THE PROCEDURES BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS USE TO ASSESS ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS

by

Mark ANGERILLI

B.A., SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY, 1978

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Language Education)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September 1992

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Department of Language Education

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date 11/9/92

DE-6 (2/88)
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to answer the question, "Do British Columbia school psychologists use a multifaceted approach to assess English As A Second Language students?" Another purpose of the study was to measure the prevailing procedures used to psychologically assess ESL students in British Columbia school districts.

A data collection design was developed that consisted of a mailed self-administered questionnaire that was to be completed by all of the school districts in British Columbia. The questionnaire items were grouped in 3 separate sections - The first section (4 items) of the questionnaire requested personal and demographic information. The second section (35 items) asked participants to indicate on a 4 point Likert scale (always (1) - usually(2) - sometimes(3) - never(4)) the techniques and testing instruments they used during the psychological assessment of an ESL student. These techniques and instruments were selected from the literature outlining multifaceted assessments and included (a) the use of tests translated into the student's L1, and the assessment of the student's L1, (b) reference to peers and siblings, (c) use of translators, (d) parental involvement, (e) number of years in an English-speaking school system before assessment, (f) use of norm-referenced standardized tests, (g) assessment of the student's social/cultural/linguistic background, and (h) an awareness of the bias found in widely used tests, and the use of test results to prescribe treatment.
The third section (open-ended) invited the participants to briefly describe the guidelines, if any, that their district followed to distinguish learning English As A Second Language difficulties from cognitive processing problems.

The results revealed that many B.C. school psychologists involved in the assessment of ESL students are cognizant of the linguistic/socio/cultural bias found in norm-referenced standardized tests and, as a result, are not extensively administering tests such as the WISC-R to ESL students, nor are they relying exclusively on the test scores to prescribe treatment for ESL students. Moreover, many psychologists are using peers and siblings to establish more realistic norms. Many of the psychologists are assessing the students' academic records (when available) and health records, and involving the ESL students' parents in the assessment process.

The data also indicated that several phases of a multifaceted assessment need to be addressed by many of the school psychologists in British Columbia that are involved in the assessment of ESL students. These include:

1) the assessment of the students' L1, and the use (when appropriate) of standardized tests translated into the student's L1

2) involving trained translators in the interview and assessment of ESL students, and the interview of the students' parents
3) measuring the students' current level of functioning with 'dynamic' assessment and adaptive behaviour measurement (such as Feurerstein's Learning Potential Assessment Device)

4) involving the students' classroom teacher in the assessment through the use of anecdotal reporting

5) understanding that it takes at least five years, on the average, for an immigrant child who arrives in the host country after the age of six to approach grade norms in L2 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.

This study has revealed the wide range of psychological assessment procedures currently employed by British Columbia school psychologists. Some psychologists are utilizing all of the data at their disposal to accurately assess ESL students, while others are employing practices that may produce inaccurate and misleading results. In this regard, this study has established a need for valid multifaceted psychological assessment of ESL students procedures to be adapted by all of British Columbia's 75 school psychologists.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Statement of The Problem

English As a Second Language (ESL) students and native English speaking counterparts experience difficulties with the academic demands of the school system. Teachers, concerned and/or puzzled with the low classroom academic performance of some ESL pupils, refer them to Learning-Assistance Centres, Speech Therapists, School Counsellors, and District Psychologists for diagnostic psychological testing. (Berry & Lopez, 1976; Cummins, 1984).

Once referred, the students are often assessed through the use of norm-referenced standardized psychometric tests. In many cases ESL students, as a result of the cultural and linguistic biases of the testing instruments, are erroneously labelled as 'slow learners', mentally handicapped, learning disabled, and in some cases are inappropriately placed in special education classes (Bernstein, 1988). This faulty labelling and placement can have a serious effect on the students, on their future and on their learning and performance (Mercer, 1971; DeBlasiis and Franco, 1983; Cummins, 1984). The problem is that placing too much reliance on norm-referenced standardized tests to determine whether or not an ESL student is in need of special placement can be misleading, and damaging to the student.

Background of the Problem

A brief examination of the literature on the historical roots of intelligence testing in the United States (origin of the vast majority of norm-referenced psychological tests) is necessary to appreciate the current state of
affairs. Mental or I.Q. testing in the United States started at the beginning of
the twentieth century as an outcome of a continuing need to justify the
differences between the races (Beckum, 1983; Williams, 1983). Beckum
(1983) writes that later tests were used to "identify and stratify the
population of Americans entering World War I, to curb the immigration of
southern and eastern European races into America, and to justify the
subjugated condition of blacks" (op.cit., p.40). Up until the late 1950's,
however, most students progressed through the school system without the
influence of scores on norm-referenced standardized tests. In 1958 funds
appropriated under the National Defense Education Act in response to the
desegregation of the American school system led to mass norm-referenced
testing and counselling. Beckum (1983) cites many studies and lawsuits
from the 1960's that decried the administration of norm-referenced tests to
minority students when they had been omitted from the norming
procedures - a violation of the three basic tenets of psychometric
assessment: validity, reliability, and standardization. It was not until 1978
that the American courts in Larry P. v. Riles (Beckum, 1983; Taylor &
Payne, 1983) decreed that norm-referenced standardized tests, such as the
Stanford Binet and the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised
(WISC-R), had not been validated for the purpose of placing black children
in self-contained EMR classes; and the use of such tests indicated an unlawful
segregation intent.

In the modern context, Cummins (1984) states that the practice of
administering a test normed on a predominantly white native-English
speaking population to minority students is potentially damaging to those
students who, as a result, are tracked into remedial skill development
activities that do not stimulate the development of students' self-image as competent learners. Deblassie and Franco (1983) go as far as to charge that standardized assessment of minority children serves as 'a gatekeeping' function. They go on to explain that the use of standardized tests represents one of the major elements in retarding the social mobility of the culturally different bilingual child and in blocking the paths for those who are poor and deprived to share in the educational opportunities and, by extension, the goods of society. Tracking leads inevitably to ethnic and socio-economic separation and it reinforces the stereotypes of inherent intellectual inferiority (Samuda, 1977). Ebel (1966) notes four outcomes of testing for all youth. He suggests that tests may:

1. Place an indelible stamp of intellectual status on a child, thereby predetermining his or her social status as an adult and possibly doing considerable harm to his or her self-esteem and educational motivation.

2. Lead to an overly narrow conception of ability, thereby eliminating the diversity of talent sometimes associated with creativity.

3. Place testers in a position to control education.

4. Encourage impersonal, inflexible and mechanistic processes of evaluation and determination with a corresponding loss in essential human freedom.

Samuda (1975) indicates that there is a widespread belief among teachers that it is educationally beneficial when classes are homogeneous. He goes on to say that ability grouping, which is usually based on standardized test results, exercises harmful influence on the attainment and self-concept of those students placed in the lower ability classes.
The placement of minority students in lower ability classes has received much attention. Leal (1976) found that Mexican-American children score 10 to 20 points below their Anglo counterparts on standardized measures, and as a result of this 'difference', the Educatably Mentally Retarded classes in California contain a higher proportion of Spanish students than found in the general population. Leal's 1969 ethnic survey showed that Spanish surname pupils made up 15% of the general school population, but 28% of the EMR enrollment Mercer's (1971) eight-year study indicated that public schools send children to EMR classes based on the following criteria:

1. The almost exclusive reliance on IQ test scores.
2. The utilization of a high cutoff score (IQ of 79) or below as compared to a recommended IQ of 69 or below.
3. The failure to take into account sociocultural factors when interpreting IQ test results.

Mercer (1971) suggests that if the IQ scores used to place these minority children were reinterpreted with the knowledge that sociocultural factors contaminate them, the social imbalance in EMR classes disappears. Mercer's study points out that approximately 75% of the minority children enrolled in EMR classes, during the period of her investigation, "were mislabelled, incorrectly placed, and suffering from stigmatization and lowered self-esteem in a learning environment far from optimum."

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the procedures used in the British Columbia public school system to assess ESL students' cognitive
learning processes. In particular, the study attempts to assess the appropriateness of these procedures in light of the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and to determine if the testing professionals are aware of linguistically and culturally appropriate assessment procedures. The central objectives are:

1. to examine and describe current policies and practices in the testing and assessment of ESL students within the British Columbia school system.

2. to evaluate the adequacy of the testing and assessment and the validity of related practices in the light of the needs of the student population for which they are designed.

3. to determine how often and to what extent during a multifaceted evaluation school psychologists employ techniques designed to reduce linguistic and cultural bias.

4. to develop a data base in order to facilitate further research into the assessment of ESL students.

5. to provide guidelines for further research into the testing and assessment of ESL students.

Definition of Terms

- English As A Second Language (ESL) students are defined as students whose first or home language (L1) is different from the language of the wider community and its schools (L2).

- A standardized test is a sample of norm-referenced behaviour taken at a point in time from which certain behaviours are inferred and/or predicted.
about any individual. Classic examples of norm-referenced tests are the Stanford Binet Intelligence Test, and the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R). Norm-referenced standardized tests are used to predict school performance. If a student scores high, the student according to the predictive function of the test will do well in school. On the other hand, if the student scores below a set score then the student, again according to the predictive function of the test, will not do well in the standard setting and some type of remedial classroom setting might be required. Standardized tests assume that previous learning is a good indicator of future learning in school (i.e. potential) so the tests attempt to discover the range of the student’s academically relevant knowledge and skills.

- Culture is the set of institutions, rituals, values, world views, artifacts, and the rules of behaviour (including language) used by a group of people for the purpose of relating to their environment. The concept of culture is not isomorphic with race, although members of a given culture are often of the same race. In fact, members of the same race need not share the same culture.

- Assessment refers to the process by which data about a person are gathered and critically evaluated in an attempt to obtain an accurate view of the person and his or her adaptation to the environment.

- Testing, one of several approaches to assessment, is the use of specific tests or defined test procedures for the purpose of generating a score or rating for an individual.
Measurement is the process of generating objective scores, subjective ratings, or other quantitative or qualitative values or information that can be used in the assessment process.

Culturally valid assessment is a data collection process. Testing, measurement, and evaluation are conducted using instruments and procedures that discriminate only in those areas for which they were designed and do not discriminate unfairly either for or against a subject for cultural reasons or because of social variations within a culture based on such factors as age, gender, socioeconomic class, cultural background, language or even dialect.

WISC-R (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised) The WISC-R is an individually administered intelligence scale designed to assess mental abilities found to play a part in students' aptitude toward school work. It consists of twelve individual subtests that measure skills primarily in verbal comprehension and perceptual organization and to a lesser extent in short term memory, numerical reasoning, and speed of eye/hand coordination. Frequently only ten of these subtests are administered with the other two considered optional.

The Full Scale I.Q. score is a composite which reflects an average of a student's performance on both the Verbal and Performance Batteries. Intellectual abilities measured by the WISC-R closely follow a curve of normal distribution. The mean score is set at 100 and a standard deviation is set at 15. The Verbal Scale is composed of six subtests, although frequently only five are administered. These subtests measure a student's
Verbal Comprehension by requiring him to orally answer questions involving vocabulary, range of information, analogies and common problem situations. The Performance Scale consists of six subtests that are designed to assess a child's perceptual organization skills. Commonly only five subtests are used. Students are required to find missing parts in pictures of common objects, assemble designs using a model from colored blocks, put together jigsaw like puzzles, perform a coding task, put pictures in logical order to tell a story, and solve mazes. High scores are achieved by those who work quickly as these subtests are timed. The Performance subtests require very little expressive language and only enough language to understand the requirements of the task.

A discrepancy between a student's Verbal and Performance I.Q. scores may arise. This usually means that the student's I.Q. measures on the two scales differ by at least 12 points, which is statistically significant. This difference usually indicates a high probability that the student is stronger in either verbal or non-verbal skills. For example, when a student's Verbal I.Q. is significantly higher than his Performance I.Q., the psychologist should gather further information about the student's visual-motor discrimination skills, his problem-solving ability, copying skills, and response to time pressures. When Performance I.Q. exceeds Verbal I.Q. by a significant degree, problems with reading are likely, and the student's language development should be examined.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The following issues relating to the psychological assessment of ESL students which are relevant to the present study will be presented:
1) What effect does language proficiency have on academic achievement?
2) What are the effects of using standardized tests on an ESL population?
3) What are the effects of using a multi-faceted assessment?

As an introduction to the research on the above issues, a brief outline of the linguistic limitations of ESL students and the academic problems they face as an outcome of their linguistic limitations will be presented. This will help to link the research problem and the current research on the psychological assessment of ESL students.

Importance of L2 Proficiency

It is evident that acquisition of the language of instruction in all its phases is crucial for the non-English or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) student in order to make full use of the resources within the school system. Linguistic limitations may be present in varying degrees. Taylor (1974) has classified them as:

1. Total language deficiency - students who speak and write only a Foreign language. They have had very limited contact with the language of instruction prior to arrival in the new country.
2. Partial language deficiency - students who have a limited command over the language of instruction, but another language is used at home.
3. Dialect impediments - students whose first language is the same as the host language but it is spoken with a different dialect. This is a problem, for instance, for some West Indian students.

The development of language is crucial to the cognitive and affective growth of the young learner (Brown, 1978; Cummins, 1984; Langdon, 1989). There is not a single concern in education that has more importance than language learning because of its varied and long term consequences. Academic and personal worth, career expectations, and career achievements are all influenced by the students' linguistic abilities - or lack of them (Cummins, 1984).

Addressing the topic "The Language Barrier", Brown (1978) offers a view of the difficulties encountered by the non-English speaking LEP student.

Not only will the child be unable to comprehend the teacher, but he may not be able to make himself understood. He cannot communicate with other children, unless there are others who speak his language; he cannot ask any questions; he cannot express or explain his feelings to anyone. He cannot, through language, share in any discussions, stories, or rhymes, however carefully they are linked with his home experiences. Although he has the ability to talk, any effort to do so fails miserably and perhaps for the first time in his life, he is unable to invoke a satisfactory response to speech (p. 12).

Some academic problems that are a result of being unable to learn because of a language deficiency are presented in Table 1. These results show that some ESL students are, in some cases, severely disadvantaged in two modes of school learning: Reading and Verbalizing.
Table I
Years Behind National Norms in Grade 12 Academic Achievement by Ethnic Group (Adapted from Coleman, 1966).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Verbal Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEXICAN-AMERICAN</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUERTO RICAN</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN AMERICAN</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that minority students can be over three years behind their native English speaking peers in the areas of Reading and Verbal Ability. The following section of the review examines some theories relating to learning a new language in a school environment, and the relationship between the new found language abilities and academic success.

L2 Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement

This part of the review will examine some of the theories that have been put forward to explain the learning of a second language in the context of school, and the relationship between proficiency in the new language, L2, and academic success. Donaldson (1978) points out that early pre-school language and cognitive processes develop from a meaningful context, for example, goals, intentions, and familiar events. However, she goes on to say that language and cognitive processes that do not involve meaningful interpersonal context make entirely different demands on the learner in that the learner must focus on the linguistic forms themselves. She adds that
children are able to perform at much higher cognitive levels when the task is presented in an embedded context. Her argument presents a strong case for the hypotheses that disembedding of early instruction in reading and other school-tasks contribute to educational difficulties.

There can be a discrepancy between students' face-to-face English language ability and their academic level and use of English. Skutnabb-Kangas (1984) draws attention to the phenomenon of having fluency in only one of the two languages; 'surface' fluency in L2 and not the academically-cognitive aspects of the L2. His study indicates that Finnish immigrant students who were either born in Sweden, or who migrated at a relatively young age appeared to converse in the L2 (Swedish) in appropriate ways in everyday face-to-face situations (context embedded) despite literacy skills that were very much below age-appropriate levels in both L1 and L2.

Cummins (1984) defines surface fluency as 'basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and conceptual-linguistic knowledge as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins elaborates on BICS as the manifestation of language proficiency in everyday communicative contexts while CALP is defined as the manipulation of language in decontextualized academic situations. Cummins (1980) also notes that it takes students from six months to two years to reach fluency in BICS but "that it takes at least five years, on the average, for immigrant children who arrive in the host country after the age of six to approach grade norms in L2 Calp" (p.148). These distinctions become much more evident when the language and the use of language in the school context is considered.
Schools and Language Learning

The basic tenet in Canadian schools is that teachers have to impart knowledge or skills that they possess to students who do not yet have the knowledge or skills. The transmission model of teaching (Barnes, 1976) implies that the teacher initiates the topic and guides it towards the ultimate goal - the instructional objective. This emphasis on conveying context-reduced knowledge and content, which demands CALP, goes against most theories about how language and cognitive skills are acquired by L1 students. It may be the case then, that many L2 learners who are experiencing difficulty with learning (labelled as low-achievers, mildly mentally retarded, learning disabled, etc.) are, in fact, having difficulty with disembedded or context-reduced learning situations that have no relation to their lives outside of the classroom. It may also be the case that the transmission model does not encourage motivation and involvement in learning. Essentially, the learning difficulties experienced by many L2 students could be a result of methodology and may not be intrinsic problems. Coles (1978) states, "By positing biological bases for learning problems, the responsibility for failure is taken from the schools, communities, and other institutions and is put squarely on the back, or rather within the head of the child" (p.333).

Lindfors (1980) sees children as 'active and powerful language acquirers interacting with people and things in a responsive environment' (p.198). That is to say, children acquire their first language through actively exploring meanings in the context of interaction with significant others. Donaldson (1978) points out that young children infer the meanings of words based on prior understanding of the meaning of the situation in which the
words are embedded. The use of context-embedded language can, according to Donaldson, facilitate the acquisition of language.

Wells (1982) notes that children learn language at the same time as they are using language to learn other things. He points out that most of the children in his study experienced 'a reciprocal form of interaction, in which meanings were negotiated, not unilaterally imposed' (p.206). He goes on to say that the parents of children who acquired language quickly and efficiently treated their children as equals in conversation, encouraged them to initiate topics, and helped them to extend the topics. His study also looked at the differences between the typical patterns of interaction in the home and in the school. He points out that the one-to-one ratio in the home can be seen as one of the variables in the results, but the differences in ratio of adults to children cannot explain all of the differences found in the two situations. Some of Wells' findings are presented in the following chart for comparison purposes.

Table II
Comparison Between School and Home Language (Wells, 1982).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>topic initiated by child</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asking of display questions</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adults' utterances which extend child's utterance</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child pursuing adult topic</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wells' evidence seems to indicate that compared to parents, teachers are more concerned with their own topics rather than accepting and expanding topics offered by the students. Teachers who explicitly or implicitly follow the transmission model of instruction try to use every situation to convey new knowledge or to evaluate prior knowledge. Wells notes:

that teachers only listen to the child's contribution 'long enough to decide how best to use it to advantage from their own point of view. They never really discover what it is about the experience that the child finds sufficiently significant to want to share it in the first place (p. 211).

Cummins (1984) expands on the notion of teachers' personal agendas. He points out the trend in the school system to maximize student 'on task' time encourages teachers to maintain even tighter control over classroom interaction. Teachers and administrators, according to Cummins, have more confidence in presequenced and predictable interactions as opposed to less predictable active involvement to keep students on task. Cummins predicts that teachers will have their students completing ditto sheets which require factual recall, but which keep students on task, to the exclusion of tasks which require active, unpredictable problem-solving which could involve higher level language and cognitive processes.

Lindfors (1983) labels the contrast between the patterns of language children experience in their home and in the school as a 'mismatch of major proportions' (p. 146). Lindfor's model has the the child, in the home, actively exploring their own world through language. While on the other hand, she
sees schools encouraging performances, that is, having the students demonstrate what they have learnt as opposed to using language to explore in order to advance their knowledge.

Cummins (1981), Wells (1982) and Lindfors (1983) all hypothesize that ESL students can experience learning difficulties as a result of the discrepancy in the use of language between their home and the school. Long (1983) posits that second language acquisition is dependent not just on exposure to the target language, but also on interaction with target language users who provide access to language input which has been modified to make it comprehensible.

The language problem facing ESL students is two-fold: they are expected to develop a basic interpersonal communication proficiency in an environment that, according to Wells (1982) and Lindfors (1983), is not conducive to language development, and they are also expected to make a transition to cognitive/academic language proficiency in order to access higher level knowledge. Cummins (1984) argues that once BICS has been attained it is only a matter of developing CALP. His assumption is based on the notion that ESL students can acquire BICS after approximately two years in the host country (p. 132). This very well might be the case for some students who are fortunate enough to not only have the benefit of additional language support (for example, ESL instruction) in the school system, but who also have access to interaction with native speakers outside of the classroom. As Wells (1982) and Lindfors (1983) succinctly point out: the classroom itself is not an ideal environment for language acquisition.
The above studies seem to indicate that an L2 deficiency could be a result of a language learning environment the ESL students find themselves in. This L2 deficiency, as seen in Table II, could in turn lead to low academic performances. Houston (1970) refutes the assumption that a linguistic difference is a cognitive deficit. He indicates that the majority of ESL students are neither linguistically impoverished nor cognitively underdeveloped. Even though their language deficit presents a barrier to a student trying to negotiate meaning in their new environment, it is nevertheless a fully developed, highly structured system that is more than adequate for higher-level thinking (Baratz & Baratz, 1970).

Another possible cause of ESL students' low-achievement is the expectations teachers hold for their ESL students. Expectations teachers hold may be powerful determinants of students' actual performances because teachers translate their expectations into responses that affect the students' own expectations for themselves (Merton, 1957). These expectations are influenced by two categories of student behaviours (Samuda, 1975):

1. Cultural characteristics (physical appearance, skin colour, clothing, mannerisms, etc) that are totally irrelevant to academic performance.

2. Characteristics that students manifest as a result of their academic achievements (academic performance, educational abilities, conformity, etc.)

Even if it has not been proven conclusively, the belief exists that teacher attitudes exert a major influence on the achievement of ESL students who are expected to achieve poorly and consequently to require
psychological assessment (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Samuda, 1975). The teacher, faced with an ESL student, who could be over three years behind in Reading, Verbal and Math skills, might refer the student to the school psychologist whose mandate is twofold: one, to discover the cause of this lag in the student’s progress, and two, to suggest ways in which to remedy it.

Algozzine, Christenson, and Ysseldyke’s (1983) study indicates that 92% of students referred to psychologists for low-achievement were subsequently administered psychoeducational tests. The importance of the decision to administer psychoeducational tests is highlighted by the research that indicates that, once a student has been tested, the probability is very high that s/he will be placed in a special education setting. (Shepard & Smith, 1981; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982; Foster, Ysseldyke, Casey, & Thurlow, 1984;). Cummins (1980) states “that psychological or educational assessment of immigrant children in L2 within their first five years in the host country is likely to seriously underestimate their potential academic abilities” (p. 148).

The Use of Standardized Tests On An ESL Population

This part of the review will examine the literature that deals with the language/cultural mismatch between standardized tests and ESL students, and the possible outcomes of the mismatch.

Recognition of the impact of cultural and linguistic differences on learning problems is a relative new concern in special education. Bernstein, (1989) points out that it is only recently that educators have begun to realize
that norm-referenced standardized tests can be meaningfully used only with students from the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds as the original sample on which the tests were normed. Within this growing awareness of the need for culturally valid assessment some issues have received attention: inappropriate assessment procedures and tools, inaccurate differential diagnosis (inability to separate language and culture from learning problems) and inappropriate placements (Mercer, 1973; Oakland, 1977; Feuerstein, 1979; Omark and Watson, 1983; Manni et al., 1984; Olion and Olion, 1984; Cummins, 1984).

Once referred, the low performing ESL student will be tested by a district psychologist who will use any one of a battery of standardized tests. "A standardized test is usually defined as a sample of behaviour taken at a specific point in time from which certain behaviours are inferred and/or predicted about an individual." (Deblassie and Franco, p.62). That is to say, standardized tests are used to predict school performance. If a student scores high, the student, according to the predictive function of the test, should do well in school. On the other hand, if the student scores below a set score, the student, again according to the predictive function of the test, may not do well in the standard classroom setting and some type of remedial setting might be required. Cummins (1984) notes that standardized tests assume that previous learning is a good indicator of future learning in school so they (the tests) attempt to discover the range of the student's academically relevant knowledge and skills.

Standardized tests begin with the test constructor gathering appropriate items and presenting these items to a sample of children to see
how they do. Tests that are well designed tend to prove the general rule that intelligence stays the same as the student develops, has new experiences, encounters new social pressures, and progresses through the school system (Deblassie and Franco, 1983). However, it takes manipulation of the questions to make sure that the predictive function of the test is maintained. It is during this standardization process that cultural bias first appears. For example, of the 2,200 children who formed the sample for the standardization of the WISC-R (Weschler Intelligence Scale For Children - Revised) there were only 330 non-white children, 305 of who were black (Cummins, 1984).

Cummins states: "Thus, in the pilot stage of item development, the majority of items selected for try-out will reflect the prior learning experiences of the majority Anglo group" (p.70). Taylor and Payne (1983) write "most standardized tests, if used in accordance with the publisher's instructions, would be culturally discriminatory because no specific norms have been established for various cultural groups and because representation of diverse cultural groups were not used in the standardization sample." What, then, do the tests measure when they are administered to various cultural and linguistic groups when they have, in fact, been designed for a majority native English speaking population?

Intelligence or Language ??

The issue of what is being measured, intelligence or language is examined by Duran (1989). He notes that for a non-native English speaker, every test given in English becomes a language or literacy test. Omark and Watson (1983) note that the examiner, most likely a white, monolingual
psychologist, is going to attempt to explain the test to the limited English proficient student who is not going to understand the directions no matter how warm and responsive the examiner is if there is a language barrier. If the student cannot follow the directions, or is bewildered, then the test results will not be a valid representation of the student's potential and misguided programming or placement may take place (De Avila and Havassy, 1974).

Some test-producing companies have tried to deal with the language barrier aspect of their tests by translating their product into minority languages such as Spanish. DeAvila and Havassy(1974) suggest that translating existing intelligence test for non-English speaking students often creates problems:

1. Regional differences within a language make it difficult to use a single translation in a standardized testing situation where examiner and examinee are permitted virtually no interaction.

2. Monolingual translations are inappropriate because the language familiar to non-English speaking children is often a combination of two language as in the case of Tex-Mex. (Haitian Creole in Canada)

3. Many non-English-speaking children have never learned to read in their spoken language. For example, many Chicano children speak Spanish, but have had no instruction in reading Spanish.
The notion of using regional or ethnic norms instead of national norms is addressed by Howell and Morehead (1987) and Tucker (1985) who report on the increasing utilization of local curriculum or school based norms. The use of local norms allows the ESL student to be compared to students, who for the most part, are members of the same socio/cultural/linguistic group.

Williams and Mitchell (1977) contend that cultural loading enables students whose experiences parallel the content of intelligence and aptitude tests to perform better than students with culturally different backgrounds. Ribeiro, cited in Cummins (1984), draws heavily on his administration of 350 WISC-R's to low income Portugese-speaking students from the Azores who had been referred for psychological assessment, to demonstrate the fallacy of establishing a minority student's intelligence as an outcome of experiences as measured by a standardized test. As an example of culture determining the response to a question, Ribeiro writes that one WISC-R question asks the student if it is better to give money to an organized charity or to a beggar on the street. The correct response is that it is better to give the money to an organized charity because the beggar might squander it. However, all 350 students from the Azores answered that it was better to give money to a beggar on the street. Their answer was an outcome of the belief in the Azores that giving money to beggars was the same as giving money to God. Ribeiro's analysis of the Azorean students' responses clearly demonstrates that the WISC-R can not do an adequate job when it comes to measuring the intelligent behaviours of a minority student, "yet these same tests label children as 'deficient' or 'low-ability' because the children lack knowledge and skills that they have never had the opportunity to acquire" (Cummins, 1984, p.74).
De Avila and Havassy (1974) point out that it is impossible to determine the source of the student's error on a norm-referenced standardized test: the student may not have ever been exposed to the word or the student actually lacks the capacity to understand the word. Cummins' (1980) analysis of psychological assessments of over 400 children from non-English speaking backgrounds shows that in many cases there is no logical or empirical basis for psychologists to decide whether poor test performance is a reflection of students' true ability or of their non-English-speaking background, but rather they rely on intuition.

In an attempt to measure children's intelligence, but without the influence of limited English, the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children was developed. The Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), was designed following many criteria, one being "to be sensitive to the diverse needs of preschool, minority groups, and exceptional children" (Kaufman, 1983, p.5). This standardized test attempts to measure the intelligence of students while at the same time keeping the influence of language proficiency to a minimum. Why then are ESL students still being assessed with cultural and linguistically biased tests?

Watson et al. (1980) indicate that most psychologists do not utilize a wide array of psychoeducational tests, but continue to use the same tools they were trained to use in graduate school. Johnson, Vickers and Williams (1987) suggest that few school psychologists are trained in the area of nonbiased assessment. Finally, Mehan, Hertwick and Meihls' (1986) study indicates that psychologists continue to administer tests to children until
they find a disability that can be used to explain the student's academic difficulties.

Outcomes of Psychological Assessment

What happens to the student who, because of a cultural/linguistic biased test, is labelled deficient or low-ability? Mercer (1974) reports that these students are often erroneously placed in EMR (Educable Mentally Retarded) classes. She also points out that:

Criteria for selection and placement in such classes were based on (a) the almost exclusive reliance on IQ test scores and the almost total absence of medical diagnosis; (b) the utilization of a high cutoff score (IQ of 79 or below as compared to recommended IQ of 69 or below) and (c) the failure to take into account sociocultural factors when interpreting IQ results (p. 54).

Mercer also discovered four times as many Mexicans and twice as many Blacks in the classes for the mentally retarded, a disproportionate number for their population in California. When she used a 'two-dimensional' definition of retardation: (intellectual performance and adaptive behaviour) and when the IQ scores were examined in light of the sociocultural background of the students, then the racial imbalance in EMR classes disappeared. Mercer found that approximately 75% of the ESL students in EMR classes "were mislabeled, incorrectly placed and suffering from stigmatization and lowered self-esteem in a learning environment far from optimum. In similar studies of EMR classes Fisher's (1977) results
indicate the full-scale IQ approach led to the classifying of 75% of the minority language students in his study as being EMR. Using Mercer's Adaptive Behaviour for Children led to 26% of the students being classified as EMR. Findley and Bryan (1971) found that the effect of ability grouping is to deprive the low groups not only of self-respect, but of stimulation by higher achieving peers and often of helpful teaching expectations. Samuda (1977) notes that tracking leads inevitably to ethnic and socio-economic separation and it reinforces the stereotypes of inherent intellectual inferiority.

Finally then, the above mentioned studies indicate that very little other than a rather sketchy picture of the student's language proficiency can be gained by trying to assess the intelligence of an ESL student with a norm-referenced standardized test. A test normed on the dominant culture does not measure an ESL student's intelligence and it cannot accurately predict the student's true potential.

The decision to test or not to test is a difficult one. The tests do not adequately measure intelligence, but by not assessing, the ESL student's legitimate learning disability may not be discovered, and he or she may not receive the proper placement or program. The answer to this dilemma could lie in the area of a broader assessment of the student; that is, looking at more than a number on a test. Multi-faceted assessment will be addressed in the final section of this chapter.
Multifaceted Assessment

It is of paramount importance to the minority student for the school system to know if the student's academic difficulties are a result of language/sociocultural differences or are a product of a more serious cognitive processing problem. The diagnosis of a minority student's cognitive functioning problems as much research has shown (Cummins, 1984; Feuerstein, 1979; Manni et al., 1984; Olion and Olion, 1984) should not be based solely on the results of a conventional IQ or achievement test. Cummins (1984) points out that standardized tests do have their place:

Although specialized assessment can play an important role, it also has obvious limitations in that few assessment procedures have any demonstrated validity for bilingual students (p. 182).

Olion and Olion (1984) and Manni et al. (1984) outline procedures that utilize more strategies than standardized testing for the assessment of bilingual exceptional children. They see decisions regarding the placement and programming of bilingual exceptional children stemming from a collection of data - not just based on an individual test, or even a battery of tests. As Olion and Olion (1984) make clear: "Assessment is a multifaceted process of collecting the data necessary for making educational decisions" (p. 201).

This part of the review will examine some of the sources of data and some of the decisions that have to be made when assessing a bilingual student in order to determine the extent of the student's learning problems. This examination will include: looking at the literature concerning the choice
of language for standardized testing; methods of determining the influence of
the child's sociocultural background; the role of the classroom teacher and
parents of the child, and finally; Feurerstein's (1979) Learning Potential
Assessment Device (LPAD) - an alternative to standardized testing.

Testing in L1 or L2?

The choice of language to conduct aspects of the assessment in, for
example norm-referenced standardized testing, is of crucial importance. In
the attempt to differentiate linguistic and cultural factors from learning
problems, many researchers have recommended a more comprehensive
focus on first language proficiency, and more native language achievement
and intelligence testing (Oller, 1983; Mattes & Omark, 1984; Ortiz, 1984). De
Blasie & Franco (1983) indicate that the professionals collecting the data
should be aware that some bilingual children often lack language
proficiencies in either language. Cummins (1984) also points out that
weaknesses that show up in the results of a translated test could stem from
an L1 cognitive/academic proficiency because of a lack of L1 instruction in
the schools. The decision to use a test in the student's L1 is not as easy as it
first appears. As mentioned above, it is exceedingly difficult to translate
psychometric properties from one language to another. However, in the case
of recently arrived immigrant students with no or minimal English, the use
of L1 (where available) is highly appropriate as the only other alternative is
a trial and error approach to assessment (Cummins, 1984).

Use of Translators

Bernstein (1989) indicates that interpreters or translators must be
present during the administration and interpretation of standardized tests.
She goes on to say that it is very important that the interpreter provide feedback to the psychologist about forms of testing that may be culturally inappropriate. She gives the example of a culture where children are taught not to comment on facts that are perfectly obvious to adults. In the same vein, Langdon (1989) notes that students being assessed may be more willing to talk to a person from their own culture. Watson et al. (1986) write that because it so difficult to cross linguistic and cultural boundaries with tests, the time taken in training interpreters is a good investment.

Adjusted Norms

Mercer's (1979) 'System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA) expresses a child's sociocultural status by utilizing adjusted norms for the Bender-Gestalt test, the Adaptive Behaviour Inventory for Children (the ABIC attempts to measure the ability of an individual to cope with natural and social demands of the environment) and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (many critics, notably Cummins (1984), indicate that the WISC-R is totally inappropriate for administration to minority students because of its language and cultural bias). It should also be noted that the WISC-R test publisher has warned that the test is not to be given to Limited English Proficient students (Palmer et al., 1989). The student's test results are interpreted in relation to norms developed from the scores for children from similar sociocultural backgrounds. That is, norms can be used to compare a black or Hispanic child to other children from the same racial/ethnic/linguistic background. The SOMPA uses four sociocultural scales for the comparisons: family size, family structure, socioeconomic status, and urban acculturation. Cummins (1984) acknowledges that the SOMPA is useful to predict the extent to which a
student is likely to benefit from an educational program that takes the student's sociocultural background into consideration.

The Classroom Teacher

Olion and Olion (1984) indicate that the student's classroom teacher is in a position to observe the student coping with an array of academic activities and thus has a wealth of information on the student's strengths and weaknesses. They continue by saying that the teacher should, however, be trained not to place value judgements on observed behaviour. The teacher should be aware for example that loud talking could be the result of cultural background and not the result of boisterous or aggressive behaviour. The authors reiterate this point when they write:

Our ethnocentrism encourages us to measure the behaviour of others against our own internal standards. Each of us must learn how to look at a child within the context of that child's own cultural setting before any conjecture is made about ability or behaviour. (p.208)

The classroom teacher, through the use of anecdotal reporting, should also be keeping systematic records of the child's academic achievements and social behavior. This data could be used to validate information provided by standardized instruments; for example, the child's response style, impulsivity, and tolerance for frustration. (Taylor & Payne, 1983, Samuda, 1975; De Blassie & Franco, 1983; De Avila & Havassy, 1974). Manni et al. (1984) summarizes this aspect of the assessment procedure when they write, "the use of observation results in the establishment of a more direct link between assessment and intervention" (p.165).
Omark and Watson (1983) warn the psychologist to be aware of the students who are referred who do not meet their teachers' expectations. They continue by stating emphatically that the psychologist must carefully examine why the student is being referred in the first place. They indicate that acculturation can be accompanied by periods of either extremely active or extremely passive behaviour as the students adjust to freedom not found in their native educational system. Some teachers, according to the authors, may view this behaviour as indicative of a learning disability.

Parents

Parents can play a role in the assessment of their child (De Blassie & Franco, 1983; Omark & Watson, 1983; Langdon, 1989). The child's parents spend large amounts of time with their children and thus can be an important source of information. The parents might be aware, for example, of the games the child plays (Are they age appropriate? How complex are the rules?). The parents can be useful in defining the extent of their child's learning problems by helping to determine if the child's problems are exclusive to school-related tasks, or if they are found in all of the child's activities in and out of the classroom. The parents should be consulted to determine if they perceive a difference between their child who is being assessed and his or her siblings. Such comparisons can eliminate any beginning concerns as to whether the problem is due to social, cultural or poverty issues.

Omark and Watson (1983) emphasize the importance of the psychologist being familiar with the home environment of the student. They note that it is one of the major criteria of a nondiscriminatory assessment that the psychologist consider at all times the effects of poverty or extreme
deprivation. (They define deprivation as 'an extensive amount of absence or lack of schooling' (p. 45). Watson et al. (1980) assert a need on the part of the psychologist to become familiar with the many aspects of the culture of the population they serve.

Peers and Siblings

Continuing with the notion of the psychologist being familiar with the student's environment the psychologist needs to be familiar with the language experiences of the student being tested. Omark & Watson, (1983) and Langdon, (1989) indicate the importance of determining if the student's learning is progressing at the same rate as other students with similar socio/cultural/linguistic backgrounds. If students can be found who appear to come from a similar background as the child being referred then a benchmark can be established as to how much growth in language or in academic skills one might expect from a student from that particular background.

Watson et al., (1980) advocate the use of 'focal child assessment' or naturalistic observations. The psychologist, they point out, should ensure that the settings, tasks, protocol, and participants are compatible with the communicative and interactional rules of the student being observed. As well, the settings must be varied to allow the student to demonstrate a broad spectrum of his or her behaviour and communicative range. The analysis of the data should include linguistic, pragmatic and contextual parameters. Reschly (1981) writes that behavioural assessment provides psychologists with means to assess and develop interventions in the natural setting. He also notes that it is extremely useful in evaluating referrals and clarifying problem behaviours by focusing on the natural environment.
Dynamic Assessment

The professional collecting the data on a child must always be alert to the notion that good assessment should lead to informed instruction. Feuerstein (1979) through the means of his "Learning Potential Assessment Device" (LPAD) advocates the use of 'dynamic' assessment which attempts to determine the student's ability to profit from training to solve problems. Most testing procedures use what he calls 'static' assessment. That is, they are concerned only with measuring the student's current level of functioning.

Dynamic assessment, on the other hand, utilizes a test-train-test procedure to measure a student's potential for being modified by training. The student is taught initial problem-solving principles along with work habits and study skills. The student's capacity to utilize the taught skills on progressively different and complex tasks is then measured and decisions regarding placement and programming can then be made. He presents many case studies that appear to indicate that students who had been previously diagnosed as mentally retarded by standardized psychometric tests achieved average levels of cognitive functioning when they had been taught how to effectively use their cognitive abilities. That is to say, the students' academic and intellectual potential was enhanced through direct intervention.

Feuerstein (1979) notes the sombre prospect that many children will never reach their potential because they are labelled retarded by standardized tests and are placed in special schools and programs where their cognitive development is 'hampered by the reduced intellectual
stimulation engendered by the assumption that such children have limited access to abstract and representational thinking' (p.317).

Summary and Conclusions

The review of research concerning the psychological assessment of E.S.L. students highlighted the dilemma facing school psychologists - how to determine, through the use of assessment techniques and testing instruments designed for, and normed on, North American English-speaking students, if an ESL student's academic problems are a result of a language learning problem, or are a result of a cognitive processing problem?

Brown (1978), Cummins (1984, 1989), and Langdon (1989) report on the importance of language learning, and its impact on a student's overall learning. Coleman's (1966) study isolated academic deficiencies related to limited English proficiency (see Table I). Cummins (1984) explores two different, but nevertheless related types of proficiency - BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency - the academic language found in schools). His findings focus attention on the need for school psychologists to be aware that it can take up to five years, on the average, for an immigrant student to reach grade norms in L2 CALP - which is the language of norm-referenced psychological tests.

The academic problems an ESL student experiences could be an outcome of a school system that does not allow ESL students to easily learn the language (Lindfors, 1980; Wells, 1982). These academic problems, in turn, could lead to the ESL student being psychologically assessed. The
potential tremendous impact of being psychologically assessed is emphasized by the research (Shepard & Smith, 1981; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982; Foster, Ysseldyke, Casey & Thurlow, 1984) that indicates that once a student has been psychologically assessed, the probability is very high that she/he will be placed in a special education setting. For the ESL student, the probability of a special program placement could increase as a result of the linguistic and cultural biases inherent in the psychological assessment procedure.

Norm-referenced standardized tests (the mainstay of psychological assessment in North America) which were designed for, and normed on, native English speaking students who have been exposed to mainstream North American education and culture, have resulted in many ESL students being erroneously placed in EMR (Educable Mentally Retarded) classes (Mercer, 1974; Fisher, 1977). A multifaceted assessment approach has been advocated given the serious limitations of norm-referenced standardized testing. A multi-faceted approach includes assessment of the ESL student’s L1 proficiency, a thorough examination of the student’s previous health and academic records, interviewing the student’s parents in their first language, consideration of the student’s socio-cultural background and its influences on present school performance and finally, the use of a dynamic assessment such as Feuerstein’s Learning Potential Assessment Device.

The evidence presented suggests that ESL students will not be adequately and fairly psychologically assessed and, as a result, school psychologists will end up with little more than a sketchy picture of the ESL student’s English language proficiency. This present study was designed to
ascertain if the procedures being used to psychologically assess ESL students in B.C. public schools are fair and unbiased.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to answer the following question, "Do British Columbia public school districts use a multifaceted approach to psychologically assess English As A Second Language students?" Eight much more specific hypotheses were generated from this rather broad question.

Hypotheses
1) ESL students in B.C. school districts are being psychologically assessed in English rather than in their native language.

2) B.C. school psychologists do not examine ESL students' academic, health, socio-economic, cultural background, and levels motivation, as part of a psychological assessment.

3) B.C. school psychologists make regular use of the WISC-R or other standardized intelligence tests when psychologically assessing ESL students.

4) B.C. school psychologists, as part of an assessment of ESL students, reference them to norms that do not include ESL students.

5) ESL students in B.C. school districts are assessed by psychologists who are not familiar with Second Language Acquisition Theories.

6) ESL students in B.C. school districts are referred for psychological assessment as a result of their difficulties with L2 acquisition.
7) ESL students are psychologically assessed before they have acquired a sufficient Cognitive Academic Language Level.

8) B.C. school psychologists rely on the results of norm-referenced standardized testing to prescribe treatment for low-functioning ESL students.

Literature on the psychological assessment of ESL students points to standard accepted procedures that are biased against ESL students, and these same ESL students, as a result of biased assessment, may receive an inadequate and misleading assessment. This study attempted to discover if the psychological assessment of ESL students in B.C. public school districts is, in fact, biased and misleading. I have chosen to focus on the collection of data collected through a mailed questionnaire which reveals the procedures and testing instruments used by the B.C. school psychologists that responded to the survey. The methodology aims to juxtapose B.C. school psychologists' procedures for the assessment of ESL students with the research on this topic.

The study consists of a collection of data outlining the assessment procedures and testing instruments used by B.C. public school psychologists, and a basic analysis indicating the prevailing use of these procedures and instruments.
PROCEDURES

Design of Questionnaire

The source for items included published scholarship on the psychological assessment of ESL students as outlined fully in Chapter 2. Items were grouped in three separate sections - The first section (4 items) of the questionnaire requested personal and demographic information including district position, population of school district, ESL population of the district expressed as a percentage, and the number of ESL students psychologically assessed within the previous two years. (Two years was adopted as a criterion point to ensure that the survey results indicated recent practices and trends.)

The second section (35 items) asked participants to indicate on a four point Likert scale ("always - usually - sometimes - never") the techniques and testing instruments their school psychologists used during the assessment of an ESL student. These techniques and instruments were selected from the literature outlining various assessment procedures and included (a) the use of tests translated into the student's L1, and the assessment of the four modes of the student's first language, (b) peer and sibling reference, (c) use of translators, (d) parental involvement, (e) number of years in an English - speaking school system before assessment, (f) use of norm-referenced standardized tests, (g) assessment of the student's social/cultural/linguistic background, and (h) an awareness of the bias known to be found in widely used tests, and the use of results from these
same tests to prescribe treatment. The participants were also invited to write comments regarding their choices.

The third section (open-ended), invited the participants to briefly describe the guidelines, if any, that their psychologists followed to distinguish learning English As A Second Language difficulties from cognitive processing problems. (see Appendix I for Questionnaire)

The survey instrument was piloted and revised with the kind assistance of the District Principal In Charge of Special Education, School District No. 36 (Surrey). Confusing items, omissions, and irrelevant material were altered, and the final editing was supervised by this researcher's graduate committee at the University of British Columbia.

Study

The initial step in the data collection procedure was to contact by mail each of B.C.'s 75 school superintendents in order to be granted permission to conduct the study, and to obtain the name of the member of the school district in charge of psychometric testing (see Appendix II for The Letter to School Superintendents). The initial mailing of 75 requests to all public school district superintendents in B.C. to conduct the study resulted in a return of 40 responses (a return rate of 53%). Of these 40 responses, 20 superintendents indicated their permission to conduct the study, while the remaining 20 superintendents indicated that their districts did not have an ESL population.

A follow-up mailing to the 35 superintendents who did not respond to the initial request to conduct the study (see Appendix III for Follow-up
Letter to School Superintendents) produced: 15 districts that consented to the study; 14 districts that did not have an ESL population, and 1 district that did not feel that they had the time to take part in the study. In total, 35 (46%) of B.C.'s 75 school district superintendents consented to take part in the study.

Contact with the district staff member in charge of psychological testing in each of the 35 participating school districts was made with an introductory letter (see Appendix IV for Introductory Letter to Participants). Within two weeks of the mailing of the initial contact letter, a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a stamped self-addressed return envelope were sent out to each of the 35 participants (see Appendix V for Cover letter to Participants). Twenty-five (70%) of the surveys initially mailed out were returned within the requested two week time period. After a mailing of a reminder letter (see Appendix VI for Follow-up Letter to Participants) a further 6 surveys were returned giving a total return of 31 surveys (or 86% of the consenting districts). Of the 31 returned surveys, 22 were completed, while eight participants did not complete the survey as their districts had not psychologically assessed an ESL student within the two years previous to the study.

Participants

The participants in this investigation were the district staff members identified by their district superintendents as being responsible for psychological testing in their respective school districts. The participants included district psychologists, district counsellors, district principals,
assistant superintendents, co-ordinators, supervisors and directors of special education and consultants.

Data Analysis Procedures

Each survey was numbered and each item response was numbered. All responses to items were entered onto a computer program which generated a mean response for each item. Handwritten responses to the questions, and the responses to the final section were collated and analyzed by hand.

Limitations

This method of data collection cannot be guaranteed to determine what the school districts really practice. But, assuming that people who voluntarily respond to such surveys are answering truthfully, the data can be assumed to approximate reality. However, the small sample size indicates that the results can only be generalized to a similar population.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter contains two sections of data. The first section contains quantitative data which displays: 1) a breakdown of the school districts that responded to the survey into total population size; the percentage of students that is ESL; the number of ESL students assessed in the two years previous to the survey and 2) the psychoeducational practices of the British Columbia school districts that responded to the survey. The second section also contains qualitative data derived from the open-ended comment section found at the end of the survey form.

Data from the four demographic questions (see Table III) indicate the range of overall school district size, percentage of the district student population identified as being ESL, the actual number of ESL students in the school district, the approximate number of ESL students assessed in each school district in the two years previous to the survey, and finally the percentage of the ESL students assessed. The school districts that responded to the survey ranged in size from 600 students to 52,000 students, and the ESL student percentage ranged from 1 percent to a high of 47 percent. The actual number of ESL students assessed ranged from a low of 1 in the previous two years to a reported high of 20. The districts with the two highest actual number of ESL students did not report the number of ESL students they had assessed nor did they indicate the reason why they could not provide this information.
Table III

Quantitative Description of School Districts

(NR = Not Reported)

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<th>ESL ASSESSED</th>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>7008</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<td>17000</td>
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<td>1190</td>
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<td>NR</td>
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<td>87</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>20000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4400</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22000</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6840</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52000</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24440</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from this data seem to indicate that except for the one district that assessed 16.6% of its ESL population, ESL students are psychologically assessed at approximately the same rate in B.C. school districts regardless of the total population of the district or the size of its
ESL population. An extension of this study could include a comparison of the rates of psychoeducational assessment between native English speaking students and their ESL counterparts.

Psychopedagogical Practices of the B.C. School Districts

The questions on the survey were intended to gather information in four categories: 1) testing of the student's first language in reading, writing, oral and aural comprehension, and the use of norm-referenced standardized tests translated into the student's first language; 2) parental involvement in the assessment process; 3) examination of the student's previous scholastic and health records, and 4) the actual tests used to assess the student. The respondents had to choose from four degrees of frequency on a Likert-type scale: ALWAYS(1) - USUALLY(2) - SOMETIMES(3) - NEVER(4). That is to say, if a district as part of a psychological assessment always used existing psychological tests translated into the student's L1 then that district would have indicated ALWAYS (1) on the questionnaire. A four point scale was chosen because this researcher, at the outset of this study, intended to replicate a similar study conducted by Johnson, Vickers and Williams (1987). The responses for each question have been presented in terms of a mean response of all of the districts that responded to the question. A mean score of 3.7273 for the question, "Does your district use testing instruments translated into the child's first language?" for example, indicates that B.C. school districts, on the average, almost 'NEVER' use tests translated into student's L1.
Assessing the Student's L1

Four questions pertaining to the four modes of language: Speaking; Listening; Writing, and Reading, and one question relating to the use of existing psychometric tests translated into English were included in an attempt to discover the scope of L1 testing in the British Columbia public school system.

'Does your district use testing instruments translated into the child's first language.'

'As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' oral proficiency in their first language?'

'As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' aural proficiency in their first language?'

As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' writing proficiency in their first language?'

As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' reading proficiency in their first language?'

Table IV
Use of Translated Tests and L1 Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE TRANSLATED TESTS</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 ORAL PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 AURAL PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 WRITING PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 READING PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of Translated Tests

It is evident that of the school districts that responded to this section of the questionnaire only a few assess the student's cognitive abilities in their first language as part of the psychological assessment. Breaking the results down into percentages we find that 0% of the districts always use translated tests as part of the assessment; 11% usually use them; 11% sometimes use translated tests, and 78% never use translated tests. Only two of the districts that indicated that they usually, or sometimes use translated tests, commented as to how they used translated tests:

"locally developed measures"

"I (questionnaire respondent) sometimes translate test items into Spanish for Spanish-speaking ESL students."

L 1 Oral Proficiency

A further examination of the L 1 Oral results shows that: 28% of the districts always assess the student's L 1 oral proficiency as part of the assessment; 17% usually do; 33% sometimes, and 22% never assess the student's oral proficiency. When invited to comment as to how they went about assessing the student's oral proficiency the following comments were made:

"informal conversation using multicultural worker"

"developmental history with parents - school records"
"not formally - via observation - parent input"

"subjective reports by native speakers"

"informal conversation with another (adult) speaker of the same language"

"speech and language assessment by pathologist"

"interviews with fluently bilingual specialist"

"consultation with a person who speaks the language or with a parent"

"informally by having native speakers provide information re communicative abilities"

"oral interview by a volunteer interpreter"

The above data indicates that over half of the responding districts made some attempt to assess the student's oral abilities in first language as part of the psychoeducational assessment. However, from the following written comments it can be seen that in most cases it is a native-speaking volunteer, or a parent who carried out this task, while only two districts used trained professionals to assess the student's oral proficiency in their first language. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for the untrained
volunteer or parent to notice, or assess, any but the most glaring irregularities in a student's first language.

L 1 Aural Proficiency

The results for the assessment of the student's aural proficiency are similar to the oral proficiency results except for the never category. Approximately 47% or nearly half of the districts, when psychologically assessing ESL students never assess the student's ability to aurally comprehend their first language. Most of the respondents, when asked to describe the process by which they assessed aural comprehension, replied that they used parents and volunteers fluent in the student's first language while one district indicated that they used a speech pathologist. (This district did not indicate if the speech pathologist was fluent in the student's first languages.) Again, as noted in the oral proficiency results, it is notable that some districts are attempting a comprehensive assessment but they are not using trained professionals for what could be a vital component of the assessment.

L 1 Writing and Reading Proficiency

The data found in Table IV indicates that the school districts that responded to this survey are consistent in their assessment of the student's reading and writing proficiency in their first language. An alarming statistic is found in the never category where approximately 40% of the districts never assess the student's writing or reading proficiency in their first language. Writing and reading problems present in the student's L2 but not
found in the student's L1 could indicate a second language learning problem as opposed to reading and writing problems found in both of the student's languages which, in turn, could indicate a more serious cognitive processing problem. It is quite clear from the written comments which follow that all but one of the school districts that added written comments are relying on subjective assessment of first language reading and writing ability:

"...informally - listening to the child read in their first language."

"...informal assessment of a writing sample"

"...informal writing sample"

"...miscue analysis of a variety of texts in first language"

"...having them write about a topic: getting input from someone who has the expertise to evaluate it"

"...volunteer interpreter"

"...if necessary"

"...we use several teachers and educated parents of same language"

"...could be an oversight"
More than half of the responding districts, as was the case with assessment of the student's oral proficiency in their first language, made some attempt to assess the student's aural, writing and reading abilities in their first language. These results would be more encouraging if the assessment of these abilities was carried out by a professional trained in the appropriate areas. The districts that indicated how they carried out this aspect of the assessments, for the most part, depended on volunteers or parents for assistance. The results of these 'informal' first language assessments might give some insight into the students; however, most of the results should be viewed with some trepidation.

It is of some consternation that approximately 44% of the B.C. school districts that responded to this survey never make an assessment of the student's first language a part of their psychological assessment. The assessment of the student's L1, as pointed out in the review of the literature, can help in determining if the student's academic problems are a result of deficiencies in L2, or are an outcome of cognitive processing difficulties that are also present in the student's L1.

Use of Translators During the Interview and Assessment of ESL Students

Translators fluent in the first language of the student being assessed, according to the research, are important in many areas: administration and interpretation of standardized tests; providing cultural insight into assessment tools and procedures, and providing accurate communication with the student's parents. The survey presented three questions relating to the use of translators in the various steps of the assessment procedure: the use of translators during the interview of the student being assessed; during the
interview of the student's parents, and the use of translators during the assessment. Table V presents the findings from these three questions:

**Table V**

Use of Translators During the Interview and Assessment of the Students, and to Interview the Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE TRANSLATORS WHEN INTERVIEWING STUDENTS</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE TRANSLATORS WHEN ASSESSING STUDENTS</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEW PARENTS IN THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score of 2.56 for the districts that responded to this survey regarding the use of translators during the interview is approaching sometimes. A closer examination of the data reveals that only 32% of the districts always or usually use a translator to interview the student during the assessment. The mean score of 3.09 reveals that, as a province, the school districts are only sometimes using a translator during a psychological assessment. Further analysis of the data indicates that during the actual assessment only 13.6% of the districts always or usually use a translator. The mean of 2.70 shows that the student's parents are only sometimes being interviewed in their first language. A closer look at the data shows that only
35% of the districts always or usually interview the parents in their first language.

The written response "When available" appeared on many of the surveys that indicated the use of translators. Two districts noted that they used parents or volunteers fluent in the student's first language during the interview of the student, but not during the assessment. One district added that they used 'Higher-grade ESL students to translate during the interview. The written responses seem to indicate that there is a lack of trained translators capable of being a part of a psychological assessment.

The above results substantiate Hypothesis No. 1: ESL students are psychologically assessed in English rather than in their native language.

The Students: Then and Now

In an attempt to gain insight into the student's present behaviour and development it is of paramount importance to examine the student's previous behaviours and development. Cognitive processing problems existing in the student's first language might have been detected in their country of origin, or they could be an outcome of health problems present in the student's early development. It was also noted in the review of the literature that the student's present socio-economic status as well as their 'motivation to do well or work quickly' could exert some influence on school performance - notably tests. The data in Table VI demonstrate the school districts' efforts to ascertain 'who' the students were before they arrived in the B.C. public school system.
Table VI
Assessment of the Students' Previous Academic and Health Records, Socio-Economic Level, and Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS RECORDS FROM COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS HEALTH RECORDS</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSIDER STUDENTS' SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSIDER STUDENTS' MOTIVATION</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that, for the most part, the British Columbia school districts that responded to this survey are usually trying to research the student's previous academic and health records. The 28% of the districts that always assess the student's previous academic and health records have a baseline to work from when examining the student's present cognitive processing problems. The remaining 72% of the school districts are depriving themselves of vital information that could add to the findings resulting from the standardized assessment of the students. Present academic deficiencies not noted in previous academic records, or attributable to health problems, could be the outcome of language learning difficulties. On the other hand, a history of academic problems or health problems could signal the possibility of a more serious cognitive processing problem. A sample of the written comments on the districts' attempts to
examine health and previous academic records helps to explain the mean scores.

"...if possible - we usually receive no or very little data"

"...if at all possible"

"...if available"

Most of the districts that added comments to the above two questions noted that it is very difficult to obtain previous school records from ESL students and when the records are available, it is difficult to translate them. In some cases records were not available at all because the student did not attend school in their native country or, as in the case of refugees, the records were left behind.

Socio-Economic Level and Motivation

British Columbia school districts, as shown in Table VI, are attempting to examine factors outside the realm of academic abilities that could influence the student's academic achievement. The student's academic problems could be a result of a socio-economic level that has deprived the child of the elements necessary for academic achievement. i.e. nutrition. The above results do not substantiate the hypothesis that B.C. school districts do not examine ESL student's academic, health, socio-economic, and cultural background as it pertains to motivation as part of a psychological assessment. Many of the school districts that assess the student's socio-economic level
added comments that reflect an awareness of how forces outside of the student can affect their academic performance:

"The level of enrichment in the home should be considered as an influencing factor in any psychological assessment not just with ESL.

"...amount of education/standard of living in native country/parents level of education"

"What is known about student's environment which potentially supports, or detracts from education, is taken into consideration"

"...possibly the most critical factor"

Table VII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WISC-R</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-ABC</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.O.N.I.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table VII concerning the use of the WISC-R are rather surprising when they are juxtaposed to the extensive amount of literature
concerning the use or misuse of standardized tests with ESL students. The literature indicates that it has been an over reliance on standardized tests, notably intelligence tests such as the WISC-R, which has caused many ESL student’s academic difficulties to be interpreted as cognitive processing problems as opposed to language learning difficulties. The mean score of 2.75 indicates that, as a whole, the school districts that responded are approaching sometimes in their use of the WISC-R and, do not necessarily depend exclusively on the utilization of standardized testing when they are psychoeducationally assessing ESL students. A closer look at the actual responses to the use of the WISC-R shows that only 10% of the districts that responded always administer it as part of their psychological assessment procedure. A further 20% of districts usually administer the WISC-R, while the remaining 70% of the districts only sometimes or never administer the WISC-R Battery. The written responses were also encouraging in that of the 18 districts which administer the WISC-R to ESL students, 72% administrated only the Performance section.

The written responses also revealed a broad spectrum of how the school districts which utilized the battery interpreted the results. The majority of the districts that added written comments pointed out that the results were always considered in light of the fact that the student was ESL. One district’s response, however, illustrated the underlying concern that critics of the WISC-R and other standardized tests have regarding their use with ESL students, and that is in comparing the student with a set of norms that do not include an ESL population.
"...depends on the student, their cultural educational background etc. Never use 'standard setting'."

"...performance subtests and interpreted Language subtests"

"...if administered - all - but interpretation and scores on verbal scale are very guarded and at times not reported."

"...when it seems appropriate and with identification in the report that the student was operating in a second language. We use tests to sample behaviour as much as to compare a child against a set of norms."

The Use of Adaptive Behaviour Measurement/K-ABC/T.O.N.I.

The low use of adaptive behaviour measurement is alarming in that the use of measures such as Feuerstein's Learning Potential Device can produce data not necessarily tainted by the possibility of the cultural or linguistic bias commonly associated with standardized testing. Also, considering that only four districts added written comments, it can be seen that adaptive behaviour measurements have yet to be widely accepted in B.C. school districts as an integral part of a psychological assessment. One written comment sheds light on possibly why they are not being used:

"an adaptation from workshops because no one has trained officially in Feuerstein's methodology. Books and information are available."
The above admission could imply that the training institutions, and the personnel in charge of psychometric testing are not moving away from the more traditional modes of assessment but rather are sticking to the tests they were trained to use. A similar comment was also made concerning the use of the K-ABC:

"We have the instrument but to my knowledge it has not been used with ESL students."

There were no written comments regarding the use or the reasons the T.O.N.I. is not being used so it is impossible to determine why the provincial usage rate is 3.05 or sometimes. One can only predict that the low usage rate is attributable to the fact raised in the review of the literature that testing personnel are inclined to administer tests that they were exposed to during their training. The above results do not substantiate the hypothesis that B.C. school districts make regular use of the WISC-R or other standardized intelligence tests when assessing ESL students.
The Use of Peers, Siblings and Parents to Establish Local Developmental Norms

Table VIII
Use of Peers, Siblings and Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS INTERACTION WITH PEERS</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE STUDENT TO SIBLINGS</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE TO ESL PEERS</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVE PARENTS IN THE ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The guiding principle behind the use of standardized tests is the belief that in order to measure one student's academic performance then that student's performance must be compared with the performances of many other students on the same task. A significant drawback encountered when using standardized tests with ESL students is that the 'other students' are not necessarily of the same cultural or linguistic background. The old adage 'it is like comparing apples and oranges' rings some truth in this situation. The school district personnel charged with the psychological assessment of ESL students could possibly overcome this drawback by comparing the performance of the ESL student being assessed with either siblings and/or peers with similar experiences and backgrounds. The data found in Table VIII indicates that most of the B.C. public school districts that responded are 'always or usually' trying to incorporate peer/relative comparisons, and to involve the student's parents in their psychological assessments of ESL
students. The comments on these questions revealed the process the
districts use to establish peer/relative norms, and the commonly occurring
problem faced by districts with small ESL populations:

"...informal and subjective opinions of teachers"

"Since we have so few ESL students sometimes it is difficult to find
similar cultural experiences."

The latter of the two comments indicates a problem that most of the
B.C. school districts face - a small ESL population does not easily lend itself to
peer/sibling comparisons. The districts with small ESL populations are
possibly compelled to use possibly misleading national and international
norms when assessing their ESL students. The potential for biased results
due to linguistic/cultural/racial differences arises when the psychological
assessment includes testing material developed for the mainstream North
American population (notably Anglo-Saxon), and the utilization of norms
derived from the same population.

The Selection and Use of Culturally and Linguistically Fair Tests, and the
Utilization of Local and/or Minority Norms

The following section of results examines the efforts the B.C. school
districts have made to deal with the biases inherent in most commercially
available testing materials, or as one respondent noted:

"Bias is in all tests in North America - It is the interpretation
of these tests which is important."
The data found in Table IX illustrates that, as a whole, the responding B.C. school districts are usually cognizant of the notion that there is bias found in commercial North American standardized tests, and of the notion that the student's language level is not always indicative of the student's ability level. A provincial mean of 1.7143 and 1.5714 in response to the questions, 'Tests Reflect student's ability not language' and 'select testing material that is not racially or culturally biased', respectively, is very encouraging.

The personnel in charge of psychometric assessment in B.C., for the most part, are trying to select and use measures that reflect the student's true abilities, not their language or culture. It would be more encouraging if more districts were attempting to evaluate their current testing materials and procedures that could produce results that do not accurately reflect the student's abilities.

Some of the psychometricians made mention of the difficulty they faced in finding testing materials that were not culturally or racially biased. It is also worth noting that some of the respondents wrote that they believed all testing material to be culturally or racially biased. The written comments supports the idea that the personnel in charge of psychometric assessment in B.C. are hindered in their attempts at culture-free assessment by the absence of appropriate testing materials.
Table IX
The Selection and Use of Culturally and Linguistically Fair Tests, and the Utilization of Local and/or Minority Norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELECT TESTING MATERIAL THAT IS NOT RACIALLY OR CULTURALLY BIASED</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESTS REFLECT STUDENTS' ABILITY NOT LANGUAGE</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATE MATERIAL FOR RACIAL OR CULTURAL BIAS</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEDURES EXPECT A KNOWLEDGE OF NORTH AMERICAN CULTURE</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE TESTING INSTRUMENTS THAT HAVE CULTURAL MINORITIES INCLUDED IN THE NORMS</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE LOCAL NORMS</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATE TESTS IN TERMS OF NORMS, VALIDITY, AND RELIABILITY RELATIVE TO ESL STUDENTS</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of norms, (described in detail in Chapter 2 of this paper), serves as a benchmark in the standardized assessment of students. A psychometrician can compare the results of the student being assessed to the results of (depending on the sample size) thousands of other students. The
student, once assessed, can then be seen as being roughly above, the same as, or below the students used in the standardization process of the test being used. As noted in the review of the literature - the norms of most standardized tests reflect an Anglo-Saxon population. An ESL student does not usually have the same educational, cultural and affective backgrounds of the students used in the standardization process of most tests. This apparently unfair comparison could result in an ESL student being erroneously labelled.

The responses from the B.C. school districts indicate that they are at least aware of the need to compare ESL students to norms that reflect an ESL population. The overall response rate of 2.24 (almost 'usually') to the question, "Does your district use Testing Instruments that have cultural minorities in the norms?" is promising. This result coupled with the positive responses to the remainder of the questions in this section does not substantiate the hypothesis that B.C. school districts reference ESL students to norms that do not include ESL students. The following written responses to the question, "Does your district attempt to select testing and evaluation material that is not racially or culturally biased?" represent an awareness on the part of the psychometricians of cultural bias in tests, while on the other hand, they indicate their frustration with the lack of 'unbiased material':

"It is very difficult to find materials."

"All tests are culturally biased."

"Aren't all materials culturally biased?"
"This is very difficult to carry out."

"Attempt is the key word - very little is not."

"Most instruments have some bias in them. We try to
"to use the best we have."

"Is there such? I would like to hear of it."

An Informed Team Approach to Assessment

The psychometrician carrying out the assessment is often a virtual stranger to the student being assessed. The same psychometrician can only make inferences about the student's academic abilities based on what the student does or does not do on a series of tasks and tests. The first of the following three questions was put to the districts in order to discover if the psychometric assessment of ESL students included input from sources such as the student's classroom teacher or ESL teacher. These two people have been in daily contact with the student and therefore should be able to add pertinent information regarding the student's day to day performance and behaviour. The second question was asked to determine if ESL students were being assessed as if they were, in fact, native English speaking students. The third question was asked to find out if and to what degree the student's classroom teacher was involved in the assessment, especially in the area of the student's classroom social behaviour.
The data found in Tables X and XI illustrate that, at the provincial level, ESL students are usually being assessed by a district team and that the personnel who psychologically assess ESL students are usually knowledgeable about L2 acquisition theories. The student's classroom teacher, however, is only sometimes involved in the assessment process.

Table X
Use of A District Team, Knowledge of L2 Acquisition Theories and Classroom Teacher Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE A DISTRICT TEAM</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT L2 ACQUISITION THEORIES</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHERS KEEP SYSTEMATIC RECORDS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The written responses of 16 districts that indicated a team approach revealed the members as being (listed in ascending order of frequency):

### Table XI
Members of District Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBERS</th>
<th>TIMES MENTIONED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside Consultant (not elaborated on)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer (Principal)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Consultant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural worker/interpreter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Assistance Teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Pathologist</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Psychologist</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above results indicate that the psychological assessment of an ESL student in B.C. will be carried out by a District Psychologist who usually will be part of a District Team. However, the district psychologist who 'usually' will be familiar with L2 acquisition theories might not have access to information regarding the student's performances outside of the formal testing procedure especially the information that the student's ESL teacher
could provide regarding the student's L2 acquisition. These results, although not that positive, do not substantiate the hypothesis that ESL students in B.C. are assessed by psychometricians not familiar with Second Language Acquisition Theories. Psychometricians should be, however, making better use of the other professionals involved with the student being assessed.

L2 Acquisition Difficulties As A Reason for Referral for Psychological Assessment, and the Evaluation of the Appropriateness of Referrals

Much of the research in the area of the psychological assessment of ESL students points out that the reason that they are being assessed in the first place is an outcome of their limited English language skills. Two questions were posited in an attempt to discover if ESL students in B.C. were in fact being referred for psychological testing because of their limited language skills, and if the personnel in charge of psychological assessment were examining the referrals for their appropriateness. The question pertaining to English language skills was worded the way it was because any weakness in English would most likely surface in Language Arts/Reading as opposed to Mathematics for example.

The data in Table XII indicates that the rate of referral for the psychological testing of ESL students as a result of difficulties with Language Arts/Reading is close to sometimes in B.C. public schools. These results do not substantiate the hypothesis that ESL students are referred for psychological assessment as a result of their difficulties with L2 acquisition. The written responses to this item show an understanding of the importance of
separating the difficulties associated with L2 acquisition and cognitive processing difficulties:

"...only if overall general delays are suspected"

"...but not generally - usually other factors are also involved"

"...only when the delay appears to be more than can be accounted for by the fact that the student is working in a second language."

"...if a student has been receiving ESL instruction for a period of time and is not progressing at a rate similar to other ESL students."

Any referrals being made as a result of the student's difficulties in Language Arts or Reading, or for any other reason deemed inappropriate by the psychological testing profession should be discovered as almost all of the districts always evaluate the appropriateness of the referrals. The few districts that added comments demonstrated an awareness of inappropriate referrals:

"The school psychologist is not involved until the school-based team, in conjunction with the ESL consultant, deems the referral appropriate."

"If 'problem' is more vocabulary (language based) probably won't worry about it; if, however, 'problem' appears more of a processing difficulty, then referral will be considered."
Table XII
Referral For Psychological Assessment As An Outcome of Difficulties With L2 Acquisition, and the Evaluation of Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referrals Are A Result Of Difficulties With Language Arts And/or Reading</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Appropriateness Of A Referral</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Years In An English Speaking School System Before Assessment

When does an ESL student have enough English to be psychologically tested in English? How long can the school system wait when it strongly suspects an ESL student has cognitive processing problems? How long can ESL students wait before being tested in order to be placed in program designed to help them? There are no clear cut answers to these questions but many researchers in this area, notably Cummins (1980), believe that ESL students can take up to seven years to reach their native English speaking peers in Cognitive Academic Language Ability, the very language that many psychological tests tend to measure. The question, 'How many years in an English-speaking school system does your district usually allow before psychologically assessing an ESL student' posed a problem for most of the districts in that only eleven districts responded to it. The provincial mean result of 2.6818 years in an English speaking school system.
substantiates the hypothesis that ESL students are psychologically assessed before they have acquired a sufficient Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. The following table, in order to demonstrate the broad range of responses, reports all of the data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEAN 2.68  STD DEV 1.12  TOTAL 11

Many of the districts that did not indicate the actual number of years they waited before testing did add comments as to how they approached this very critical juncture in the assessment process. The comments indicate a broad range of 'district policy' in the British Columbia public school system - ranging from basing the decision on academic progress to having no policy at all:

"Not dependent on years, but lack of academic progress."

"Dependent on age and proficiency"
“Varies greatly according to the exhibited needs of the student.”

“Depends on the presenting concern.”

“Depends upon age on arrival and length of residency in Canada - usually five years in Canada minimum for standardized tests.”

“Would vary entirely upon the individual case.”

“This is left to the discretion of the practitioner.”

“No firm policy” (reported three times)

Use of Test Results to Prescribe Treatment

The last question on the survey ‘Does your district use test results to prescribe treatment or intervention specific to ESL students?’ was included to determine how great a part the results of standardized testing played in follow-up intervention. As can be seen in Table XIV, the provincial mean of 2.55 (approaching sometimes) seems to indicate that there is not an over-reliance at the provincial level on test scores in the determining of remedial intervention for ESL students. Therefore, the hypothesis that B.C. school districts rely on the results of norm-referenced standardized testing to prescribe treatment is not substantiated. However, it is worth noting that 45.5% of the districts always or usually use results from, according to the research, possibly culturally biased tests to prescribe treatment or intervention.
Table XIV
The Use of Test Results To Prescribe Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE TEST RESULTS TO PRESCRIBE TREATMENT</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B.C. School Districts' Guidelines to Distinguish L2 Difficulties From Cognitive Processing Problem

The districts were invited to detail the guidelines, if any, that their school psychologists followed to distinguish learning English As A Second Language difficulties from cognitive processing problems. Of the 18 districts that responded to this item, 11, or 61%, indicated that they followed some guidelines to separate L2 difficulties from cognitive processing problems, 3, or 16%, of the districts indicated that they followed the same guidelines they used with native-English speaking students, while the remaining 4 districts did not indicate they used any guidelines at all. The guidelines specific to the psychological assessment of ESL students that reoccurred in the responses included (reported in order of descending frequency): the use of nonverbal assessment (reported four times); researching the development of the student's L1 (reported three times); comparing the student's academic development to peers and siblings (reported two times); using interpreters during formalized testing (reported two times), and finally, allowing sufficient time for acculturalization and L2 learning (reported two times).
Summary

The results revealed that many B.C. school psychologists involved in the assessment of ESL students are cognizant of the linguistic/socio/cultural biases found in norm-referenced standardized tests and, as a result, they are not extensively administering tests such as the WISC-R to ESL students, nor are they relying exclusively on the test scores to prescribe treatment for ESL students. Moreover, many psychologists are using peers and siblings in an effort to establish more realistic norms. Many of the psychologists are assessing the student's academic records (when available) and health records, and involving the ESL student's parents in the assessment process in an attempt to discover an historical basis of the student's current academic difficulties.

The data also indicated that several phases of a multifaceted assessment as outlined in the literature need to be addressed by many of the school psychologists in British Columbia that are involved in the assessment of ESL students. These include:

1) the assessment of the student's L1, and the use (when appropriate) of standardized tests translated into the student's L1

2) involving trained translators in the interview and assessment of the ESL student, and the interview of the student's parents

3) measuring the student's current level of functioning with 'dynamic' assessment and adaptive behaviour measurement (such as Feuerstein's LPAD)
4) involving the student's classroom teacher in the assessment through the use of anecdotal reporting

5) understanding that it takes at least five years, on the average, for an immigrant child who arrives in the host country after the age of six to approach grade norms in L2 Cognitive Academic Language Processing (C.A.L.P.) (Cummins, 1980).
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Problem

Teachers, concerned and/or puzzled with the low classroom academic performance of some ESL pupils, refer them to Learning-Assistance Centres, Speech Therapists, School Counsellors, and District Psychologists for diagnostic psychological testing. Once referred, the students are often assessed through the use of norm-referenced standardized psychometric tests. In many cases ESL students, as a result of the cultural and linguistic biases of the testing instruments, are erroneously labelled as 'slow learners', mentally handicapped, or learning disabled, and in some cases are inappropriately placed in special education classes. This faulty labelling and placement can have a serious effect on the students, on their future and on their learning and performance (Mercer, 1971; Berry & Lopez, 1976; DeBlassie and Franco, 1983; Cummins, 1984; Bernstein, 1988). The problem is that placing too much reliance on norm-referenced standardized tests to determine whether or not an ESL student is in need of special placement can be misleading, and damaging to the student.

Background

Psychometric testing in the United States started at the beginning of the twentieth century as an outcome of a continuing need to justify the differences between the races (Beckum, 1983; Williams, 1983). Beckum, (1983) also writes that later tests were used to "identify and stratify the population of Americans entering World War I; to curb the immigration of southern and eastern European races in America, and to justify the
subjugated condition of blacks" (op. cit., p. 40). The practice of administering a test normed on a predominantly white native-English speaking population to minority students is potentially damaging to those students who, as a result, are tracked into remedial skill development activities that do not stimulate the development of their self-image as competent learners, and retards their social mobility (DeBlassie and Franco, 1983; Cummins, 1984).

The Educatably Mentally Retarded classes in California contain a higher proportion of Spanish students than that found in the general population (Mercer, 1971; Leal, 1976). Mercer (1971) suggests that if the psychometric scores used to place these minority children were reinterpreted with the knowledge that linguistic/socio/cultural factors contaminate them, the social imbalance in EMR classes disappears. Approximately 75% of the minority children enrolled in EMR classes, during the period of her investigation, "were mislabelled, incorrectly placed, and suffering from stigmatization and lowered self-esteem in a learning environment far from optimum" (p. 15).

There can be a discrepancy between a student's face-to-face English language ability and his or her academic level and use of English. Cummins (1984) and Skuttnabb-Kangas (1984). Cummins (1984) defines surface fluency as 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS) which is the language used in everyday communicative contexts, and conceptual-linguistic knowledge as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) which is the language used in academic situations. Cummins (1980) also notes that it takes students from six months to two years to reach fluency in BICS but "that it takes at least five years, on the average, for immigrant
children who arrive in the host country after the age of six to approach grade norms in L2 CALP" (p. 148). It may be the case that many L2 learners, who are experiencing difficulty with learning (labelled as low-achievers, mildly mentally retarded, learning disabled, etc.), are, in fact, having difficulty with disembedded or context-reduced learning situations. Coles (1978) states, "By positing biological bases for learning problems, the responsibility for failure is taken from the schools, communities, and other institutions and is put squarely on the back, or rather within the head of the child" (p. 333). A classroom teacher faced with an ESL student who, as a result of difficulties with the acquisition of L2 (the language of instruction) is over three years behind in Reading, Verbal and Math skills, might refer the student to the school psychologist whose mandate is twofold: 1) to discover the cause of this lag in the student's progress, and 2) to suggest ways in which to remedy it.

A large majority of students referred to psychologists for low-achievement are subsequently administered psychoeducational tests (Algozzine, Christenson, and Ysseldyke, 1983). Most standardized tests, if used in accordance with the publisher's instructions, are linguistically and/or culturally discriminatory because no specific norms have been established for various cultural groups and because representation of diverse linguistic and/or cultural groups were not used in the standardization sample (De Avila & Havassy, 1974; Omark & Watson, 1983; Taylor & Payne, 1983; Cummins, 1984; Omark & Watson, 1983). Cummins (1980) states "that psychological or educational assessment of immigrant children in L2 within their first five years in the host country is likely to seriously underestimate their potential academic abilities" (p. 148). The importance of the decision to
administer norm-referenced psychoeducational tests is highlighted by research that indicates that, once a student has been tested, the probability is very high that s/he will be placed in a special education setting. (Shepard & Smith, 1981; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982; Foster, Ysseldyke, Casey & Thurlow, 1984).

Cummins' (1980) analysis of psychological assessments of over 400 children from non-English speaking backgrounds shows that in many cases there is no logical or empirical basis for psychologists to decide whether poor test performance is a reflection of students' true ability or of their non-English-speaking background, but rather they rely on intuition. Watson et al., (1980) indicate that most psychologists do not use a wide array of psychoeducational tests but continue to use the same tools they were trained to use in graduate school. Johnson, Vickers and Williams (1987) suggest that few school psychologists are trained in the area of nonbiased assessment. Finally, Mehan, Hertwick and Meihls' (1986) study indicates that psychologists continue to administer tests to a student until they find a disability that can be used to explain the student's academic difficulties.

The decision to test or not to test is a difficult one. The tests do not adequately measure intelligence; but, by not assessing a low achieving ESL student, a learning disability may not be discovered and the student may not receive the proper placement or program. The answer to this dilemma could lie in the area of a broader or multifaceted assessment of the student.
Multifaceted Assessment

The diagnosis of an ESL student's cognitive functioning problems should not be based solely on the results of a norm-referenced standardized test. The decisions regarding the placement and/or programming of exceptional ESL children should stem from a collection of data (Feuerstein, 1979; Cummins, 1984; Manni et al., 1984; Olion & Olion, 1984).

In the attempt to differentiate linguistic and cultural factors from learning problems, many researchers have recommended a more comprehensive focus on L1 proficiency and more native language achievement and intelligence testing (Olifer, 1983; Mattes & Omark, 1984; Ortiz, 1984). DeBlassie and Franco (1983) indicate that the professionals collecting the data should be aware that some bilingual children often lack language proficiencies in either language. The decision to use a test in the student's L1 is not as easy as it first appears as it is exceedingly difficult to translate psychometric properties from one language to another. However, in the case of recently arrived immigrant students with no or minimal English, the use of L1 (where available) is highly appropriate as the only other alternative is a trial and error approach to assessment (Cummins, 1984).

The student's classroom teacher is in a position to observe the student coping with an array of academic activities and thus has a wealth of information on the student's strengths and weaknesses which can help establish a more direct link between assessment and intervention (De Avila & Havassy, 1974; Samuda, 1975; De Blassie & Franco, 1983; Taylor & Payne, 1983; Manni et al., 1984; Olion and Olion, 1984). As well, the student's parents
can be useful in defining the extent of their child's learning problems by helping to determine if the child's problems are exclusively school-related tasks or if they are also found in the child's activities outside of the classroom. The parents should also be consulted to determine if they perceive a difference between their child who is being assessed and his or her siblings. (De Blassie & Franco, 1983; Omark & Watson, 1983; Langdon, 1989).

Omark and Watson (1983) and Langdon (1989) indicate the importance of determining if the student's learning is progressing at the same rate as other students with similar linguistic/socio/cultural backgrounds. Students who appear to come from a similar background as the child being referred can be used to establish a benchmark as to how much growth in language or in academic skills one might expect from a student from that particular background.

Feuerstein (1979) through the means of his "Learning Potential Assessment Device" (LPAD) advocates the use of 'dynamic' assessment which attempts to determine the student's ability to profit from training to solve problems. The student's capacity to use the taught skills on progressively different and complex tasks is measured and decisions regarding placement and programming can then be made. Feuerstein presents many case studies that appear to indicate that students who had been previously diagnosed as mentally retarded by standardized psychometric tests achieved average levels of cognitive functioning when they had been taught how to effectively use their cognitive abilities.
In summary, despite the vast amount of research and literature concerning the potential harm resulting from the over-reliance on norm-referenced standardized testing of an ESL population, school psychologists continue to administer them as part of, or as the solitary component of, psychological assessments of ESL students. Not only does the research demonstrate that, for the most part, norm-referenced standardized tests serve only as a test of ESL students' L2 ability, but also that the misuse of the results of these tests can lead to incorrect labelling and placement of ESL students. The research presented strongly suggests that a multifaceted approach to psychological assessment would produce more reliable results. Therefore, to answer the question, "Do British Columbia public school districts use a multifaceted approach to psychologically assess English As A Second Language students?" a data collection design was developed that consisted of a mailed self-administered questionnaire that was to be completed by all of the public school districts in British Columbia that had psychologically assessed at least one ESL student within two years previous to the study. The data were used to test the hypotheses that:

1) ESL students in B.C. school districts are being psychologically assessed in English rather than in their native language.
2) B.C. school psychologists do not examine an ESL student's academic, health, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds as part of a psychological assessment.
3) B.C. school psychologists make regular use of the WISC-R or other norm-referenced standardized intelligence tests when psychologically assessing ESL students.
4) B.C. school psychologists, as part of an assessment of ESL students, reference them to norms that do not include ESL students.

5) ESL students in B.C. school districts are assessed by psychologists who are not familiar with second language acquisition theories.

6) ESL students in B.C. school districts are referred for psychological assessment as a result of their difficulties with L2 acquisition.

7) ESL students are psychologically assessed before they have acquired a sufficient Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1984).

8) B.C. school psychologists rely on the results of norm-referenced standardized testing to prescribe treatment for low-functioning ESL students.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire items were grouped in three separate sections - The first section (4 items) of the questionnaire requested personal and demographic information. The second section (35 items) asked participants to indicate on a 4 point Likert scale (always (1) - usually(2) - sometimes(3) - never(4) ) the techniques and testing instruments they used during the psychological assessment of an ESL student. These techniques and instruments were selected from the literature outlining multifaceted assessments and included (a) the use of tests translated into the student's L1, and the assessment of the four modes of the student's first language, (b) reference to peers and siblings, (c) use of translators, (d) parental involvement, (e) number of years in an English-speaking school system before assessment, (f) use of norm-referenced standardized tests, (g) assessment of the student's social/cultural/linguistic background, and (h) an awareness of the bias known to be found in widely used tests, and the use of results from these same tests to prescribe treatment. The participants
were also invited to write comments regarding their choices. The third section (open-ended) invited the participants to briefly describe the guidelines, if any, that their district followed to distinguish learning English As A Second Language difficulties from cognitive processing problems.

Study

The initial step in the data collection procedure was to contact by mail each of British Columbia's 75 superintendents of schools in order to be granted permission to conduct the study and to obtain the name of the district staff member in charge of psychological testing. After a second mailing, a total of 35 school district superintendents consented to take part in the study. After a second mailing to the district staff members in charge of psychological testing, 31 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 89%. Of the 31 returned questionnaires, 22 were completed while 9 participants did not complete the questionnaire as their psychologists had not psychologically assessed an ESL student within the two years previous to the study.

Participants

The participants included: district psychologists, district counsellors, district principals, assistant superintendents, co-ordinators, supervisors and directors of special education and consultants. The school districts that they represented ranged in size from 600 students to 52,000 students, and the ESL student percentage ranged from 1 percent to a high of 47 percent. The actual number of ESL students assessed in each district ranged from a low of 1 in the previous two years to a reported high of 20. The districts with the two highest actual number of ESL students did not report the number of ESL
students they had assessed. All responses to items were entered onto a computer program which generated a mean response for each item. Handwritten responses to the questions, and the responses to the final section were collated and analyzed by hand.

Results

The responses for each question have been presented in terms of a mean response of all of the districts that responded to the question. A mean score of 3.72 for the question, "Does your district use testing instruments translated into the child's first language?" for example, indicates that B.C. school psychologists, on the average, almost 'never' use tests translated into students' L1.

Table 5.1
Use of Translated Tests and L1 Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE TRANSLATED TESTS</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 ORAL</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 AURAL</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 WRITING</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS L1 READING</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data revealed that B.C. school psychologists, for the most part, are almost never using tests translated into the student's L1, and only 'sometimes' assessing a student's L1 as part of a psychological assessment. The written responses to this question revealed that even when a psychologist does assess a student's L1 that it is usually done by volunteers, parents and, in a few cases, even students. It is of some consternation that
approximately 44% of the B.C. school districts that responded to this survey never assess the students' L1 as part of their psychological assessment.

Table 5.11

The Use of the WISC-R, Adaptive Behaviour Measurement, Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), and Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (T.O.N.I.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WISC-R</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-ABC</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.O.N.I.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score of 2.75 for the use of the WISC-R in British Columbia school districts, as part of the psychological assessment of ESL students, is approaching 'sometimes'. A closer look at the individual responses to the use of the WISC-R shows that only 2 or 10% of the districts always administer it as part of their psychological assessment procedure. A further 4 or 20% of districts usually administer the WISC-R while the remaining 14 or 70% of the districts only sometimes or never administer the WISC-R Battery. The written comments also indicated that the results were always considered in light of the fact that the student was ESL:

The only 'sometimes' use of adaptive behaviour measures such as Feurerstein's LPAD, and culture free tests such as the K-ABC (Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children), and the T.O.N.I. (Test of Nonverbal Intelligence) could imply that the training institutions, and the personnel in charge of psychometric testing, are not moving away from the more
traditional modes of assessment and that adaptive behaviour measurements and culture free tests have yet to be widely accepted in B.C. school districts as an integral part of a psychological assessment. One can only predict that the low usage rate is attributable to the fact raised above that testing personnel are inclined to administer tests that they were exposed to during their training.

Table 5.111
Use of Translators To Interview and Assess Students, and to Interview Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEW STUDENTS</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESS STUDENTS</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEW PARENTS</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score of 2.56 for the use of translators during the student interview is approaching sometimes; during the assessment the mean of 3.09 is slightly above sometimes, and the mean of 2.70 for interviewing the student's parents in their first language is also approaching sometimes. The written response 'When available" appeared on many of the surveys that indicated the use of translators. Two psychologists noted that they used parents or volunteers fluent in the student's first language during the interview of the student, but not during the assessment. One psychologist added that she used 'Higher-grade ESL students to translate during the interview.
Table 5.IV
Use of Peers, Siblings, Parents and Teachers To Establish
Linguistic/Socio/Cultural Norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPARE TO SIBLINGS</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPARE TO ESL PEERS</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVE PARENTS</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHERS KEEP SYSTEMATIC RECORDS</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above mean of 2.52 indicates that B.C. public school psychologists are approaching 'sometimes' in the involvement of the student's classroom teacher, but are 'always or usually' trying to involve the student's parents, and to incorporate ESL peer/sibling comparisons into their psychological assessments of ESL students. One respondent's comment revealed a problem probably common to most of the districts with small ESL populations:

"Since we have so few ESL students sometimes it is difficult to find similar cultural experiences."

Awareness of Bias In Testing and Assessment

"Bias is in all tests in North America - It is the interpretation
of these tests which is important." (Survey respondent)

Table 5.V
The Selection and Use of Culturally and Linguistically Fair Tests, and the Utilization of Local and/or Minority Norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE UNBIASED TESTS</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESTS REFLECT ABILITY NOT LANGUAGE</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATE MATERIAL FOR BIAS</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEDURES EXPECT A KNOWLEDGE OF NORTH AMERICAN CULTURE</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE TESTS THAT HAVE MINORITIES INCLUDED IN THE NORMS</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE LOCAL NORMS</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATE TESTS FOR NORMS, VALIDITY, AND RELIABILITY RELATIVE TO ESL STUDENTS</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data illustrates that, as a whole, B.C. school psychologists are usually cognizant of the biases found in commercially produced North American standardized tests, and that the student's language level is not always indicative of the student's ability level. The psychologists, for the most part, are usually trying to evaluate, select and use measures that reflect the student's true abilities, not their language or culture. The mean of 3.52 or approaching never use of local norms could be a result of many of the school districts not having enough ESL students to establish valid local
norms. Many of the comments on these questions reflected the difficulty the psychologists faced in finding testing materials that were not linguistically or culturally biased.

Table 5.VI
Years An ESL Student is in An English Speaking School Before Being Psychologically Assessed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YEARS BEFORE ASSESSING</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 11 participants that responded indicated that, as a province, students are allowed an average of 2.67 years in an English speaking school system before being psychologically assessed. A detailed analysis indicates that 8 of the psychologists, or 73%, are allowing ESL students only up to 3 years in an English speaking school system before being psychologically assessed. Many of the psychologists that did not indicate the actual number of years they waited before assessing an ESL student noted that they did not adhere to a firm policy.

Table 5.VII
The Use of Test Results To Prescribe Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USE TEST RESULTS TO PRESCRIBE TREATMENT</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean of 2.55 indicates that, as a province, the school psychologists are approaching sometimes in their use of test results to prescribe remedial treatment for ESL students. However, a closer examination reveals that 10 of the psychologists that responded to this question, or 46%, always or usually use the results of tests to prescribe treatment or intervention.

DISCUSSION

The results revealed that some B.C. school psychologists are aware of some of the factors necessary for valid psychological assessments of ESL students. Many of the psychologists are cognizant of the linguistic/socio/cultural biases found in norm-referenced standardized tests and as a result, they are not extensively administering them to ESL students, nor are they relying exclusively on the test scores to prescribe treatment for ESL students. Moreover, many psychologists are using peers and siblings in an effort to establish more realistic linguistic/socio/cultural norms. Many of the psychologists are also involving the ESL student's parents in an attempt to delve into the student's academic, health and developmental backgrounds in order to discover an historical basis of the student's current academic difficulties.

Even though some of the psychologists are using some aspects of a multifaceted approach to ESL psychological assessment there are several phases identified in the literature as being an integral part of a multifaceted assessment that need to be addressed by the psychologists in B.C. schools. In-service sessions at the provincial level and at the university level are
needed to assist practising and perspective school psychologists to become aware that:

1) the assessment of the student's L1 and use of standardized tests translated into the student's L1 could help in differentiating linguistic and cultural factors from learning problems.

2) trained translators should be a vital part of the assessment of an ESL student in that they can help the psychologist to cross linguistic and cultural boundaries.

3) most standardized testing procedures are 'static' in that they are only concerned with measuring the student's current level of functioning while the use of 'dynamic' assessment and adaptive behaviour measurement (such as Feuerstein's LAPD) attempts to determine the student's ability to profit from training to solve problems.

4) the classroom teacher should play a significant role in the assessment. Through the use of anecdotal reporting that could be used to validate information provided by standardized instruments, for example the child's response style, impulsivity, and tolerance for frustration.

5) it takes at least five years, on the average, for an immigrant child who arrives in the host country after the age of six to approach grade norms in L2 CALP, and that any assessment taken before this may result in a serious underestimation of the student's ability.
It is of obvious importance for the school system to know if the ESL student's academic difficulties are a result of linguistic/socio/cultural differences or are a product of a more serious cognitive processing problem. The diagnosis of a minority student's cognitive functioning problems, as much research has shown (Cummins, 1984; Feuerstein, 1979; Manni et al., 1984; Olion and Olion, 1984), should stem from a collection of data - not just be based on an individual test or even a battery of tests. As Olion and Olion (1984) make clear: "Assessment is a multifaceted process of collecting the data necessary for making educational decisions."

This study has revealed the wide range of psychological assessment procedures currently employed in British Columbia school districts. Some psychologists are using all of the data at their disposal to accurately assess ESL students while others are employing practices that may produce inaccurate and misleading results. In this regard, this study has established a need for valid multifaceted psychological assessment of ESL students procedures to be adapted by all of British Columbia's school psychologists.

Some Implications For Further Study

A series of considerations related to the outcome of psychological assessment of ESL students present themselves, none of which appear to have been addressed in the research on the psychological assessment of ESL students.

1. What are the various options open to ESL students after they have been diagnosed as being in need of special assistance?

2. Should the special assistance be offered in L1 or L2?
3. Do follow-up procedures designed for native English speaking students meet the ESL student’s developmental and L2 language needs?

4. Are there any benefits in establishing ESL special needs classes?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: For the purposes of this survey an ESL student is defined as a student who speaks a language other than English at home.

1. My position is: ____________________(i.e. Area Psychologist, Director of Special Education, District Learning Assistance Teacher, ETC.)

2. What is the total student population of your school district?

3. Approximately what percent of your school population speaks English As a Second Language? (Do not include native Indians as ESL)

4. Approximately how many ESL students have been psychologically assessed in your district in the past two years?

IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 4 IS ONE OR MORE PLEASE CONTINUE. IF AN ESL STUDENT HAS NOT BEEN ASSESSED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS PLEASE STOP AND MAIL IN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

PART B. Circle the appropriate comment following each of the statements below.

5. Does your district use testing instruments translated into the child's first language?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

which ones? ____________________________________________
6. As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' oral proficiency in their first language?

1. always 2. usually 3. sometimes 4. never

If so, by what means?

7. As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' aural proficiency in their first language?

1. always 2. usually 3. sometimes 4. never

If so, by what means?

8. As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' writing proficiency in their first language?

1. always 2. usually 3. sometimes 4. never

If so, by what means?

9. As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL students' reading proficiency in their first language?

1. always 2. usually 3. sometimes 4. never

If so, by what means?

10. As part of the psychological assessment does your district assess ESL interaction with their peers outside of the classroom? (e.g. the playground)

1. always 2. usually 3. sometimes 4. never

If so, by what means?
11. Does your district assess ESL students’ school records from their country of origin?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

12. Does your district use translators when interviewing ESL students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

13. Does your district use translators when assessing ESL students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

14. Does your district involve the parents of the ESL students in the assessment procedures?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

15. Does your district interview the parents in their first language?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________
16. Does your district assess ESL students' health records?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:__________________________________________________________

17. How many years in an English-speaking school system does your district usually allow before psychologically assessing an ESL student?

1  2  3  4  5

Any comments:__________________________________________________________

18. Does your district use a 'district-team' to psychologically assess an ESL student?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:__________________________________________________________

Please indicate the titles of the members of the district team who would most likely assess an ESL student:________________________________________

19. Does your district evaluate the 'Appropriateness' of a referral for the assessment of an ESL student.

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:__________________________________________________________
20. As part of the psychological assessment, does your district compare the academic performance of the ESL student to ESL peers who have experienced similar cultural experiences for an equal amount of time?

1. always  
2. usually  
3. sometimes  
4. never

Any comments:________________________________________________________________________

21. Does your district reference the student to either siblings or close relatives who are progressing through the educational setting?

1. always  
2. usually  
3. sometimes  
4. never

Any comments:________________________________________________________________________

22. When evaluating the results of the psychological assessment does your district consider the students' socio-economic level?

1. always  
2. usually  
3. sometimes  
4. never

Any comments:________________________________________________________________________

23. Are the personnel who psychologically assess ESL students, and who evaluate the results in your district knowledgeable about 'Second Language Acquisition' theories?

1. always  
2. usually  
3. sometimes  
4. never

Any comments:________________________________________________________________________

24. Does your district incorporate adaptive behavior as part of its assessment of ESL students? (i.e. Feuersteins's Learning Potential)

1. always  
2. usually  
3. sometimes  
4. never

Any comments:________________________________________________________________________
25. Are referrals for psychological assessment of ESL students in your district made as a result of the students' difficulties with Language Arts and/or Reading?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:_____________________________________________________________________

26. As part of the psychological assessment are classroom teachers in your district asked to keep systematic records of the students' social behavior?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

If yes, please explain how_____________________________________________________________________

27. Does your district attempt to select testing and evaluation material that is not racially or culturally biased?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:_____________________________________________________________________

28. As part of the psychological assessment does your district administer tests that reflect ESL students ability in the area tested rather than the students' limited English skills? (i.e. abstract reasoning)

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:_____________________________________________________________________

29. Does your district evaluate testing and evaluation material for racial or cultural bias?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:_____________________________________________________________________
30. Do the tests and evaluation procedures used in your district expect a knowledge of North American culture on the part of the students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

31. Does your district's assessment/evaluation procedure take into consideration the students who are not in a hurry or who are not motivated to do well?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

32. Does your district use testing instruments that have cultural minorities included in the norms?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

33. Does your district use 'local norms' when interpreting ESL students psychological test results?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments: ____________________________________________________________

34. Does your district administer all or part of the WISC-R to ESL students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

If part, which parts? ________________________________________________________
35. Does your district administer all or part of the K-ABC to ESL students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

If part, which parts?

__________________________________________________________

36. Does your district administer the T.O.N.I. to ESL students as part of the psychological assessment?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

If part, which parts?

__________________________________________________________

37. Please list any other standardized and/or locally developed psychological assessment tests your district administers to ESL students?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

38. Does your district evaluate tests in terms of norms, validity, and reliability factors that relate to and/or could affect ESL students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:

__________________________________________________________

39. Does your district use test results to prescribe treatment or intervention specific to ESL students?

1. always  2. usually  3. sometimes  4. never

Any comments:

__________________________________________________________
40. Briefly describe the guidelines, if any, that your district follows to distinguish learning English As A Second Language difficulties from cognitive processing problems.
APPENDIX II - LETTER TO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Mark Angerilli
2872 McKenzie Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
V4A 3H4
October 20, 1990

Name
Title
School District
Street
City, Province
Postal Code

Dear

I am a graduate student in Language Education at the University of British Columbia. I am conducting a study "The Procedures British Columbia School Psychologists Use to Assess English As A Second Language Students." The purpose of this study is to ascertain the testing instruments (i.e. standardized tests) and assessment procedures (i.e. classroom observation) used in assessment.

I am asking you for permission to allow your district staffmember in charge of psychometric assessment to fill out a 30 minute questionnaire dealing with the above mentioned study. I am also asking you for the name of the staffmember so that I may directly contact her or him.

All data will be kept highly confidential. My committee at the University of British Columbia and I will be the only people with access to the information. If you should have any questions or concerns regarding this study please feel free to contact me at 538-8483 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Lee Gunderson, at 228-6287 (UBC). I am willing to send you the conclusions of my study when it is completed. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

Yours truly,

Mark Angerilli
APPENDIX III - FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Mark Angerilli
2872 McKenzie Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
V4A 3H4
December 28, 1990

Name
Title
School District
Street
City, Province
Postal Code

Dear

Approximately six weeks ago I wrote to ask for your permission to conduct a very brief survey in your district. Would you please reply as soon as possible whether or not that you have ESL students in your district.

I am a graduate student in Language Education at the University of British Columbia. I am conducting a study "The Procedures British Columbia School Psychologists Use to Assess English As A Second Language Students." The purpose of this study is to ascertain the testing instruments (i.e. standardized tests) and assessment procedures (i.e. classroom observation) used in assessment.

I am asking you for permission to allow your district staffmember in charge of psychometric assessment to fill out a 30 minute questionnaire dealing with the above mentioned study. I am also asking you for the name of the staffmember so that I may directly contact her or him.

All data will be kept highly confidential. My committee at the University of British Columbia and I will be the only people with access to the information. If you should have any questions or concerns regarding this study please feel free to contact me at 538-8483 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Lee Gunderson, at 228-6287 (UBC). I am willing to send you the conclusions of my study when it is completed. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

Yours truly,

Mark Angerilli
APPENDIX IV - INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Mark Angerilli
2872 McKenzie Ave.,
Surrey, B.C.
V4A 3H4
January 5, 1991

Dear

I am a part-time graduate student in Language Education at the University of British Columbia and a full-time ESL teacher in a Lower Mainland school district. I am conducting a study "The Procedures British Columbia School Psychologists Use to Assess English As A Second Language Students." This study has the potential of providing data indicating if ESL students in B.C. are being accurately psychologically assessed.

Your superintendent has given permission for me to ask you if you would be willing to take part in the study. For this study I am asking the person in charge of psychometric assessment in every school district in B.C. to complete a questionnaire: it takes less than 30 minutes. Your participation would be, of course, voluntary. Please note that there is no jeopardy to your job if you should refuse to participate. All data will be kept confidential. Only my committee at the University of British Columbia and I will have access to the information. I am willing to send you the results of my study when it is completed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please feel free to contact me at 538-8483 (Home) or my faculty advisor, Dr. Lee Gunderson, at 228-6287. (U.B.C.) I hope that you will agree to participate, and in that hope I am sending a questionnaire which you should receive in about one week. Thank you in advance for any co-operation you are able to give.

Yours truly,

Mark Angerilli
APPENDIX V - COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

"THE PROCEDURES BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS USE TO ASSESS ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS"

February 11, 1991

Dear Respondent,

This study is being conducted to find out what procedures and practices are being used to psychologically assess ESL students in the B.C. Public school system. As a professional in the field of assessment, your response will be most valuable in compiling an overview of what is occurring in B.C. The accuracy of this survey depends upon your willingness to answer the questions. You are being asked to complete the enclosed questionnaire, which should take about 30 minutes of your time, and then return it. You have the right to refuse to participate; however, completion of the questionnaire indicates that consent has been given. Also, please note that there is absolutely no jeopardy to your job if you should refuse to participate. A number code is being used to ensure that all data and identities will be kept highly confidential.

I trust that your interest in assessment will ensure your co-operation and promptness in replying. In order to make it more convenient, a self-addressed envelope has been enclosed with this questionnaire: 30 minutes of your time is all it will take.

If you should have any questions or concerns regarding this study please feel free to call me at 538-8483, or my faculty advisor Dr. Lee Gunderson at 228-6287.

Please note: I will donate $1.00 to Oxfam Canada for every completed questionnaire that I receive within three weeks of my mailing.

Yours truly,

Mark Angerilli
MA Candidate (Language Education)
APPENDIX VI - FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

"THE PROCEDURES BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS USE TO ASSESS ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS"

March 9, 1991

Dear Respondent,

Approximately 4 weeks ago I mailed you a questionnaire concerning the psychological assessment of ESL students. Please ignore this letter if you have already completed and mailed the first questionnaire. If you have misplaced it please take the time to complete this one as I believe that as a professional in the field of assessment, your response will be most valuable in compiling an overview of what is occurring in B.C.. The accuracy of this survey depends upon your willingness to answer the questions. You are being asked to complete the enclosed questionnaire, which should take about 30 minutes of your time, and then return it. You have the right to refuse to participate; however, completion of the questionnaire indicates that consent has been given. Also, please note that there is absolutely no jeopardy to your job if you should refuse to participate. A number code is being used to ensure that all data and identities will be kept highly confidential.

I trust that your interest in assessment will ensure your co-operation and promptness in replying. In order to make it more convenient, a self-addressed envelope has been enclosed with this questionnaire: 30 minutes of your time is all it will take.

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Please note: I will donate $1.00 to Oxfam Canada for every completed questionnaire that I receive within three weeks of my mailing.

Yours truly,

Mark Angerilli
MA Candidate (Language Education)