’s not difficult for me because I know they don’t get it; I don’t get it. We are all having difficulty. We are all learning. It’s OK.

If he perceived that his question would reflect his below-average performance, he was reluctant to seek teacher help. He described, “In Humanities, I don’t like it [asking the teacher questions in public] because many people might know what, for example, *biannually* means. But I don’t know it. If I ask the teacher, no one’s learning.” He added that his English proficiency “could be a problem” (below the perceived average), and he was thus reluctant to ask the teacher “stupid” questions because he did not want to show his “weakness.”

When comparing himself with peers, Hugh had high self-expectations. He said, “[The average level] that’s where I should be. I should be up above; I should be smarter; I should be better.” That was why Hugh was concerned about whether his HS made him look smart or stupid. Consistently, when Hugh asked teachers for confirmation about his marks, he said that he only asked about good marks to “make you feel good.” He did not ask about bad marks “because you might save a lot of being embarrassing [embarrassed]. You know poor marks getting you

down. . . I'll get frustrated the entire day. I don't even bother ask."

His high self-expectations appeared to be related to his high academic achievement in Saudi Arabia, his home country in a sense. Hugh was a top student there and studied very diligently. He stated in his interview, "I made 3rd place in the entire western territory. I was [like] the 3rd best student in entire British Columbia. . . . I understood everything from A to Z. I did over the extra work." The ranking system used in Saudi Arabian schools may have strengthened Hugh's sense of social comparison and competition, which he brought into Canadian classrooms. Hugh described the sharp competition he had experienced there, saying:

It's like a competition. . . . On your card, there's a position. You're 1st. You're 2nd. . . .

"Who got 5th? Let me check yours. Oh, you got 5th." They give you kind of peer pressure.

"Oh, you are last. Oh, my God." It burns you from the inside. So you've got to above yourself way up.

In Saudi Arabia, Hugh was reluctant to seek teacher or peer help in class due to his negative perceptions about HS and help-giving there. He perceived that asking questions, especially many questions, was a negative thing. He said, "If you ask too much questions," for teachers, "that means in a way I have to speak the entire lecture again. 'Why didn't you pay attention? How come he gets it, you don't get it?'" For students, "they think you are stupid." Thus, the HS norm in Saudi Arabian classrooms was not to ask the teacher in class but to ask

parents at home. He said, “Students like ‘No, you ask him [the teacher]. No, you ask him. No, you ask him. Oh, OK.’ They don’t like to ask questions. Everybody they go home and ask their parents. Everybody’s like that.” Hugh also followed the norm. He said, “When I don’t understand something, I always go to my parents.” He did not turn to peers for help either because he said, “I’m like really above them. If I ask them, they might give me wrong answers or something.”

In Saudi Arabia, Hugh used his own language (Arabic) to learn and earned high academic achievements. But in Canada, the English language caused him challenges in terms of reading and writing, especially in Humanities. Furthermore, his prior knowledge learned in Saudi Arabia could be applied to the Math-Science subject in Canada, but not to Humanities. He was sad about his low marks here due to English challenges. He said:

The English part drop[s] me down. The language was a big problem. In Math [which uses a worldwide language], first of all, the decimal system, you know, how to write the numbers, the way we count here [are the same]. [But] Many many MANY other things [in English] are like new to me. They were hard to convert from Arabic to English. That’s why they drop my mark like very low.

With respect to his reading ability, Hugh was good at Arabic reading but poor at English reading. He said:

I understand it in more deep, a little more strong way. Even if I don't understand the text in Arabic, I feel like pretty in my own language. I know what it is about. In English I can only guess.

In Saudi Arabia, Hugh could comprehend what the text was about even if he did not understand its lexical part. But he could not get such comprehension about English texts. I infer that his comprehension abilities differed because he owned different amounts of background knowledge about texts in Arabic and in English, that is, knowledge about the two cultures. In terms of interactions with others, Hugh was also confident in Saudi Arabian classrooms because he knew the culture there. He described, "I'm like Arabic. I speak the way; I act the way; [I understand] things they are laugh[ing] about." As an ESL student in Canadian classrooms, on the contrary, Hugh encountered cultural barriers in HS. Even though he had confidence in his speaking in English, he sometimes did not know an appropriate and tactical way in his Humanities class to request what he needed and to protect his self-esteem at the same time. He remarked:

My speaking is perfect. . . . [But] You don't know which way to ask a question, it should be asked. . . . You could ask him [his Humanities teacher] in many ways. But [you don't know] the good way, the smart way.

As described above, Hugh was reluctant to seek help because of his lack of cultural knowledge, worries about the stupidity of his questions and others' negative perceptions of him,

and the likelihood of obtaining wrong answers from peers. He revealed on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that he also avoided HS in other circumstances (see Table 10). He did not want to ask teachers questions, if they were good, all at once. He explained, “You have a lot to ask. . . . If you get them all at one time, you get the teacher frustrated. He might think I’m stupid. I won’t get anything. I don’t like to do it.” He would separate his questions and ask at different times. He was also concerned about appropriate times for questioning. For instance, he reported that he did not want to interrupt when the teacher or peers were busy working. He might use a tool instead. During lectures, he would wait for the right moments to ask such as when the teacher encouraged questioning or finished a section on the topic. But he reported that sometimes there was no time for questions.

He did not want to ask the teacher questions when he/she was “like mad at something” or when he perceived that the teacher would not provide “the right information I need.” He added, “I would go ask my friend.” As in his ESL class, he would also use a tool like a dictionary. Hugh “didn’t bother asking” questions when he had no interest in the topic “because there’s no point.” In some contexts (e.g., Saudi Arabia), Hugh did not seek help in class because the HS norm there was to ask parents for help at home.

In sum, Hugh was a smart and motivated student. However, he had differential attitudes about the values of Canadian courses, based on his perception of the utility of each course for his

future in Saudi Arabia. Interest also affected his learning approaches, in particular, his effort and willingness to seek help. The teacher's help-giving style influenced Hugh's HS approaches in the classroom. He liked to seek help from teachers who welcomed all questions, good or not, and answered nicely, like his Math-Science teacher, or who could spare time to chat with him freely, like his ESL teacher.

Hugh's perception of challenges and choice of resources in Canadian classrooms were based on his comparison between his task performance and the average level of peer performance. Hugh liked to work on his own when he perceived that his performance was above average. Something hard for everyone was not a challenge for him because he perceived that everyone was at the same level. In these circumstances, Hugh liked to ask the teacher good questions because he and peers could learn together. If something was hard for him but not for most peers, he perceived it as a challenge and judged his performance to be below average. In these circumstances, he liked to ask friends for help. But if something was challenging for him only, then he did not ask anyone for help because he feared others' negative perception of him (being stupid). Underneath Hugh's social comparisons were his high self-expectations, which could have been related to his excellent academic achievement in Saudi Arabia.

Besides academic purposes, Hugh sought help for nonacademic purposes as well. He asked capable peers for help in order to work efficiently. He asked teachers good questions in

order to impress people. He liked to chat with teachers and asked off-topic questions in order to be knowledgeable.

Hugh was reluctant to seek help for varied reasons. He was more likely to avoid seeking teacher help in his Humanities class than in his ESL and Math-Science classes because he perceived that his Humanities teacher disliked silly questions and that his performance was below average, and because he did not value Humanities. Sometimes he did not know how to ask questions smartly (lack of cultural knowledge). Although his language skills, cultural knowledge, and academic achievement were more established in his home country of Saudi Arabia, he nonetheless avoided seeking help in class there. The HS norm in Saudi Arabian classrooms was to seek parent help at home. Overall, Hugh did not seek peer help when he perceived that his ability was better than his peers' because he worried that they might give him the wrong answers. He also avoided seeking other help when he worried that others would have negative perceptions of him and when he lacked interest. He did not approach teachers when he perceived them to be in a bad mood or unhelpful. He also had concerns about appropriate times for questioning.

With reference to my research questions, Hugh's case unveiled very complex interactions among factors associated with his HS and HA. Specifically, across contexts, Hugh's HS or HA decisions and HS approaches appeared to be affected by his personal goals, course values, interests, perceived competence (linguistic and academic), cultural knowledge (about subject

matters and HS), perceived performance, self-expectations, perceptions of HS costs and benefits, perceptions of teachers and peers, teaching and help-giving practices, and HS norms.

Basically, Hugh was willing to put effort into work and to seek help when he was interested in the subject matter or valued the course as important for his future (e.g., Math-Science). But if he observed an opportunity to impress others, Hugh would ask teachers questions even when he was not interested or did not value the course (e.g., ESL and Humanities) or could have used self-help tools instead. Hugh was only willing to seek teacher help readily when he perceived the teacher as helpful (meeting students' needs) and as welcoming of all kinds of questions. That seemed to be why Hugh sought teacher help actively in his ESL class but passively in Humanities.

Hugh had high self-expectations due to his past academic achievements and was very concerned about looking competent in front of others. For example, he sought teacher help publicly in Math-Science because he thought he could show his ability by asking smart questions. In a challenging class like Humanities, where he felt his limited language proficiency and cultural knowledge interfered with his reading and writing performances, Hugh avoided seeking help in public so as not to look stupid and to protect his self-esteem. He preferred seeking help from friends or sometimes asked the teacher for help in private. But if Hugh felt that his question would reveal his low level of competency or knowledge, he would "keep it inside" and avoid

other-help completely.

Hugh' HA in some Canadian classrooms could be attributed in part to his lack of cultural knowledge about tactical HS (i.e., when and how to request what he needed while also protecting his self-esteem). Although he was confident about the language and culture in Saudi Arabia (his home country), HS norms and perceived HS costs (e.g., the teacher would perceive him as inattentive; peers would give him the wrong answers) shaped his HS approach there. He sought parent help at home rather than teacher or peer help in class.

Whether or not Hugh used self-help tools adaptively depended on his interests and competence. For example, he liked to use the math textbook because of his interest and ability to work independently. But he disliked using reference books in the library for Humanities projects because of his lack of interest and poor reading ability in English. Hugh also sometimes used teacher help instrumentally in order to access tools for independent work.

Ian

Ian was a Canadian-born Chinese student (see Table 2). He was born in Canada to Chinese parents. His family returned to Hong Kong when he was three years old and moved back to Canada again when he was 12. Both Cantonese and English were his primary languages. He talked to his family members in Cantonese and talked to friends in English. He stated that he preferred to use English because he could "speak faster in English." Ian had six years of

education in Hong Kong, from Kindergarten to Grade 6. He continued his education in Canada from Grade 7. At the time of the study, Ian was 15 years old and in Grade 9.

Ian was a motivated and learning- and achievement-oriented student. He stated on the HS questionnaire that in general, he valued education and aimed to learn well and to achieve good grades. Specifically, he valued the courses of ESL and Humanities (no comment here about a third course). He aimed to learn and achieve well in his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes.

In his ESL teacher's opinion, Ian was the type of student who produced excellent work and did not need her help. She commented:

[Ian] NEVER asks questions. . . . He understands. . . . Everything he produces and every time I ask him to answer questions, he'll give me the right answer and more. . . . His products, everything he gives me is excellent work.

Ian's ESL logs suggested that most of the time he either did not have challenges or drew upon self-reliance or self-help strategies to cope, for example, by listening to the teacher for answers or seeking "help from internet [Internet] resources." Only on one log sheet (out of five) did he state that "I seeked [sought] help from teacher" to solve his confusions about the Canadian holidays assignment ("to find the dates of holidays according to the calender [calendar] of this year?") and about the famous Canadians project ("if the project requires bibliographies of

different sources?”).

In his Humanities teacher’s opinion, Ian was a motivated and diligent student and sought teacher help quietly. His teacher commented:

He was not one of the neatest students, the tidiest. But he put thought and effort into his work. . . . He wants to do well. . . . He quietly seeks for help, not in front of his peers. . . .

He will come to me and ask all sorts of questions.

Ian sought and used teacher help adaptively and productively like a model learner and help seeker. He worked on his own first, using self-reliance and self-help tools. When those strategies failed, he turned to the teacher for help. With the help given by his teacher, Ian engaged in work again. When he encountered another challenge or confusion he could not solve on his own, he approached the teacher for help again. Such a cycle of HS and task engagement continued until he completed his task. His Humanities teacher described the adaptive and productive HS cycle that Ian did, saying:

[Ian] seeks help in a productive way often. . . . [Ian] seeks help until he understands. . . . If he needs clarification, once he reads the instructions, he will come and he will ask me. I’ll re-explain and he’ll restart. And if he gets confused again, he will come and ask me again. I feel like [Ian] very investing and doing it correctly. . . . They [his questions] would help him move along if he was persistent on whatever he was doing.

Although his teacher reported a good deal of HS by Ian, I did not see him approach his teacher for help. The Humanities-9 teacher explained, “He didn’t ask when you were in the class. That’s rare of the year.” Later, his teacher gave a positive explanation that Ian had progressed in his Humanities class and became more confident and independent. Therefore, he sought much less teacher help near the end of the school year (at the time of the study). His teacher remarked:

He was much quieter than he used to be. As I said it’s a question of the time of the year because [Ian] certainly built up confidence up to the year. At the beginning of the year, he wasn’t doing confident[ly]. He asked A LOT OF questions than toward the end of the year. This was consistent with Ian’s self-report. He responded in his interview that the context in which he was least likely to seek help was “when I understand the subject very well, completely, like detail and stuffs.”

In my observations in both his ESL and Humanities-9 classes, Ian always focused his attention on tasks. It was amazing that he seemed to be neither annoyed nor distracted by his group members (four boys) in his Humanities class, who were chatting, bickering, or having fun from time to time. In an after-class chat, Ian commented nicely and with a smile, “They are very sociable.” I noticed that in his Humanities class, Ian acted like the leader of his group. For instance, during the group research activity (reading the textbook) on the Vikings, he said peacefully to the boys who were off task, “Now keep reading,” to bring their attention back to

work. Later, he said to the group, “We are trying to search ‘more opportunities,’” to focus their attention on the same topic. He also talked about what he learned from the textbook and started group discussions. In the computer lab, he told a boy not to use the Wikipedia Website and referred to the teacher, who told them it was not an academic Website.

Ian sought help in order to enhance learning/understanding or improve task performance (see Table 5). On his Think-Pair-Share sheets, Ian stated that he sought help in order “to ease confusions, to understand and learn better, to develop a way to solve problems, [and] to work better.” With regard to challenges (see Table 6), Ian stated in his interview that he mostly sought help when he was unable to answer questions in assignments. With respect to reading activities, he reported on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that across his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes, he had difficulty in vocabulary like “scientific terms and stuffs I haven’t learned before.” On his log sheets, he stated vocabulary challenges more often in his Humanities class (three out of four sheets) than in his ESL class (two out of five sheets). He also had difficulties in remembering facts and details because he said, “Most of the stuffs are, ya, new to me.” He added, “But once after I study it, I’ll remember everything.”

Ian readily utilized other-help and self-help across contexts (see Table 7). He stated in his interview that across his ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes, his choices of resources were the same, in order of the teacher, books, and the computer. Consistent with his report of

preference for teacher help was his Humanities teacher's comment that Ian "asked a lot of questions." I also noticed that in the library, Ian approached the teacher librarian for help. On his log sheet for that class, he reported his challenge as "Where could I get books about colonialism?"

Besides teacher help, Ian also reported on the HS questionnaire that he liked to seek peer help (see Table 7). He elaborated in his interview that he usually liked to ask nearby peers for help. I noticed that in the ESL class, he asked Fred, sitting nearby, about the *Self* section in the Think-Pair-Share activity. He asked a boy sitting beside him in the lab to help him log in. He responded in his interview further, "If they [nearby peers] don't know the answers, I will just go ask some better students," even if they were not familiar. This was consistent with what he said in an after-class chat that sometimes he asked non-ESL students about new vocabulary because "their English is better." Ian got along with peers during work in both his Humanities and ESL classes. He worked together with a boy on the poster project in his ESL class. During the two sessions for the poster, I noticed that Ian drew and his partner talked or commented on Ian's drawing. Ian did not make any complaint about the absence of his partner's manual contribution to the poster.

When Ian studied in Hong Kong, he said, "Usually I understand them [the teachers]" because they spoke in Cantonese, a language in which Ian was proficient. If he needed help, he

said that he asked peers first. He explained, “Some of the teachers would think it’s a trouble of some action [HS]. They’ll interrupt their lecture. So they usually tell us to ask them questions at recess or after class.” Ian thus learned not to interrupt teachers. If he needed teacher help, he said, “I’ll ask right after their lectures.” Ian’s learning experience with this HS norm in the Hong Kong context might explain why later in Canada, he always approached his Humanities teacher quietly for help after he finished his whole-class instruction.

Data combined to indicate that Ian made a variety of HS requests (see Table 9). He indicated on the HS questionnaire and in his interview that he sought clarification, instructions, and confirmation. Similarly, his Humanities teacher said in his interview that Ian asked questions “like ‘Am I doing this right?’ or ‘I don’t understand. Can you explain it again?’ or ‘Where am I if I’m looking for information?’” Unlike Hugh, who asked friends for help if he missed something important, Ian would ask his teacher for help. But he added that he did not have such problems often. Ian prepared well for his classes. He reported that he “only a few times” requested supplies because “I usually have all things in my backpack.” He also reported that he made requests for extra time, notes, and handouts.

Data from logs, observations, and after-class chats indicated that Ian also like to use varied self-help tools as resources to get the information he needed. For example, Ian used his school agenda book to look for Canadian holiday dates in his ESL class. During Humanities activities,

he used dictionaries or the Internet to look up unfamiliar words. He used his work sheet to check his spelling of *colonialism* on the computer. He used the timeline of historic events in the textbook to check whether the online information he was going to cite was correct. His use of a dependable source to crosscheck an uncertain source showed that he was a clever and cautious tool user. Among the tools he reported, Hugh said that the computer was his favorite.

Among the participants, Ian reported the fewest reasons for reluctance to seek help (see Table 10). He perceived no fears or worries in relation to embarrassment or self-esteem. Even the common reason among the participants that teachers or peers were not nice did not deter him from seeking their help. He said firmly, “That doesn’t happen.” He indicated that he wanted his questions solved. The only reasons for HA he reported on the HS questionnaire and in his interview were all time-related. He did not interrupt the teacher’s instruction (consistent with the HS etiquette he had learned in Hong Kong). He did not ask teachers questions when they were busy or left no time for questions. Sometimes he himself was busy. If he had many questions, like Hugh, he did not ask them all at once. But his consideration was different from Hugh’s. Ian explained, “If I ask all of it at once, it would take a long time to do it. So I chose not to ask at that moment.” Strategically, he said that he would wait for the right moments to ask “one or two each time.”

Lack of English proficiency made HS challenging for Ian to some extent. He explained in

his interview, “Because my English abilities are limited, some of the vocabularies that I use cannot well explain what I want to ask. So that might be a problem.” But Ian was not discouraged. He still managed to seek help from teachers and English-speaking peers. To overcome his language limitation, Ian prepared his questions in advance for effective communication. He remarked, “Usually I’ll organize my thoughts. I create a clear question that can be understood by people and teachers.” Ian said that he did not purposefully seek help from peers who spoke Cantonese so as to avoid the linguistic challenge. He explained, “Because usually I will want to improve my English. So I’ll try my best to create a question and ask the teacher in English.” Ian chose to face the HS challenge and further turned it into an opportunity for language improvement. In other words, by seeking other help, Ian not only solved task challenges but also advanced his learning of English.

In sum, Ian was a student who demonstrated motivation, diligence, and initiative. He not only got along well with peers in both his ESL and Humanities classes but also acted as a group leader in his Humanities class. Ian needed help mostly with assignments/projects and vocabulary. His HS approaches were stable across contexts. He readily utilized teachers and peers as resources without fears or worries, which were common among other participants, unless it was not an appropriate time for questioning. Ian also readily utilized various tools and verified the credibility of online resources. Ian produced quality work in both his ESL and Humanities

classes. He sought little teacher help in his ESL class but sought plenty of teacher help in his Humanities class. With his diligence and teacher help, Ian had progressed greatly in his Humanities class. Near the end of the school year, Ian became more independent and sought much less teacher help because he had mastered the subject better and was more confident. Although lack of English proficiency made HS challenging for Ian in terms of framing his questions, it did not deter him from seeking teacher or peer help. Not only did he strategically organize his thoughts and prepare his questions beforehand, but he also took the initiative to utilize HS as a good opportunity to improve his English.

In this study, I drew on a sociocultural model to characterize students' HS as embedded in context. Ian's case provides an excellent example of HS as a self-regulated, adaptive learning and coping strategy as defined in this model. Ian was willing to put a lot of effort into his work because he was a motivated and task-oriented student. He employed both other-help and self-help strategies readily and productively across contexts.

As in other cases, how and why Ian sought help was affected by multiple, interacting factors. For example, Ian's HS was affected by his perceptions of HS norms. In Hong Kong, because teachers disliked interruptions during lectures, Ian usually sought peer help. If he needed teacher help, he would proceed after lectures. He carried this etiquette over to Canadian classrooms.

In Canada, language proficiency was more or less a problem for Ian and caused some linguistic challenges. For example, he encountered vocabulary challenges in Humanities reading tasks and in HS. Because of Ian's motivation (e.g., personal goals to learn and perform well, viewing classes as important) and his beliefs that HS benefited his learning and seeking social help improved his English proficiency, Ian consistently made efforts to seek teacher and peer help adaptively across secondary classes. Due to his positive attitudes toward learning and HS, Ian described no fears or worries that would interfere with his seeking help when needed. Ian's HA only related to lack of time or opportunities for HS (e.g., no time for questions, others being busy).

As a self-regulated learner, Ian also monitored and evaluated his HS process and results. For example, he used a reliable tool (e.g., the textbook) to check the credibility of an unfamiliar online source. His sensible use of dependable tools could explain why he preferred teachers as his first choice of resources across contexts.

Chapter Five

Cross-Case Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate why and how students seek or avoid seeking help across contexts, giving particular attention to some important knowledge gaps in the current literature. Specifically, the study was designed to investigate HS within a naturalistic context to inform understanding about how language and cultural factors impact student HS, what other factors are associated with students' HS and HA across different contexts, and how students use self-help as a form of HS. In order to achieve these research goals and to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of student HS across contexts, I used a comparative multiple-case study design. This design featured: nine ESL students as cases who came to Canada from different backgrounds, multiple secondary classrooms (ESL and Humanities) in Canada as research sites, multiple sources of data, and investigation of individual HS across multiple learning contexts within and outside of Canada. In this chapter, I present findings about cross-case patterns in tandem with a discussion of their meaning in relation to the literature.

Why Students Seek or Avoid Seeking Help in the Classroom

To answer my main research question of *why* and *how* students seek or avoid seeking help in naturalistic settings, my cross-case analyses built from my sociocultural HS model, which describes student HS as a function of the interactions between individuals and contexts,

involving many interwoven factors. In this section, I present findings related to individual and contextual factors that seemed to explain *why* students sought or avoided seeking help in classrooms. Specifically related to my research subquestions, I discuss how linguistic and cultural factors played in students' HS and HA decisions and what other factors were associated with those decisions. In a subsequent section, I then present findings that seemed to explain *how* students sought help in classrooms, specifically focusing on how students used self-help as a form of HS.

Individual Factors

Drawing on prior research, the sociocultural HS model applied in this study (see Figure 2) suggests that students bring their backgrounds and experiences into classrooms. Then while learning and engaging in tasks, they build from their past knowledge and learning experiences to generate various thoughts, perceptions, and emotions which mediate their HS in context (e.g., Butler & Cartier, 2005; Karabenick, 2003; Nadler, 1998; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). Consistent with this theoretical perspective, a cross-case review of student portraits suggests that participants' HS and HA could be related to their: (a) course value, personal goals, and interests, (b) perceptions of HS costs and benefits, (c) help expectations and perceived HS consequences, (d) personal characteristics, (e) perceived linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge, and (f) academic performances and self-expectations.

Course Value, Personal Goals, and Interests

In the sociocultural HS model (see Figure 2), motivational factors are proposed as mediators of students' perceived need for help and HS/HA decisions (e.g., Butler & Neuman, 1995; Karabenick, 2003; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). In line with this model, a cross-case review of patterns in this study suggested that participants' HS and HA could be linked to the value they placed on subject courses, achievement goals they set, and their interests.

In the cross-case analysis, I found variations across students and across contexts in the value participants placed on learning in Humanities, ESL, and a third, self-selected subject course and in the achievement goals they set in those courses. In terms of ESL and Humanities, most participants valued both classes (as important), and only two students valued either ESL or Humanities (see Table 4). More participants endorsed a mastery goal (to learn well) in Humanities than in ESL (seven vs. five students), but almost all participants endorsed a performance goal (to perform well) in both classes (eight vs. eight students; see Table 4). Hugh represented an opposite case. He did not value either Humanities or ESL, nor did he hold the two achievement goals in either class because he did not envision the utility of the two subjects in his future in the Middle East. With regard to the third, self-selected subject, almost all participants (eight students) cared about Math-Science (see Table 4). They held the two achievement goals in this course as well.

In previous research on the relationships between HS/HA and motivational factors, Karabenick (2003) found that students who endorsed higher task value in chemistry were more likely to seek adaptive help. Furthermore, D. L. Butler and her colleagues (2006) found that among four clusters of students (actively engaged, high stress/actively inefficient, disengaged, and passive/inactively efficient), disengaged students placed the lowest task value on reading and sought the least help during reading activities. With respect to achievement goals, many researchers (e.g., Butler & Neuman, 1995; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997) have found that students who adopt mastery or task-focused goals tend to seek adaptive help, whereas those who adopt performance or ego-focused goals (to be better or to avoid being worse than others) tend to seek nonadaptive help or not to seek help at all.

Not completely consistent with previous research, I found that students' endorsements of course value and achievement goals, both mastery and performance goals, facilitated their HS in classrooms. Generally speaking, when participants valued a subject course, they also wanted to learn and to perform well in the class and in turn sought help in order to achieve their goals. However, the relationships were not always so clear. The two motivational factors (course value and achievement goals) appeared to interact with other factors to influence students' HS or HA decisions. For example, Amy did not value ESL and was not strongly motivated to learn well in either ESL or Humanities. But she wanted to perform well in these two classes. Hence, her goal

to perform well and her positive attitude toward HS (see a further discussion below) drove her to seek help whenever she did not understand, even when her lack of interest in tasks might have inhibited her willingness to seek help initially (see a further discussion below).

Betty and Carol valued both Humanities and ESL and wanted to perform well in both classes. They held a mastery goal in Humanities but not in ESL because they did not think that they needed to learn well with efforts in a nonprescribed course. Their HS patterns seemed to reflect their goals and perceptions. In Humanities, they were active in participation and HS. They were also willing to seek teacher help in public. In ESL, tasks were easier and they understood well. But they often sought simple confirmation from the teacher in private for reassurance about their work and marks, which could be attributed to their performance goals combined with insecurity (see a further discussion below).

Hugh had low motivation in both ESL and Humanities. He did not value or have interest in either subject, nor did he want to learn or perform well in the two classes. But Hugh did seek help in both classrooms, albeit for less academically-oriented purposes (e.g., to impress others) and in relation to other factors (e.g., perceptions of HS costs). He sought plenty of teacher help in ESL; he sought more peer help but less teacher help in Humanities.

Karabenick (2003) found that students with intrinsic interest in the subject matter were likely to seek adaptive help but that HA was not related to intrinsic interest. My finding was

consistent with that study, in that students were willing to seek help when they were interested in the task. But lack of interest, in general, was not related to their HA. Instead, personal goals played a stronger role in their HS decisions. Among the seven students with relevant data, five students (Betty, Carol, Dave, Eva, and Ian) were likely to seek help even when they were not interested in the task because they wanted to do well. Amy was initially reluctant to seek help when she was not interested. But she would eventually seek needed help in order to reach her goal to perform well. Hugh basically had a clear-cut, love-it-or-hate-it, learning attitude in terms of interest. He only put effort into the work when he was interested. However, in some contexts, he used HS as a means to his nonacademic ends (e.g., to impress others), even when he was not interested in or did not value the subject matter.

Perceptions of Help-Seeking Costs and Benefits

The sociocultural HS model proposes that students' perceptions of HS costs and benefits affect their decisions about whether or not to seek assistance (see Figure 2). In the literature, for example, Newman and Goldin (1990) found that perceived benefit for learning was positively correlated with students' liking to ask questions, especially of teachers. Also, Newman (1990) and Ryan and Pintrich (1997) found that perceived benefits were associated with student HS, whereas perceived costs were associated with students' HA.

Consistent with previous research, I found that students sought help to attain academic or

nonacademic benefits. All students utilized HS strategies in order to learn or to understand, to engage in tasks, or to perform well (see Table 5). In other words, they sought help because they believed that HS could benefit their learning/understanding, task engagement, or performance. In addition, Gary and Hugh wanted to be knowledgeable through HS. Hugh also wanted to impress others with good questions and to work efficiently with other help in some contexts. In other words, Gary and Hugh thought that HS was beneficial for their knowledgeability, personal image, or work efficiency.

I also found that Amy, Eva, and Ian held positive attitudes towards HS and believed that HS could yield overall benefits. Their beliefs in HS facilitated the three students' stable use of adaptive HS approaches across contexts. The positive thoughts which made them distinctive from other participants were, respectively: every student needs help, students could do things right with help, and ESL students could improve their English proficiency through HS. The three students perceived none of the HS costs under investigation (see Table 10) and moreover performed adaptive HS across secondary classrooms (see Table 8).

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Newman & Goldin, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich 1997), I found that various perceptions of HS costs, combined with negative emotions, deterred students from seeking help from others (see Table 10). For example, students sometimes feared peer ridicule, worried about negative reactions by teachers, or felt uncomfortable being the focus of

public attention. It seems that this evidence might also help to explain mixed findings about the relationship between affect and HS/HA in the previous literature. Karabenick (2003) found that university students who were more anxious about a course were more likely to perceive threats and then to avoid seeking help. On the country, Tang et al. (2006) found that secondary students who were more stressed and worried about tasks were more likely to seek help, and Warr and Downing (2000) found that adult learners who were more anxious about learning were more likely to use self-help and other-help. As the sociocultural model applied in this study suggests, task-related affect might mediate perceived need for help (Nadler, 1998). For example, anxiety or stress about tasks, courses, or learning may increase perceptions of a need for help, which may then lead to HS. However, the aforementioned evidence suggests that emotions in relation to HS costs may lead to students' HA.

Another pattern of perceived HS costs emerging in the cross-case analysis was negative perceptions about helpers. Almost all participants (Ian was the exception) avoided seeking help from teachers or peers who they thought were unhelpful (e.g., giving indirect help or wrong answers, unwilling to help), unkind (mean or in a bad mood) or unfamiliar (see Table 10). Consistent with this finding, Barnett et al. (1982) found that when identifying good helpers, children across ages took into account niceness or kindness most frequently, and older children also considered willingness and competence frequently.

The interactions between perceptions of HS costs (as individual factors) and teaching practices, interpersonal relationships, and resource availability (as contextual factors) will be discussed further below.

Help Expectations and Perceived Consequences

The sociocultural HS model proposes that students' help expectations affect their choice of resources (see Figure 2). This hypothesis is supported by the evidence gathered in this study. Moreover, I found that both help expectations and perceived HS consequences could explain in part why students sought or avoided seeking help from certain resources in different contexts.

First, evidence showed that students' help expectations influenced their choice of resources, including people and tools. When choosing helpers, six students (Dave, Eva, Fred, Gary, Hugh, and Ian) took into account whether their target helpers would/could offer what they wanted, for example, direct help, correct information, explanation in a certain language, or quick help. They would seek help from those who could meet their expectations and avoid those who could not (see Table 10). If ideal helpers were in other settings such as parents at home or tutors on campus, students would delay HS until they reached their ideal helpers (see Table 7).

Likewise, students chose or avoided certain tools based on their help expectations. Hugh chose the textbook as a resource in his Math class because it contained the clear step-by-step information he needed. Eva was willing to use online dictionaries but reluctant to use paper

dictionaries because of her expectation of efficiency.

Second, evidence suggested that perceptions of HS consequences also influenced student HS and HA in terms of choice of resources. A likely bad consequence changed Dave's mind about his choice of helpers. He avoided asking peers for help, his preferred strategy, in his Humanities class because he thought that the teacher might punish him for chatting. Dave thus chose the teacher as a helper instead. Although he felt a little sad about this compromise, it was a safe strategy for Dave.

My findings complement the literature about expectations in relation to HA. For example, Newman and Goldin (1990) found that reasons for students' HA included perception of teacher expectations (e.g., students have acquired competence or knowledge) and some classroom rules (e.g., not to talk). A synthesized explanation for HA is as follows. Students are likely to avoid seeking help when perceiving that the teacher expects them to work independently or when students want direct help but the teacher usually gives indirect help, expecting students to solve problems on their own. In order to meet teacher expectations about classroom order and to avoid a likely punishment, students are likely to avoid seeking help in some circumstances.

Personal Characteristics

The sociocultural HS model proposes that students bring to learning contexts personal characteristics that might exert more or less influence on their HS decisions, depending on the

context (see Figure 2; Butler & Cartier, 2005; Dillon, 1998; Shwalb & Sukemune, 1998). In this study, evidence suggested that some personal characteristics were unfavorable to students' HS. Three students (Dave, Eva, and Gary) attributed their HA in some contexts to being shy or quiet (consistent with Shwalb & Sukemune, 1998). But I found that familiarity or friendship could relieve HS discomfort. Dave was shy to seek help from girls. But he sought help from the girls in his regular group as if they were his buddies. Eva and Gary were quiet or shy and did not seek teacher help in public or seek help from unfamiliar peers. However, they sought help from friends with ease.

I also found that three students (Betty, Carol, and Dave) asked teachers for the same types of help repetitively because of their dispositions. The twins understood well in ESL, but they seemed to lack confidence in their understanding and thus asked their ESL teacher simple questions for reassurance most of the time. Dave was distracted easily and often needed teachers or peers to repeat instructions for him. In comparison, Ian had good understanding and sought little teacher help in ESL. However, he seemed to lack confidence and thus needed and sought plenty of teacher help in Humanities in the beginning. But Ian made progress in Humanities through the school year of the study. He became more capable, confident, and independent (i.e., seeking much less teacher help) near the end of the school year.

Perceived Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge

A central purpose of this study was to explore how linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge might affect HS decision-making by ESL learners. Given prior cross-culture research about ESL students (e.g., Holmes, 2005; Purdie & Hattie, 1996; Volet, 1999), I hypothesized that students would bring self-perceptions of their linguistic competence and background knowledge to classrooms, which would affect their HS and HA. Findings from this study were consistent with this expectation.

First, evidence showed that proficiency in the instructional language influenced students' learning and HS in several ways (consistent with Holmes, 2005). All participants encountered reading challenges in Canadian classrooms, and seven students perceived either reading or writing as the most challenging activity (see Table 6). In a way, lack of language proficiency increased students' need for help. But at the same time, five students attributed their reluctance to seek other help in some contexts to difficulties in framing their questions well (see Table 10). In another way, lack of proficiency made it a challenge for language beginners to develop relationships with peers, which undermined their HS in the classroom. For example, when Dave and Eva were newcomers in Hong Kong and Canada respectively, they were unable to converse with peers in an unfamiliar language so that they could not make friends and did not seek help at all in class.

However, a positive attitude toward learning and HS made a student resilient. Ian also experienced linguistic challenges in Canada. But he did not avoid seeking teacher help in English, nor did he seek peer help in Cantonese, which was contrary to Holmes (2005) and Volet (1999). With a positive attitude, Ian took the initiative in preparing his questions in advance so that he could not only cope with his learning challenges but also improve his English proficiency through help-seeking and help-giving interactions.

Second, evidence also suggested that cultural knowledge was related to learning and HS (consistent with Holmes, 2005). Like linguistic proficiency, cultural knowledge could be related to students' experience of a need for help. For example, Hugh was familiar with Arabic culture and possessed sufficient background knowledge about Arabic reading. Hence, he could comprehend Arabic texts well even when he encountered lexical challenges. But he lacked the advantages of cultural familiarity and language proficiency in Canadian classrooms. Thus, he had reading challenges and poor comprehension of English reading there. In terms of HS, Hugh knew how to speak and act in his home country (Saudi Arabia), but he encountered a cultural barrier in his host country (Canada). He attributed his HA in some Canadian contexts to his lack of cultural knowledge about how to ask questions tactically, that is, how to request what he needed and to protect his self-esteem simultaneously.

Academic Performances and Self-Expectations

Many researchers (e.g., Newman, 1990; Newman and Goldin, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997) found that students with lower achievement scores or perceived competence were more likely to avoid seeking needed help because they were more likely to perceive threat to self-esteem. My findings elaborate previous research by showing that students' HS and HA in context were related to their present performances and their past achievements. Hugh perceived his reading and writing performances in English as poor in Canada (see Table 6). However, he had high self-expectations from his past excellent academic achievements in his home country. When Hugh perceived that his questions would reveal his performance to be below average in Humanities, he avoided seeking teacher help, especially in public, or even peer help if he thought his questions were really stupid. He intended to hide his weaknesses and protect his self-esteem. In contrast, Hugh was good at math and had confidence in this subject. In Canada, he liked to ask his Math teacher smart questions in public, which he thought could show his strength and benefit peers.

Gary also earned good academic achievements in his home country. In Filipino classrooms, he was confident and liked to seek help from friends and teachers to cope with challenges. In Canada, he perceived his performance as poor in his Math and Humanities classes. He needed more help in the two classes, but he avoided seeking help from others in the two settings. Gary

perceived a threat to his self-esteem in the two classrooms, given his poor academic performance there and likely high self-expectations from his past achievements. Furthermore, he felt inferior in the two classes when he compared his performance with peers' and thus avoided socialization. Consequently, Gary had no friends to turn to for help in the two Canadian classrooms.

Contextual Factors

The sociocultural HS model proposes that learning is embedded within and influenced by layers of contexts (e.g., classrooms, schools, neighborhoods, and broader social systems; see Figure 2; Butler & Cartier, 2005). In this study, contextual influences on student HS emerged, and students' HS patterns seemed to be related to: (a) challenging courses and activities, (b) teaching practices and HS norms, (c) interpersonal relationships, and (d) resource availability.

Challenging Courses and Activities

In the sociocultural HS model, courses and learning activities are positioned as components of the instructional environment in the classroom, and the occurrence of a challenge is the prerequisite for HS (see Figure 2). In the literature, there is little investigation on student HS in Humanities classes, which demand linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge heavily. In this study, as expected, it appeared that Humanities created class demands that were most challenging for ESL students, particularly because of reading and writing expectations. Eight participants encountered different kinds of reading challenges in Humanities, whereas only four

students encountered reading challenges in ESL and in Math-Science (see Table 6). In terms of the most challenging activity, six students referred to projects/assignments and four students referred to writing as such (see Table 6).

It is understandable that Humanities and projects/assignments were most difficult for participants. In terms of the class demand for competent reading, Humanities requires both good English proficiency and sufficient cultural knowledge, both of which can pose challenges for ESL students. Successful projects and assignments require a combination of good language skills (reading and writing), good academic skills (e.g., research, note making, presentation), and creativity. Participating students were in the process of acquiring English proficiency and competent academic skills as they were receiving relevant training in an ESL-4 class. They might not have been used to creative work as several students needed help with ideas (see Table 9 and a further discussion below) Thus, in connection to previous discussion on individual factors, ESL students seemed to be challenged by contexts differentially, depending on class demands in relation to their linguistic competence, cultural knowledge, academic skills, and prior learning experiences.

Teaching Practices and Help-Seeking Norms

The teacher is typically the source of instruction, the planner of learning activities, and the key helper in the classroom. Teaching and help-giving practices are important contextual factors

in the sociocultural HS model (see Figure 2). Newman and Schwager (1993) found from interviews that elementary students across grade levels generally preferred teachers to peers as helpers in math classes. Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Scheib (1985) found from observations that in reading classes, elementary students performed the most HS at seat work and the least HS in whole-class activities.

My findings about preferred resources were consistent with those of Newman and Schwager (1993). All students liked to draw upon teachers as helpers (see Table 7). Further, teachers were most frequently referred to by students as their first choice of resources across their ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8). But whether or not participants asked teachers for help depended on activity formats. My findings about the relationship between activity formats and HS/HA were consistent with those of Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Scheib (1985). First, students were much less likely to ask for help during whole-class instruction. They attributed their reluctance to seek help openly to reasons like fear of peer ridicule, being uncomfortable or shy, and HS etiquette (not to interrupt the teacher; see Table 10). Second, students preferred individual help given in private such as when the teacher circulated among students or sat down during seat work sessions. Four students also liked to seek tutor help (see Table 7), possibly for the same purpose of receiving individual and private help with no worries about ridicule or asking too many questions (see Table 10). Gary was an extreme example of

avoiding public HS. When he was afraid of peer ridicule in some contexts, he avoided seeking teacher help in class even though he wanted to. He desired to seek truly private help from the teacher after class when no other peers were present in the classroom.

In addition to activity formats, I also found that students' willingness to seek teacher help was influenced by teachers' help-giving practices. For example, three students were reluctant to seek help from the teachers who were likely to give indirect help (see Table 10). Hugh was a good example of seeking and receiving individual and direct help in his ESL class. He often sat by the teacher's desk and asked her all kinds of questions when she sat down. He liked to seek help from her because she usually did her best to grant what students requested, even to help with what were supposed to be their own responsibilities, such as generating or accessing ideas, supplies, tools (e.g., fetching an atlas for Hugh), and problem-solving techniques (e.g., how to copy a picture from the school agenda to his poster).

Consistent with Newman and Goldin (1990) and van der Meij (1988), I found that HS norms in classrooms influenced students' HS and HA. All participants were concerned about HS etiquette related to appropriate times for questioning (see Table 10). For instance, although Eva did not regard HS norms as a deterrent to her HS, she did follow expected HS practices by avoiding seeking help from busy target helpers. Ian carried on the HS etiquette he had learned in Hong Kong to Canada, seeking teacher help after lectures. Hugh followed another norm in his

home country, that is, not to seek teacher help in the classroom but to seek parent help at home.

Three students (Amy, Eva, and Ian) did not ask others for ideas because they followed the norm that as part of task requirements, students should think of their own ideas.

Interpersonal Relationships

In the sociocultural HS model, interpersonal relationships are considered an important component of the HS environment in the classroom. Newman and Schwager (1993) found that across grade levels, students' HS was associated with their perception of a friendly relationship with the teacher (mutual liking). Nelson-Le Gall and Gumerman (1984) also found an association between students' seeking peer help and having friendships with peers.

My findings were consistent with previous research. In general, having friendly and relaxing relationships with nice, trustworthy teachers or peers, on the one hand, facilitated students' willingness to ask them for help and, on the other hand, eased their HS-related fears and worries. In terms of seeking teacher help, all participants liked to use teachers as resources; however, seven of them liked to approach nice or trustworthy teachers for help and shied away from those they perceived as mean or being in a bad mood (see Tables 7 and 10). Eva and Ian were exceptions. They did not consider whether the teacher interacted with students nicely or not when they needed teacher help (see Tables 7 and 10).

Gary and Hugh provided good examples of how having a friendly and relaxing

relationship with a teacher mattered to their willingness or reluctance to seek teacher help. Both Gary and Hugh were willing to approach their ESL teacher for help, especially Hugh, but they were not so in their Humanities classrooms. In their ESL classroom, the interactions between Gary and the teacher were relaxing and friendly. For example, Gary uttered his puzzle and surprise spontaneously, and the teacher patted him on the head after her reply. In his Humanities class, Gary was quiet and used only self-help to cope with his challenges. He had little spontaneous interactions with the teacher. He once silently declined the teacher's offer of help even though he needed her help. Hugh liked to chat with his ESL teacher freely and to ask her for sorts of help. In contrast, he thought his Humanities teacher was serious and did not welcome silly questions. He usually sought help from friends in Humanities.

In terms of seeking peer help, all participants liked to ask friends for help, seven liked nice peers (non-friends), but only five liked capable peers (see Table 7). On the other hand, five students were reluctant to seek help from unfamiliar peers (see Table 10). Furthermore, among different kinds of peers, friends were most often reported by participants as their first or second choice of resources (next to teachers) across ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science classes (see Table 8). Eva provided a good example. She sought help from either friends or teachers across contexts, not from other kinds of peers.

In sum, good relationships with trusted helpers seem to provide psychological safety

(Sandoval & Lee, 2006). Students seem to be willing to disclose their weaknesses (being incapable or ignorant) and seek needed help from trustworthy people who make them feel safe from refusal and negative judgments.

Resource Availability

Resources in a classroom comprise the teacher, peers, and self-help tools. Newman and Goldin (1990) and van der Meij (1988) found that unavailability of preferred helpers was one of the reasons for student HA. Consistent with those studies, I found that resource proximity or availability played an important role in participants' decisions on HS or HA. As discussed above, students preferred to seek individual, private help from a teacher side by side. For instance, Hugh preferred the seat by his ESL teacher's desk to ensure his easy access to her. On the other hand, students avoided seeking teacher help when the teacher was unavailable, for example, when he or she was giving instruction or busy working (see Table 10). Similarly, easy access seemed to weigh more than capability in students' choice of peers as helpers. Seven participants preferred nearby peers and five preferred capable peers as helpers (see Table 7).

Past investigations (e.g., Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Scheib, 1985; Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986) found that students used social and nonsocial sources as HS or SRL strategies. Consistent with this previous research, evidence in this study showed that besides other-help strategies, students also liked to draw upon self-help

strategies, using varied tools. The computer was the most popular tool, followed by books and then dictionaries (see Table 7). All participants liked to utilize online resources for self-help, and seven students regarded the computer as their favorite tool. No access to their favorite tool in the classroom was likely to influence their choice between self-help and other-help (see a further discussion below). Furthermore, three students attributed their HA in some contexts to the fact that the tools they needed were not available in the classroom (see Table 10).

How Students Seek Help in the Classroom

In order to answer my main research question with a focus on self-help, in this section, I present cross-case findings related to how students sought help in classrooms with particular attention to how students used self-help with tools as a form of HS.

The sociocultural HS model outlines a cyclical and recursive HS process (see Figure 2). An HS episode comprises a set of activities by a self-regulated learner: engaging in tasks, perceiving challenges, perceiving a need for help, choosing resources or deciding not to seek help (under the mediation of motivation, affect, and HS-related perceptions), monitoring and evaluating HS outcomes, and then engaging again or seeking help again or being disengaged (depending on whether or not the HS outcome is satisfactory).

Overall, I found that the sociocultural HS model applied in this study was useful in describing how students sought help in classrooms, specifically in its depiction of a

self-regulated, recursive HS process that subsumed self-help strategies. When participants engaged in tasks in ESL or Humanities classes, for instance, they most often perceived challenges in reading, writing, or projects and needed help. A number of individual and contextual factors affected students' HS/HA decisions (see discussions above). In order to obtain needed help, students used both self-help and other-help strategies and made various types of requests (see further discussions below). Evidence also showed that students monitored and evaluated HS results and reattempted HS when they did not obtain satisfactory help or when they encountered challenges again. For example, Ian checked the credibility of the information he obtained on line. When Dave and Fred found that the peers they asked first could not help, they asked other peers (for information about Canadian holidays and exchange of research topics, respectively). Ian often sought help from his Humanities teacher recursively and materialized the HS cycle of task engagement, challenges, HS, task engagement, and so on.

In the remainder of this section, I focus attention more specifically on findings about the types of HS requests that participants made and their choices of resources (between self-help and other-help).

Types of Help-Seeking Requests

In the literature, there is abundant research investigating the types of HS that students perform, for example, adaptive versus nonadaptive (Newman, 1998a), instrumental versus

executive (Karabenick, 2003; Nelson-Le Gall, 1985), or autonomous versus dependent (Butler, 1998; Nadler, 1998). But there is little research investigating what kinds of help students need and request. My findings fill this gap in the literature by showing that the types of HS requests students made were related to their HS purposes, both academic and nonacademic.

Requests for Academic Purposes

I found that participants requested of others various kinds of help in relation to their academic work in order to understand, to learn, or to perform well (see Tables 5 and 9). All students requested clarification or explanation and instructions about tasks. Eight students requested visual demonstrations about how to do the required work. Eight students requested information that they forgot or missed. Seven students asked for confirmation or feedback about their work or marks. Five students requested examples. Besides requests for information, most to all participants also asked for things like extra time, supplies, handouts, and notes in order to engage in or complete tasks.

Participants also asked for pronunciation, spellings, and grammar help to cope with their speaking and writing challenges. In addition, when working on projects, they asked for ideas, permission or approval (e.g., of a research topic or presentation content), exchange of research topics, and tools (see Table 9).

Some participants also performed illegitimate HS (i.e., cheating). While five students

asked peers for answers during a reading activity in their ESL class with teacher permission, three participants either cheated at the time of the study or had cheated before (see Table 9). They asked peers for answers during tests, asked peers to do assignments for them, or copied peers' work. R. Butler (1998) and Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Scheib (1985) also found cheating behaviour among students and called it avoidant-covert HS and executive HS respectively.

Requests for Nonacademic Purposes

I found that sometimes students asked teachers for information that did not concern their academic work directly. For instance, without experiencing challenges about tasks, Fred requested further information about Filipino workers that was beyond his ESL teacher's lecture on the history about the Canadian Pacific Railway. His questioning was due to his interest in his own people. Hugh liked to talk with teachers casually and to ask off-topic questions in order to be knowledgeable or to impress others.

Strictly speaking, asking questions for further information (rather than in response to a challenge) is related to but not the same as academic HS as defined by the sociocultural model applied in this study. However, in a broad sense and from a behavioural perspective, asking such questions is HS behaviour because students are seeking external help to achieve their goals (namely, acquiring additional information).

Choices of Resources

The sociocultural HS model proposes that students can seek both other-help and self-help to cope with challenges, drawing on people and tools as resources. This proposition is supported by the evidence in this study. Consistent with Purdie and Hattie (1996) and Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986, 1990), I found that students liked to seek help from a variety of other people, including teachers and peers within the classroom and parents and tutors outside the classroom. All participants liked to utilize teachers and friends as helpers, seven students liked nice, friendly peers, seven students liked nearby peers, and five students liked capable peers (see Table 7). With respect to helpers outside the classroom, seven students liked to ask parents for help, four students liked tutors (at home or on campus), and three students liked siblings (see Table 7).

Traditionally, researchers have regarded HS as seeking social assistance (Karabenick, 1998; Karabenick & Newman, 2006). For instance, Nelson-Le Gall and Glor-Sheib (1985) observed that student sought help from teachers, peers, and impersonal sources (e.g., dictionaries and metric conversion tables) in reading and math classes. But they classified using tools and copying peers' work covertly in the same category, defining both as nonadaptive, copying behaviour conducted to avoid soliciting assistance from others. I disagree and argue that using tools is a form of HS. Students may use self-help tools autonomously and adaptively as shown in

this study.

As expected, I found that students liked to use a variety of self-help tools as HS strategies. All participants liked to draw upon the computer as a resource (online resources), which was the favorite tool for seven students (see Table 7). Eight students liked to use books (the favorite tool for two students). Six students liked to use dictionaries (the favorite tool for three students). Three students liked to use notes or handouts (the favorite tool for one student). In addition, students looked for information or ideas from other things like school agenda handbooks, an atlas, and displayed student work. The above findings, together with the following discussion about students' choice between people and tools as resources, can fill the gap about self-help in the HS literature.

Overall, I found that students predominantly preferred other-help to self-help across contexts. Take the secondary classes, for example. Eight students referred to the teacher or friends as their first choice of resources across ESL, Humanities, and Math-Science (see Table 8). Only Gary preferred to work on his own, using self-reliance or self-help, across the three classes. In contrast, he also preferred friends as helpers in his home country. In the cross-case analysis, I found some underlying reasons for students' choices between other-help and self-help.

First, when students did use self-help, they did so either for autonomy or to avoid other-help. This finding can elaborate and extend R. Butler's (1998) argument. She argued that

when students worked on their own for independent mastery, it was autonomous (not maladaptive) HA. When they perceived a need for help, they were likely to seek autonomous help (hints) from others. In this study, for example, Gary basically liked to work on his own in Canadian classrooms. In some contexts, he successfully solved his challenges by self-reliance (cognition). This was not HA because he did not need external aid. In some contexts, he successfully solved his challenges using tools as resources. This was autonomous HS, not HA per se because Gary sought self-help as an alternative to other-help. But when self-help strategies failed to solve his challenges and he gave up, it was maladaptive HA because Gary did not seek needed help from useful social resources like the teacher.

Second, students sought other-help because their preferred tools were not available. For example, Eva preferred online dictionaries to look up words. When the computer was not available in the classroom, she sought peer help instead. In the study, seven students' favorite tool was the computer. If they had had easy access to a computer in the classroom, they might have used more self-help in class.

Third, although students could utilize self-help in some contexts, they decided to seek other-help so that they could achieve such personal goals as to work efficiently or to impress others. Eva could use paper dictionaries which were available in the classroom, but she disliked using them due to inefficiency. Likewise, Hugh sought peer help rather than using the textbook

in some contexts for the sake of efficiency. He sometimes asked the teacher for help in order to impress people with good questions although he could have used self-help tools in that context.

Last, seeking other help was instrumental in seeking self-help. Three students (Fred, Hugh, and Ian) strategically sought teacher help first in order to obtain the tools they needed. That is, they sought self-help through other-help. They took good advantage of different resources in order to solve their problems.

Implications

The integration of the findings in this study yield two major, related implications for practice, namely, to optimize the chances that students perceive HS benefits and to diminish the chances that students perceive HS costs. To cultivate students' positive attitude toward HS can facilitate their use of adaptive HS strategies in classrooms. For example, a finding in this study was that adaptive HS was supported by beliefs that HS is common among students and that HS is a useful learning and coping strategy. Teachers could nurture such positive beliefs about HS by telling students that everyone needs help, we can do things right with help, and HS can benefit our understanding, task performance, and development of competencies and skills.

To eliminate possible deterrents to student HS in classrooms can decrease the likelihood of HA. Teachers can establish HS-friendly classroom norms so as to promote students' perception of psychological safety (Sandoval & Lee, 2006) and willingness to seek help. For instance,

teachers can tell students that all questions (big or small) are good questions and there are no stupid questions (thereby discouraging laughing or ridicule). Further, teachers should practice these norms themselves by answering all kinds of questions patiently and praising students for asking questions rather than for asking good questions, lest some students fear asking simple questions when they need the basics or background information. In addition, there needs to be sufficient question time during activities, allowing students to seek teacher help (in public and in private), and class management and seat/group arrangements that enable students to seek peer help, especially from friends.

Further, if teachers aim to develop independence in students, they need to be alert to students' levels of competency/knowledge and be responsive to their needs and help expectations (i.e., when choosing whether to give more direct or indirect assistance). Ideally, teachers should provide assistance as a form of scaffolding within students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, as sociocultural theory illuminates, students can benefit from teaching approaches that go from direct instruction to modeling/guided practice then to independent practice (Henderson & Cunningham, 1994). A push for independent learning too early may deter students from seeking teacher help and then hinder their learning because they may perceive that seeking direct help is a dependent, undesirable behaviour or perceive teachers as unhelpful.

Limitations

When interpreting and applying findings from this study, however, readers must keep certain limitations in mind. First of all, this case study design was limited to investigation of only nine students with particular backgrounds, studying in particular contexts. Therefore, future research is needed to elaborate and extend this study's findings, inviting students with backgrounds and learning experiences different from those of the students in this investigation, studying across contexts different from the classes in this study.

Other limitations of the study derive from my methods of data collection. My presence as an observer affected three participants' HS behaviour in classrooms. These students sought little teacher help when I was present. Fortunately, although my observations of their seeking teacher help were limited, abundant data from other sources, such as teacher and student interviews, HS logs, and the HS questionnaire, helped me understand the three students' HS approaches.

Also, the amount of available data about students' HS in different contexts varied. For example, I was not able to interview the Humanities-7 teacher about HS by participants in his class. Data in relation to HS in a third, self-selected class were only collected through student interviews and the HS questionnaire. Data concerning students' past HS in schools outside Canada were collected based on students' recollections. Recollection data are limited in that students might forget what they thought or did in the past. Further, I had no other sources of data

(e.g., observations, interviews, and documents) to provide converging evidence related to students' recollections. Students' HS outside Canada was also described from a general, overall perspective, not by class or subject area. Thus, although this study contributes to understanding students' HS across contexts, particularly across ESL and Humanities classes, future research might focus on more complete, cross-context comparisons.

Future Research

I propose some directions for future research here, hoping that researchers can extend what I found in this study or accomplish what I did not. Larger scale research is needed, using complementary designs, to investigate the key factors in the sociocultural HS model, which is supported by evidence from this study with a small number of students. Longitudinal research is needed (e.g., to collect data at the beginning and the end of the school year) to investigate HS changes and influential factors. Cross-cultural research is needed to investigate, for example, similarities and differences between students' HS and HA in the same/similar subject courses in different countries.

Also needed is further research on the impact of contextual variables on HS. For example, we need to understand how students seek help when performing different tasks, how different help-giving practices by teachers affect student HS, and how teachers' cultural backgrounds and past teaching experiences shape their classroom environments, which in turn shape students' HS.

Conclusions

In this study, I employed an in-depth, multiple case-study design to investigate how HS/HA plays out for individuals as a function of context. Through a careful analysis of multiple forms of data, a number of findings emerged. One key finding was that students' positive beliefs in HS and perceptions of HS benefits seemed to be related to HS, whereas perceptions of HS costs and lack of preferred resources appeared to be related to HA. Another key finding was that although three students' HS patterns were stable across secondary classes, mostly, students' HS approaches were contingent on interactions between their past learning experiences, current perceptions, and features of the contexts in which they were working.

A third key finding was that students drew upon various resources, including people and tools, as HS strategies and used them adaptively most of the time to achieve their personal (not always academically-oriented) goals. Overall, students preferred teacher help in classrooms, while the computer was the most popular self-help tool among students. A final key finding was that language proficiency and cultural knowledge as individual and contextual factors were influential in student HS.

Derived from these findings were a number of important implications and recommendations for teachers, which is the practical contribution by this study. For example, findings suggest that teachers can facilitate student use of adaptive HS strategies by fostering

students' perceptions of HS benefits and diminishing HS deterrents in classrooms. To this end, teachers need to establish classroom norms favorable for HS and provide help in ways to scaffold learning based on students' current levels of knowledge and understanding. This study also makes a theoretical contribution by evidencing the potential utility of a comprehensive, sociocultural model of strategic help seeking in context, which represents the complexity of factors involved in self-regulated learning and HS by students who are situated within socioculturally- and historically-delimited settings.

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Table 1

Participating Students in Class Contexts

	Hum 7	Hum 8	Hum 9	ESL 4
Amy (case 1)	X			X
Betty (case 2)	X			X
Carol (case 3)	X			X
Dave (case 4)	X			X
Eva (case 5)		X		(X)
Fred (case 6)		X		X
Gary (case 7)		X		X
Hugh (case 8)			X	X
Ian (case 9)			X	X

Note. Eva was originally in the ESL-4 class but left it before data collection.

Table 2

Background Information of Participating Students

Student	Age	Gr level	Ethnicity & coming from	Languages spoken	Ed yrs Canada	Ed in other countries
Amy	13	7	Filipino Philippines	Filipino English	8	Philippines
Betty	12	7	Chinese Hong Kong	Cantonese English	8	Chinese class Canada
Carol	12	7	Chinese Hong Kong	Cantonese English	8	Chinese class Canada
Dave	12	7	Chinese Hong Kong	Cantonese English	5	Hong Kong
Eva	13	8	Chinese Hong Kong	Cantonese English	6	Hong Kong
Fred	14	8	Chinese-Filipino Philippines	Filipino English Mandarin	2	Philippines Taiwan
Gary	13	8	Filipino Philippines	Tagalog English	3	Philippines
Hugh	14	9	Columbian- Brazilian Saudi Arabia	Arabic English	4	Saudi Arabia
Ian	15	9	Chinese Hong Kong	Cantonese English	3	Hong Kong

Note. Data sources included the cultural background questionnaire, the Learning Through Reading Questionnaire, and student interviews.

Table 3

Multiple Cases and Data Sources in an Ideal Timeline

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12-16	Day 17-19
ESL 4	Obs 1 TPS Log Chat	Obs 2 Log Chat	Obs 3 Log Chat	Obs 4 Log Chat	Obs 5 Log Chat								
	Hum 7			Obs 1 TPS Log Chat	Obs 2 Log Chat	Obs 3 Log Chat	Obs 4 Log Chat						
	Hum 8				Obs 1 TPS Log Chat	Obs 2 Log Chat	Obs 3 Log Chat	Obs 4 Log Chat					
	Hum 9					Obs 1 TPS Log Chat	Obs 2 Log Chat	Obs 3 Log Chat	Obs 4 Log Chat				
											Q 1 & 2		
												9 S Ints	
													5 T Ints

Note . ESL-4 class had cases 1 to 4 and 6 to 9, Humanities 7 had cases 1 to 4, Humanities 8 had cases 5 to 7, and Humanities 9 had cases 8 and 9. Sources of data included class observations (Obs), think-pair-share activity (TPS), in-class help-seeking logs (Log), after-class chats (Chat), cultural background and help-seeking questionnaires (Q 1 & 2), student interviews (S Ints), and teacher interviews (T Ints).

Table 4

Course Value and Personal Goals Participants Endorsed in Learning Contexts

Student	Views as important				Wants to learn well				Wants to get good grades			
	School	ESL	Hum	Other class	In general	ESL	Hum	Other class	In general	ESL	Hum	Other class
Amy	X		X	MS	X			MS	X	X	X	All
Betty	X	X	X	All	X		X	MS	X	X	X	All
Carol	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	
Dave	X	X	X	TW	X	X	X	MS	X	X	X	MS
Eva	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	MS
Fred	X	X			X	X	X	MS	X	X	X	MS
Gary	X	X	X	MS	X	X	X	MS	X	X	X	MS
Hugh	X			MS	X			MS	X			MS
Ian	X	X	X		X	X	X	MS	X	X	X	MS

Note. MS is Math-Science. TW is The Way Things Work. Data sources included the HS questionnaire and student interviews.

Table 5

Reasons Why Participants Sought Help in Class

Reason	Amy	Betty	Carol	Dave	Eva	Fred	Gary	Hugh	Ian
To understand/learn	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
To perform tasks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
To get good marks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
To be knowledgeable							X	X	
To impress people								X	
To work efficiently								X	

Note. Data sources included Think-Pair-Share sheets, the HS questionnaire, and student interviews.

Table 6

Challenges Participants Encountered in Activities

Challenge	Amy	Betty	Carol	Dave	Eva	Fred	Gary	Hugh	Ian
Reading									
Vocabulary		E, H		E, H	E, H	MS	MS	H	E, H, MS
Main ideas	H	E, H		H	H	MS	H, MS	H	
Important ideas		E, H			H		H, MS		
Mind map	H		H	H					
Connections			H	H			H, MS		
Remembering facts/details	H, MS		H	H			H, MS	H	E, H, MS
Note making				H			H, MS	H	
Studying for tests	X	X		X					
Most challenging activity									
Projects	X					X	X		
Assignments				X	H				X
Reading								X	
Writing	X	X	X					X	
Math							X		
Science						X			

Note. E stands for ESL, H for Humanities, MS for Math-Science, and X for context not specified.

Data sources included the HS questionnaire and student interviews.

Table 7

Resources Participants Liked to Use

Resources	Amy	Betty	Carol	Dave	Eva	Fred	Gary	Hugh	Ian
People									
Teachers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Friends	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Capable peers	X	X	X	X					X
Nice peers	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Nearby peers	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Parents	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Siblings		X	X				X		
Tutors		X	X		X	X			
Tools									
The Internet	X*	X*	X*	X*	X*	X	X	X*	X*
Books	X	X	X*	X	X	X	X		X*
Dictionaries	X	X*	X*			X*	X		X
Notes			X				X*		X

Note. * indicates favorite self-help tool(s).

Data sources included the HS questionnaire, student interviews, and logs.

Table 8

Three Resources/Strategies Participants Preferred to Use in/for ESL, Humanities, and Other Classes

Student	ESL			Humanities			Other class			
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Class	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Amy	F	T	WA	F	T	WA	MS	F	T	WA
Betty	T	F	Tutor	F	T	Dictionaries	MS	T	F	Tutor
Carol	T	F	Nice p	F	T		MS	T	F	Nearby p
Dave	F	T	Capable p	T	Nearby p	Nice p	French	T	Nearby p	F
Eva	T/F			T/F			All	T/F		
Fred	T	Parents	Capable p	T	F		MS	T	F	Capable p
Gary	WA	T	F	WA	T	Notes	MS	WA	Notes	T
Hugh	T	F	Dictionaries	F	T	Computer	MS	T	Textbook	F
Ian	T	Books	Computer	T	Books	Computer	MS	T	Books	Computer

Note. F stands for friends, P for peers, T for teachers, and WA for working alone. MS is Math-Science.

Data sources included the HS questionnaire and student interviews.

Table 9

What Participants Requested in Help Seeking

Types of requests	Amy	Betty	Carol	Dave	Eva	Fred	Gary	Hugh	Ian
Clarification/Explanation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Examples	X		X	X				X	X
Instructions on tasks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Demonstration	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Information forgotten/missed	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Further/Off-topic information	X					X		X	
Ideas		X	X	X				X	
Pronunciation				X					
Spelling		X	X	X		X		X	X
Grammar	X							X	
Confirmation/Feedback (work)	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Confirmation/Feedback (marks)	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Extra time	X	X	X			X		X	X
Handouts lost	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Supplies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Notes	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Answers		X		X		X		X	X
Cheating (tests, assignments)				X		X		X	
Exchange (research topic)						X			
Permission/Approval						X		X	
Tools						X		X	

Note. Data sources included the HS questionnaire, student and teacher interviews, observations, logs, and Think-Pair-Share sheets.

Table 10

Reasons Why Participants Might Not Seek Help in Class When Needed

Reason	Amy	Betty	Carol	Dave	Eva	Fred	Gary	Hugh	Ian
Fears/Worries (e.g., ridicule, to upset helpers)						X	X	X	
Uncomfortable to ask in public	X				X	X	X	X	
Didn't know what/how to ask	X			X	X	X	X	X	
Had too much to ask	X					X	X	X	
Not a good question								X	
The question was asked and answered							X		
No interest	X							X	
Didn't want to learn	X								
Didn't want to use class time to ask my questions							X		
Didn't want to interrupt the teacher's instruction	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
No time for questions	X	X		X				X	X
Teacher was busy	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Peers were busy	X	X			X	X		X	
I was busy		X							X
Teacher was not helpful (indirect help)				X			X	X	
Teacher was not nice	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Peers were not helpful						X		X	
Peers were not nice	X								
Peers were not familiar		X	X	X	X		X		
Liked to work on my own	X					X	X	X	
Didn't have the tools I needed		X						X	
Could get help at home	X		X	X		X	X	X	

Note. Data sources included the HS questionnaire, student interviews, and logs.

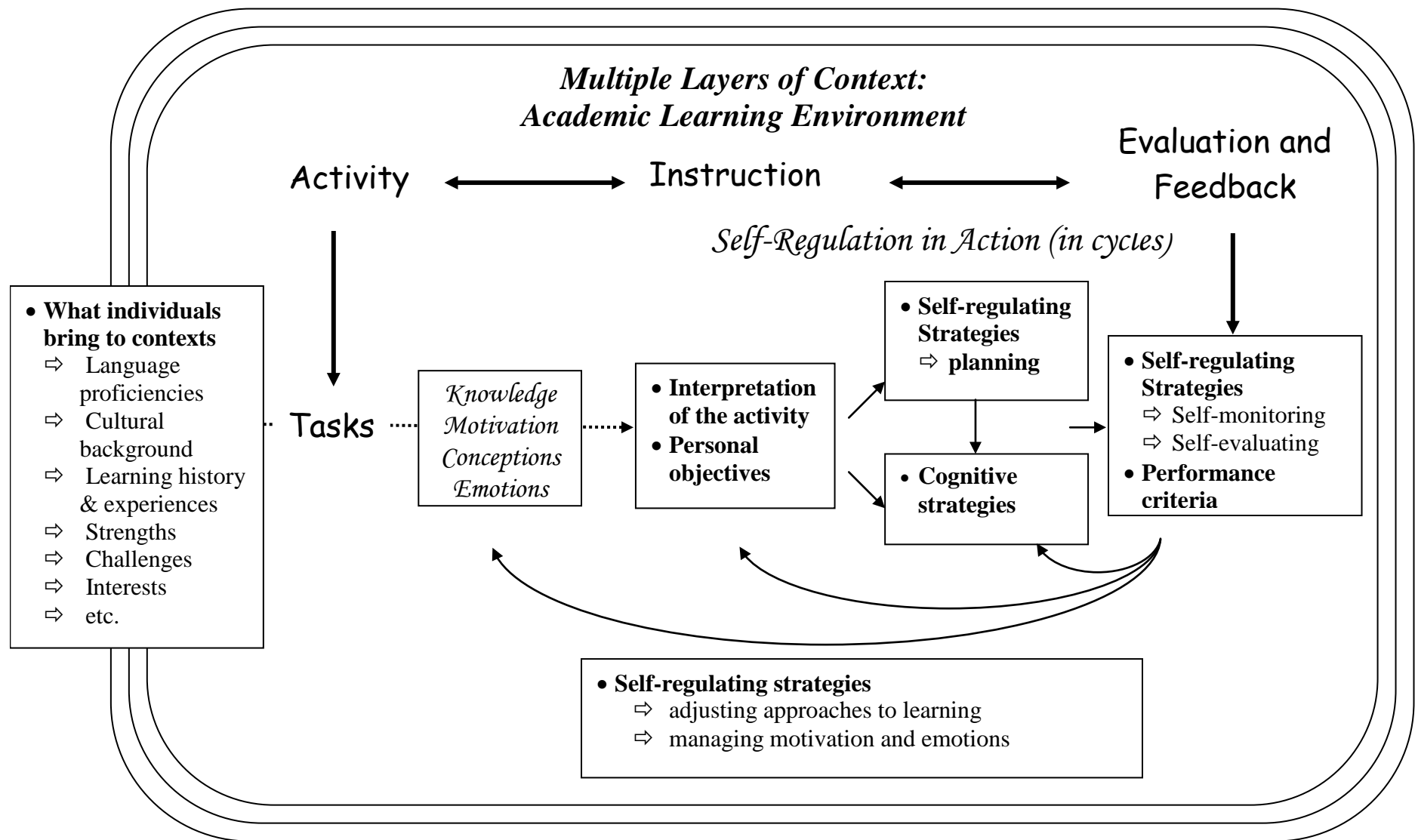


Figure 1. A situated model of self-regulated learning in complex activities.
Adapted with permission from Butler & Cartier (2005).

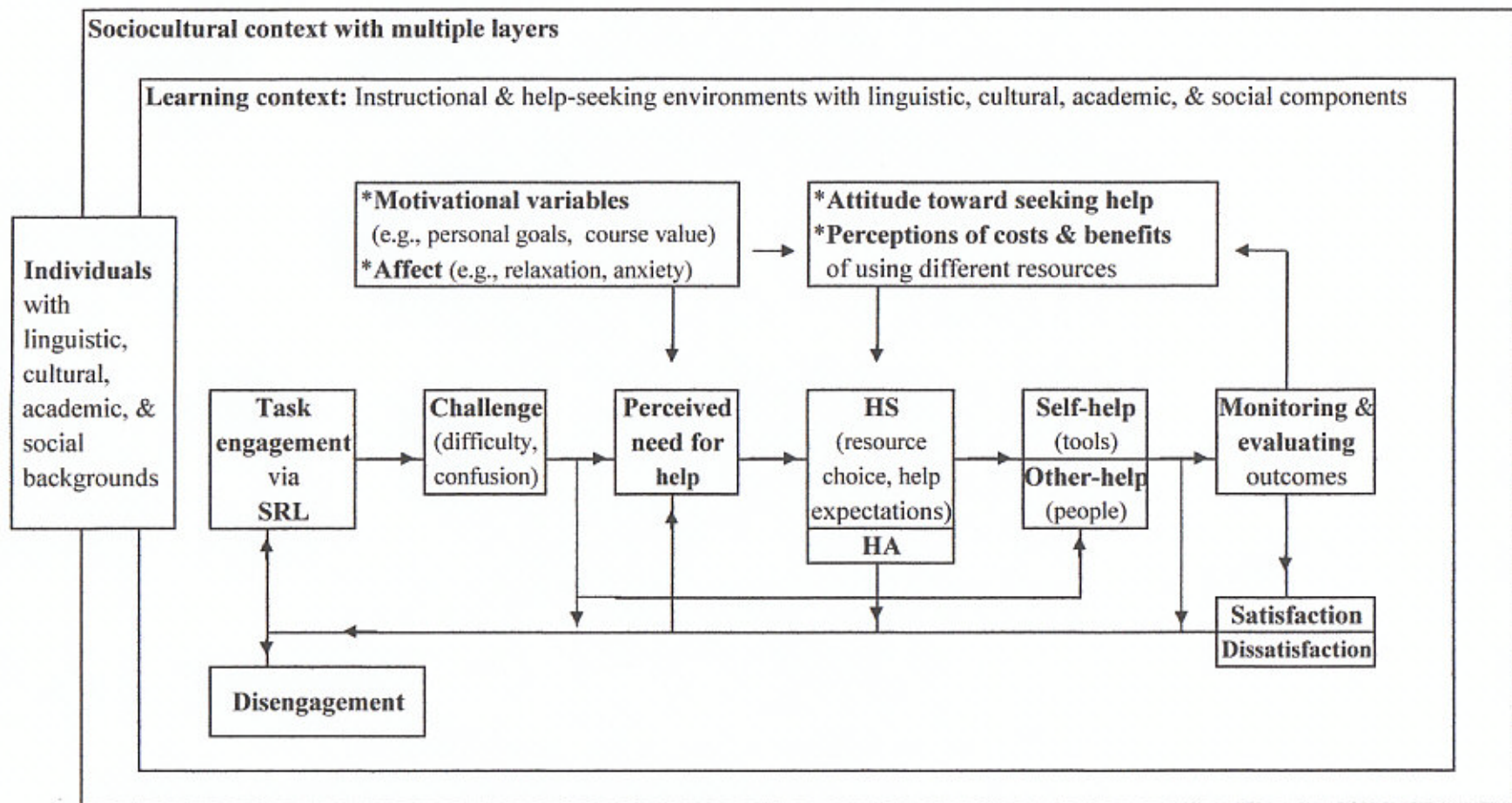


Figure 2. A sociocultural model of strategic help-seeking in context

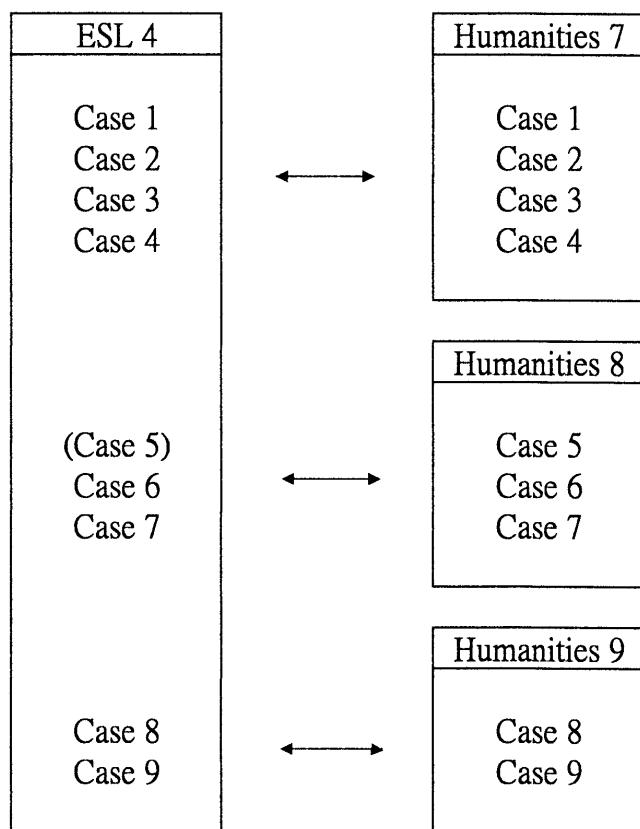


Figure 3. A comparative multiple-case study design.

Appendix A

Think-Pair-Share Sheet

Why do you think you might need help in class? What kinds of help do you need? How can you get the help that you need?

Student Name:

Teacher & Class:

Date:

Self	Partner	Partner
<p>Why might I need help in class?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>What kinds of help do we need in class?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>What can we do to get the help we need?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
Self	Class	Class
<p>What kinds of help do I need in class?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>What kinds of help do we need in class?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>What can we do to get the help we need?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>

Appendix B

Classroom Observation Protocol

The purpose of class observation is to observe and understand what actually happens in class in relation to our research questions. Observation data can complement those collected through questionnaires and interviews. They can also facilitate accurate and meaningful qualitative and quantitative data analyses and interpretations. The observer will sit near the participants (with permission) uninterruptively, observing the environment and behaviors related to help-seeking. She will write notes and keep records regarding the following things.

1. Basic Classroom information:
 - (a) date & block
 - (b) teacher
 - (c) class/subject
 - (d) learning topic/activity
 - (e) participating students & assigned code
2. Participants' help-seeking behaviors:
 - (a) questions asked or help asked for (what I hear or see, such as using a dictionary)
 - (b) time/situation they seek help (e.g., during lecture, group work, after encouragement)
 - (c) help resources they turn to (e.g., teacher, peer sitting next or far away, dictionary, book)
3. Participants' engagement in the activity:
 - (a) concentration (e.g., listening/doing work attentively, staring at nothing)
 - (b) participation (e.g., actively offering ideas, passively answering Qs, chatting, doing other things)
4. Reactions to help seeking
 - (a) teacher's (e.g., ask Qs back, answer directly, ask the class for answers, give directions)
 - (c) peers' (e.g., laugh, answer directly, don't know the answer, can't/refuse to help)
 - (d) participants' reactions to those responses (e.g., stop/keep asking, turn to other resources)
5. Class environment:
 - (a) forms of instruction (e.g., lecture, discussion, project, pair work, individual practice/reading)
 - (b) teacher's position (e.g., standing in a fixed position, walking around or back & forth)
 - (c) teacher's eye contact (e.g., whole class, certain students, notes, ceiling)
 - (d) class order (e.g., orderly, quiet, lively, noisy, full of distractions)
 - (e) equipment & teaching aids (e.g., whiteboard, overhead, computer, audio-visual aids)
 - (f) resource tools and placement (e.g., dictionaries, reference books, maps, computers, corners)
 - (g) seat arrangement (e.g., assigned & fixed, self-selection, separate, connected, circle, rows)

6. Teacher encouragements of help-seeking:
- (a) checking student understanding (e.g., Do you understand? Any questions?)
 - (b) praising (e.g., good question, thank you for asking)
 - (c) direct encouragement (e.g., You can come to me when you have questions, help each other)
 - (d) leaving time for questions, allowing students to go get help or answers
 - (e) results (student responses to the encouragements)

Appendix C

Log Sheet

This log is for you to write notes about when you seek help in class. For each learning activity, describe any challenges or confusions you had. Then tell us if you wanted help (what kind), if you tried to get help (from whom or where), or if you didn't get help, why not.

Student Name:

Teacher & Class:

Date:

We worked on (activity):	We worked on (activity):	We worked on (activity):
1. What challenges or confusions did you have?	1. What challenges or confusions did you have?	1. What challenges or confusions did you have?
2. Did you want help? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What kind?	2. Did you want help? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What kind?	2. Did you want help? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What kind?
3. Did you seek help? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> From whom/where?	3. Did you seek help? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> From whom/where?	3. Did you seek help? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> From whom/where?
4. If you didn't get help, why not?	4. If you didn't get help, why not?	4. If you didn't get help, why not?

Appendix D

Student Interview Protocol

The purpose of the student interview is to understand the participants' ideas and behaviors of help-seeking in class, their intentions and thoughts underlying their fulfilled and unfulfilled help-seeking in class, and their self-reported help-seeking on the questionnaires. The interview will be semi-structured. Because the interviewer will follow the student's lead, the exact questions asked may vary from student to student. However, the guiding questions listed below will represent the full range of the topics that will be addressed in the interviews.

1. Do you ever ask for help in class here (Canada)? Why or why not?
2. Do you see your classmates ask for help in class? Can you give me some examples?
3. Do you ever have trouble understanding things in class here? Can you give me some examples?
What do you do when you have such trouble? Do you ask questions for information? From whom?
Why or why not? Can you give me some examples?
4. Do you ever have trouble learning through reading in this class? Can you give me some examples?
What do you do when you have such trouble? Do you ever ask for help? Why or why not? Can you give me some examples?
5. When are you most likely to ask questions or ask for help in this class? Can you give me some examples? Can you explain why you are most likely to ask questions or ask for help in these situations?
6. Did it ever happen to you in this class that you really needed help or some information but you didn't ask for it? Can you give me some examples? Why did you not ask for help or information then? When are you least likely to ask questions or ask for help in this class? Can you explain why you don't in those situations?
7. Are there some people you are more likely to go to when you need help or information in this class? Who are they? Why? Are there some people you are less likely to go to when you need help or information in this class? Who are they? Why not?
8. Did you ever go to school somewhere else before you came to Canada? Did you ever ask for help or information when needed in class when you studied there? Why or why not?
9. What did you do then to get the help you needed? From whom?
10. Are there things here in Canada that make you more or less likely to ask for help or information in class? What are they? Why or why not?
11. Do you want to learn and do well in school? In this class? How well? Is learning and doing well in school important to you? In this class? Why or why not? In what way do you like to learn through reading in English (e.g., on your own, with tools, with teacher instruction, with discussion with friends, with help from others such as teacher, tutor, parents, classmates)?

Appendix E

Teacher Interview Protocol

The purpose of the teacher interview is to obtain teachers' perceptions on help-seeking and its role in learning and to obtain their perceptions of help-seeking by the students in their class. The interview will be semi-structured. Because the interviewer will follow the teacher's lead, the exact questions asked may vary from teacher to teacher. However, the guiding questions listed below well represent the full range of the topics that will be addressed in the interviews.

1. Can you give me some examples of the different ways that students ask for help in your classroom?
2. Which ways of help-seeking do you think are positive? Can you give me some examples in this class? What ways of help-seeking do you think are not positive? Examples?
3. What do you think of help-seeking and its role in student learning in this class? When does it help their learning? When does it not? Can you give me some examples in this class?
4. When do you think it's appropriate for students to ask for help? When do you think it's inappropriate? Real examples in this class? How do you deal with appropriate and inappropriate help-seeking in this class?
5. Do you ever tell your students when and how to ask for help/information in this class? What do you say?
6. Do you encourage your students to ask for help or ask questions in this class? How do you do it? What are their reactions to your encouragements?
7. Have you noticed whether your students have different help-seeking behaviors (e.g., more help-seeking, different resources approached, different types of help/info sought, better learning/engagement) when you use different forms of instruction (e.g., lecture, discussion, group project, individual work) in this class? Would you please describe and give some examples?
8. Concerning (specific students), when, what, and from whom does he/she seek help in this class? How do you think of those help-seeking strategies (e.g., necessary, unnecessary, positive, negative)? Why?
9. Does he/she always seek help when needed and from appropriate resources? What are the reasons do you think why he/she didn't seek needed help or not from appropriate resources?
10. Does he/she do well in your class? In what way does this student learn/work usually (e.g., independently, actively, being engaged)? How are his/her learning attitude and work habits in this class?

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Why do students seek and not seek help? An exploration of linguistic and cultural influences on secondary students' help-seeking in reading contexts

Principal Investigator: Dr. Deborah L. Butler is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, UBC. Her phone number is: 604-822-5513, fax number: 604-822-8971, and E-mail address: deborah.butler@ubc.ca.

Co-Investigator: Ms. Irene A. Tang is a Master's student in the same department. Her phone number is: 604-274-2555 and E-mail address: aihlingtang@yahoo.ca

Purpose: This study aims to understand when, how, and why English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students do and do not ask for help while reading. Our goal is to help in defining ways in which teachers can support ESL students' effective use of help-seeking to promote greater success in school. This is an in-depth study which follows up on Dr. Butler's primary study in Richmond in which your child is already participating. We are inviting 5 to 10 ESL students to participate in this follow-up study.

Study Procedures: If you consent for your child to join in this study, he/she will be involved in the following activities:

1. Logs: Your child will write brief notes on a log sheet in or after class about his/her help-seeking 5 times (once a day), using about 5 minutes or less per class (a total of 25 minutes or less).
2. Classroom Observations: Ms. Tang, co-investigator, will sit quietly in class near your child, observing and writing notes about things related to your child's help-seeking. After class, if time permits, Ms. Tang will talk casually with your child about the log notes he/she wrote for less than 5 minutes each time.
3. Interview: Your child will be interviewed once by Ms. Tang for 15-20 minutes outside of class time (at a time and a place of his/her convenience and choice). She will ask your child what help he/she needs and gets, and in what situations he/she is most or least likely to ask for help. The interview will be tape-recorded and then transcribed as research data.

We will also relate what we learn in this study to the information we have already gathered in Dr. Butler's primary study in Richmond, in which your child is already a participant.

Compensation: There will be no costs or risks and a minimal loss of class time (for log entries) due to your child's participation in this study. However, we will gratefully thank your child for his/her participation and time spent with some treats.

Confidentiality: Data collected for this study will only be available to the researchers. In our study report, all participants will be anonymous; your child will not be referred to by name or identified by any descriptions. Our computer data files will use student numbers and be password protected. All study materials will be locked in the file cabinet in our locked research office.

Contact for Study Information: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Butler at 604-822-5513 or Ms. Tang at 604-274-2555.

Contact for Participant Rights: If you have any concerns about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You and your child may refuse to participate in or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences to your child's class standing.

Note: *Please keep the first two pages for your own records.

*Please detach and return the following page to the teacher.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Why do students seek and not seek help? An exploration of linguistic and cultural influences on secondary students' help-seeking in reading contexts

I have read the consent form and kept a copy of it for my own records. (Please circle one)

I consent I do not consent to my child's participation in this study.

Student School:

Student Number:

Student Name (printed): _____
(First) (Last)

Parent/Guardian Signature:**Date:**

If you would like a copy of the study report, please fill in your mailing address below. Thank you.

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

Why do students seek and not seek help? An exploration of linguistic and cultural influences on secondary students' help-seeking in reading contexts

Principal Investigator: Dr. Deborah L. Butler is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, UBC. Her phone number is: 604-822-5513, fax number: 604-822-8971, and E-mail address: deborah.butler@ubc.ca.

Co-Investigator: Ms. Irene A. Tang is a Master's student in the same department. Her phone number is: 604-274-2555 and E-mail address: aihlingtang@yahoo.ca

Purpose: This study aims to understand when, how, and why English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students do and do not ask for help while reading. Our goal is to help in defining ways in which teachers can support ESL students' effective use of help-seeking to promote greater success in school. This is an in-depth study following up Dr. Butler's primary study in Richmond in which you are already participating. We are inviting 5 to 10 ESL students to participate in this study.

Study Procedures: If you agree to join in this study, you will be involved in the following activities:

4. Logs: You will write brief notes on a log sheet in class about your help-seeking 5 times, using about 5 minutes or less per class (a total of 25 minutes or less).
5. Classroom Observations: Ms. Tang, co-investigator, will sit quietly in class near you, observing and writing notes about things related to your help-seeking. After class, if time permits, Ms. Tang will talk casually with you about the log notes you wrote for less than 5 minutes each time.
6. Interview: You will be interviewed once by Ms. Tang for 15-20 minutes outside of class time (at a time and a place of your convenience and choice). She will ask you about what help you need and get and in what situations you are most or least likely to ask for help. The interview will be tape-recorded and then transcribed as research data.

We will also relate what we learn in this study to the information we have already gathered in Dr. Butler's primary study in Richmond, in which you are already a participant.

Compensation: There will be no costs or risks and just a minimal loss of class time (for log writing) due to your participation in this study. However, we will gratefully thank you for your participation and time spent with some treats.

Confidentiality: Data collected for this study will only be available to the researchers. In our study report, all participants will be anonymous; you will not be referred to by name or identified by any descriptions. Our computer data files will use student numbers and be password protected. All study materials will be locked in the file cabinet in our locked research office.

Contact for Study Information: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Butler at 604-822-5513 or Ms. Tang at 604-274-2555.

Contact for Participant Rights: If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences to class standing.

Note: *Please keep the first two pages for your own records.

*Please detach and return the following page to the teacher.

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

Why do students seek and not seek help? An exploration of linguistic and cultural influences on secondary students' help-seeking in reading contexts

I have read the assent form and kept a copy of it for my own records. (Please circle one)

I agree I do not agree to participate in this study.

School:

Student Number:

Name (printed): _____
(First) (Last)

Signature:

Date:

If you would like a copy of the study report, please fill in your mailing address below. Thank you.

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Why do students seek and not seek help? An exploration of linguistic and cultural influences on secondary students' help-seeking in reading contexts

Principal Investigator: Dr. Deborah L. Butler is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, UBC. Her phone number is: 604-822-5513, fax number: 604-822-8971, and E-mail address: deborah.butler@ubc.ca.

Co-Investigator: Ms. Irene A. Tang is a master's student in the same department. Her phone number is: 604-274-2555 and E-mail address: aihlingtang@yahoo.ca

Purpose: This study aims to understand when, how, and why English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students do and do not ask for help while reading. Our goal is to help in defining ways in which teachers can support ESL students' effective use of help-seeking to promote greater success in school. This is an in-depth study that follows up on Dr. Butler's primary study in Richmond, in which your students are already participating. We are inviting 5 to 10 ESL students in the primary study and two of their teachers as our participants in this study.

Study Procedures: If you consent to participate in this study, you will be involved in the following activities:

7. Classroom Observations: Five times (once a day, one block each time) in the same classroom, Ms. Tang, co-investigator, will sit quietly in your class near participating students, observing and writing notes about things related to their help-seeking, such as questions they asked, when and from whom they asked for help, instruction going on in the classroom, and the classroom environment.
8. Interview: You will be interviewed once by Ms. Tang for 30-40 minutes outside of class time (at a time and a place of your convenience and choice) about student help-seeking in your classroom. It will be a semi-structured interview focused on topics such as the ways your students seek help in reading work, your opinions about their help-seeking and learning attitudes, and your teaching methods in relation to student help-seeking. The interview will be tape-recorded and then transcribed as research data.

Confidentiality: Except for investigators, data collected in this study will not be available to students, parents, or other school personnel. In our study report, all participants will be anonymous; you will not be referred to by name or identified by any descriptions. Our computer data files will use teacher code and be password protected. All study materials will be locked in the file cabinet in our locked research office.

Contact for Study Information: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Butler at 604-822-5513 or Ms. Tang at 604-274-2555.

Contact for Participant Rights: If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences to services from the school district office or Dr. Butler's research team.

Note: *Please keep the first two pages for your own records.

*Please detach and return the following page to your literacy leader.

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Why do students seek and not seek help? An exploration of linguistic and cultural influences on secondary students' help-seeking in reading contexts

Your signature below indicates that you have read and kept a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature also indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

School:

Class for Observation:

Name (printed): _____
(First) (Last)

Signature:

Date:

If you would like a copy of the study report, please fill in your mailing address below. Thank you.

Appendix I

Cultural Background Questionnaire

My cultural background _____

Name _____

1. Ethnic background

- My father is from _____ & my mother is from _____
- I was born in (country) _____
I got to Canada at the age of _____

2. Language background

- My father can speak _____ & can read _____
My mother can speak _____ & can read _____
- I can speak _____ & can read _____
- When speaking with my grand parents, I use _____
When speaking with my parents, I use _____
When speaking with my brothers/sisters, I use _____
When speaking with my friends, I use _____
- I like to speak in _____ because _____
- I like to read in _____ because _____

3. I used to go to school in (country) _____ from age _____ to age _____.

4. We celebrate _____ holidays in my home.
(in general e.g., Canadian, Chinese, Filipino, Arabic)

5. I feel I am _____

(It can be one ethnic group or a combination, for example, Canadian, Chinese, Filipino, Arabic.

If you feel a combination, put them in order based on how much you feel of it. The strongest feeling is first.)

Appendix J

Help-Seeking Questionnaire

My thoughts and preference of seeking help in class

Name: _____

1. Personally, I think we students are seeking help when doing these (please check).

Kinds of getting help	Students in general	I did or do this
1. asking for explanation or clarification		
2. asking to repeat the things we missed hearing		
3. asking for examples		
4. asking for ideas		
5. asking to tell me how to (e.g., do assignments, prepare for tests)		
6. asking to show me how to		
7. asking whether I did the work right		
8. asking about marks/grades		
9. asking for answers when we write a test or quiz		
10. Borrowing notes for copying		
11. asking for the handouts that we lost		
12. asking for extra time		
13. asking to spell out words		
14. asking to do assignments for me with reasons (e.g., because I'm busy, I'm sick, I'm not good at writing, I'm not interested in the topic)		
15. asking for supplies (e.g., blank sheets, pen, ruler, scissors)		
16. Using tools (e.g., computer, books, dictionary) to get info		

2. When I am in the following situations, I'd like to get help.

- 1) _____ when I don't understand something, 2) _____ when I missed some important information,
- 3) _____ when I don't know how to do the work, 4) _____ when I don't have the materials I need,
- 5) _____ when I need the notes the teacher gave us, 6) _____ when I want to get good marks,
- 7) _____ (other situation) (what) _____

3. When doing assignments or studying for tests, I like to use the following methods to solve difficulties:

- 1) _____ working on my own, 2) _____ using the Internet, 3) _____ using books,
- 4) _____ using a dictionary, 5) _____ using other tools like _____ ,
- 6) _____ asking teachers, 7) _____ asking friends, 8) _____ asking familiar classmates,
- 9) _____ asking capable classmates, 10) _____ asking classmate sitting beside or near me,
- 11) _____ asking nice, friendly classmates, 12) _____ asking my parents,
- 13) _____ asking my brothers/sisters, 14) _____ asking my private tutor.

My preferences of the above methods:

In ESL class: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

In Hum class: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

In other class (name) _____: 1st _____ 2nd _____

3rd _____

4. When I needed help but I didn't seek it in class, the reasons include (please check):

Yes	My reasons for not seeking help	Yes	My reasons for not seeking help
	1. I like to work on my own		2. I feel uncomfortable to ask in public
	3. I didn't want to interrupt (stop) the teacher		4. I didn't want to use class time to ask my own questions
	5. I didn't have the tools/resources I needed in class		6. I could get help at home
	7. I was afraid to be laughed at by others		8. I don't want to be noticed (the focus of attention),
	9. The teacher was busy		10. Classmates were busy
	11. I was busy		12. There was no time for questions
	13. I had too much to ask (too many questions)		15. The teacher was not helpful because he/she didn't answer directly (e.g., he/she would ask questions back to make us think on our own, he/she would tell us how to find out answers on our own)
	14. I didn't know what to ask (how to form my question)		
	16. In general, I'm afraid of teachers		17. The teacher was not nice
	18. I was not interested in the subject		19. My friends or familiar classmates were not around
	20. Asking questions is too much trouble for me		21. I didn't want to learn the topic/subject
	22. I didn't want to get good marks		23. I didn't want to work hard

5. In general, I like to learn well. (Please check: I agree _____ or I disagree _____)
Specifically, I like to learn well in the following classes (check if you agree)
_____ ESL class, _____ Hum class, _____ other class (name) _____
6. In general, I like to get good grades. (Please check: I agree _____ or I disagree _____)
Specifically, I like to get good grades in the following classes (check if you agree)
_____ ESL class, _____ Hum class, _____ other class (name) _____
7. My difficulties in reading to learn include (check if you agree)
_____ vocabulary, _____ text, _____ getting main ideas, _____ getting important ideas,
_____ note-making, _____ making a mind-map, _____ making connections,
_____ remembering facts & details, _____ others (what) _____
* Such difficulties happen in the following classes: (check if you agree)
_____ ESL class, _____ Hum class, _____ other class (name) _____

Interview questions

1. In the log, Question 1 asks “What challenges or confusions did you have?” When you answered this question, what did “challenges” and “confusions” mean to you?
2. Question 2 asks “Did you want help?” and Question 3 asks “Did you seek help?” When you answer these two questions, what did they mean to you?
3. In what situations you are most likely to seek help in class?
You can consider the aspects of learning activities, assignments, teachers, classmates, tools/resources, yourself (e.g., abilities, interests, time, workload, personal goals)
4. In what situations you are least likely to seek help in class? (You can consider the above aspects.)
5. To compare what you do in different classes, what are the differences of your help-seeking among different classes (e.g., ESL class, Hum class, another class)?
6. To compare what you did before and what you do now, what are the differences between your help-seeking in the past and your help-seeking at present?

Appendix K

Questionnaire for Teachers

I. Teacher perspectives of and responses to student seeking help in class

1. I think the following student help-seeking actions are valid or positive for their learning (please check).

My responses include: (1) giving direct & full answers, (2) giving indirect answers (e.g., ways to work it out on their own), (3) getting answers/help from other students, & (4) other (describe).

Students' Help-seeking Actions	Valid	Positive	Response
1. asking for explanation or clarification			
2. asking to repeat the things we missed hearing			
3. asking for examples			
4. asking for ideas			
5. asking to tell me how to (e.g., do assignments, prepare for tests)			
6. asking to show me how to			
7. asking whether I did the work right			
8. asking about marks/grades			
9. asking for answers when we write a test or quiz			
10. Borrowing notes for copying			
11. asking for the handouts that we lost			
12. asking for extra time			
13. asking to spell out words			
14. asking to do assignments for me with reasons (e.g., I'm busy, I'm sick, I'm not good at it, I'm not interested in the topic)			
15. asking for supplies (e.g., blank sheets, pen, ruler, scissors)			
16. Using tools (e.g., computer, books, dictionary) to get info			

2. Students have various reasons for not seeking help. Please tell me what you think and do in class.

(1) to work on their own

(2) time:

- proper time to ask (not to interrupt the teacher, not to use the class time)
- no time to ask (others are busy, self is busy)

(3) embarrassment:

- uncomfortable to ask in public (e.g., shy)
- afraid to be laughed at (e.g., stupid questions)
- not to be noticed

(4) lack of knowledge (too many questions, didn't know what to ask)

(5) lack of motivation (no interest, not to learn / work hard / get good marks)

(6) people:

- not nice
- not helpful (didn't answer directly)
- friends/familiar classmates not around

(7) other resources (no tools, help at home)

II. General questions

1. What are student qualifications to have ESL services? (for ESL-4 teacher only)

In your class, some students either were born in Canada or came here at an early age. How come they are ESL 4 students?

2. Your comments on the participating students in terms of their learning and help-seeking.

3. Do you use differential ways to respond to student help-seeking? Why? If so, how?

4. Do you encourage students to work on their own? Why? When & how?

5. Do you encourage students to ask you for help? When & how?

6. Do you encourage peer help? Why? When & how?

Data Collection Introduction Protocol for Teachers

Background information: What is help-seeking?

We are interested in when and why students ask for help in class. Ideally students ask for help when challenges or confusions arise during class/schoolwork that they can't resolve on their own.

"Help-seeking" occurs when students seek assistance from someone else (e.g., a teacher, a peer, a parent) to help them resolve a confusion or a challenge.

Gathering Student Perspectives on Help-Seeking: (First class only)

1. At the beginning of class you might say,
"For the next several classes, we will be completing a 'log' at the end of class, something like an exit slip. The log will tell us about when and why you get help while you are in class. I'm going to tell you more about the log later. But first, I am very interested in how you think about getting 'help.' We're going to think about all the reasons why you might ask for help, what kinds of help you might need, and what you can do to get help when you need it."
2. Completing the think-pair-share with the class,
 - Step 1:** "First think on your own for a couple of minutes about all the reasons you might need help while you are in class. Write your ideas in the top box on the left side of the page (where you see the question mark)."
 - Step 2:** "Now, think on your own about what kinds of help you might need. For example, what kind of help would you need if you are confused about something? Write your thoughts in the bottom box on the left side of the page, where you see the 'help wanted' sign."
 - Step 3:** "Next, share your ideas with your partner (or partners) about what kinds of help you might need, and write your answers in the top box in the middle of the page, where you see another 'help wanted' sign."
 - Step 4:** "Finally, talk with your partner about where you might get the help that you need. Fill in your thoughts in the top box on the right hand side of your sheet (where you see picture of the girl with her hand in the air)."
 - Step 5:** Let's talk about some of your answers as a whole class (record on a transparency in the bottom row of the think-pair-share sheet). Focus first on "What kinds of help do you need?" Then focus attention on "How can you get help when you need it?"

Tie-up: At the end of today's class, and in some other classes in the next couple of weeks, we're going to ask you to complete a log, like an "exit slip" that tells us whether or not you are asking for help in class, and why you do or don't ask for help. I'll tell you more about that today, at the end of the class.

Completing the Log with Students: (on days when Irene is observing)

Each day, at the end of the class, work with the students to complete the top section of the log (to identify the activities in which they engaged during the class). On the first day or two, go through each question with students to make sure they understand what it is asking. After that, just ask the students to complete and turn in the log in the last five minutes of blocks when Irene is there.