AN EVALUATION OF A LONG TERM CARE AIDE/ESL PROGRAM

by
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Date April 30, 1992
ABSTRACT

This two-part study evaluates a government sponsored Long Term Care Aide/ESL Program taken by a group of immigrant women. The purpose of the first part of the study was to assess how effective a B.C. government sponsored Long Term Care Aide/ESL program was in preparing a group of immigrant women for the workplace. A questionnaire was used to determine demographics and employment status. Also, it obtained perceptions on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The purpose of the second part of this study was to hear the women's personal insights and voices about their experiences while taking the program and after the program. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain these stories. Results from the quantitative questionnaire indicated that 94% of the immigrant women who had taken this course were employed as care aides. Three years after the completion this program, the women felt that the course had provided them with both a vocational skill and more English language skills.

Results from the qualitative portion of this paper focused on how the women felt about their experiences in this Long Term Care Aide/ESL program in their own words. The data were analyzed and put into themes. Theme 1 was "The pain of renewal". It presented their collective stories of being an immigrant and struggling to begin again. Theme 2 was "The costs and the benefits". This theme presented the women's insights on working as care aides. Most of the women liked their jobs but found trying to secure a full time job difficult. Theme 3 was "The need to learn the language of care". All the women interviewed wanted to have more "caring" language, the "everyday" language to relate to their clients. Theme 4 was "Advice to other immigrant women". This theme revealed how some women felt about the work they did. The last theme, Theme 5, was "Hopes and dreams". Half of the women interviewed had aspirations
to continue their education and these women were already enrolled in other health care courses.

The results of the study are discussed and implications are drawn for research and pedagogy.
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PROLOGUE

Guided by my heritage of a love of beauty and a respect for strength-in search of my mother's garden, I found my own (Walker, 1983, p. 243).

This paper has been a journey of self-discovery. I began this journey searching for a clear path that would lead me to "my findings". I set out to evaluate a group of immigrant women who had participated in a Long Term Care Aide/ESL program. I wanted to know how many had secured jobs, and to find out about their perceptions about the program.

However, as I explored and learned I began to shift and move away from my original path. I realized that the study was more than reporting achievement of goals; but that it was about "finding my voice" and understanding this process. I found this voice through the voices of the women I interviewed. I learned that I did not want to speak for others, rather present their voices and include my own.

The journey into an unknown "garden" of findings became a journey towards my own garden of understanding and knowledge.
CHAPTER ONE

In The Beginning

1.1 Background

Three years ago, I taught in a long term care aide/English as a second language combined-skills program at a non-profit immigrant services agency. This program offered basic nursing skills training with vocational English as a second language instruction. I taught the basic nursing skills and coordinated their worksite practica.

The long term care aide/English as a second language (LTCA/ESL) program at the immigrant services agency was a government funded combined-skills vocational program. This program provided a training allowance, child care expenses, transportation expenses and uniform/material expenses. The program ran for eight months each year upon renewal of funding. The objective of the program was to train and/or retrain immigrant men and women to work with elderly or dependent people. Each program had twenty immigrant students. I taught in two of the programs, one in each of two separate years. The combination of my experiences as a nurse educator and as an ESL teacher enabled me to both train health care workers and support their language learning.

During the course of the program, I heard the students' voices, their life stories and their struggles. These stories were diverse, intense and interwoven with tears of joy and sadness. I heard their hopes for the future and their goals. I also witnessed the students' efforts to succeed in the program despite such obstacles as limited economic resources, a large family to care for in some cases, personal illnesses and minimal time to study.

Thoughts and questions that would later germinate into this study began then. I began to wonder what happened to the women after they took the course: Did they get a job? How long did it take them to find employment? What did they think about the program once they had graduated? It was in this context that I began to form the questions that became central to this study.
The majority of the students I taught were women and my focus for this thesis was from the women's perspective of their experiences. Also, I was influenced in choosing this focus by my own experiences as a woman who herself emigrated to Canada. Specifically, in the first program, 1994-95, there were no male students; all twenty students were women. In the second program, 1995-96, there were four male students out of twenty students.

In the beginning, my question seemed to me straight forward: How effective was this long term care aide/English as a second language program in preparing a group of immigrant women for the workplace? I wanted originally to find out how many of the women had found employment after graduation and how they had perceived the program after its completion. So, I decided to mail out a questionnaire to my former students to obtain information related to their employment status and their perceptions of the program.

My intention was to report the percentage of responses to a set of questions and from this perspective, the study became a quantitative evaluation research study. The literature, as discussed below, pointed out the lack of evaluative studies which have examined the success of combined-skills programs, in terms of later employment. Therefore, my choice of a thesis topic was influenced by both the paucity of studies in this important area and my own experiences with such a program.

However, as the project unfolded, I found myself shifting and refocusing the original intent of the study. What had begun as a goal oriented evaluation, emerged as a process oriented evaluation (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995) as I presented my voice and the voices of the women in the program. The study became a more collaborative research project. I was not so focused on outcomes but on insights and illuminations. Thus, I expanded this study to include interviews and I analyzed them qualitatively to consider common themes.

Also, my shift in perspective was supported by the evaluation literature I reviewed. Experts in evaluation research encouraged the use of multidimensional approaches for evaluation, in particular, using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Hitchcock &

My role as researcher was further challenged and shaped by my personal experiences as an immigrant woman, a teacher and a registered nurse. As my study progressed, the voices of the women and their personal accounts became important. The questionnaire's open-ended questions did not seem to tell the stories which I had heard in conversation. I realized that in my original research design, the voices of the women were but a whisper.

This realization caused me to question my choice of design. I started to explore other approaches, so as to find one that would connect my voice with the women's voices. I reconsidered my original epistemological position and shifted perspectives. I had positioned myself within a positivist perspective at the beginning, and then moved towards a naturalistic perspective. I wanted to acknowledge my personal experiences, my role as teacher and the voices of the women in my study. The feminist position and a participatory approach to evaluation seemed more honest and true to my evolving researcher self. I felt as if through the voices of the women in the study, I had begun to find my own.

This study was also promoted by the existing literature and the lack of recent research about immigrant women in ESL/health care training programs and follow-up studies about such programs (Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996; Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training, 1994).

The available research outlined the need to address concerns regarding the immigrant population growth in North America, in relation to English language education, employment and immigrant women issues. In particular, various studies about vocational ESL, workplace ESL and combined-skills ESL/content stated that there is a need for evaluative follow-up studies. The following discussion presents relevant literature that speaks to the need for evaluation studies in these areas.
During the last two decades, there has been a significant change in the number and origin of immigrants coming to British Columbia, specifically to the Lower Mainland. Projections estimate that the number of foreign-born living in the Lower Mainland will increase from 426,000 in 1986 to 606,000 in 1996, approximately 30% of the total population. It was expected that the Lower Mainland's share of international immigrants would increase modestly from approximately 80% of all immigrants in 1990-1991 to 82% by 1995-1997 and would diminish only slightly thereafter (Nelson, 1992).

In the 1980's the number of new immigrants arriving in B.C. dramatically changed the demographic composition of the Lower Mainland (Nelson, 1992). While this growth in immigration has added diversity and richness to the region, it has also created new demands for English language programs, education programs, bridging programs and job-training programs (Nelson, 1992).

Providing programs, job-training and language instruction to immigrants has been implemented since the 1970's. In a review of the literature in this area, Crandall (1989) reported that vocational-technical education for immigrants needs to be prioritized, allowing immigrants to gain skills which would lead to employment or higher paying jobs.

In BC, there have been a few studies reviewing workplace, vocational and ESL programs which signify possibilities for tremendous growth, demand and challenges in this area. (Battrum, 1988; Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training, 1994; Pharness, 1991). In a study of immigrant women in Vancouver conducted by Bhagavatula (1989), she recommended that job entry and re-entry programs be examined to determine long-term effectiveness in terms of employment, job mobility and advancement.

In addition, recent studies have documented that the lack of English proficiency is a significant barrier to full participation in Canadian society. Lack of recognized formal training and marginal English fluency have been associated with unemployment, lower incomes and
less occupational mobility for immigrants, in particular women (Alfred & Wakefield, 1991; Boyd, 1992; Doherty, 1992; Nelson, 1992; Torjman, 1988). At the level of local adult education programs, women continue to be underrepresented in language, job retraining and academic upgrading programs (Cumming & Gill, 1992).

In the early 1990's, the government of B.C. made available a combined-skills fund. This fund was to promote the development of job-training and language instruction programs which would enable immigrants to acquire a marketable skill while increasing their command of English. LTCA/ESL at the immigrant services agency was an example of such a program, a vocational health care training program with content specific English language instruction.

Although there has been an increase of ESL/vocational skills/ workplace instructional programs, research that addresses the need to determine long-term effectiveness on employment, job mobility and advancement for women has been scarce (Bhagavatula, 1989; Burt & Saccomano, 1995; Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training, 1994; Nelson, 1992). Vocational/ESL programs have remained a relatively unexplored territory in terms of evaluating effectiveness. In particular, little research has been conducted on the effect of health care/ESL training programs on immigrant women's lives. Thus, the literature not only points out the general lack of evaluative research regarding employment outcomes but also the specific impact of the program on the women's lives.

Overtime as I gained a clearer perspective, I positioned myself within a specific research evaluation framework. I chose to work with Hopkins' approach (Hopkins' framework, as cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995) where he discusses three types of evaluation inquiry: Autocratic, Bureaucratic and Democratic. This perspective suited my own shifting of paradigms and approaches. I began with a positivist perspective and moved to a more naturalistic one. This shift was due to my on-going reading of the research.
literature and to my own voice surfacing.

This study has some findings which report achievement of goals (Bureaucratic) and findings that are illuminative (Democratic), that is, they simply attempt to illuminate the field of education. These illuminations are the women's voices, their stories, their own words, together with an analysis and synthesis of the themes that emerged. This study attempts to focus on the process of having been a participant in a LTCA/ESL program rather than on the results alone.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to increase our understanding of the impact of an LTCA/ESL program on a group of immigrant women living and studying in Vancouver. It also addresses the gap in the literature regarding specific outcomes such as employment figures and students' perceptions of a combined-skills program. Furthermore, this study attempts to articulate the voices of some of the women, illustrating their opinions and perceptions.

My hope is to provide information that may help immigrant women, evaluators, ESL and content instructors, curriculum developers and government agencies in understanding the value and benefit of courses that provide language training and job training.

1.3 Design

This research study was a two-part research evaluation of a LTCA/ESL Program in Vancouver. The first part of the study was quantitative in its approach; a survey was used to find out if former participants of the program were subsequently employed as care aides. A questionnaire was sent to twenty-seven women and out of these, eighteen responded. The other women whom I had contacted by telephone prior to sending the questionnaire gave me information about their employment status and life after the program. Many were employed as care aides but this information could not be corroborated with the questionnaire. Of the 18 women that responded, 17 stated that they had jobs as long term care aides. The questionnaire also asked for the women's perceptions of the program, its strengths and
weaknesses.

Part one, the quantitative portion, attempted to answer the following research question:

1. How effective was a B.C. and Federal government funded LTCA/ESL program in preparing a group of immigrant women in Vancouver for the workplace in terms of English language proficiency, basic job skills and specific job skills? Specifically, how many of the women found employment after taking the course?

The second part had a qualitative perspective. I interviewed six women who had completed the questionnaires two months after I received them. The purpose of the interviews was to hear their perspectives and to achieve a clearer understanding of the questionnaire responses. Many social scientists involved in interviewing recognize that there needs to be perspectives and voices of the participants before a narrative is complete (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, et al., 1996; Patton, 1989).

The main purpose of this qualitative section was to seek and hear the immigrant women's personal accounts, insights and voices about their experiences both during the program and after the program. This portion of the study was an extension of my shifting and growth as a researcher. Here, I attempted to explore the following questions:

1. How did the women feel about the program in terms of its strengths and weaknesses?

2. How did they feel about the program after graduation?

3. What insights would they offer an immigrant woman thinking about taking such a course?

This part of the research was conducted in interview form. I interviewed six women who had answered the questionnaires. I chose these women because they agreed to be interviewed, had different backgrounds, covered a range of ages and had different employment
experiences. I analyzed the information gathered in an interpretive style. This data is relevant to other immigrant women considering taking an LTCA/ESL program and to ESL and content teachers wishing to gain a better understanding of a combined-skills workplace program.

Finally, the key reason for wanting to interview some of the women is best explained by Patricia Cayo Sexton (1982) in her study of female hospital workers:

Generalizations can be misleading, inadequate, and lacking in any flesh and blood reality, they can also fail to take account of the astonishing variations among women and the work they do. Women have not one but many voices. Both themes and variations, the individual and the collective voices need to be heard (p.5).

In both part one and part two, I wanted to report the findings of the study in such a way as to inform curriculum developers interested in this type of program and offer suggestions from the findings for future programs offering long term care aide skills training.

1. 4 Definitions

To facilitate the reading of this research paper, I would like to define the following key terms as they are used in this study.

**Immigrant women:** For the purpose of this study, immigrant women refers to those women who have come from another country, live permanently in Canada and whose first language is not English.

**Long term care aide program:** A long term care aide program is an entry level health care worker program. It is usually five to eight months in length. Its focus is care of the institutionalized elderly and persons with disabilities. The program teaches basic therapeutic communication skills, basic anatomy and physiology of the human body, disease processes most commonly found in the elderly, basic personal care skills and the health care worker's
role. The program provides a "clinical" placement in an extended care facility where students under supervision of a registered nurse, provide basic nursing care.

**ESL/vocational ESL:** Vocational English as a second language (VESL) provides non-native English speaking students with the English necessary to complete vocational training successfully. The content of the VESL class is directly related to the content of the vocational class. VESL teachers coordinate their lessons with vocational instructors to determine what job-related language needs to be taught and when (McGroarty, 1992). This type of VESL training is usually government funded.

**English proficiency:** At the time of the study, the English proficiency level of the participants was intermediate to advanced. Proficiency involves a range of abilities to communicate competently (linguistically, discursively, sociolinguistically and strategically) in some unpredictable contexts and to function independently in most familiar situations of daily social, educational and work-related experience (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 1996)

**Basic job skills:** By basic job skills, I refer to the ability to independently search for jobs, ability to do job interviews, ability to communicate competently (linguistically, discursively, sociolinguistically and strategically) in the workplace in some unpredictable contexts and in most familiar contexts (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 1996).
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

My journey began with the literature review. The readings not only helped me shape this study but they also expanded my understanding of the original research questions.

This chapter is a review of some of the existing literature. It is not an exhaustive review but a selective discussion of important writings in three areas: immigrant women in the workplace, vocational and workplace ESL and evaluation research.

2.1 Immigrant Women

One key issue I found discussed in the literature about immigrant women in the workplace was the barriers that affected their ability to gain access to language and job training. This information clarified my understanding of the issues that the women I surveyed faced in their lives.

2.1.1 Barriers

Several studies discuss the barriers that immigrant women experience which prevent them from accessing English language education, literacy and workplace English training. These barriers, therefore, make it difficult for immigrant women to secure jobs and economic empowerment (Boyd, 1992; Cumming, 1992; Cumming & Gill, 1992; Doherty, 1992; Das Gupta, 1996; Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996; Peirce, 1994; Rockhill, 1992; Torjman, 1988; Wismer, 1986).

Access to language training has been limited by barriers that are both external and internal. External barriers such as inadequate training information, program co-ordination and referral prevent immigrants from even getting into programs in the first place. Internal barriers, such as long waiting lists, few training seats and the inadequacy and unfeasibility of free programs have been factors that make programs inaccessible for those who have managed to get into them (Doherty, 1992). Another internal barrier identified in the literature is secondary sexism. It is described as an indirect kind of sexism. It includes criteria such as weight, height, educational
described as an indirect kind of sexism. It includes criteria such as weight, height, educational background, salary. These criteria have had nothing to do with gender but could be employed in ways which end up discriminating negatively against women (Doherty, 1992).

In another study, a pilot survey was undertaken of both male and female students enrolled in several different apprenticeship programs in a community college in Ontario. The survey identified areas of linguistic difficulty that students experienced in their course work and issues of perceived discrimination (Goldstein, 1993).

Moreover, racist attitudes in the health care field have in some cases led to little chance for advancement and to a lack of feelings of empowerment for immigrant women health care workers (Das Gupta, 1996).

Low median wage, poor working conditions, and lack of official language ability have left immigrant women very vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace. These barriers have affected some immigrant women's abilities to help themselves (Doherty, 1992). Language training, educational upgrading, and improved job-related skills are potential mechanisms for improving the socio-economic position of immigrant women who are not able to communicate in one of Canada's official languages (Boyd, 1992).

2.1.2 Other Factors

The literature also identifies other factors that influence immigrant women's ability to access language and job training. A growing body of literature refers to the loss or gain of status and power of immigrant women within the family (Buijs, 1993). Factors related to the influence of ESL/job training programs on immigrant women's socio-cultural life are also relevant to my study, because the women who I interviewed discussed the impact of the program from both a socio-economic and socio-cultural point of view.

Peirce (1994), in her study of immigrant women as language learners examined the relationship between language learning and social identity. The data illustrated that language learning is a social practice that must be understood within and not apart from the context of
larger, and frequently inequitable social processes (Peirce, 1994).

In a study addressing the situation of Punjabi-speaking women in Vancouver learning English and literacy, Cumming and Gill (1992) recommended that consideration of various contextual factors was necessary to understand how literacy and language instruction could best serve the interests of adult immigrant learners, particularly those who are often disadvantaged in conventional programs of ESL or literacy training. Among the factors were gender roles, the felt needs of learners and their extent of socioeconomic stability (Cumming & Gill, 1992).

Other factors that may contribute to the achievement of immigrant and minority women were explored in a study by Aguilar and Williams (1993). They looked at how Hispanic and African-American women achieved self-defined success. The women in this study believed that personal strength, family support, and role models were critical to the achievement of their goals. Their findings suggested a basis for a model of conscientization and empowerment that could be used to nurture and develop the strengths of minority women by increasing their personal, interpersonal, and political power through the improvement of their life situations (Aguilar & Williams, 1993).

Bhagavatula (1989), sponsored by the Vancouver Society of Immigrant Women, conducted a research project to determine the needs of immigrant women in Vancouver. She surveyed 206 women of various ages and ethnic backgrounds. The study identified current common difficulties experienced by immigrant women when they arrive in Canada and still experience them. The top five persistent difficulties were described as: jobs, language, money, culture and friends. Thirty percent of the "top five" responses reflected continuing difficulties experienced in these five areas. Strategies, as suggested by the immigrant women surveyed and interviewed in her study, to overcome these difficulties included learning the language in order to obtain a job, or to help with social integration; looking for a job; job training; support from friends and community; studying and personal efforts consisting of several ideas (e.g. positive thinking, determination).
Bhagavatula's findings concluded that immigrant women faced a wide range of social, cultural and economic pressures when they immigrated to Canada. Specifically, these women as a group had a wide range of educational qualification and skills, however a large number of them were under-employed or employed on a part-time basis.

The relevant studies discussed above speak for the need to "find out" what happens to the women after they take an ESL/job training program. The job entry and re-entry programs, appear to target a very small proportion of immigrant women, both in terms of numbers and the nature of skills required; and the long-term effectiveness of these training programs in terms of employment and other outcomes continues to very limited (Bhagavatula, 1989; Boyd, 1992; Doherty, 1992; Goldstein, 1994).

Finally, though not large, my study addressed immigrant women's issues as they relate to ESL and job skill training. There is a large body of literature looking at women's issues in the workplace and immigrant women's issues in the workplace. However, my focus was that of immigrant women's issues in a Canadian context in the health care training field. Emphasis has been on the broader issues with scant attention given to immigrant women training in the ESL/health care field.

2.2 Workplace ESL

We have learned a great deal in the past few years about refugee and immigrant language and employment education programs (Applebaum, 1984; Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Bell and Goldstein, 1993; Crandall, 1979; Crandall, 1989; Cumming & Gill, 1992; Goldstein, 1992; Goldstein, 1994; Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996; Isserlis, 1991; McGroarty & Scott, 1993; Peirce, 1994; Pharness, 1991; Rosembn, 1996; Svendsen & Krebs, 1984). However, there have not been many studies in the area of workplace or vocational ESL that have investigated or followed-up immigrant women after an ESL/combined skills program (Bell & Goldstein, 1993). Specifically, little literature exists documenting if such programs assisted women in obtaining jobs (Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996)
There is a continuum of definitions that exist within the field of women in the workplace about vocational/workplace ESL. Following, I will review key reports and studies that express ideas that were useful in my research.

Integrated courses, or content based courses, provide a relationship between teaching a subject and teaching a language as communication rather than just usage (Widdowson, 1983). Snow and Brinton (1988) proposed an adjunct model of language instruction as an ideal framework for English for Academic Purposes. They implemented this framework at the University of California, Los Angeles, in the freshman summer program for ESL students. This adjunct model focused on the academic writing, reading and study skills development. These activities were geared to stimulate students to think and learn in the target language. The materials used were specific and relevant content material which motivated the students in the language class (Snow & Brinton, 1988).

This model applies very well to academic or professional courses in particular. Also, the students must usually be at a high proficiency level and have a great deal of ESL and content support. Vocational and workplace English, as we shall see, has some connection to the Adjunct Model proposed by Snow and Brinton (1988). However, unlike the Adjunct Model which is heavily academic, vocational ESL has a strong work related component and is usually connected to a work site.

The usual meaning of workplace ESL is second language instruction held at the work site. Goals for such programs generally reflect a competency-based approach, particularly if they have been developed based on an employer's perception of participants' language needs for their positions. Thus, the language structures, functions, and vocabulary are drawn from the work life of the participants and can range from a concrete study of specialized vocabulary items to the more abstract and often convoluted language used in procedures manuals or benefits packets, to the language needed to communicate with co-workers (McGroarty & Scott, 1993).

Workplace ESL is training for employees within a company with limited English proficiency. In some ESL classrooms, depending on the goals of the students, part of the
instruction may be focused on one or more specific occupations.

Workplace-based/ESL programs have differed from traditional classroom-based literacy programs with a workplace component. They have taken place at the work site or at a location designated by the site, in response to needs identified by staff of the site's top level management, personnel officers or union representatives (Isserlis, 1991).

Also, workplace-based/ESL programs have incorporated the range of approaches and techniques found in many adult ESL programs, using activities from many different approaches: from competency-based and grammar-based approaches to the more participatory approaches such as whole language, language experience or a problem-posing approach (Roseblum, 1996).

Curricula for English in the workplace programs have grown out of the learner's language needs in an employment situation: To determine the language and communication needs of a workplace, we have to involve ourselves in the employment situation so that we come to know and feel the unique aspects of the workplace (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984).

However, English language instruction for immigrant men and women's economic protection and control over everyday living conditions and relationships, must be understood differently from the way current workplace English language training is often understood. To differentiate between the two types of practices, the term critical pedagogy has been used in contrast to the terms job-specific language training, vocational ESL, industrial English language training, ESL training, ESL instruction, ESL teaching, English language training, English language instruction, all of which are presently used in the field of workplace ESL (Goldstein, 1994).

The word critical in the term a critical pedagogy of ESL refers to an understanding of ESL practice as transformative. Like job-specific English language training, much is based on the teaching of English for everyday use and mobility in workplace situations. A critical pedagogy of ESL takes as its starting point the reality that we teach ESL to immigrant workers in an ethnically
stratified society where members of different ethnic groups have differential access to valued resources and power (Goldstein, 1994; Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996). Critical pedagogy of ESL goes beyond survival English. It teaches ESL learners the concepts and language of questioning, decision making and empowerment. In my study, the women discuss workplace issues connected to these concepts.

Problem-posing approaches are particularly relevant to immigrant and refugee ESL students who have little control over their lives (Belfiore and Burnaby, 1984; Sanguinetti, 1993; Wallerstein, 1985). A problem-posing ESL curriculum is centered on talk about shared conflicts and problematic interactions. Programs that are responsive to the learners' various backgrounds, personal needs and address particular workplace issues tend to have a low dropout rate and the program participants enter jobs that were originally beyond their reach (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Pharness, 1991).

There are a variety of workplace language programs. There are pre-workplace classes or ESL literacy programs, and work-centered approaches where second language instruction is held at the work site to reflect competency-based approaches based on an employer's perception of participants' language needs (McGroarty & Scott, 1993).

Also, there are *Bridging* training programs, which can be in part, another version of workplace ESL. *Bridging* can take many forms, it may include life skills and academic upgrading, specific job skills, job search and ESL with transferable and specific job skills and work placements for immigrant women (Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Marker Officials on Education and Training, 1994).

2.3 Vocational ESL

Vocational English as a second language (VESL) has been described as providing non-native English speaking students with the English necessary to complete vocational training successfully and secure and keep a job. The content of the VESL class is directly related to the content of the vocational class. VESL teachers coordinate their lessons with a vocational
instructor to determine what job-related language need to be taught when (McGroarty, 1992).

Occupation-specific VESL teaches the specialized language of a particular job. Depending on the setting in which it is taught, it may include the language skills necessary to function in a training program, to achieve certification and to perform satisfactorily on the job.

Vocational English as a second language (VESL) courses have usually concentrated on language for entry level jobs. Svensen and Krebs (1984) in an article discussing "English for the Job", relate their experiences and strategies that helped them design job-specific English classes.

The presence of many immigrant adults, especially in vocational training and retraining programs and in workplaces where specific English needs to be upgraded, has resulted in an expansion of specific-English instruction courses. Courses now include pre-employment English-basic English, cultural orientation, and skills required to see, find and maintain a job, usually at an entry-level, prevocational ESL programs that prepare students for vocational training; and specific VESL courses in welding, accounting, machine shop, etc.(Crandall, 1989).

Vivian (1984) described two courses in vocational ESL for students preparing for the occupations of nursing assistant and home health worker. These courses prepared them to meet the entrance requirements for the vocational training course and for the occupation specific course itself. The courses provided language support for the vocational courses in nursing assistance or home health. The VESL courses were developed and taught in close coordination with the content instructor of the vocational course. Instructional strategies in the more vocation-specific course, were designed to encourage language behavior which allowed students to assume responsibility for their own professional learning (Vivian, 1984).

There is an awareness that students need carefully coordinated language and content-area instruction. Moreover, as with Snow and Brinton's Adjunct course, there is the realization that instruction that uses concepts and procedures from vocation-related areas for teaching the language, increases the motivation and success of the student in both content areas and in English
language skills (Snow and Brinton, 1988; Crandall, 1986).

Furthermore, programs need to involve teachers and students in all aspects of design, implementation, and assessment; identify and build on the strengths that learners bring to instruction; and explain the focus of instruction so it does not simply develop specific skills but also increases individual's options as workers and as citizens (Isserlis, 1991).

There are two settings within which occupation-specific VESL is most often taught. In the vocational classroom, students are trained in a closely coordinated program in which they learn a vocational skill and related English. In the work experience site, the training combines work experience in a public or private sector work site with classroom VESL and vocational instruction. In whatever setting the VESL class exists, the instructor is challenged to determine the language requirements of the target vocations and then apply ESL teaching techniques to help the students achieve necessary proficiencies (West, 1984).

2.4 The Immigrant Services Agency and The Long Term Care Aide Program

Where and how then, does the program I evaluated fit in the continuum? The government sponsored LTCA/ESL training course in which I taught can be described as a VESL program. The content instructor (myself) and the ESL instructor coordinated the curriculum so it would be relevant and specific. However, it was student-centered in terms of considering the students' areas of expertise, English language ability and cultural background. The ESL instructor and myself, as the content instructor, approached the curriculum from a critical pedagogy ESL perspective.

As both a content and ESL teacher, I had the unique opportunity to bring together the content skills which I am knowledgeable about and my experience as an ESL instructor. This dual perspective allowed me to understand effectively the challenges faced by many of my immigrant women students.

2.5 Evaluation Research

The readings of this section introduced me to several ways of viewing and writing
research. They led me to much soul searching and, ultimately shifting. The review of evaluation research literature helped me in that shift, in finding "voice" and a perspective to express it. The following discussion presents the relevant research evaluation themes found in the literature, specifically, definitions and perspectives of what evaluation research can be.

Talmage (1982) suggests the three purposes most frequently used in definitions of evaluation are: 1) to render judgments on the worth of a program, 2) to assist decision-makers responsible for deciding policy, and 3) to serve a political function. He notes that these purposes are all included in an evaluation but may receive different emphases in different evaluation studies (Talmage, 1982).

Furthermore, two distinctive types of evaluations have been identified by evaluation researchers; formative and summative evaluation (Patton, 1994; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). Most educators have recognized that evaluation can serve a formative purpose, such as helping to improve a curriculum, or a summative purpose such as deciding whether that curriculum should be continued (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

If I juxtapose my question: how effective was the LTCA/ESL program in assisting the participants in finding employment and in improving their language skills? with Talmage's discussion of the three purposes used in definitions of evaluation outlined above, my question then can be defined as evaluation research.

However, Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that there is no right way to define evaluation, that definitions of evaluation are human mental constructions. They discuss the development of the evaluative process in terms of "generations" whereby each generation of evaluation represented a step forward, both in the range of content and level of sophistication.

Guba and Lincoln state that as a group, all generations have had certain flaws or defects which warranted raising the question of looking at a new generation of evaluation. The three flaws of major implications have bee: a tendency toward managerialism, a failure to accommodate value-pluralism and overcommitment to the scientific paradigm of inquiry.
They call for a challenge to the "facts", and encourage value disclosures and interpretations because "every act of evaluation becomes a political act" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; 1994).

As I explored further Social Constructivist perspectives, I began to feel at odds with my original approach to the study. Guba and Lincoln's statement that every act of evaluation becomes a political act and the feminist premise that "the personal is political" were key concepts that began my journey towards "voice".

Recently there has been wide interest among evaluation researchers on constructivist approaches to evaluating programs. The following discussion examines several perspectives. A major concern in many programs has been individualization. Individualization means matching program services to the needs of individual clients. While clients or students in a program may experience a similar program process, the meaning of the outcomes for their personal lives may be quite different. What has been needed is descriptive information about how clients' lives change over the time period of the program and in the period following the program. Qualitative methods and design strategies are particularly useful for evaluating programs which emphasize individualized client outcomes (Patton, 1989).

Another important approach in evaluation research is from a feminist perspective. The purpose of feminist evaluation research is to evaluate the effectiveness of different types of actions in meeting needs or solving problems. It is used to evaluate individual and organizational behavior, and to evaluate evaluation research itself (Reinharz, 1992). Feminist evaluation research tries to be sensitive to the danger of sexist bias creeping into the very process of evaluation, particularly in the form of sexist concepts and inappropriate comparisons. The feminist program evaluation requires that the evaluator and program recipient articulate their values (Reinharz, 1992).

Racial and ethnic minorities and the poor, who are disproportionately represented among social program participants, have been omitted as stakeholder participants in evaluation (Madison, 1992). Postmodern perspectives of evaluation have recognized evaluation as political
activity, carried out in political contexts (Lincoln, 1994). Lincoln calls for the inclusion of postmodernist theory such as critical theorists, feminist researchers and ethnic/racial/cultural studies researchers, in the models of evaluation, so as to make evaluation more flexible and more responsive to the changing contexts in the real world programs.

An important new direction for program evaluation has been to seek ways of actively involving people of color in evaluation processes; to think about multicultural perspectives in evaluation as involving different voices. The evaluation process needs to be sensitive to and empowering of, people of color and respectful of their diverse perspectives (Hueftle, et al. 1992). Lincoln (1991) pointed out that most people who evaluate social programs know very little about the minority program participant's world view, the appropriateness of program interventions in meeting their needs, or the programs' personal consequences for these clients.

The move in the social sciences more broadly is toward pluralism, and many social scientists now recognize that what is needed is many perspectives, many voices, before we can achieve deep understandings of social phenomena, and before we can assert that a narrative is complete (Lincoln, 1994).

The evaluator needs to seek out all possible stakeholders, in an effort to persuade them to speak, to grant us their narratives, to talk about the benefits and detriments of programs, and to invite them to have their perspectives represented in the studies. Furthermore, it has been suggested that all stakeholders should have access to the text which has been constructed about them, and should have the opportunity to respond (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln, 1994).

Finally, evaluation research points towards the need for a collaborative and participatory relationship between the respondents and the researcher; with "the Other's" voice in the text (Lincoln, 1994).

Yet, participation in the evaluation, in and of itself, may not ensure that traditionally marginalized groups will be heard during the evaluation process. In their paper, Mertens et al. (1994) offered an alternative process, "emancipatory evaluation", a perspective that encompassed
the views of feminists, minorities and persons with disabilities. Specifically, this paradigm placed central importance on the lives and experiences of the diverse groups that have traditionally marginized, analyzed asymmetric power relationships, examined how results of social inquiry on inequities have been linked to political and social action and used an emancipatory approach in evaluation.

In this approach, the evaluator is required to be sensitive to gender, race and disability issues, search out inequitable power relations, identify them and address them. Also, the emancipatory perspective reminds the evaluator of her/his position: to define diverse groups, to select evaluation/research questions and interpret the outcomes. Through these actions, evaluators not only contribute to images concerning these diverse groups but also contribute to knowledge building about them.

Empowerment evaluation, emancipatory evaluation and different kinds of naturalistic evaluations approaches tend to use criteria which judge a program depending upon the particular beliefs, goals or preferences of the client or other stakeholders (Stufflebeam, 1994) and they include and consider the stakeholder groups in the evaluation process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, et al. 1994).

In my study, I began with a questionnaire to find specific outcomes. Participation, voice and other issues were not part of this approach. Yet, I saw myself as a facilitator to the stories these immigrant women wanted to tell. So, how could I bring together this new shift in perspective and my own reflection to this quantitative approach?

Also, I understood that as an immigrant woman, I was sensitive to their experiences and life stories. The women were open, candid and giving of themselves and their homes. I wanted to truly "listen" to the women in my study.

This selective literature review helped in the journey towards my own garden of knowledge. I found many seeds strewn along my path: seeds of self-awareness, of voice and of understanding. In time, some of these seeds began to germinate and some actually bloomed. In
particular, the review of existing perspectives on evaluation research made me much more reflective of the methods I used in this study. The "seed" for the qualitative section of this research study was planted partly by these readings, specifically by Hitchcock and Hughes' perspectives (1995) on evaluation research. I wanted to facilitate the voice of "other" to tell their stories and in Hopkins' framework (as cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995), these voices could be heard.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) see evaluation as examining a set of practices with regard to their functioning, efficacy and quality. As with any other kind of research, evaluation researchers will collect data in much the same ways as other researchers, via observations, interviewing, the use of questionnaires, testing. Furthermore, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) define evaluation in the following way:

- Evaluation is not neutral, is systematic, is about products and processes, is concerned with policy and practice, it defines and explores effectiveness. It can be a process of curriculum inquiry, it may be central to professional development, is part of the quality assurance process. Evaluation and improvements are linked (p. 31).

Also, two questions arise from Hitchcock and Hughes's perspective:

1. Is it purely educational research or applied or action research?

2. What are the most appropriate forms of data collection for evaluation studies? (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). These two questions truly reflect the very same ones I had. The model they present, allowed me to re-frame my research study and bring to it a qualitative part. Hopkins' approach to evaluation is the framework that best suits this shift.
Within this model, I saw room for both my original quantitative approach with the questionnaire and my desire to bring a more participatory, feminist approach to the study. In terms of the scale of my study, Nunan (1992) supports the small-scale program evaluations, for they can provide an excellent research training ground for graduate students.

2.6 Program Evaluation in ESL

In language programs, specifically ESL programs, evaluation research has examined what happens in a language program, and it usually serves as the basis for judgments and decisions about these programs. It has focused almost entirely on specific issues of methodology and
measurement. It rarely addressed the full range of concerns of language teaching programs (Lynch, 1990).

The context-adaptive model suggested by Lynch (1990) features flexibility in responding to the range of contextual constraints that program evaluation can encounter. In a series of steps and considerations, the model can be adapted to different contexts, combining qualitative and quantitative methods and encourages a multi-strategy approach.

Lynch (1992) also conducted a study at the University of California, Los Angeles, to investigate the two major approaches to program evaluation: quantitative, experimental evaluation and qualitative, naturalistic evaluation. He concluded that program evaluation should probably always require a traditional, quantitative component. This design can give a useful picture of the extent to which the program reached or not reached its goals. The qualitative data should also be used in evaluation. It provides different viewpoints, it represents an inside view. Furthermore, the linking of qualitative and quantitative data can be useful and illuminating (Lynch, 1992). Lynch's study supported the new approach I chose to work with, combining the questionnaire with a qualitative interview.

Beretta (1992) in his writings about "What can be learned from the Bangalore evaluation", discusses his own personal shift of perspective after conducting a program evaluation. Specifically, evaluations take place in the real world, where results will always be tentative and non-conclusive at best (Beretta, 1992). I found his disclosure of how he would have done things differently, encouraging and refreshing. It supported my own growth as a researcher.

With the increase of ESL/vocational skills/workplace instructional programs, a need has arisen for evaluation of program effectiveness (Burt & Saccomano, 1995). Evaluations of ESL workplace programs have attempted to determine if the attention given to improving basic skills and English language proficiency has made a change in the participant's lives. They also identified practices associated with program effectiveness so that successes could be replicated (Burt & Saccomano, 1995).
Lastly, evaluation has reached a stage of development where an evaluator can construct an evaluation using elements from different models or even constructions that the models do not encompass. Thus, evaluation designs can consist of a complex set of evidence to be examined from an eclectic approach and also employ a combination of data collection procedures (House, 1994; Lincoln, 1994; Lynch, 1990; Patton, 1989).

The study I conducted was a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. I utilized Hopkins' (1989) evaluative framework to position myself within the context of Evaluation research. A feminist perspective was the underlying epistemological position of the study.

The ultimate goal was to bring the women's voices forward, so that they could share with us, their opinions, perspectives and feelings about a LTCA/ESL program and how it affected their lives.
CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

In this chapter, I will first address my methodological positioning. Then, I will give a general background of the context and the sites involved in this program. Finally, I will present demographic information about the participants. It is my hope that this background information will assist the reader in following my footsteps.

3.1 A Change in the Journey, from a Bureaucratic to a Democratic Path

The original central purpose of this study was to find out how effective a long term care aide/ESL (LTCA/ESL) program was in assisting the participants in finding employment and in improving their language skills. For this original question, I chose to use a questionnaire. This questionnaire obtained background information from the respondents, asked about their experiences in the program and about employment status. At that time, my perspective was more positivist, seeking achievement only. The questionnaire seemed to allow me to collect descriptive data that would answer this question.

However, after the inception of my original question, my perspective changed, expanded and grew. This growth came about from courses I took in research design and as I read for the literature review. I came to understand my own epistemological position in the research process. The readings opened up the world of qualitative research, specifically feminist research, spinning a web of questions and self-reflection (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Hueftle Stockdill et al., 1992; Madison, 1992; Mertens, et al., 1994; Peirce, 1996; Nunan, 1992; Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Patton, 1989; Reinharz, 1992).

In the readings, I found a methodological position that seemed to echo my change in perspective. The evaluation process includes focusing upon a problem, collecting and analyzing relevant data, communicating findings and making recommendations. In this study, the focus is
on educational research and on finding the most appropriate form of data collection. Evaluation in the way it is designed can be purely qualitative or it can be a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

The first part of my research was the questionnaire. The questionnaire provided me with quantitative data that answered specific questions. However, in the process of gathering and analyzing the data, I found myself wanting to create a forum to give voice to the women in my study. I was not only interested in outcomes but in how these women made sense of their own experiences and talked about their situations.

The following visual attempts to explain my growth as a researcher and clarifies my positions from an epistemology and methodology perspective.

Figure 2 - Visual description of my position within the research paradigms.
Hopkins' framework to evaluation (as cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995) offers an overview of social and education research (see figure 1 in Chapter Two). I chose to use this framework to navigate the changes in perspective.

I originally positioned myself, under the research design of Bureaucratic, having a clear definition of my role, prepared to examine achievement and to report about my findings. Yet, as I found my own voice, the methodology moved to a Democratic design. It mirrored the participation of the women, their willingness to verbally share their stories and the findings.

To summarize once again, as outlined in Chapter One, the purpose and design of my study was to seek an increased understanding of the impact of an LTCA/ESL program on a group of immigrant women living and studying in Vancouver. It also addresses the gap in the literature regarding specific outcomes such as employment figures and students' perceptions of a combined-skills program. In addition, this study attempts to articulate the voices of some of the women, illustrating their opinions and perceptions.

Specifically, this research study was a two-part research evaluation of a LTCA/ESL Program in Vancouver. The first part of the study was quantitative in its approach; a questionnaire was used to find out if former participants of the program were subsequently employed as care aides. The questionnaire also asked for the women's perceptions of the program, its strengths and weaknesses.

Part one, the quantitative portion, attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How effective was a B.C. and Federal government funded LTCA/ESL program in preparing a group of immigrant women in Vancouver for the workplace? Specifically, how many of the women found employment after taking the course?
2. How effective was the program in preparing students for the workplace in terms of English language proficiency, basic job skills and specific vocational skills?

The second part had a qualitative perspective. I interviewed six women who had completed the questionnaires two months after I received them. The main purpose of this qualitative section was to seek and hear the immigrant women's personal accounts, insights and voices about their experiences both during the program and after the program. This portion of the study was an extension of my shifting and growth as a researcher. Here, I attempted to explore the following questions:

1. How did the women feel about the program in terms of its strengths and weaknesses?
2. How did they feel about the program after graduation?
3. What insights would they offer an immigrant woman thinking about taking such a course?

3. 2 Context and Location

The LTCA/ESL program at the immigrant services agency where I conducted my study was a provincially and federally government funded combined-skills vocational program. This particular immigrant services agency is a twenty year old non-profit organization whose mandate is to advocate for immigrants, assist them with settlement and employment issues. The society also offers literacy, ESL and combined ESL/job training classes.

ESL/combined skills programs such as the LTCA/ESL program provide immigrant men and women with a training allowance, child care expenses, transportation expenses and uniform/material expenses. The LTCA/ESL program I taught ran for eight months. The objective of the program was to train and/or retrain immigrant persons to work with elderly or dependent people in an institution. Each program had twenty immigrant students. I taught in two
of the programs.

The content/skills taught were based on the LTCA Provincial Curriculum designed by Faye Ferguson (1992). The curriculum proposed was a competency-based one. It describes specific skills which each student has to master prior to finishing the course. These skills were divided into concepts of health and healing, therapeutic communication, psycho-motor nursing skills, responsibility and accountability, safety standards and problem solving approaches. The language part of the program used activities based on the content curriculum as well as on competency-based approaches, grammar-based and participatory approaches such as whole language.

At the end of the five in-class months, the students did a two week supervised clinical experience at a hospital. This hospital was in Vancouver and is a well known multicultural hospital. The students and I were placed in the extended care unit within this hospital. The extended care unit has dependent and frail elderly people who needed 24 hour nursing care. I supervised them every day during their full shift. It was in this context that one could say that the language learning became more "workplace" as I began to respond to their language needs which arose from situations with their clients, co-workers and peers. This approach could be called "learner-centered" within a workplace situation (McGroarty & Scott, 1993).

After these two weeks, the students were placed for three weeks in different care facilities where they worked closely with the staff and had minimal supervision from me, the nursing instructor.

The Bridging part of the program was taught by guest lecturers and the program's manager. In this latter part of the program, workshops were given on job search skills and on work placements issues.

3. 3 The Women that Participated in the Study

Each program had twenty immigrant students. In the first program there were all female students and in the second program there were four men out of twenty students. These students
had been selected from a pool of about eighty to one hundred applicants each time. The selection process was based on financial needs and on an English language assessment test. All students had to have at least a low intermediate level of English to be able to be considered for the program. Interviews were then conducted for suitability by the coordinator of the program and myself, the health sciences instructor. The forms and interview guides were dictated by specific guidelines set up by the Federal Government.

The women I sent the questionnaires to, had an intermediate to advance level of English. I telephoned them prior to sending the questionnaire, to ask permission verbally, to check for understanding regarding the purpose of the study and to connect with my former students again. I was able to locate 27 women out of 36, all of whom I sent questionnaires to. The rest of the women, as I found out, either changed addresses, or did not want to participate and some moved back to their native country.

3.3.1 Demographic Information

The following data is a broad summary of the general demographic patterns of the group of women.

Eighteen women out of 27 responded back to the questionnaire. The 18 women ranged in age from 32 years old to 48 years old.

Country of origin: Table 1 summarizes the surveyed women's countries of origin.
Table 1

Summary of countries of origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within this group, approximately 45% were from Asia, 25% were from Central and Latin America, 20% were from Eastern Europe, 15% were from Iran. Also, the range of time since the women immigrated to Canada was from three years to twelve years.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the women's occupational background and the kind of work they did upon arrival to Canada.
Table 2

List of the profession or occupation in the country of origin and the type of work the women did on arrival into Canada.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession/occupation in country of origin</th>
<th>Type of work on arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nurse and midwife</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Supervisor of a linen company</td>
<td>worker in a linen factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nurse</td>
<td>not working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Accountant</td>
<td>sewing machine operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nurse</td>
<td>salesclerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nursing aide</td>
<td>care aide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Computer operator</td>
<td>machine operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Chinese medicine doctor</td>
<td>waitress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kindergarten teacher</td>
<td>housekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Nursing assistant</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Elementary school teacher</td>
<td>housekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Nurses' aide</td>
<td>housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Nurse</td>
<td>waitress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Leather technician</td>
<td>dietary aide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Housekeeper and nurses' aide</td>
<td>housekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Nurse</td>
<td>packer in a fish factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Nurse</td>
<td>not working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Accountant</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fifty-five percent of the respondents had been nurses or nurse's aides in their native country. One student had been an MD in her native country.

The amount of English language courses that these women took in Canada varied in range: zero/self taught (3); under one year (7); over one year but under three years (5); three years or more (2).

3. 4 Part One: The Questionnaire /The Bureaucratic Position

3. 4. 1 Data Collection:

The findings are presented in two parts: part one, the findings from the questionnaire and part two, the findings and insights from the interview with six women who had responded to the questionnaire.

In part one, I used a questionnaire (Appendix 2) to obtain information from two groups of women who had taken the LTCA/ESL combined program at immigrant services agency in the same year, 1994-95. A questionnaire was used to ask specific questions and for economical reasons (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

From an evaluation mode of inquiry, the questionnaire provided me with quantitative data related to specific outcomes. My role in this process could be described as that of a consultant, trying to find out if the goals of the program, i.e., employment had been achieved. This role very much echoes the model presented by Hopkins (cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

The questionnaire was developed and adapted from an existing one given to the immigrant services agency LTCA/ESL students shortly after completing the program. The "End of Program Questionnaire" had been administered to these former students prior to graduating. This questionnaire was designed by the coordinator of this LTCA/ESL program to report outcomes to the government agencies sponsoring the students. At the time when I developed the questionnaire for the study, I saw the previous one as a type of pilot questionnaire. Additional
questions were designed to clarify and to expand on the questions of the original questionnaire.

Twenty-seven questionnaires were mailed out. Permission was obtained from the participants via an explanatory letter. I requested the participants to try to complete the questionnaire within a month. The questionnaires were mailed out with a letter of explanation, a consent form for permission to contact them at a later time and a return self-addressed envelope with paid postage. The questionnaire contained three types of questions, closed-ended questions, Likert-type scale questions and open-ended questions.

3. 4. 2 Data Analysis

Data obtained from the questionnaires was used to depict a picture of who these immigrant women were. It describes the various multicultural backgrounds, age, length of time in Canada, their previous education, previous employment and present employment.

Likert-type scale items were used to measure feelings of students towards different aspects of the ESL component and the long term care aide (basic nursing skills) component of the program. These scales were chosen because they provided greater flexibility. The descriptors on the scales varied to fit the nature of the question or statement (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

The questionnaire also contained open ended questions so as to allow the participants to write and express what they thought was relevant and important. As this was a small group of participants, I felt that the open ended questions would generate salient issues or themes.

I found two specific approaches which guided me through the process of analyzing the data. Kvale in his book "Interviews, An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing" (1996), summarizes the literature and provides an overview of the five main approaches to the analysis of meanings.
Five approaches to the analysis of meanings.

Condensation: an abridgment of the meanings expressed by the respondents/interviewees. The statements are compressed into succinct, brief formulations.

Categorization: the interview is coded into categories such as "+" or "-", indicating occurrence and non-occurrence of a phenomenon. It can reduce a large text into a few tables and figures.

Narrative: focuses on the stories told during an interview and works out their structures and their plots.

Interpretation: goes beyond a structuring of the manifest meanings of a text to deeper and more or less speculative interpretations of the text.

Ad Hoc: An eclectic approach. A variety of commonsense approaches to the text interview as well as sophisticated textual or quantitative methods.

Figure 3-Interviews, An introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing: From, Kvale (1996, pp.191-204).

In this study, I used Kvale's (1996) framework to analyze the data. There are two parts to the analysis of the data. In part 1, I utilized the Condensation approach. Condensing the responses of the Likert-type questions and the open-ended questions allowed me to succinctly
present the meaning expressed by the women. In part 2, I chose to use the Interpretation approach. I interpreted the six women's responses and categorized them into themes. Then, I related the findings from the questionnaire to the comments in the interviews. The following quote illustrates Kvale's perspective (1996) and supports my choice of methodology:

The researcher has a perspective on what is investigated and interprets the data from this perspective. The interpreter goes beyond what is directly said to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in a text (p. 201).

In the model by Hopkins (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995), the questionnaire could be placed under the Bureaucratic evaluative approach, reporting the women's employment status and their opinions about the quality of the program. On the other hand, the interviews can be positioned under Democratic evaluation research, the findings are seen as non-recommendatory and more illuminative.

Indeed, the interviews blossomed into insightful voices, shedding more light onto this study; beyond goals of employment and specific language issues. It is at this point of the research process, that my journey began to include more of my voice among the voices of the women. The voices seemed to illuminate my path towards my garden.

3.5 Part Two: The Interviews/The Democratic Position

Part two of this chapter is very much the result of a soul-searching journey to identify my own position within the research paradigms. My original research question and questionnaire expanded, reflecting the process of adapting a feminist research perspective and a more "democratic" evaluation process (Hopkins, 1995; Reinharz, 1992).

I chose to further expand the original question and I added a semi-structured interview. The key reason for this choice was that use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal means by which feminists attempt to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives (Graham, 1984; Reinharz, 1992)
3. 5. 1 Data Collection

The purpose of the interviews was to increase my understanding about the data I had collected in the questionnaire, and to seek active involvement from the women, to bring their voices in the construction of the data about their own situations. Hopkins' table of evaluation research helped me with this change in methodological perspective (Hitchock & Hughes, 1995). In his model, the democratic design encompasses a more collaborative, open and qualitative approach. The interviews were more inclusive and brought the women's own stories into the study.

In Mary Belenky and her colleagues study of women's ways of knowing (1986), the interview/case study approach was used intensively and exclusively. Although they included certain questions, the rest of the questions were open ended:

Because we wanted to hear what the women had to say in their own terms rather than test our preconceived hypotheses ...we proceeded inductively, opening our ears to the voices and perspectives of women so that we might begin to hear the unheard and unimagined (p. 11)

Feminist researchers find interviewing appealing for the following reasons: it offers researchers access to people's thoughts, ideas, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher (Belenky et al., 1986; Reinharz, 1992). This asset is particularly important for the study of women because in this way learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether (Mertens, et al., 1994; Reinharz, 1992).

Thus, in part two of this study, I analyzed the interviews of the six immigrant women and interpreted their responses. Understanding the background of the women and having been their teacher two years earlier, I feel, helped me in gaining a perspective about this study and thus, in interpreting the interview responses (Kvale, 1996; Mertens, et al., 1994; Reinharz, 1992).

Finally, I wanted to provide a framework within which the respondents could express
their own understandings, views and opinions in their own terms. I chose to interview six women. The women were from different countries: China (3), Hong Kong (1), India (1) and Iran (1). They ranged in age from 23 years of age to 43 years. At the time of the interviews, these women had been in Canada from three years to six years.

The women were selected for this part of the study because they met the following requirements. First, they had successfully completed the LTCA/ESL program at immigrant services agency within the year of my instruction there. Second, they had completed the questionnaire and they willingly volunteered consent to being interviewed. Third, these women had the time to meet with me while other women had agreed to being interviewed but due to scheduling difficulties, could not meet. Fourth, the women were in a variety of situations in terms of employment and education. Fifth, six women seemed a realistic number to interview with some depth, taking into account the purpose of the interviews.

3. 5. 2 Data Analysis:

In reviewing the literature about interviewing, I realized I needed to clarify how I positioned myself within the context of analyzing and interpreting interview data. The following section is a discussion of an specific approach to this.

First, I will assume that the interviewer and interviewee actively construct some version of the world appropriate to what we take to be self-evident about the person to whom we are speaking and the context of the question (Silverman, 1993)

However, there are issues that arise about the status of interview data:

1. What is the relation between interviewee's accounts and the world they describe?
2. How is the relation between interviewer and interviewee to be understood?
   Is it governed by standardized techniques or is it taken for granted knowledge of interpersonal relations? (Silverman, 1993)

There are two positions which could answer these questions: The positivist version and interactionist version. According to the positivist version, the interview data give us access to
"facts" about the world, the primary issue is to generate data which are valid and reliable. The Interactionist version views interviewees as experiencing subjects who actively construct their social worlds; the primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences the main ways to achieve this are unstructured, open-ended interviews usually based upon prior, in-depth participant observation. Following is an explanation of these two positions.

**Two versions of interview data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of data</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>Facts about behavior and attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactionism</td>
<td>Authentic experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4: Interpreting Qualitative Data. From Silverman (1993, p.91)*.

For this study, I have chosen to view the data from an interactionist perspective. It follows my own naturalistic positioning. Also, feminist interviewing involves commitment on the part of the researcher to form a relationship, and on the part of the interviewees to participate with sincerity (Reinharz, 1992).

In the actual interviews, I used an open ended, semi-structured interview style. I identified general areas I wanted to cover, but I let the interviewee's responses determine the order of subjects, the time spent on each, and the introduction of additional issues (Reinharz, 1992).

The reason for conducting these interviews was to explore the lived world of the women with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the data collected in the questionnaire (Kvale, 1996). I had a thematic context from which to begin the interviews. This context helped me connect to the findings from the questionnaire (Kvale, 1996).
I decided to use an interview guide to assist me with these interviews. For a semi-structured interview, the guide usually contains an outline of topic/questions to be covered. I wanted to have a "loose" interview, an interview with a focus but with room for exploration. (Kvale, 1996).

I conducted semi-structured interviews based on some of the following issues to explore and leading questions. Following are some of the questions I asked:

1. How did you feel about the program while you were in it? How did you cope during the course?

2. How do you feel about the course now? What has changed if anything?
   What has not changed?

3. If you were speaking to a woman thinking about taking such a course, what would you tell her?

4. What would you wish and/or want in the future?

5. How do you feel about continuing your education? Tell me about it.

The interviews took place at a convenient time for the respondents, in either their homes or at coffee shops. In two instances, the women's children were present. The interviews were audio taped and they were aware that they could request the taping be stopped at any time. Most of the interviews lasted between one hour to one hour and forty-five minutes.

The taped interviews were transcribed and analyzed to bring light and voice to some of the themes that had emerged from the questionnaires. The women expressed their feelings about the program, their hardships about trying to find employment, their insights on immigrant issues and the realities of their lives two years later. The voices were then connected to themes that seemed to be present in both the questionnaire and the interviews.

3. 6 The Trinity of Reliability, Validity and Generalizability

Verification of knowledge is commonly discussed in the social sciences in relation to the
concepts of reliability, validity and generalizability. The main emphasis in the discussion below will be on the concept validity, as it relates to interview knowledge (Kvale, 1996; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993)

At this point, I would like to briefly address the issues of validity and reliability within this small scale study. The literature on these issues is varied and can be viewed within a continuum of postmodern perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Kvale, 1996; Lather, 1995; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Silverman, 1993). However, for the purpose of this paper, I shall discuss validity and reliability from a moderate point of view (Kvale, 1996). They can be viewed within the context of accepting the possibility of specific local, personal, and community forms of truth, with a focus on daily life and local narrative (Kvale, 1996).

3. 6.1 Reliability

Reliability pertains to the consistency of the research findings. It is defined as "the extent to which independent researchers could discover the same phenomena and to which there is agreement between the researcher and participants" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). In quantitative research, reliability refers to the consistency of the instrument and administration of it in the study, and in qualitative research, it refers to the consistency of the researcher's interactive style, data collection, analysis and interpretation of meaning (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

In the quantitative part of my study, I sent the participants a questionnaire that had been administered prior to the end of the program by the manager of the program and myself. This questionnaire had also been given to other previous groups of women who had taken the same program. The questionnaire I sent the women was modified to clarify certain questions and the format changed to follow a consistent style.

In the qualitative part, I examined the reliability of the findings in relation to interviewing, transcribing and analyzing. In terms of interviewing, the leading questions in the interview guide were derived from the questionnaire's responses and the respondents' comments. For example,
one of the questions, "If you had to give advice to other women thinking about this program, what would you tell them?" was developed as a lead question that would engage the women in telling me what they believed were the benefits of the program.

The decisive issue is then not whether the lead questions may make the interview process unreliable, but whether they will lead in important directions, producing new, trustworthy and interesting knowledge (Kvale, 1996).

In terms of the transcription, I transcribed the interviews verbatim from the tape. That is I did not change or correct the respondent's grammar or sentence structure. I also used Kvale's "Guidelines for Reporting Interview Quotes" for consistency (Kvale, 1996). In the analysis section, I analyzed the questionnaire by using Kvale's Meaning Condensation approaches and for the interviews I used the Meaning Interpretation and Categorization approach (Kvale, 1996). This was a small scale study, so control issues for the analysis were not as critical. However, when I categorized the interviews into "themes", I presented examples of the interviews that had led me to identify those "themes". In this manner, I explained how I had arrived at that possible theme.

3. 6. 2 Internal validity

Ascertaining validity involves issues of truth and knowledge. Validity can also be divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of the phenomena match the realities of the world (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). It involves strategies such as lengthy data collection time, use of participant's language, participant interviews conducted in natural settings and self-monitoring (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). This study follows these strategies. My journey of self-awareness and of finding my own voice speaks to the self-monitoring guideline in particular.

From this perspective, I chose to position myself as an "Interactionist", viewing the participants' experiences as authentic (Silverman, 1993). Also, I considered the analysis of
the study. In particular I examined whether the logic of the themes seemed sound. I cross-referenced the themes from the interviews with the open-ended questions in the questionnaire part of the study and found that the "themes" were similar in content.

Ultimately, I made no claims but categorized the women's voices into themes that surfaced in the study. The women told their perspectives in their own terms, constructing the data about their lives.

3. 6. 3 External Validity or Generalizability

In qualitative research, external validity is not treated as a probability sample of the large universe. Instead, the researcher aims at extending the understandings of a situation. Detailed descriptions can help others understand similar situations and extend these understandings in subsequent research (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). The issue of qualitative generalization has been treated particularly in relation to case studies, and three forms of generalizations from case studies have been outlined by Stake (1994). The three forms are naturalistic, statistical and analytic.

Naturalistic generalization seems most appropriate for this study. It rests on personal experience. It develops for the person as a function of experience (Stake, 1994). Naturalistic generalization derives from tacit knowledge of how things are and may lead to expectations rather than formal prediction (Stake, 1994).

In my study, the understandings discussed were derived both from personal experience as an ESL and nursing instructor and from the women's very words.

3. 7 Assumptions

Finally, I would like to clarify the assumptions by which this study was conducted.

a. That the participants of the study understood the questions and answered them honestly, and

b. That the participants in this study were able to accurately recapture and articulate their experiences in the vocational/ESL program and their search for employment.
CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussion

My journey towards my own garden of knowledge was filled with gifts of stories and insights that the women shared with me. I view the findings from the questionnaires and the interviews in this light.

This chapter discusses the findings from both the questionnaires and the interviews. The data I collected provides insights to the women's perceptions about the LTCA/ESL program and presents some of the women's stories about their lives after the program. There are two parts the chapter. In the first part, I will discuss the quantitative data obtained from the analysis of responses to the questionnaires. Here, I describe the sample and the participants' employment status. In this section, I present and discuss the women's opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the program, together with specific discussion of the two components of the program, the LTCA and the ESL component. In the second part of the chapter, the qualitative data gathered from analyzing the interviews are discussed. Themes arising from the analysis are presented and illustrated by quotes from the interviews; illuminations will then be highlighted.

4.1 Part One: The Questionnaire

In the quantitative part of this study, I sent out a questionnaire. There were two types of questions in the questionnaire. There were questions that specifically asked for demographic information and employment status and questions that focused on the respondents' perceptions about the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for the workplace, in terms of English language proficiency, basic job skills and specific vocational skills.

Eighteen women out of 27 responded. These 18 women were from nine different countries and had immigrated to Canada from 12 years to 3 years ago. The age range was also varied, from 31 years old to 48 years old. About half of the respondents had been working as professional care givers in their native country. The following is a summary of the answers from
the questionnaires.

4.1.1 Employment Status

The first part asked the respondents about their employment status, type of position and length of time in that position. The results were very positive. Of the 18 women, 17 were employed as long term care aides in facilities and in home care situations; one woman was not employed as a care aide. Out of the 18 women, the length of time to find employment as a care aide since graduation from the LTCA/ESL combined program, ranged from immediately after graduation to one year. Thus, 94% of the women surveyed had jobs working as a long term care aides.

4.1.2 Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program

The questionnaire had two different kinds of question formats, Likert-style and open ended questions. These questions, which explored the women's perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program, were divided into the ESL component and the LTCA component of the program. I chose to use open-ended questions because I felt that open ended questions would allow the women to give more comprehensive feedback and to share their perceptions of the program. Lincoln (1994) points out that most people who evaluate programs that involve minority groups know very little about the minority program participant's world view, the appropriateness of program interventions in meeting their needs, or the programs' personal consequences for these clients. In this section I report on the overall effectiveness of the program for this specific group of women and on their perceptions about the two distinct components of the program; the ESL and the LTCA components.

One key open ended question in the questionnaire asked the reasons that they had applied to the LTCA/ESL program. Many of the women responded by saying that they had done this kind of work in their country of origin and that they wanted to go back to their professions. Many wanted to work with people and some wanted the English support and training which would make them employable. Another important reason was to have jobs that were similar to
The data showed that 55% of the women surveyed had been health care givers in their native country. Following, are some examples of the women's explanations, which will be reproduced in italics throughout the remainder of this chapter and are not edited for grammar or punctuation.

I was auxiliary nurse midwife in India. So, I was use to working in the hospitals.

I like work in the hospital.

Because I worked as a nursing aide in my country and is natural every body like to work here the same work we did before.

I was a RN in China. I like my job. I like to have the same or similar job in Canada.

This data seems to corroborate my understanding about the women that applied to the program. The women who had been nurses, doctors or studying to be one in their native countries seemed to want to enter and work in the health care system in Canada at an entry level position. Their choice to become LTCA's did not seem to be greatly influenced by the fact that a LTCA has a lower status than most of the women's previous employment. Nevertheless, another frequent response was that the women really liked working with the elderly. The following quote is typical:

Because I really like the elderly people, I enjoy to talk to them and do something for them.

The women perceived many strengths in the overall program. They believed that the program was an important step towards financial security. They also stated that it increased their self-confidence and helped them gain an overall feeling of being a productive new Canadian. Furthermore, they felt that the program gave them the opportunity to use their education from their home country and their past work experiences to good use in Canada.

Lastly, 87% of the respondents pointed out that the ESL and LTCA classes were effective in preparing them to function as long term care aides. These statements seem to
sum up their perceptions about the program:

Because we have a lot time (8 months) to practice, and assimilate, understand and to prove ourselves that we became conscientious of our role.

I help myself a lot.

From my experiences as a LTCA instructor in a combined-skills program, I feel that these responses truly represent the women's perceptions of the overall program. The strength of this type of program is the training of women (and men) in both ESL and a vocational skill in a relatively short period of time. The students upon graduation can usually find employment in the vocation that they were trained in. I have watched many immigrant women blossom into self-sufficient and confident individuals after having taken this program.

4.1.3 The ESL Component

This section reports of the women's responses to the part of the questionnaire which specifically addressed the ESL component of the course. The eighteen women provided feedback on the ESL classes. Both the Likert-style questions and open-ended questions asked how the women felt about their English language skills after the program.

Their responses on how much their English had changed/improved since starting the program were mixed. Fifty-four percent of the women commented that their English language skills had improved considerably through their involvement in the program. The following comments illustrate these perceptions:

I learned many things that in regular English class I didn't know.

My written and spoken English have improved more than I expected.

Have courage to speak.

I learned many words to use in the hospitals.

The other 46% felt that the ESL component of the program could have provided more conversation, more content-related role playing and more connection to the LTCA component
of the program. The responses that follow reflect their opinions:

(My English improved but not as much as I expected because the lack of conversation.)

(The English we should have be practicing and talk to people. Make you understand a person with her own needs.)

(We need more practice in speaking, the other was okay.)

These results appear to reflect the pedagogical methods of the ESL instructor teaching in the program at that time, and their comments need to be understood within this context. However, the women remind ESL and content teachers of the importance of practicing speaking and listening skills which relate to the workplace.

Finally, the participants gave feedback on how the program could be improved. The women wanted to see more time spent in the content area and more practical experience with the elderly. Also, they wanted more job finding skills and support. From a language perspective, the women expressed the need for more oral practice, role playing and communication techniques related specifically to working with an older person. These latter comments were also made in their opinion of the ESL part of the program. The comments that follow illustrate their suggestions:

(I would like to have more practice and intructions in job search.)

(I think how to understand the elderly people, including heir believing, activity, spirits' need.)

Fifty-five percent of the women seemed to feel that the ESL class provided enough vocabulary and content specific language activities to be able to function in a long term care facility or home support agency. These quotes support this summary:

(Yes. I can use a lot of terminologies to describe the condition of a patient accurately.)

(Yes, definitely in some very stressful or emergeencee situations.)
Everybody can understand me immediately.

The rest of the women felt that the ESL class could have been more content specific. These comments echo their perceptions:

My english improved when we had nursing, not when we had english time.

Because never is the same the practice as the work place.

It was not useful in many situations because we didn't learn different situation in our classroom.

The women's perceptions of how the ESL and content classes were connected were quite positive. Sixty percent of the respondents perceived that the LTCA classes were well coordinated. However, the other 40% felt that the ESL teacher needed to have background knowledge or an understanding of the nursing content in the LTCA class.

The comments below exemplify their varied perceptions:

The english teacher taught the words and special medication words in the class.

We had our class in the morning and in the afternoon, we reviewed the vocabulary and did a little games practising our new words.

I had vocabulary and grammar practice that connected with LTCA class.

English instructor didn't had that much experience with nursing, that's why she did same content.

I think were the lack of combination between ESL teacher and LTCA instructor.

This last comment, though valuable, may have been influenced by my own background, as I have both nursing and ESL training and thus, I was very attuned to the language needs of these former students in the LTCA classes. However, it may be an unrealistic expectation for future students in a LTCA/ESL or similar programs to have an ESL instructor that has both content and ESL training. Instead, there needs to be coordination time for the ESL and LTCA classes and on-going conversations between the ESL and the LTCA instructor to share expertise, concerns and suggestions.
These women also felt that there needed to be more subject-related English. The following quote is an example of this perception:

_The english course, no enough subject relate the nursing._

_Recently, LTCA is difficult to find job. I think learn more skills may be help to find job. The skills like housekeeper, food preparation, those are works related to facility._

The women's perceptions of the content classes were very encouraging. Ninety-four percent of the respondents felt that they clearly understood the language and content in the LTCA class. One respondent clearly illustrates this:

_I had no difficulties to understand what I was taught in the lessons._

_My instructor help me with my pronunciation and encourage me to talk with others. She was able to explain anything on our english level._

Some of the women felt very strongly about the need to know about different approaches to speaking with elderly residents. The quotes that follow reflect their opinions:

_More conversation practice. Every day conversation._

_The same language that residents use every day._

Furthermore, the respondents gave feedback on how the ESL class could be improved. In particular, the women wanted a self-esteem workshop and more communication and study skills. Here are two of their specific recommendations:

_We need more group discussion and charting to improve our spoken english._

_Have a special workshop to share the experiences of each other and discuss how to study English as an immigrant._

These results speak of the specific language needs that future LTC aides need to provide safe and compassionate care. As a nurse and LTCA instructor, I am well aware of the specific language skills that caregivers need to provide gentle and efficient care. Their comments illustrate the reality of the workplace and the challenges of working with elderly people who have
difficulties listening, speaking, understanding and following directions.

4. 1. 4 The Long Term Care Aide Component

This section reports on the women's responses regarding the LTCA component of the program. In general, the women felt that the content class had provided the basic skills to be an effective LTCA. They also felt that the instructor was very professional and organized the classes well. These women mentioned the importance of having a LTCA instructor who provides clear explanations for ESL students. The responses below are examples of their feedback:

*The class is good for us, because we learned a lots of knowledges about how to take care of elderly.*

*The teacher we had explained very good. It was easy to understand her.*

*LTCA class was very strong, good planned, easy and enjoyable class.*

However, the women also felt that the LTCA class needed to be longer and cover information in more depth. They felt that there could be more coordination between the LTCA and the ESL class. This response mirrors the responses in the questionnaire about the ESL component. As I mentioned before, my expertise in teaching ESL greatly influenced my choice of teaching methods in this program. Yet, LTCA instructors who have minimal exposure to ESL pedagogy can gain expertise in this area by closely collaborating with the ESL class instructor.

The women surveyed recommended several topics that ought to be covered in the content classes. These were: *"Workshop about handicapped peoples; Canadian Daily Living Style and Ask some LTC Aides which have rich experiences how to deal with clients ".*

These recommendations are most helpful for curriculum developers and combined-skills instructors. Their feedback suggested ways of orienting prospective LTC aides to the culture of health care and to specialized care approaches for a particular population. One of the last questions that I posed in the questionnaire asked the women who were not employed, how the program could have helped them further in their job search. The one woman who was not
employed stated:

*The LTCA need to be upgrading or at least continue to practice, what she have learned otherwise nothing happened even though a course were taken mean nothing or find a place to keep practicing.*

This response presented the issue of shelf life in regards to the LTCA program. Indeed, maintenance of current caregiving skills and recent practicum or work experience are important in searching for a LTCA position. If a student has not worked for over a year, many agencies and facilities are reluctant to hire them because of the time gap between training and practice. Based on my experience as a nursing and LTCA instructor, former students who are not able to find employment within a year, can try to maintain their skills by volunteering at an extended care unit.

### 4.2 Part Two: The Interviews

Part two of the study, the qualitative portion, was designed to seek and hear the immigrant women's personal accounts, insights and voices about their experiences while taking the program and after the program. In this part, I would like to compare and discuss the findings from the questionnaire and the interviews and consider the responses in relation to the relevant literature discussed in Chapter Three.

The data from both approaches yielded important insights. These insights are presented in the hope that they will be useful to both ESL and content teachers involved in combined-skills program, who wish to improve their reflective practice. Furthermore, implications for future research arise from the data collected and the themes that emerged. Implications for both teaching and research will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The interviews provided a framework within which the respondents could express their own understandings, views and opinions in their own terms. The reason for conducting these interviews was to explore the lived world of the women with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the data collected in the questionnaire (Kvale, 1996).
The research literature supports this type of data validation. Lincoln (1994) addressed the questions of legitimization and representation in research evaluation. She discussed the issue of how evaluators know if the "text" is faithful to the context and the individuals it is supposed to represent. She stated that evaluators need to seek out all possible stakeholders, in an effort to persuade them to speak, to grant us their narratives, to talk about the benefits and detriments of programs, and to invite them to have their perspectives represented in the studies (Lincoln, 1994).

I interviewed six women. The women were from different countries: China (3), Hong Kong (1), India (1) and Iran (1). They ranged in age from 23 years of age to 43 years. At the time of the interviews, these women had been in Canada from three years to six years. I analyzed and interpreted the data using Kvale's Interpretations approach (1996). This interpretation and categorization led me to identify five general themes.

Before presenting the themes, I want to explain my position in respect to the interview process. I viewed the interview responses from an Interactionist perspective, assuming that the interviews mirrored the women's authentic experiences. The interviews were semi-structured in format (Silverman, 1993); they last anywhere from 45 minutes to one hour and 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the women's home or in a comfortable place of their choosing.

4.2.1 The Themes

The themes I identified were closely related to the responses and perceptions given by the other women in the questionnaire. I connected the common threads from their interviews and interpreted them into themes.

4.2.2 Theme 1

The Pain of Renewal

In all six interviews, the women discussed the context of their experiences, specifically their experiences shortly after immigrating to Canada. For all, immigrating to a new country and trying to find employment was very difficult. Financial difficulties, loss of social status and lack of language skills made beginning again very challenging. In the following passages M and H
discussed these challenges.

H is a woman from Mainland China who immigrated seven years ago. She had been a cardiac registered nurse in China. At the time of the interview, H was living with her husband and baby girl.

H. Well, I got discouraged when I worked in a factory, you know...when we chatting, they asked me ...like what were you doing back home? I say, I was doing as a registered nurse and...they said, well, you'll never get your job back here. and I said, why?.. she said. Oh do you know? ..The people from Hong Kong, they are educated in English, even it's hard for them to get their job back here, how about you come from China, you educated in Mandarin, so..I think it's even hard for you...

M is a woman from Iran who had been studying to become an MD at the time of the political coup in Iran. She was put in jail as a political prisoner for six months. At the time of the interview, M was living with her husband and her two elementary school aged daughters.

M. Yes, I had some choices...When you are a single person you don't have any responsibility. You can do whatever you like to do. You can go and study something for a long time...for 10 years. You have time. But when you come as a Mom as immigrant...you don't have that much time and you have responsibility...having kids is very big responsibility, is very big responsibility. It's so hard to leave them...because I don't want them to suffer...because I came to this country or I want to go to study for something it takes 10 years !, what about them? That's why I chose to go for something that is short time and I like to do it. and when I found the nursing aide course, it was something that really I needed at the time...Because I was so depressed I did not know what to do. I didn't what to be
on Welfare, because even in my country I was always working, I had good job... and I didn't like to stay at home and get some money and the money that they are giving, you know, is very, very basic.

These passages illustrate the impact that immigration has on the women's overall life. It struck me that their self-esteem and self-confidence would be most affected. These findings are well documented in the literature. The barriers of English language, literacy and education lead to the inability to be economically empowered (Boyd, 1992 Cumming, 1992; Cumming & Gill, 1992; Doherty, 1992; Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996; Peirce, 1994; Rockhill, 1982; Wismer, 1986). Furthermore, the literature refers to the loss or gain of status and power of immigrant women within the family as a result of immigration (Buijs, 1993).

H's and M's responses are similar to the responses given by women in a study done by Bhagavatula (1989) in Vancouver. The study identified common difficulties experienced by immigrant women when they arrive in Canada and found that many still experience them several years later. The top five persistent difficulties were described as: jobs, language, money, culture and making friends (Bhagavatula, 1989).

In the questionnaire that I administered, the women felt that being able to get a job was one of the most important reasons for taking the LTCA/ESL program. The other important reason was to work in a similar environment to the one they had worked in their native country. This reason can be related back to the high percentage (55%) of women who had previously been health care givers. These responses are in keeping with the interviewed women's stated concerns and their desire to gain employment in the profession they once had.

4.2.3 Theme 2
The Costs and The Benefits

The Costs

The respondents talked about the challenges of finding enough work to provide a stable income. They all said that being "on call" (waiting for an available shift on the day of the shift)
was difficult. This theme was strongly and passionately presented by the women I interviewed.

The uncertainty of not knowing when they would work made the women feel insecure about their income. Thus, all the respondents had at least two jobs, both jobs "on call" and some women had three jobs. One woman, J, talked about the hard choices she had to make in order to be available "on call" and care for her infant son.

These findings were minimally reflected in the questionnaire, where the women gave feedback on how the program could be improved. One of the suggestions they made was that they would have liked more job-finding skills and support in gaining employment.

In the literature, strategies to overcome these difficulties include learning the language in order to obtain a job, or to help with social integration; looking for a job; job training and support from friends and community (Aguilar & Williams, 1993; Bhagavatula 1989; Cumming, 1992).

However, despite the findings from the questionnaires and my readings of the literature, I had not anticipated the women's difficulties with maintaining a stable income amidst the uncertainty of the "on-call" shifts and the impact of such uncertainty on the women's families. All six women that were interviewed talked about the experience of working on call, the number of jobs they had to maintain to make a reasonable income and the stress of juggling work and family responsibilities. In the following quotes, Y and H talked about this situation.

Y is originally from Hong Kong where she had been a nurse. At the time of the interview, she lived in Vancouver with her daughter who attended high school. Her husband remained in Hong Kong.

Y. Two places or three places... keep working... one place calls you once a week, another place calls you once a week and another place... so, it's ok... only place is not enough... I like to do job like similar, not in the restaurant, right? Even I thought, okay... I like to get a job in Agency or hospital, not another work because I had my course with nursing, right?
H, as described earlier, had been a cardiac nurse in China.

H. I had hired in June 5th...we graduated May 26th? I guess?...I got hired June 5th...that summer was okay...I got average was three or four days a week...and then, slow down at October and November. At Christmas, was busy for about two weeks...and then, January, February, March, April was so slow...At that time, I still keep my housekeeping job at LB. Home...The housekeeping job, usually more hours available during the weekend, which is okay. I still keep my name on a list!...like I was thinking it's too much for me now...because I work at two place...plus that one, three place...and then, I think it's too many for me....

J is originally from China. At the time of the interview, she lived with her husband and infant son. J discussed the hardship of trying to maintain her availability to work on call and care for her baby son.

J. At the beginning he was here but it's too tough to keep him at home so... later, I decide I better send him back.(to China). Yeah, that was very difficult...but I think, now, he is still young, he don't need education, he just someone to feed him up...right?...until he grow up we have enough like, of financial will be...like, easier for everybody? I can bring him back and everybody was happy., right? I can give him enough education?. I was missing him very much... But I had to do that, I have to save some money...save some time for myself. Right now, he can go to day care, I can go out to work immediately. So, I think at that time, the choices very hard..

J's story of sending her child back to China shows the tremendous difficulties that some immigrant women face while trying to get employment. Torjman (1988), in her background paper on the gap between women's needs and available programs and services, discusses the
difficulties that immigrant women employed in the manufacturing and service sectors face in trying to meet their child-care needs. She states that "these women have no choice but to resort to the informal child-care market" (Torjman, 1988, p.35).

The women identified the difficulties and factors influencing their ability to maintain socio-economic stability and their family life. The literature mentions that immigrant women face a range of social, cultural and economic pressures when they immigrate to Canada. Some of the factors identified are gender roles, the extent of their socioeconomic stability, personal strength, family support, and role models (Aguilar & Williams, 1993; Bhagavatula, 1989; Cummings, 1992).

Yet, I wish to speculate about J's story, the story of her choice to send her baby boy to China so she could work. Such practice certainly was not discussed in any of the literature I read. Torjman states that immigrant women may resort to informal child-care. Sending one's child back to his/her native country appears to go beyond informal child-care. This action with all the heartaches that it entails has given me cause for much thought. I wonder how many other immigrant women in Canada have sent their children back to their native country when there is no support at home. This surely is worthy of more attention in future studies. I suspect that there may be many undocumented stories like J's.

The Benefits

In the questionnaire, seventeen out of eighteen women had jobs as long term care aides. The length of time to find employment as a care aide since graduation from the LTCA/ESL combined program, ranged from immediately after graduation to one year. The women interviewed also found employment as care aides within a relatively short period of time.

In addition, the women responded that they felt that the program had prepared them well enough to function as care aides in a long term care facility. Ninety percent of responses seem to point out that overall, the ESL and LTCA classes were successful in preparing the women to function as a LTCA. The high rate of employment could be attributed to their own and to the
employer's positive evaluation of the course. In the interviews, the women talked about the excitement of being employed and doing something which they considered "worth doing". Three out the six women I interviewed found the job satisfying. Perhaps job satisfaction could also be related to their perception in the questionnaire of being well equipped to handle the tasks of the job. The quotes below are examples of their voices on this theme.

S is a woman from India. She had been an auxiliary nurse-midwife at a large hospital in Northern India. At the time of the interview, she was living with her brother and his family, her mother-in-law, her husband and infant son.

S. Like I finish my course then I got a job with "Caring Agency"
very quickly! Even I went there one time, she knows I have a certificate, she looked my certificate and she took my interview right away. Then she asked me many question about because I have experience to work in India similar with Nursing? And she was very happy then I got job there.

The following is a passage from the interview with M. It illustrates how, overall the women felt about their jobs as care aides.

M. I like doing it, because...you know for doing this job you must care for people...I am not thinking as a job. When I go, when I go there, I like to see their residents and I am friend with them....most of them whenever I am finishing shift, they ask me if I go back tomorrow...and I am like friend with them...we talk, we laugh...and I feel good...because whenever they see me, they are happy. They knew that they're gonna have a good day! and I am happy that I can make some changes in their life to make their life better...because it's not like only a job.. I enjoy doing that, I...

whenever I am off two days I miss it! (Laughter) and I like to go back.

J shared her thoughts about how the program helped her integrate into her new adopted country.
1. *At that time I think, I need to get to training and go back to the society to
get a job...and connect with people and that will be a good why to start it.*

These findings are also in the literature on immigrant women and job training. Language
training, educational upgrading, and improved job-related skills are potential mechanisms for
improving the socio-economic position of immigrant women who are not able to communicate in
one of Canada's official languages (Boyd, 1992).

4. 2. 4 Theme 3
The Need to Learn the Language of Care

This theme was clearly present in both the questionnaire and the interviews. In the
questionnaire almost 80% of the women seemed to feel that the ESL class provided them with
enough vocabulary and content-specific language activities to be able to function in
a long term care facility or home support agency. However, in the open-ended questions section
of the questionnaire and in the interviews, their opinions were at best mixed. More than 60% of
the women felt that they wanted more conversation and content-related role playing.

In the interviews, the participants had similar views on the ESL component of the
program. In general, the women felt that they had not learned enough English to speak with their
residents and they wanted to feel more comfortable with speaking with their residents about their
"everyday" type of experiences. Also, they wanted English which was closely related to the act of
caring. The following quote briefly illustrates the women's perceptions of the ESL part of the
program. In particular, H talked about the need for more role playing conversations in the
classroom.

H. *What I am thinking for the care aide in extended care unit, actually is not
a lot of terminology, like usually we use very often, like bowel care...an
transfer, like bruise, scratch, redness, or something like that or about the
resident...like she or he is in a good mood, or is aggressive. Is not ver
much in terminology...like is daily conversation, not terminology.*
The literature speaks at length on the need for a strong link between a content area and the ESL component of a course, whether it is an academic or a workplace course (Snow & Brinton, 1989; Crandall, 1986; Goldstein, 1994; Isserlis, 1991; Roseblum; 1996; Svensen & Krebs, 1984; Vivian, 1984; Widdowson, 1983). The origins of VESL/Workplace are connected to English for Special Purposes (ESP) literature. Widdowson (1983) explains that In ESP we are dealing with students for whom the learning of English is auxiliary to some other professional or academic purpose. ESP is or ought logically to be integrally linked with areas of activity (academic, vocational, professional) which have already been defined and which represent the learners' aspirations. (pp.108-109)

The students' comments on the need for a better connection and coordination between the ESL and the long term care aide class are supported by the above literature. More ESL teachers need to coordinate their lessons with a vocational instructor to determine what job-related language needed to be taught (McCarthy, 1986). The following excerpt illustrates this theme also. S discussed the need for wanting to have more practice with the "care" aspect of the language.

S.  Like she can ask like students what is their interest, what kind of study they want it...if they like nursing, she should do like . To teach some nursing words? and she have to like do demonstration about nursing... how to talk to the residents in the hospitals, how to...like motivate them when we are feeding and taking for walk? Like that stuff...

The literature also suggests that there needs to be a range of approaches and techniques in ESL-vocational programs, such as competency-based and grammar-based approaches to the more participatory approaches such as whole language, language experience and problem-posing (Roseblum, 1996). Also, curricula for English in the workplace programs need to grow out of the learner's language needs in an employment situation. To determine the language and communication needs of a workplace, the ESL instructor needs to come to know and feel the
unique aspects of the workplace (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984).

In this case, the respondents identified that they wanted language which would allow them to communicate with the client beyond the basic conversation skills and beyond the technical words. They wanted the language of "caring" such as the oral practice of approaching a resident and using therapeutic communication skills. These are skills commonly taught to health care providers. These skills encompass active listening, clarifying, using empathetic approaches, touch and interviewing skills.

4. 2. 5 Theme 4
Advice to Other Immigrant Women

This theme came about from a semi-structured interview question I posed to the women. The theme was also present in the questionnaire, in the open-ended questions section. I asked the respondents to share any additional thoughts and comments that they might have about the program. They wrote about their hope that the program would continue so other women could benefit. These comments led me to pose a related question in the interviews. The respondents were eager to share their opinions and advice with prospective students. All of the women recommended the program or a similar program. They felt it was a chance to gain a skill in a short time and be employable.

S gave advice to other immigrant women about taking an LTCA/ESL program. She recommended that women who have health sciences background ought to take this kind of program and that having past experience helps with finding a job.

S. I always have some friends, then always telling them...should do that, should take a course...because...we...like me, I know how to take care as nurse, right? It's similar work. I know, like for example, it's pain, how much he is feeling pain now...what we can say to them. It's good help, and even here, that they looked at background too...employer?
H gave advice about taking this program even if the woman has had the training in her country of origin.

H. *Actually, depends... if the woman, she shows she likes works in the health care, I would suggest to take the course, because I think it is helpful. It doesn't matter how long you have been work in the nursing field, still find something different here.*

J gave advice about working "on call" shifts. She recommended that women working "on call" need the patience to wait for the facility's call.

J. *I think if I worked, I probably had more patience, I can get that job! but they need a long time, two years, three years... 'cause I didn't have enough patience to wait at home... I couldn't do anything at home, just waiting, so very nervous to me!.*

Y and G stated that prospective students need to really understand what the job is about. They felt that the work can be "below" their cultural standards and that this reality needed to be addressed. This response was not anticipated yet it did not surprise me. They talked about how doing this "kind of work", providing personal care to elderly clients, was a type of job that they would never do in their native country. They both recommended that the reality of giving personal care be discussed with prospective students. The following quotes present some of these sentiments.

G is from China. At the time of the interview, she was living with her husband and her teenage daughter, who attended high school. G and Y are very good friends and they came to the interview together.

G. *We tell to them... you should toilet them... that's the big thing. You should take of resident... for our culture... we think to do that job... is ha...*

Y. *Is a lower level... lower, lower. level... No people want to this job..*
If I go back to my country, I never tell the people I do that job.

Because that job, in my country, it's a farmer, the girl, do that...they are not educated. Sometimes like the ... the nanny, like that ... always hire from the farm, they are not educated...

Y./G. It's a hard job... (in unison).

M. talked about how her sister reacted when she heard that M was taking this LTCA program.

Yeah, below me. That's why she didn't like it. She said no, this is not you. You had good job in your country and you going to study to be a doctor you have to try to do that here too! But... because she doesn't understand... She is single. She doesn't know how it feels to have a children, you to have to support them. And I explained it to her that I am not ashamed. That I doing this job now... actually I like it. I think that in this situation I like to do this job. I don't like to say okay... this is belows.

4.2.6 Theme 5

Hopes and Dreams

This theme appeared throughout the conversations that I had with the six women. They hoped to gain the ability to take care of their families and they hoped for financial stability. Some of the women shared with me their dreams of getting further training and becoming registered nurses (RN's). The questionnaire produced similar responses when asked why they had taken the course. The following examples illustrate the dreams and hopes that many of the women talked about.

M. I am planning to go for something more... I am not planning to stay...

I need a change too! Like you!! Yeah... of full time study... and after I am
planning to work few years in LPN and see, maybe I go for RN..I don't know yet....am planning to go for something more...I am not planning to stay...I need a change too! Like you ...so this course was very important... because it help us to fly, you know...and we took our first step and after is our choice and most of them...because these people...they had education... and they had good life in their country, they had good job and off course they gonna improve themselves and gonna take more step and when I see them you know... I feel very good , when I see somebody take something higher, go to RN...I know that in future, I gonna able to do that also.

H spoke to me about her plans for the future. She hoped to enter a nurse refresher/ESL program.

H. I was an RN back home and that was my only job back home, so my final goal if I can get my RN job in Canada...it would be fine!

S told me about her hopes for a better job. She hoped for steady work in one facility instead of many.

S. I am looking for work in facility, because this work is not bad but sometimes...like daytime work in three places, so it's hard...right? So in the hospital it's like if it's four hours work, so we can work straight, right like eight to twelve...it's better...I hope I can try and find another job!

4. 3 Summary

4. 3. 1 The LTCA/ESL Program

Relevant studies speak for the need to "find out" what happens to women and men after they take an ESL/Job training program (Bhagavatula, 1989; Boyd, 1992; Doherty, 1992). This study attempted to describe what happened to a group of immigrant women after they took a government sponsored LTCA/ESL program.
Seventeen of the eighteen women were employed as LTCA's at the time this study was conducted. These women's perceptions of the LTCA/ESL components were overall positive. They felt that the ESL component of the program had provided enough English to secure and maintain their jobs as LTC aides. However, the women felt that the ESL component needed more conversation, role playing and specific caregiving language and skill training in a short period of time.

The women felt that the LTCA component had prepared them well for caring for frail or dependent persons and many of them found this type of work rewarding. Also, this program's short duration was an attractive feature to many women who could not afford to spend a longer period of time participating in other types of programs. Yet, the women stated that they needed more training in specialized areas of caregiving and more job searching skills.

4.3.2 Themes

The themes that evolved from the interviews presented some of the women's voices. Three of the themes, "The Pain of Renewal", "The Need to Learn the Language of Care" and "Hopes and Dreams" connected to the questionnaire's findings.

The other two themes revealed unexpected insights that did not appear in the questionnaire's responses. These were "The Cost and Benefits" and "Advice to Other Women" themes. In "The Cost and Benefits" theme, stories of the hardships of shift work, multiple work sites and child care were illustrations of the difficulties and barriers that these women face. In the "Advice to Other Women" theme, some women expressed their true feelings about being a LTCA and the work involved. Their feelings of embarrassment and of doing work that was beneath them were eloquently described by these women.

Programs such as the LTCA/ESL program do allow women to "Fly Again" as one the participants concluded. It provides in a short period of time, a marketable vocational skill, further ESL training and job search skills. Nevertheless, the challenges of being a caregiver need to be discussed with potential participants who may not be familiar with this type of vocation.
CHAPTER FIVE
Implications, Illuminations and Epilogue

This chapter looks back on my journey and retraces my steps. In it, I will also reflect on the implications of this study and speculate on its findings without making any strong claims.

5.1 Implications for Teaching

I will begin with implications of the study related to teaching. The discussions will merge the findings from the questionnaire and the interviews. However, they have been organized around the themes. Theme 1, "The Pain of Renewal", speaks of the barriers that immigrant women must overcome in order to succeed in a program or in employment situations. The implication here is that curriculum designers, program administrators and ESL/content teachers need to be aware of the challenges immigrant women face when they attempt to begin a new life in Canada. Clearly, the women face challenges and barriers in accessing ESL/workplace programs and barriers in trying to stay and succeed in combined-skills programs. Those responsible for their education need to integrate into their programs and courses concrete supports and strategies to help the women face these challenges. Also, understanding an immigrant woman's life history and own personal situation allows for a more student-focused program. Teachers and program administrators need to learn early on as much as they can about their students and their lives (Bell & Goldstein, 1994; Das Gupta, 1996; Doherty, 1993; Harper, Peirce & Burnaby, 1996).

Some respondents felt that they did not have enough job searching skills to successfully secure a job. The "Bridging" part of the LTCA/ESL included life skills and job search skills. However, it may not have been long or thorough enough to provide full support for these women (Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training, 1994).

Immigrant women specifically may require more support during the job finding period. Yet, in most LTCA programs, the support systems stop once the student has graduated. As teachers and administrators, we may need to examine how a program is designed and how to
help with follow-up. Schedules and workshops related to job search and counseling could be strategically placed throughout the program so as to be most effective and in ideal circumstances continue for some time after.

Theme 2 relates to the costs and benefits of taking a course like the LTCA/ESL program. The women I interviewed discussed their experiences trying to fit and cope in the working side of the health care system. Several of the women stated that they experienced difficulties with the lack of stability, with shift work and the lack of affordable child care.

ESL and content instructors involved in teaching long term care aides need to understand the realities of this occupation. Clear discussions of the women's expectations versus the reality of the job market need to take place. Also, problem solving approaches to the nature of the "On-Call" experience must be presented to the students. Helping students use a "problem-solving" approach would assist immigrant women in making more informed decisions and in having more control over their lives (Belfiore & Burnaby, 1984; Sanguinetti, 1993; Wallerstein, 1985).

Working as a health care worker is a physically, emotionally and mentally demanding job. There is a culture of work, scheduling and language that are unique to the health care field. The content instructor needs to discuss this culture with the ESL instructor for language socialization implications and with the students early on in the program so that they can make informed choices.

Theme 3 presents the women's perceptions about their language needs. They felt that they needed in-depth instruction on the language of caring. The ESL instructor and content instructor both need to continually identify the needs of the students and the workplace. Also, teachers need to be aware of the "working language" used in a health care facility and the language used when working with elderly residents. In particular, the language needs appropriate when working with residents who have Dementia.

The English language needs in this program go beyond basic health care terminology and conversation. The respondents identified this issue very clearly. In the health care field, there is a
great emphasis on "Therapeutic Communication", that is techniques and approaches used with a person who is experiencing a particular illness. The content teacher may need to clearly identify this area in the curriculum and coordinate its teaching with the ESL instructor. Also, administrators may need to allow for more time in the programs so that the area of therapeutic communication can be properly addressed.

Theme 4, "Advice to Other Women", speaks of the need to discuss the nature of the job prior to a student enrolling in this type of program. The women I interviewed revealed how they felt about the tasks involved in this work. Some of them shared their feelings of shame and embarrassment related to some of the tasks they had to do.

The skills and tasks that a care aide is expected to perform focus on the personal needs of a client. They usually provide assistance with personal hygiene, such as baths or bedbaths, clean clients who are incontinent, assist clients to eat, transfer, walk, comfort and support a client.

Some of the women perceived that some of these tasks were beneath them and they felt reluctant to disclose their occupations to their relatives or acquaintances. Both ESL and content teachers need to address issues of discomfort about performing particular health care tasks with their students. It may be done initially by an open discussion about the actual work where the students have a chance to understand the nature of the job. Another strategy might be to have a one day orientation to the course and a one day orientation to a long term facility or have the students follow a care aide for a morning. Bringing a care aide as a guest speaker could also prove beneficial. The students would be able to hear the realities of the job from an aide's perspective. In this manner, prospective students would have the opportunity to learn and understand the nature of the job.

Theme 5, "Hopes and Dreams", is about the women's future aspirations. In the interview, the conversations were dotted with stories of their future plans. For some women, this program had given them the confidence to continue their education. M speaks most eloquently to both teachers, administrators, and government officials. She stated
So this course was very important...because it help us to fly, you know...and we took our first step and after is our choice and most of them.

ESL and content teachers need to encourage and assist students in planning for further education. As a teacher, I felt that some of the key supports that would help women succeed in this program were government funded assistance for tuition, program materials and child-care expenses, an understanding of what the LTCA program offers, and my belief that the women could succeed.

5.2 Implications for Research

The literature speaks briefly about the challenges faced by women such as these. Evaluation researchers interested in working with minority groups need to conduct small and large scale studies that examine the impact of a LTCA/ESL program on an immigrant woman's life, both from a socio-cultural and socio-economic perspective. The implications for research in relation to barriers that immigrant face when they immigrate to Canada point towards more studies in this area. Future research should examine the impact of ESL/content programs on the lives of immigrant women. The methodological approaches need to reflect a variety of perspectives, from a large scale longitudinal study to single case studies. In particular, there need to be more research studies on immigrant women taking health care courses, from the entry level to the professional level, i.e.: to become care aides, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, baccalaureate trained nurses, graduate degree holders in nursing. As an experienced ESL and health sciences instructor, I have seen a tremendous growth in the vocational ESL and health fields. The demand by immigrant women, in particular, to access a LTCA program is great. Research would provide more documentation and awareness about these programs, as well as a better understanding of the problematics of their design and implementation, together with the impact on the many aspects of the lives of the women and their families.

I also invite researchers to explore the issue of specialized communication techniques within the context of ESL training in health care, in particular, communication techniques used
with residents or clients that have Dementia. The findings in both the questionnaire and the interviews indicate that there needs to be more time spent teaching specialized communication techniques. Researchers could examine how ESL speakers cope with these kind of language skills. They could also help provide a clearer account of the nature of such language and how an individual may become socialized into its use.

The findings also present the women's perceptions on the actual work involved in caregiving. If this is the case, researchers may want to pose the following questions: how does the LTCA student or worker cope with the change of status, the shame or embarrassment and how does work of this nature affect either positively or negatively a person's cultural identity? It seems that initially, when an immigrant woman is looking for a short term training program that leads to a reasonable hourly wage, questions about the actual job and tasks involved do not seem of immediate concern. However, later on, the kind of job that immigrants do may affect their self-esteem, and affect their status with family, friends and in societal situations (Buijs, 1993). This is a research topic which vitally needs to be addressed.

5.3 Connections

My connections to the women I interviewed go back almost three years. I have been, and still am, connected to the women I surveyed and interviewed. They have called me to say hello and to get job references, for help on resumes and advice on work issues. For one student, my phone number turned out to be her only hope for help. This woman was in a violent situation at home. She called me one evening crying and asking for help. She later told me that she had kept my phone number from the questionnaire form letter and in her hour of need, thought that I could help her. I did help her and advocated for her on several occasions. It seems that even through a mailed questionnaire, connections to respondents can become more than just a return address and a phone number. I feel indebted to the women in my study for their generosity of time, words and kindness. Assisting them with job searches or at times advocating for them is one way by which I can
exchange and share resources with them.

5.4 Summary and Illuminations

Feminists state that the connection between the research project and the researcher's self frequently takes the form of "starting with one's own experience" (Reinharz, 1992). Indeed, this research study began with my own experiences. In Chapter One, I described how this thesis grew out of my own experiences. In Chapter Three, I discuss changes that I made as a result of conducting the literature review and my self-reflection. Here, I would like to share with the reader what I have learned about myself through this study.

I believe I wanted to write this thesis because of my own experiences as an immigrant woman, a nurse, an ESL teacher and a nursing instructor in a long term care aide/ESL government sponsored program. I wanted to find out how the women felt about their immigrant experiences and their struggles for a better life. But my own "insiderness" did not prepare me for the issues that surfaced.

In the interview process, the women seemed very accommodating and willing to be interviewed by their former "teacher". In some cases, I went to their homes. I felt that this environment would make them feel more comfortable. However, later on I realized that the women would go through a great deal of trouble to make me feel comfortable. Some women cleaned their homes, got themselves dressed in their best outfits and had prepared sumptuous meals for me. In one particular case, my student had gathered her entire family to meet me. I was overwhelmed and deeply humbled.

With some women, they preferred to meet at public spaces such a coffee shop, because they felt that their homes were "no good", as one respondent said. A problem with this was the noise level while trying to tape the interview. However, I was able to purchase a sensitive tape recorder that would filter noise.

Finally, there was the issue of child care. Three of the women I interviewed had their small children with them while I interviewed them. At times, all of us were playing, then doing the
interview and then playing again.

These issues appeared not to be mentioned in any great length in the literature, including feminist literature. I believe that it is important for any researcher to examine the possible power dynamics between themselves and the respondents (Reinharz, 1992). In the case of working with immigrant women, the researcher needs to make sure that the actual process of research is equitable and sensitive to the women's needs. In the future, we may need to think of an equitable space for interviewing that is neutral and comfortable for the respondents. It may be their homes for some, but not for others. Also, in larger scale studies, child care may need to be provided.

The women that took part in the interviews were willing to explain their realities and trusted that I would present them fairly. The presentation of their lives in their own voices was the key implication of this study. My journey was about trying to understand and learn how I could best present the women's voices. I realized that in order to present their voices, I had to understand and present my own voice as a researcher. I have had to learn where to place myself and how much of myself I am confident and comfortable enough to give. I believe that letting one's voice emerge is an on-going process and thus, my journey has just begun.

This study is a perspective on the experiences of immigrant women who have taken an ESL/LTCA course. The questionnaire could have asked more specific questions about their employment and language use. For example, it may have asked them for their experiences working with clients that speak the same language. The interview sample was a limited one and the findings reflect only the experiences of the six women I interviewed. Issues related to barriers and personal concerns such as child care may be different with other women. The themes need to be considered within this context.

Lastly, I would like to go back to the question of finding voice. I have found in the process of writing this paper, that finding one's own voice within a study is a challenging task. Part of my journey, has been to try to set my voice free. But, I continue to struggle to express it
clearly in this paper.

Theme 4 in the findings was "Advice to Other Immigrant Women". I would like to use this theme and give advice to other novice researchers. I would like to say that the researcher needs to learn from, not about, the women she or he is studying. The researcher needs to look within herself/himself before researching "the other". However, looking within and finding one's voice may prove to be more difficult than it seems.

5. 5 Epilogue

Alice Walker (1983) tells of her own experiences while searching for her garden of knowledge. She says:

In my development as a human being and as a writer I have been, it seems to me, extremely blessed, even while complaining. Wherever I have knocked, a door has opened. Wherever I have wandered, a path has appeared. I have been helped, supported, encouraged, and nurtured by people of all races, creeds, colors and dream; and I have, to the best of my ability, returned help, support, encouragement and nurture (p. 18).

I feel very fortunate that I was able to share with the reader these women's words. The women I interviewed, in particular, helped me search for my own garden of understanding. From this journey, I have learned and grown. Wherever I knocked, my former students and my professors responded. Wherever I wandered, a path appeared. I was helped, supported and encouraged and nurtured by women of all races, creeds, colors and dreams. These women helped me find my own voice and for that, I am very grateful. I hope that this growing, learning, receiving and passing on will continue on in my life (Walker, 1983).
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APPENDIX I

Letter of information
APPENDIX II

Questionnaire
ISS ESL Long Term Care Aide program graduate questionnaire:

Demographic information:

a. Country of origin: ________________________________

b. Age of arrival in Canada ____________________________

c. Length of time in Canada ____________________________

d. Education from country of origin ______________________

e. Profession or occupation in country of origin ______________________

f. Type of work on arrival ______________________________

g. How long did you take English language courses before entering the Long Term Care Aide/ESL program? ______________________________

Questionnaire

1. What were your reasons for applying to the Long Term Care Aide/ESL program (LTCA/ESL program)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. What do you feel were the strengths of the LTCA/ESL program?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
3. What do you feel were the weaknesses of the LTCA/ESL program?


4. What topics or areas would you have liked to have more practice and instruction in?


5. What do you feel were the strengths of the ESL class?


6. What do you feel were the weaknesses of the ESL class?


7. How much do you feel, your English has improved since you started the program? Circle one.

A lot       Very much       A little (Explain)       Stayed the same (Explain)


8. Do you think that your English improved as much as you would have liked? Circle one.

Yes, it improved (Explain)       It improved enough (Explain)       more than I expected (Explain)


9. Do you feel that the English you were taught has been useful in your work at a long-term care facility? Circle one.

yes, a great deal       Some (Explain)       Not very much (Explain)


10. Do you feel that the English you learnt has been useful in many different work situations? Circle one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, definitely</th>
<th>Some (Explain)</th>
<th>Not very much (Explain)</th>
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11. What other topics, areas of training, workshops, etc. should be added to the English Language class?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

12. Was there a balance between content specific English and English Grammar? Circle one.

Yes, definitely  Some (Explain)  No, not very much (Explain)

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
13. Did the English Language instructor connect the English Language class with the content taught in the Long Term Care Aide training class? Circle one.

Yes, definitely (Explain)  
Some (Explain)  
No, not very well (Explain)

__________________________________________________________

14. What other comments would you like to share about the English Language Class?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

15. What do you feel were the strengths of the Long Term Care Aide training class?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

16. What do you feel were the weaknesses of the Long Term Care Aide training class?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
17. What other topics, areas of training, health workshops, etc. should be added to the Long Term Care Aide component?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

18. Did the Long Term Care Aide instructor help you understand the language and grammar involved in the lessons?
Circle one

Yes, definitely (Explain)  Some (Explain)  No, not very well (Explain)

__________________________________________________________________________

19. What other comments would you like to share about the Long Term Care Aide training class?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

20. At the present time, are you employed?
Circle one.

Yes / No
If the answer is yes, please continue with question #22. If the answer is no, please continue with question #29.

21. At the present time, are you employed as a Long Term Care Aide?  
Circle one. 

Yes / No

If the answer is yes, please answer the following questions. If the answer is no, please go to question #25

22. How long did it take you to find employment as a Long Term Care Aide?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

23. Do you feel that the Long Care Aide skills training class adequately prepared you for this job?  
Circle one. 

Yes, definitely

Some (Explain)

No, not very much

________________________________________________________________________
24. Do you feel that the English language class adequately prepared you for this job? Circle one.

Yes, definitely

Some (Explain)

No, not very much (Explain)

25. At the present time, are you employed in another area related to health? Circle one.

Yes / No

26. If yes, would you like to share which area/department you are employed in?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

27. If no, are you currently employed in another area not related to health? Circle one.

Yes / No
28. If yes, would you like to share what type of job you are employed in?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________


29. If you are not currently employed, could you offer your comments about how the LTCA/ESL program could have assisted you further with job hunting?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________


30. Do you have any other comments regarding the program or employment that you would like to share?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX III

Letter of consent for interviews
Participant letter of consent (Interviewee)
I have received your letter in which you explain the research study you are undertaking and have completed and mailed back to you the questionnaire.

I completely understand what your research is about and I agree to provide information regarding my experiences as a student of and as graduate from the ISS Long Term Care Aide/ESL program.

I am aware that I can refuse to participate and that I can withdraw at any time, including any information that I may have shared.

I am also aware that I will be able to view the videotapes and read a draft of the completed report to ensure that any information that I have shared has been accurately interpreted and recorded.

I understand that my identity and any information shared will be kept completely confidential and that all videotapes and notes of the interview will be collected and safeguarded by the investigator of the study, Silvia Wilson.

I will be able to view the videotape and read a transcription of the interview and will be able to make any changes and corrections or to withdraw the information all together at that time.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have seen a copy of this consent form and that I have kept your letter for future reference.

I _________________________________ agree to being interviewed.

I _________________________________ agree to being videotaped.

Signature of the Participant (Interviewee) _________________________________

Name ______________________________________________________________

Date ________________________________________________________________