Pedagogical rationale for *Raising The Bar 5*: Using research and best practice methods to inform textbook features

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Abstract

The Enriched English as a Second Language (EESL) program is relatively new in the province of Quebec. The Ministry has provided guidelines and set outcomes that must be reached by the end of secondary 5 yet there are very few resources for teachers at this level. This thesis explores the research on best practices in teaching advanced English to Second Language students and blends practices used in English as a Second Language and English Language Arts classes. It examines this research in relation to the EESL textbook I co-authored entitled *Raising The Bar 5.* The literature review encompasses research on grammar, vocabulary, literary analysis, listening exercises, multimedia technology as used for group work, and the peer response process, as they relate specifically to teaching of advanced and enriched English as a Second Language. The research explores each of the specific aspects of the textbook and offers insight into the EESL pedagogies and the textbook's approach, in addition to pointing out areas for improvements for subsequent editions and textbooks in the same series.

Abrégé/Résumé

Le programme d'anglais enrichi, langue seconde, a vu le jour tout récemment au Québec. Le Ministère a mis en place les directives ainsi que les résultats ciblés avant la fin de la secondaire 5. Toutefois, il existe très peu de ressources pour les enseignants intervenant à ce niveau. Ce mémoire se fixe comme objectif d'examiner les études menées sur les pratiques pédagogiques dans les cours d'anglais, niveau avancé, et celles des cours d'anglais, langue maternelle, afin de mieux comprendre les choix pédagogiques du manuel intitulé *Raising The Bar 5* dont je suis co-auteure. L'étude des recherches menées jusqu'à présent sert de base et examine plus précisément les points suivants : grammaire, lexique, analyses littéraires, exercices de compréhension auditive, TICE, travail de groupe et mesures correctives par un membre du groupe. Les domaines d'étude mettent en lumière chacun des points cités ci-dessus et aident à mieux comprendre les choix des auteures lors de la rédaction de leur manuel. L'objectif de ce mémoire est également de proposer des pistes de réflexion dans le but de porter des améliorations aux éditions futures de *Raising The Bar 5* et d'établir une trame pour d'autres manuels de la même série.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The context

The Enriched English as a Second Language (EESL) program at the secondary level of the French school system has only been officially in place since the most recent Quebec education reform (Ministère d'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport [MELS], 2003), which was implemented between 2006 and 2009 (Ministère d'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport [MELS], 2005). The official EESL program is a response to: 1) an increasing number of students at the primary level having taken the new optional intensive English program usually offered in grade 6, which helped develop their skills in English at a faster pace than students taking the regular English as a Second Language program; 2), an increase in the Anglophone student population in French schools (17 924 or 1.3% Anglophone students in French schools in 1972-73 to the 21 286 or 2.4% students in 2010-11) (Ministère d'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport [MELS], 2012); and

3), a significant English-speaking allophone[1] population in French schools (108 405 or 12% allophone students in 2009-10) (MELS, 2013).

The EESL program was designed for students whose English proficiency level went beyond that of the English as a Second Language Core (ESL) program. It focuses on the same three competencies as the ESL program, which are *Interacts orally in English, Reinvests understanding of texts,* and *Writes and produces texts*; however, the expectations in each of these competencies are different. For example, when comparing the *Progression of Learning* ministry documents (a more specific breakdown of the language and cognitive skills and knowledge students must acquire to help teachers build their curriculum) for ESL (2010) and EESL (2011), the functional language section is quite different. Most items in the ESL program are in progress until secondary 5 whereas for the EESL program they should be acquired in earlier grades: elementary or in secondary 1. There are also added sections for example in "promoting cooperation" (p. 9). Furthermore, there is a section on language register and audience that is not found in the ESL *Progression of Learning*, which demonstrates just a few of the differences in how these levels are distinguished.

The QEP expects teachers to do a good deal of the curriculum development and planning themselves. There are many resources that have been developed with the QEP in mind and they are readily available at the ESL level; however, there are very few pedagogical resources available for EESL teachers in Quebec. The way in which these skills are developed both in the

[1] Allophone is defined in Canada as a person, usually an immigrant, whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. This population is significant to the EESL program because, according to the 2006 Census, 68% of immigrants in Quebec were considered English FOLS (First Official Language Spoken) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Therefore, Enriched English as a Second Language classes would be better suited for these people who are not Anglophone yet whose proficiency in English is superior to the Core ESL program.

ESL and EESL program (as well as all other QEP programs) is through Learning Evaluation Situations (LES) (MELS, n.d.). The LES is generally designed around a particular theme and texts are used to develop skills to produce a final product (video, text, presentation, etc.) related to the theme. The Ministry developed the program but very little guidance was given to teachers as to *what* to teach in the classrooms. Sample LESs can be found on the Ministry website and on other sites promoting learning in Quebec; however, it is always up to the teachers to build their curriculum. Furthermore, it is very difficult to find LESs for Enriched English as a Second Language, which means that teachers usually base their curriculum on what they believe shouldbe the main focus of study, using the three main competencies and the *Progression of Learning*[2] (MELS, 2011) document. While this planning empowers teachers as curriculum developers, creating a program that is adapted and effective demands a great deal of preparation time from teachers, particularly difficult for new ones.

I have taught an enriched English as a second language program in a private French international school for the past six years. French international schools are under the obligation to teach the programs mandated by the French government in France; however, as students in North American often have higher proficiencies in English, different levels of English classes are created (i.e. enriched levels). Most teachers who teach at these levels develop their own curriculum using assumptions of what is necessary in CEGEP, university, and professional and social life in general to design their program. As both systems (French and Quebecois) use a

[2] There are five sections including culture, language repertoire, process, strategies and texts. In the section for language, which is divided into four parts (functional language, vocabulary, language conventions, and register and audience) teachers are given example sentences for the type of communication students will have to acquire. Each language skill (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) is incorporated within these four parts. Teachers can also use these charts to monitor what students must be learning and at what level.

communicative approach and strategy-based learning, the manner in which the four language skills are taught is similar. I have also taught the enriched English program in two Quebecois public schools during my internships in my university teacher education program leading to teacher certification. In each case, teachers developed and adapted their own program using resources from the Internet, novels, and other published ESL material. Teachers at this level have had no alternative or comprehensive resources to aid them.

In 2011, the first official and mandatory EESL secondary 5 exit-exam was published and distributed to the schools and teachers who taught at that level. Prior to this exam, students at the EESL level would take the ESL core exit-exam at the end of secondary 5 in order to validate their diploma of secondary education (DES). This new exam provided a standard for evaluating the EESL students; yet again, teachers were given very little guidance to prepare their students for this exam.

The publishing company Pearson ERPI identified the gap in resources available to teachers and in 2012, approached me and Cara Webb, a fellow EESL and ESL teacher who has taught extensively in French Quebecois public schools and has written many secondary ESL textbooks for ERPI. They wanted us to create and write an EESL textbook for secondary 5 in order to provide a resource that was structured and adapted to this particular level and which would provide guidance for the final exam. At the time and still today, there is no other published resource for EESL at the secondary 5 level. Now that the textbook is complete, I am taking the opportunity in this thesis to explore the learning principles that informed its writing, overviewing relevant literatures in relation to the textbook, and assessing in response what I might change in subsequent editions.

While Pearson was responding to a general sense that resources were missing, they also created a specific survey about teacher needs for a textbook and what elements should be included based on the type of student who would eventually use it.

Deepening Understanding of Teacher and Student Needs: the Pearson EESL Survey

Before the project was started, the research development team, led by Stephan Leduc (2012) at Pearson ERPI, used their connections in schools to find out from the teachers: who the typical EESL students were; what the challenges were to teach at this level; what teachers at the EESL level were doing in their classrooms; and also what teachers felt they needed the most in terms of support to teach at this level. Eight teachers were contacted and interviewed in the greater Montreal area. These teachers provided information, which helped solidify the elements required to create an appropriately adapted textbook at the EESL level in secondary 5, which would prepare students both to pass the final Ministry exam and to be successful in their future studies or work-life in English.

The teachers surveyed worked in schools all around the island of Montreal, in Mont Saint Hilaire, in Trois Rivière, and in Magog. Through the survey results, it became possible to get a better idea of the typical EESL student. Most EESL students in Montreal are Francophone and have a lot of exposure to English, either at home or in the community in which they live, or they had gone through the intensive English program in primary school. There are also many allophone students who had native-like English skills because they lived in English speaking countries before arriving in Quebec. Added to these students were Anglophones from the United States, Britain, or English speaking countries that were channelled into the French system when they immigrated to Quebec because of Bill 101. Another interesting aspect of the typical EESL

students that the teachers surveyed noticed was that most EESL students were more academically inclined and tended to excel in their other subjects as well.

Respondents noted that the challenges teaching at this level were typically in the creation and preparation of an appropriate and effective program that stimulates the students without putting too much pressure on their already heavy workload. As well, teachers expressed concerns about putting together a course pack, which is time consuming, or using a textbook that is not adapted to the goals of the program in Quebec. Furthermore, educators struggled to teach grammar at this level because students saw themselves as too advanced to learn grammar. However, the reality is that students can learn the grammar rules but often have difficulties transferring this knowledge to their writing and speaking practice. Other concerns were related to the preparation for the new Ministry exam and how to teach all aspects of the preparation of the feature article, an integral part of the new exam. The exam was a particular sore point as it involved students writing a 400-word feature article, which was to be prepared in 4 different steps. The first step requires students to read multiple texts ranging in length and type. The texts in the 2011 exam ranged from 30-word personal notes to a 2-page article from a magazine. The second step involves group discussions about the readings to check understanding and share opinions. Students are encouraged to take notes during the discussion, which are used for the third step in which they organize their thoughts in a booklet. They are allowed to use the booklet with all their notes in the fourth step, which is writing a 400-word feature article based on the topic of the readings. Some other, more managerial challenges included organizing a heterogeneous classroom that challenged students intellectually but was not so difficult that students want to be moved down to the less demanding ESL class.

The results of the survey indicated that teachers generally used materials found on websites, which offered ESL or English Language Arts lessons for free. PBS and *The Montreal Gazette*'s Online Pedagogical Program were mentioned. Teachers also developed or used materials bought for novel study for regular ELA. Some used Penguin Readers at the levels 5 (Upper Intermediate 2300 headwords[3] – B2 level in the Common European Framework) and 6 (Advanced 3000 headword – C1 level in the Common European Framework). Each teacher decided what (s)he would use and how. None of the materials were specific to the Quebec Education Program (QEP) and the *Progression of Learning*.

At the EESL level, most teachers indicated that reading and writing were the main focus of their program. They used magazine and newspaper articles, short stories, and a variety of literary genres such as classic canonical novels, contemporary novels and some graphic novels to teach their program. Very few branched out into poetry as they generally agreed that they found it more difficult to keep students' attention and interest. The writing assignments stemmed from what they were studying. Essays (argumentative and literary), short stories, letters, and projects were the main production being asked for from students. As for speaking, this skill was touched upon less formally through discussions about the readings or themes being developed; through group work based on communicative projects; through role-play such as a simulated UN session; and through debates. Listening (in my opinion the most difficult skill to teach, especially at the EESL level), was not formally taught by any of the teachers surveyed. They used film and videos to introduce themes or compare with literature but none spoke about using audio or video as a way to check or develop listening comprehension. Furthermore, the evaluation was mostly

[3] A headword is defined as a word found in a dictionary. On the Pearson website it is difficult to say how they calculate this but I assume they ran it through a program such as Lextutor or something similar.

performed in terms of reinvestment (C2, see above) rather than comprehension. This is important to note as it meant that teachers assumed students understood what they were working on and expected them to be able to reproduce or create based on texts they may not have completely understood. The materials used often focused on thought-provoking topics and global issues. Some teachers used documentaries and other authentic materials to expose students to different accents. Lastly, in terms of the grammatical needs of the students, the main points were sentence structure, punctuation, and complex verb forms.

Finally, the Pearson ERPI survey (Leduc, 2012) provided information about what teachers felt they needed in terms of support to teach this level. Although all of the teachers surveyed are veteran teachers, we, Cara Webb and I, believe that the support they required would be even more helpful for teachers beginning their careers. Teachers' main concern was the new exam and most expressed the need for appropriate writing support for it. They wanted examples of the texts students would be expected to write, with related activities to help with the deconstruction and writing process of such texts. They suggested having formal letters, opinion pieces, informative and narrative texts, argumentative essays, and even CVs. They also wanted projects that were related to the texts previously used in the units and included different type of media, so that such projects would also cover the requirement of developing cross-curricular competencies. In addition, they voiced the need for the deconstruction of paragraphs and formatting for different types of texts.

Advantages and Limitations of textbooks

Creating a curriculum in a textbook format has both many advantages and limitations for the authors. The advantages include being focused and clear in the goals and elements to be

taught in each unit and in the book as a whole. The limitations include having to budget for copyright materials and consequent restrictions on the length of the texts used due to limited number of pages allowed per book. However, both aspects required us, as authors, to be more creative and concise in the texts we chose and the activities we would develop.

Furthermore, when using a textbook, there are limitations for both teachers and students since there are set themes to be studied. To make the curriculum more complete and culturally relevant we hope teachers will use the textbook as a jumping off point to themes and ideas that are particularly pertinent to the students using the textbook. We also hope that teachers use the textbook in conjunction with their own material.

Brief Summary of the Textbook Features

While designing the curriculum, there were several elements that guided all of our decisions. First, we needed to design a book that would help teachers to prepare their students for the end-of-cycle exam, which we knew included the writing of a feature article which would have to be analyzed, deconstructed, and practiced. Second, we had to include tasks and evaluation situations that would take into consideration the three competencies, required by the Ministry, throughout each unit, as well as elements delineated by the *Progression of Learning* document. And third, we needed to find and create material that would be appropriate for EESL students who are particular in that they are too advanced to use the material created for ESL students yet, can not always use material for ELA students because too many of the exercises assume students know more than they do at the EESL level. Each type of material (ESL and ELA) could be used but in a very eclectic fashion; however, we wanted to create a textbook that was specifically designed for the needs for EESL students.

All units would include: three reading texts; one listening text; a more formal oral interaction activity; a mini writing assignment before the final one which would require self- and peer-editing; a focused activity on grammar (with a longer workshop at the end of each unit), language, and vocabulary; and synthesis activity in which students would use graphic organizers to sort out and process the information given in order to complete the final assignment.

We also wanted to integrate three projects that would use multimedia elements in a more formal manner. The first project is linked thematically to the first two units (a radio show podcast), the second is linked to the second two units (a public service announcement video), and the third is linked to the entire book (a zine). There is also a reference section at the end of the textbook that summarized the text components, language elements, and grammar elements visited throughout the book.

All the elements included in the book were chosen and incorporated in order to give students the required tools and practice of using these tools to be successful in the program. In the teacher's guide we have also included elements of differentiation as well as outside sources we think would be welcome additions to the textbook. We believe that teachers must use the textbook as a guide to the program but that it should be adapted and enhanced using the teacher's individual knowledge, interests, and skills.

Research Questions

In this thesis I reflect on the textbook in light of a more thorough review of the literature, which time did not allow me to complete prior to writing the textbook. That said, I was able to draw upon Cara Webb's experience as an EESL teacher as well as five years of my own experience teaching EESL classes and creating material for advanced ESL students when very

little published material existed. I used, tested, and adapted many ESL and ELA lesson plans as I got to know the typical EESL student better. Also, several courses during my MA helped shape my perspective on what a curriculum could include. For example, the course Foundations of Curriculum allowed me to insist on the importance of personal experience within the curriculum. That coupled with the fact that the QEP is insistent about the inclusion of the Personal Response process further solidified its inclusion. Also, in the course Meanings of Literacy I was able to explore how other teachers and scholars have created academic writing assignments that are more relevant to students and their future as well as effective in the teaching methods of these particular assignments. Despite the experience and course work I wanted to examine more closely what the research said about EESL education. In particular, I will be asking in this thesis:

- What are the best methods to use with advanced ESL students in high school?
- What does the research say about best practices for:
    - Teaching grammar, vocabulary and literature?
    - Providing and organizing group projects while using multimedia?
    - Teaching and monitoring the peer response process?
- How does my textbook incorporate these best practices?
- Based on the research what should be changed or adapted in the textbook to better serve the students and teachers using it?

Each chapter first offers a literature review of a particular facet of teaching EESL, and then examines the textbook in light of this research, including looking at what elements could be changed in future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* and future EESL textbooks in general. More specifically, in Chapter 2, I will focus on examining the importance of including mechanical features, such as grammar, vocabulary, and literary analysis in the EELS curriculum of *Raising*

the Bar. In Chapter 3, I will examine the lexical coverage of the listening texts included in the book, link theoretical understanding of listening comprehension to the types of documents and questions we have included, and analyze the importance of including body language as part of the listening comprehension component for the EESL level when using videos. In Chapter 4, I will explore the inclusion of group projects and analyze the support and limitations of collaborative-cooperative learning and digital literacy in particular for EESL students. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will describe the inclusion of such a peer-response process, analyze its strengths and limitations, and show how *Raising The Bar 5*, as well as teachers using it, can help their students maximize their experience.

CHAPTER 2: GRAMMAR, VOCABULARY, AND LITERARY ANALYSIS IN ENRICHED ESL: USING ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Introduction

In most English as a Second Language curricula, grammar is taught communicatively in classes. Grammar's main purpose in this philosophy of language teaching is to allow students to be better understood through proper use of verb tenses, clear word order, and meaningful word choice. The main focus of ESL curricula is the oral component, although all other skills (reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and writing skills) are taught and developed. Enriched English as a Second language classes have a slightly different focus although the same set of skills are taught. The focus of Enriched classes is on more advanced communicative skills which require more advanced knowledge and practice of grammar, vocabulary, and literary (in the broadest sense of the term) analysis. Based on the end-of-cycle outcomes in the QEP (2003) for the EESL program, students should be writing accurately and effectively depending on the context, using language conventions correctly, and selecting language to "achieve the desired effect of their text on the audience" (p. 46). They are also expected to "use concrete as well as figurative language, simple and complex sentence structure, and demonstrate effective use of text components" (p. 46).

Since EESL students are required to write accurately and effectively, curriculum at this level should include a section on mechanics of the language. In this chapter I will focus on the mechanical features, including grammar, vocabulary, and literary analysis, of *Raising the Bar 5*. These features are intrinsically linked with both language learning and meaning making but I will focus more on exploring the different techniques that are used at the advanced ESL and ELA level to inform EESL curriculum. When the research on theoretical findings and practical applications shows differing opinions on what was used in the textbook, an analysis of how to make *Raising The Bar 5* more effective or what may need to be modified in further editions will be provided.

Literature Review

Theory of grammar teaching in language classes

In languages such as French, grammar has been taught for decades, in both first and second language contexts, in an isolated manner. However, for the English language, research into teaching has changed the way in which grammar has been taught. The shift to a communicative way of language teaching has seen a shift away from formal grammar education where rules are taught in a vacuum. In most cases, researchers have found that the communicative technique of teaching grammar in a specific language context is more effective. For example, according to Hirai (2010), "teaching grammar in isolation does not seem to have an effect on the writing of more than a few students" (p. 103) and Weaver (1996) concurs that studying grammar, as a system without relating it to its use, will be ineffective. Thus, grammar must be fully integrated into the context, themes, texts, and communication skills that are being

taught to students in order to be effective. Academic writing or more formal grammar in writing must be taught in context as well.

Hirai (2010) argues that grammar taught through activities in which students manipulate the language and understand how the grammar can change meaning is more effective than traditional instruction of grammar rules. For example, practicing a shift of register from informal grammar to formal grammar and looking at how the meaning of the sentence or entire text is changed can help students see the use of grammar more clearly. Jaeger (2011) also suggests using students' writing to teach grammar and syntax in context is the most effective. Students must see "the connection between the rule and how they construct their written pieces" (p. 23).

Furthermore, scholars (Hirai, 2010; Weaver, 1996) argue that editing for syntax is another useful tool, although they warn that for this technique to be effective, students must already be proficient enough to recognize grammatical errors and must be taught how to constructively edit work. This point of teaching editing techniques and having a certain level of proficiency brings up several questions about the scope and limits of educational textbooks including:

1. Where, when, how are the editing skills taught?

2. How do students recognize their grammatical errors if they have not been taught some parts of grammar more formally?

Weaver (1996) offers some suggestions as to how grammar can be taught through mini lessons when grammatical problems arise in students' writing. Betty Azar (2007 in Harai, 2010) promotes the idea that writing skills can be improved with explicit grammar instruction when rules are taught in relation to students' writing. Language rules can then "be taught through the negotiation of meaning, as students comprehend context, and as they acquire the language and

negotiate the understanding of communication" (Harai, p. 99-100). This means that grammar lessons are dependent on students' writing, which is difficult, but not impossible, for textbooks to foresee and mimic.

Finally, Harai (2010) also notes that increased exposure both in writing and orally can enhance the use of correct grammar. There is a transference that is made by students whereby the way in which information is communicated is replicated. This means the language students hear and read must be at the level and register of what they are aspiring to use.

Theory of academic vocabulary teaching in language classes

Enriched ESL curricula assume students have already acquired more than a basic level of vocabulary required to communicate in everyday situations. What this type of curriculum aims to do is to increase students vocabulary in order for them to be more proficient users of the language capable of at least distinguishing different registers as well as beginning to use different vocabulary to write more formally. Academic vocabulary, the words used in the school setting, is especially important for EESL students because these students will be required, at the EESL secondary 5 level, to read articles, information texts, literature, and many other types of texts across school disciplines. As opposed to the United States of America, where much of the research on academic vocabulary has been done, students in the EESL program will not need content-based vocabulary since, in the context of Quebec, other disciplines are taught in French. However, preparation for general studies in English at a higher level (CEGEP and eventually university) was considered when creating *Raising The Bar 5*.

In terms of vocabulary instruction and learning, basic vocabulary and academic vocabulary are diametrically different (Harai, 2010). Studies show that implicit vocabulary

instruction is better for basic everyday vocabulary whereas for academic vocabulary, explicit instruction is more effective (Harai, 2010), which has implications for the way in which vocabulary and reading is presented in Enriched ESL textbooks. Word knowledge is complex. There are five aspects of this complexity that are recognized by researchers: 1- "incrementality" (p. 270): words are known and understood in degrees; 2- "multidimensionality" p. (270): word knowledge uses different types of knowledges; 3- "polysemy" (p. 270): words have different meanings; 4- "interrelatedness" (p. 270): words are not understood in a vacuum; 5- "heterogeneity" (p. 270): what it means to know a word depends on the word in question (Nagy and Scott, 2000). These five aspects must be taken into account in the recognition, presentation, and types of exercises provided for students to learn and integrate vocabulary learned.

Metalanguage in learning vocabulary

Explicit vocabulary instruction is recommended by researchers but there are too many words to learn by direct instruction and it would take too long to learn everything about that word. So, how should academic vocabulary be taught most effectively? Nagy and Scott (2000) recommend that for the words that are necessary for students to learn, teaching must be done in multiple ways wherein the students revisit the word often. Also, knowing that students "know" a word is not seen through rote memory of a definition but rather by its proper use in different contexts -- except in the case of technical words whereby the rote memory of the definition can in fact show knowledge acquisition of that word. They further state that "[t]eaching students new words by giving them definitions is the antithesis of a constructivist approach to learning" (Nagy and Scott, p. 274).

Nagy and Scott (2000) also argue that for students to learn vocabulary better, they must have some metalinguistic ability, which is the ability to "reflect on and manipulate the structural features of language" (p. 274). For example, morphological awareness can help students break down unknown words into the smallest unit of meaning to help derive the meaning of the new word. Also, for bilingual or multilingual students, using prior knowledge of words in other languages may help students recognize and understand words (Nagy and Scott, 2000). However, some researchers argue (Nation, 1990 in Nagy and Scott, 2000) that because English's morphemes can be irregular, the use of context first is a better way to derive meaning of a new word at first. Then more work must be done with the new word in order for it to be truly learned.

For students who have a high proficiency in a first language, not only is metalinguistic knowledge important but so is acknowledging the value of transferring notions (Cummins, 1991 in Blachowizc and Fisher, 2000) In other words, understanding how language works can be transferred to learning a new language and subsequently make language learning easier. The English language has many borrowed vocabulary words from other language that students can use their knowledge of these words to help them build their English vocabulary. Teachers should not be afraid of making students aware of these similarities. For example, Grabe (1991 in Blachowizc and Fisher, 2000), found that for academically oriented students, the knowledge and capability to use less frequent words (more than the 3,000 most frequent words) was necessary. Hazenburg and Hulstijn (1996 in Blachowizc and Fisher, 2000) argued "a minimum of 10,000 basewords is needed for university studies" (p. 514). This study's findings are interesting in terms of the type and level of vocabulary that needs to be present in the texts used and exercises provided to develop and practice using these words. More studies would need to be done to find out what the target should be for EESL students at the secondary level but I would argue that it

should be, at a minimum, more than the 3,000 most frequent words so that students are prepared for the CEGEP level in Quebec.

'How to' of learning vocabulary

Knowing that vocabulary must be seen, used, and reused is interesting but what does this look like in the context of a textbook? Based on the research review by Blachowicz and Fisher (2000), keeping students active in the process of learning vocabulary is necessary. They suggest that using grouping activities or focusing on semantic relatedness (semantic mapping uses graphs to show the relationships between words) allows students to be active learners. For example, Durso and Coggins (1991 in Blachowicz and Fisher, 2000) found that when freshmen college students used semantic mapping to organize words, they were able to reuse these words properly in other contexts.

Finally, allowing students to choose their own words for study is also a good technique as students usually chose words that are at or above their grade level and the retention of meaning was greater in several studies according to Blachowizc and Fisher (2000).

Literature for Literacy

Different types of literature must be provided for students at the EESL level if they are expected to write in different registers using appropriate and accurate language (QEP, 2003). In order to be able to produce language they must have examples and exercises to help them analyze the use and effectiveness of language.

Literature

Literary texts provide a rich sample of input of various discourse styles as well as linguistic information. These texts can be the basis for developing students' language proficiency since it was seen in earlier parts of this chapter that exposure to certain types of language and grammar can help improve students' writing (Barrette, Paesani, and Vinall, 2010; Harai, 2010). Literary analysis is the examination of the structures and themes of a literary text. In performing guided literary analysis students are able to notice and even later test out narrative techniques, which include, for example, point of view, temporal structure, or flashback. They are also given an opportunity to look closely at how patterns in the usage of lexical and grammar features can make and change meaning. Students thus become aware of the effect of language use (Barrette, Paesani, and Vinall, 2010).

An advantage of teaching literary analysis to advanced ESL students is that "in fine-tuning such discriminatory abilities, we hone a skill that can be transferred to the "reading" of anything – literary texts, non-literary texts, speeches, conversations, events. Who is speaking? What is his or her purpose? point of view? value system?" (Oster, 1989, p. 90). These skills are of utmost importance in the development of critical thinking.

In Oster's experience (1989) (though she states that there is no quantitative data to back her claim), students who read and analyze different stylistic or rhetorical devices such as metaphor or imagery, are more likely to transfer this into their writing than those who are not studying in this fashion. Furthermore, when reading literature, students are made aware of the fact that the text is reader-based, which means that the text is meant to be understood by others in a certain way. Students who study these perspectives are then able to understand that their

writing too, must be read by someone. Then, students can start manipulating their writing to influence others.

Point of view

The Western value system of analysis, voice, and argument is not shared in all cultures. For example, in China, knowing literature is about memorizing, not analysing and personalizing (Oster, 1989). It is in the context of this difference in cultures that Oster argues for the use of literature in ESL and EFL classes to teach point of view as a way to "foster academic skills in a way that minimizes the threat and encourages taking risks, both in reading and in writing" (p. 88). In sharing responses to a piece of literature or a text, students come in contact with other responses based on other cultural perspectives. They are not debating or arguing the righteousness of their point of view, simply becoming aware of it (Oster, 1989).

Oster (1989) further argues that raising students' awareness of different perspectives using texts can help raise their maturity level because they are being shown to 'see' from different angles and becoming aware that different points of view exist.

Teaching grammar, vocabulary, and literary analysis in Raising The Bar 5

Description of grammar in Raising The Bar 5

According the research, the most effective way to teach grammar is to integrate the rules into the context, themes, or communication skills that are being taught. Also, students must be able to manipulate grammar to see the changes in meaning that ensue in their own writing as well as in authentic texts. In *Raising The Bar 5,* the grammar points chosen to be featured were some of the errors compiled by the Ministry as the most frequently made in the context of the

province wide EESL final exam of 2012[4] ("Featuring the Feature Article" MELS, 2012) as well as errors taken through Cara Webb's and my own experience working with EELS students. For example, run-on sentences and sentence fragments (**Accuracy workshop 5**) and quotation punctuation (**Accuracy workshop 2**) are just two of the grammar points chosen from the Ministry exams. Cara Webb, Sharnee Chait, and I also decided that in order to avoid the most common comment by students, namely, "We know all this already!", we would have students learn the grammar through common errors. In order to alleviate this time-consuming exercise for teachers, we created paragraphs students would edit, which included typical errors made by students in order to understand the context of the grammar, as well as see it in its more authentic format.

Each unit has a different grammar focus, which we have called **Focus on Accuracy**. There is at least one authentic example of this grammar point in one or more of the texts used in the unit. Teachers can chose to focus on all *Common Errors* or simply the ones that students are making the most. Some students will need more guidance and more practice than others. By breaking down the errors, teachers can point the students to the ones for which they need more practice instead of assigning the whole **Accuracy workshop**. This can be done while students are writing their own texts and can be used at any time of the year. The Accuracy workshops have been designed in the theme and context of the specific unit; however, there is nothing to

[4] As the exam was new (implemented for the first time in June 2011) the Ministry felt it was necessary to do a follow-up review of the 2012 June exam. A committee corrected and compiled positive points as well as common errors in students' writing, reliability of the marking grids, validity of the tasks required of the students, etc. 634 student exams were collected: 346 from the public sector and 288 from the private sector. The copies came from 13 out of the 17 regions in Quebec ("Featuring the Feature Article" MELS, 2012). It is uncertain whether this practice will continue.

stop the teacher from using the grammar points at any point in the year in which they find it pertinent.

In the workshop, common errors are presented with correct and incorrect examples. Students are brought to notice the errors in sentences or paragraphs. For example in Unit 5: Superheroes, the **Accuracy Workshop** is on sentence structure. One of the common errors is fragments without a verb. The two following examples are provided and then a text is given to be corrected for fragments without a subject or a verb (*Raising The Bar 5*, p. 169):

> **Fragment:** Catwoman, an independent woman. She has the brain and the looks to overcome any obstacle. She does not need a man in her life to save her.
>
> Ask the question, "What is Catwoman doing?" Notice the missing verb.
>
> **Correct:** Catwoman **is** an independent woman. She **has** the brain and the looks to overcome any obstacle. She **does not need** a man in her life to save her.
>
> **Fragment:** Batman and Robin, both against crime. They fight a just cause because they want to find the good in society instead of being upset about their difficult past.
>
> Ask the question, "What are they doing against crime?" Notice the missing verb.
>
> **Correct:** Batman and Robin, both **fight** against crime. They **fight** a just cause because they **want to find** the good in society instead of being upset about their difficult past.
>
> **Activity 1 – Common Error 1 and 2**

- Read the following paragraph and underline the fragments.
- Correct the fragments by inserting the necessary verb or subject.

> Female superheroes are as formidable as their male counterparts. They are perhaps less popular but they are no less powerful. Storm, from the X-Men. She
> **Storm, the X-Men is able**
> is able to produce and control incredible climatic phenomena at will. Think about the power of destruction of a massive snowstorm. Able to stop at any moment.
> **and then being about to stop it at any moment**
> Rogue, another female superhero, is able to absorb the strengths, abilities, personalities, and memories of other superheroes just by touching them. The

authority to control. Now, that is power.
She has the authority to control.

Furthermore, female superheroes may have an advantage over their male counterparts because they are underestimated. For example, Elastigirl. No one
Elastigirl is a good example.
can tell that she is not just a regular mom yet she has superpowers. She is able to stretch her body to great lengths to grab or hold things together. But very
But because
innocent-like. She tricks her opponents. Her daughter also. Violent can become
acts innocently, she can trick her opponents. Her daughter is also underestimated.
invisible whenever she wants but no one would know just looking at her.

There are tips on how to avoid these errors and then there are exercises in error correction. In each unit there is a text to be edited with all the common errors combined. Students are encouraged to practice the same methods to their own texts.

Although pinpointing and recreating exact student error is difficult to replicate in a textbook, I believe that the common grammar errors found in *Raising The Bar 5* are precisely the types of errors that will be found in students writing. The **Focus on Accuracy** workshops are placed at the end of each unit so that teachers can have students write and when problems arise, guide them to the *Common Error* found in the book. There are more examples provided and tools and tips to correct that specific type of problem. Again, teachers do not have to teach the whole workshop but rather use the sections that are appropriate for individual students, which is what Weaver (1996) encouraged when she described the mini lessons.

Description of vocabulary in Raising The Bar 5

In each unit of *Raising the Bar 5* there is a **Focus on Vocabulary** section in which students understand and develop their vocabulary skills. For example, in unit 1 the focus is synonyms; in unit 2 it is cognates and false cognates; in unit 3 it is idioms; in unit 4 expressions

linked to vocabulary in different contexts; in unit 5 it is suffixes, prefixes, and root words; and finally in unit 6 the focus is on the prediction of meaning of expressions/idioms based on context. Most of the vocabulary words and focus comes from the three written texts and one audio or video text used in the unit. The exercises encourage both understanding and use and are expected to be reinvested into the final writing task at the end of each unit.

Based on the five aspects of vocabulary learning described by Nagy and Scott (2000), I believe that *Raising The Bar 5* develops vocabulary "incrementality" (p. 270) through first having students notice the word or expression in the text, then understand it either through context or by dictionary definition, then by manipulating it in a controlled activity, and finally by reusing it in the context of their own writing. The "multidimensionality" (p. 270) of vocabulary acquisition is more difficult in the sense that the vocabulary is presented only in written or auditory form. Perhaps adding exercises where students visualize the word in a drawing, skit, poem, or even a song could help students to appropriate the word. There is clear acknowledgement of vocabulary "polysemy" (p. 270), for example in the Unit 4: Taking Risks where students have to use words or expressions in different contexts to show their different or similar meanings. In the Focus on Vocabulary students have to look at the expressions, underline the word or words in the expression that bring the project to life or death. They also have to define these words and write a sentence using them in the context provided. Here are two examples with the answers (*Raising The Bar 5*, p. 120):

> 1. die a <u>slow and painful</u> death
> Definition: takes time and is not easy; agonizing
> Sentence about studying: Studying German is slow and painful.
> Sentence about the dentist: My dentist appointment to remove my tooth was slow and painful.
>
> 2. still <u>nascent</u> project
> Definition: Just beginning to develop

> Sentence about politics: The nascent party was testing its power against the opposition.
> Sentence about a flower: The nascent flowers were beautifully colourful.

According to Durso and Coggins (1991 in Blachowicz and Fisher, 2000) semantic mapping is another effective way to show word polysemy and helps students reuse words in different contexts, which is provided in Unit 1: Teen Perspectives. To work on words' "interrelatedness" (p. 270), in Unit 6: Finding Utopia, students must predict expressions or words based on their context. Finally, in order to acknowledge words' "heterogeneity" (p. 270), in all activities students are required to create their own sentences using the word to check for integration. Later, the written assignments, the teacher can assess if a students has, or not yet, appropriated the vocabulary through its use in context.

The research also suggested using students' other languages to inform vocabulary development. The difficulty with using students' first language is that in the context of Montreal and Quebec as a whole, students' mother tongue is not always French. However, French could be assumed as being a high proficiency language, albeit not a mother tongue, which is used by all students because all other classes in the Quebecois system are in French. This is the reason we integrated an exercise on cognates and false cognates in Unit 2: Gothic Horror. To be more specific, students can recognize words that are the same in both French and English such as *macabre* and *horrible* but also be made aware that there are false French-English cognates such as *formidable.* Embracing, instead of ignoring other languages will encourage students to use all types of knowledge to understand language.

Description of literary analysis in Raising The Bar 5

Understanding and making meaning from texts is the core of *Raising The Bar 5*. In each unit of this textbook, there are three written texts and one audio or visual text. For the context of this thesis I have chosen to focus my attention of literary text found in Unit 1: Perceptions of Teens with its memoire; Unit 2: Gothic Horror with its excerpt from a novel and its short story; and Unit 5: Finding Utopia with its excerpt from a short story. For each of these texts, specific questions and activities have not only been designed to check for comprehension but also for understanding in a broader context about the meaning and use of language and cultural issues.

Using, for example, the memoir in Unit 1 entitled: "On Growing Up White Trash" by Heather O'Neill, students are taught to recognize and analyze lexical choice and meaning through the **Focus on Language**. By understanding the levels of meaning in synonyms students can better understand the meaning author was communicating. The example provided in that unit is *trash* with its synonyms *garbage, waste, rubbish, refuse, litter, junk, scrap, debris*. A brief explanation of how these synonyms conjure up different images (*garbage* – a garbage can in a home or *litter* – paper or plastic outside on the street) is provided. Then students are required to loo up the word *tiny* and to find its synonyms ordering them from the small to the smallest (*Raising The Bar 5*, p. 18). Later students can try their hand at creating and communicating using the subtle nuances of vocabulary. Furthermore, by sharing their response to the language, students are developing a deeper understanding of meaning and how words can change that meaning (Oster, 1989).

In Unit 2, students are required to notice, analyze, and understand plot choice and temporal structure in "A Diagnostic of Death" by Ambrose Bierce in which the story-within-a-story creates grammatical shifts. Students are able to then see (the analysis uses a story chart)

how a story comes alive through its action. This knowledge is then practice when students must create their own Gothic horror story.

Finally, in Unit 6, the excerpt from the short story "2BR02B" by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. challenges students to take a point on view on the issue for population control. Although the basis for the debate is fiction, the debate can bring up knowledge and beliefs from students' different areas of interest. For this text, a **Focus on Language** was also developed to analyze the use of euphemisms in the text and in students' everyday lives. The ubiquitous use of euphemisms not only in fiction but also in news reports underlines the importance of this rhetorical device.

Every text used in *Raising The Bar 5* was specifically chosen to raise students' understanding for the word and the world around them. Using literature, based on the research described in the previous section, can help to expand students' worlds and writing abilities.

Implications for future textbooks

Grammar

In terms of grammar, the significant difficulty in curriculum design is knowing the type of error the student is going to make and how to translate that into meaningful exercises in a textbook. Also, it is difficult to provide the student with a sufficient number of examples and space to practice. Based on the research described in this chapter, I believe that we have chosen the most significant grammar points and provided both the students and the teachers with enough material with which to work. Feedback from teachers using the textbook will be required to glean a more detailed assessment of this section.

Vocabulary

As stated in an earlier section, vocabulary must be taught and learned in several ways. Within the textbook, there are several activities used to promote vocabulary acquisition. However, based on Nagy and Scott's research (2000) which states that learning definitions is not an effective way to learn vocabulary, one recommendation for future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* and other EESL textbook in general may be to take this component out completely and replace it with other, more productive types of exercises. A suggestion for subsequent editions or textbooks could be to add exercises where students visualize the word in a drawing, skit, poem, or even a song could help students to appropriate the word. This would in effect utilize the "multidimentionality" of vocabulary acquisition.

Furthermore, a closer analysis of vocabulary families to ensure an appropriate level could render the textbook more effective. Since *Raising The Bar 5* was not produced specifically for university bound students but it is academically oriented and could be used for that purpose it would require a higher level of vocabulary. By comparing the vocabulary highlighted to learn in *Raising The Bar 5* to a list such as the one constructed for older students and English language learners in England for TESOL called *The General Service List if English Words* (West, 1953 in Fisher, Blachowicz, and Watts-Taffe, 2011), we may be able to adequately choose words or find texts with the words that are necessary for these students' future success. On the other hand, as Fisher, Blachowicz, and Watts-Taffe (2011) state, in some circumstances it is better to choose words when they are contextualized in local curriculum developed and written by people who are more familiar with the audience. This may be another element to discuss with teachers who have used the textbook to get their feedback.

Finally, allowing students to choose their own vocabulary in the texts studied is encouraged in *Raising The Bar 5* but is difficult to be monitored, as it is dependent of the teacher's emphasis and the students' motivation. However, with new technology it may be possible to plug in the words students have chosen to a program that creates exercises directly adapted to the student's needs. More research and development at the publishing level may need to be done here.

Literacy

Based on the research, there is a sufficient variety in the text types in *Raising The Bar 5* to provide students with adequate examples of language, register, and point of view. Also, the diversity of types of exercises ranging from comprehension questions to response prompts allows students to thoroughly understand and analyze the texts. What would perhaps be of interest at a later stage is looking at how the texts and their analysis have improved students' writing over the course of the year.

CHAPTER 3: AURAL COMPREHENSION AT THE ENRICHED LEVEL

Introduction

So much of the information we are privy to comes in the form of an audio or video clip. It is important for students to learn how to listen for important information and understand the underlying meanings of what is being said, not said, or demonstrated. Aural comprehension is also one of the most difficult skills to teach as it also requires students to speak and/or write to monitor their understanding; however, it cannot be ignored as the QEP (2003) emphasizes that both authentic audio and video clips are essential texts in the development of Competency 2 – Reinvests understanding of texts for EESL students. Further exacerbating the difficulty in teaching aural comprehension, choosing appropriate texts can be difficult as EESL students' level is somewhere between ESL and ELA students. Thus it is important to examine the types of documents and appropriate strategies to enable these students to reach their potential. These strategies (activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, take notes, uses semantic mapping, etc.) are an integral part of the *Progression of Learning* (2011) and it is expected that both be acquired and reused effortlessly.

In this chapter I will examine how the lexical coverage of the listening texts can inform how much lexical knowledge EESL students should have to be successful based on Staehr's (2009) study of high proficiency EFL listeners. I will also survey the types of exercises that are recommended by researchers as being most effective for advanced students' comprehension and strategizing. Finally, I will analyze the importance of including body language as part of the listening comprehension component, especially for EESL students who are already communicating in a more or less natural way. When the research on theoretical findings and practical applications shows differing opinions compared to what was used in the textbook, an analysis of how to make *Raising The Bar 5* more effective or what may need to be modified in further editions will be provided.

Literature Review

Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension

It is important, first, to understand what is meant by aural comprehension. Based on Staehr's (2009) definition, "understanding aural text is an inferential process in which the listener actively constructs meaning through the employment of two major knowledge sources: linguistic (e.g., phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic knowledge) and nonlinguistic (e.g., knowledge of the context, topic, or general knowledge of the world)" (p. 580). This means that for students to fully grasp what they are hearing or seeing they have to have knowledge of the language but also of language and cultural conventions embedded in that language. Furthermore, students who use both top-down and bottom-up processes to understand aural text are more successful listeners as the two processes work together to create more complete understanding of a text (Staehr, 2009; Brown, 2011).

Top-level processing depends to some degree on the information from bottom-level processing, which means that if listeners have not understood a certain number of words they will not be capable of processing the information at the top-level. That is why Staehr (2009) argues that word segmentation and recognition are at the basis of aural comprehension. He is aware that recognizing the words does not guarantee understanding either in L1 nor in L2; however, the findings of his study, which analyzed the correlation between vocabulary knowledge of 115 Danish high-proficiency English speakers and listening skills, found that there was a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension (2009). The Danish students in Staehr's study were older than the students using *Raising the Bar 5*; however, the fact that they had had at least 8 years of formal English instruction and 40% of them have lived for more than 5 months in an English speaking country leads me to assume that they are similar to the students we find in our EESL classes.

Staehr (2009) also found a linear relationship wherein the *vocabulary size* required for average comprehension depended on the *degree of comprehension* required. For example, at 55% comprehension (as measured by an advanced listening test[5]), a level considered acceptable for first-year advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students, a working knowledge of the most frequent 2000 word families[6] is sufficient. Furthermore, Staehr suggests that a vocabulary size of at least 5000 word families might be a useful learning target for advanced learners. Additionally, Nation and Waring (1997) state, through their research, that

[5] The Cambridge certificate of proficiency in English (CPE) (2002) was used in the study. It is designed for the C2 (very advanced) level of the CEFR (common European framework of reference for languages) and tests many different skills including listening for gist, detail, stated and nonstated opinion, and making inferences) (Staehr, 2009, p. 586).

[6] A *word family* is defined as the base word plus its inflections and most important derivational variants (Wikipedia.com)

learners must know at least 95% of the words in a text to understand the text. This research was done for reading text but if there is understanding in reading, I am assuming, the learners will be able to transfer their knowledge to listening too. Since 80% of the individual words in any given English text are within the 2000 most frequent word families (Cobb), this should be the goal of most high school students who would like to read and write academically.

Demands of Listening Exercises: What do we want our students to understand?

It is not enough to know if the audio or visual text is linguistically appropriate. Rather, what is of utmost importance is what students will be required to understand and what they will do with the text. Shohamy and Inbar (1991) found that students were more easily able to answer specific detailed information questions as opposed to global, inference, or synthesis-required information. This means that students can pick out words or expressions but have much more difficulty deciphering what the text means as a whole.

Rost (2011) provides a multitude of listening practice tasks that he argues are all important for students to practice and learn, depending on what the task at hand is. Students need practice with all these tasks since in the real world students will be faced with each. He outlines six different types of listening and the learning focus that they entail (See Table 1: Rost, 2011, p. 183). A closer analysis of how these listening types and activities are translated into practical applications will be developed in the next section.

Listening Type	Learning focus	Activity Focus

Intensive	Focus on phonology, syntax, lexis	Learning to pay close attention to what is actually said. Teacher feedback on accuracy.
Selective	Focus on main ideas, pre-set tasks	Learner attempts to extract key information and construct or utilize information in a meaningful way. Teacher intervention during task and feedback on task completion.
Interactive	Focus on becoming active as a listener; attempt to clarify meaning or form	Learner interacts verbally with others, in collaborative tasks, to discover information or negotiate solutions. Teacher provides feedback on form and outcome of interaction.
Extensive	Focus on listening continuously, managing large amounts of listening input	Learner listens to longer extracts and performs meaning oriented tasks. Teacher directs instruction on comprehension strategies and provides global feedback.

Responsive	Focus on leaner response to input	Learner seeks opportunities to respond and convey his/her own opinions and ideas. Teacher 'pushes output' from learner.
Autonomous	Focus on learner management of progress, navigation of 'Help' options	Learner selects own extracts and tasks, monitors own progress; decides on own patterns of interaction with others. Global feedback from teacher on learning path

During the types of listening activities Rost (2011) has outlined, listeners must use metacognitive (self-managing strategies), cognitive (e.g. inferencing), and socio-affective (collaborating with others) strategies to help their learning and comprehension process (Vandergrift, 2003). The metacognitive knowledge for successful listening comprehension includes analyzing what is required of the listening task itself, activating the skills needed to understand the text, making appropriate predictions, checking comprehension, problem-solving to deduct what was not understood, and finally evaluating the success of the decisions that were made (Vandergrift, 2003). These strategies are not taught all at once but are meant to be developed over the course of a students' education. They are be broken down into mini-tasks and then brought together at certain levels. In secondary 5, according to the MELS *Progression of Learning*, students should have acquired all of these strategies.

Finally, in Vandergrift's study (2003) of the effect of listening comprehension tasks with predictions, pair monitoring and negotiating of meaning, and self-evaluation of strategies used was positive in terms of the amelioration of skill and motivation of learning. Including these types of strategies in a curriculum should be required.

Role of Body Language in advanced Listening Comprehension

A large part of non-linguistic understanding of listening comprehension is in body language and is especially relevant in face-to-face interaction, lecture style courses, and videos. Thus, it is important for students to notice and then learn to decipher these culturally bound cues. For example, in studies done with high-beginner L2 students, videos selected with sufficient clues aided students' listening comprehension (Rubin, 1990 in Rubin, 1994); however, other studies showed that as proficiency grew, the necessity of the visual for comprehension of main ideas, details, and inferences diminished in a interview text (Mueller, 1980 in Rubin, 1994). Mueller also found that as the audio text got more difficult, students required the visual more using a schema-based approach to understand it (Rubin, 1994).

To be clear, "[n]onverbal communication involves conveying messages to an audience through body movements, head nods, hand-arm gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze, posture, and interpersonal distance" (Sueyoshi and Hardison, 2005, p. 661-662). This type of communication can help both the speaker and the listener to communicate what is being said but also to communicate thoughts that are not present in speech. Cultural differences can be a factor in understanding, or not, verbal communication. Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005) provide the example of the differences between Japanese and Americans whereby American participants in the study deemed smiling people more intelligent, whereas the Japanese made no such

association. Their own study of low-intermediate and advanced Korean and Japanese ESL students found that reading both nonverbal gestures and lip movement had a positive impact on listening comprehension and perceived understanding. Their study also found that students at a higher proficiency level and who had more L2 exposure were better able to use appropriate gestures to get their own meaning across and negotiate meaning with other.

In sum, including exercises for noticing and deciphering body language and specific cultural gestures can elevate students understanding and communication skills at higher proficiency levels.

Aural comprehension in Raising The Bar 5

As so much of the information we get and use today is from audio or video clips, each unit has either an audio or video component. Additionally, for the final exam in Secondary 5, there is an aural comprehension component that is integral to the success of the student and thus, students must be prepared with strategies and skills to understand all types of audio and visual texts.

Listening/viewing material

In *Raising The Bar 5*, the listening comprehension material used is authentic and diverse. There are three videos and three audio documents, one in each unit, as well as an audio document in the first project and a video in the second project. The types of video texts include a news report, an interview, a PSA, and an informational film while the audio documents include three interviews and a podcast show.

The goal in this EESL textbook was not only to help students understand the informational basis of the text but also to infer notions about the positions of the speakers and

their underlying intentions. We used questions about body language to bring awareness to subtle, and less subtle gestures, in the videos to help students understand human dynamics. We found this element important as navigating through listening comprehension in the real world is also about reading people's linguistic and nonlinguistic cues.

Vocabulary understanding

Listening texts were chosen based on their pertinence to the unit topic as well as their potential interest for students and their length. What was not taken into account in any systematic manner was the vocabulary present in the text. However, based on the research seen above, this may have been an important element to consider.

After doing research on listening comprehension and realizing the importance knowing the level of vocabulary necessary to understand a text, I have run two of the listening comprehension text through Lextutor, a program that calculates the word frequency in texts and indicates word families as well. For example, 85% of the vocabulary in the interview for Unit 2: Gothic Horror was within the 1000 word families, 3.6% at the 2000 word families, and 0.9% at the academic level (Lextutor, http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/eng/output.pl). For the audio text in Project 1, 82% of the words were within the 1000 word families, 4.4% of the words in the 2000 word families range, and only 2% of the words at the academic level (Lextutor, http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/eng/output.pl). According to the research, these results would indicate that the listening exercises should be quite easy for EESL students, as this level of vocabulary should be acquired on the most part. In practice, it would still be necessary to see the reactions of students in order to be sure the level is appropriate or too easy.

Demands of Listening Exercises

In the secondary 5 EESL exam students have one listening text that is on the same topic as the other documents used in the exam. Therefore, students have already read about the topic, which can help them understand some of the words that may be difficult to pick up on in an audio clip. Their task is to take notes and discuss their understanding of the audio as well as the written text with a group before they will write their final production. In the textbook, we have created focused questions on the main idea, on some details, and on some implied information as well as more open questions about the implications of the information. In some units we have also provided discussion questions in order to aid students in their dialog about the text.

Since students are better at picking out specific, detailed information (Shohamy and Inbar, 1991), this may suggest that higher proficiency-level students require more practice with the latter component than the former, justifying our choice of focusing more on higher-order cognitive listening questions. In terms of Rost's (2011) list of effective listening activities, here are some examples of exercises we have included in the textbook:

- Intensive: In Unit 1: Perceptions of Teens students are asked to name five topics that were covered in "the talk" that black women have with their teenage sons. This exercise requires students to pay attention to specific details.
- Selective: In Unit 4: Taking Risks students are asked to listen for specific risky behaviour described in the video and then come up with an activity to show the dangers of this risky behaviour to other students as a preventative measure. Also, in Unit 3: The Power of Social Media students are required to create a short proposal for their own flash mod taking into consideration the information they acquired from the listening text.

- Interactive: Other than the discussion questions or the creative questions such as the ones on Unit 4, there are not set activities that require students to work collaboratively to find or negotiate meaning. Most activities are very individualistic.
- Extensive: In Unit 6, which should be done closer to the end of the year, students are asked to take notes in a Venn diagram. There is little explicit instruction in the textbook as it was expected for the teacher to specifically teach note-taking strategies.
- Responsive: In most units there is an element of response to the text. For example, in Unit 1: Perceptions of Teens students are asked about their own experiences with "the talk" as well as their opinion of the perception of teens in their community. Example questions include (*Raising The Bar 5*, p. 15):

    1. Have your parents had a talk with you about some of the topics that were discussed in the video? Why or why not?

    2. Do you think girls are perceived as dangerous, threatening or criminal? Why or why not?

    3. When the media does report on negative or criminal behaviours involving teen girls what is it usually associated with?

    4. Do you think it's possible to change this perception of teen boys? Why or why not?

    5. What does the slogan "I am Trayvon Martin" mean to you?

- Autonomous: This type of activity can only be encouraged by the teacher as textbooks must have audio or video texts already prepared.

Body Language

Body language in an integral part of understanding aural comprehension in situations of personal interaction and videos. In Unit 4: Taking Risks, students are asked to pay close attention to the interview etiquette and the body language of the three people on camera. In the following example, possible answers are provided in the teacher's guide (*Raising The Bar 5*, p. 108):

> **Watch Again**
> • Look at the interview etiquette and the body language of the three people on camera in the studio. Take note of how they interact.
>
> Kevin O'Keefe: He smiles at the interviewees, but cuts them off mid-sentence to ask another question.
> Ryan Wilson: He is very personable and lively. He answers the questions clearly most of the time and looks like he wants to be there. He uses his hands to get the audience involved.
> Maddy MacEachern: She speaks in a monotone voice and always has her hands locked, which makes her look nervous or like she doesn't want to be there. She doesn't laugh at the interviewer's jokes.

They have to note how each interacts to then decipher what is acceptable or not. Using videos where students can see facial movements and body gestures, as well as asking students to notice certain things about these gestures will help them to further their understanding of linguistic and cultural meanings.

Implications for future textbooks

In terms of vocabulary and maximizing understanding and learning, since students in secondary 5 Enriched ESL classes should have a good range of vocabulary and already know most of the 1000 word families, it may be more appropriate to find listening exercises that have a higher percentage of 2000 word families vocabulary. This being said, these texts are oral and it's clear that even at an academic level, we do not speak the way we write, so some discrepancy between the levels may always exist. However, in order to choose appropriate level listening

comprehension texts for EESL students, running the transcripts through word complexity counters may be constructive anyway to ensure that we are not wasting students' time (if the text is too 'easy') unless the text is extremely pertinent for other non-linguistic purposes.

In order to make the textbook better in terms of the quality of activities for listening comprehension we could add elements of group or pair discussion between listening opportunities as well as self-evaluation questions which would fit into the *Progression of Learning* program developed by the MELS. In the teacher's guide, encouraging teachers to go through the listening/viewing questions first may be of use too, especially at the beginning when students are not necessarily aware of the requirements.

Brett (1997) urges the use of particular multimedia tasks for listening exercises for listening tasks because they are less invasive and students can concentrate more on the task at hand. His study also showed that having questions available for the students to answer based on the section of the audio or visual input also helped students focus their attention. His study group involved undergraduates students of advanced ESL proficiency.

Also, perhaps adding one lecture style listening comprehension task may help students develop "automaticity in oral language processing" (Rost, 2011, p.195). They would also benefit from the comprehension strategies that go with such a task such as experience-text-relationship method, K-W-L charts, reciprocal teaching approach (for example jotting down questions to ask a peer to check comprehension), and QAR method (Question-Answer-Relationships (for example finding evidence that justifies an action).

Finally, adding more culturally specific listening exercises that demonstrate different types of body language could help students notice and navigate understanding.

CHAPTER 4: MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY USING PROJECTS

Introduction

The EESL classroom, as stated by the Quebec Education Program (2003), must be an "interactive, cooperative and investigative community in which students are responsible for actively participating in their learning" (p. 8). As classroom sizes get larger, teachers must provide more time for students to interact orally (Competency 1) and group work is the best way to provide students, with a higher proficiency in English, an authentic reason to communicate with each other. Furthermore, at the ELA level, students are expected to collaborate with their peers to construct knowledge in action research groups (MELS, *ELA*) so if we are catering to a level in between ESL and ELA, group work is essential. This also responds to the world of work in most industries today, which requires people to work together to find solutions to problems. It is imperative for curricula to provide situations and opportunities for students to work together to both produce concretely and creatively as well as to resolve issues. Furthermore, The QEP (2003) places an emphasis on integrating appropriate ICTs into the classroom and curriculum, emphasising that teachers must provide guidance into the choice and use of these resources. In

this chapter, I explore the importance of fostering media and digital literacy in the EESL classroom, and of supporting student group, collaborative work.

In *Raising The Bar 5,* there are three projects which call for students to work in groups to build a final media or text product. While deconstructing these products (a podcast, a video public service announcement, and a Zine), students must use digital tools to research and produce and even publish their material. These projects are used to integrate cross-curricular competencies mandated by the Ministry (QEP, 2003). They are all designed as group projects that entail the use of multimedia and research, and involve self-reflection as part of the learning component. The element of self-reflection comes from the *Progression of Learning* and is necessary as part of the development of all aspects of learning (MELS, 2011).

In this chapter, I will analyze the support and limitations of digital literacy to show how teachers using *Raising the Bar 5* can help their students fully attain their learning objectives. I will also explore the advantages of collaborative work in classroom settings and beyond using theory and research studies. Finally, through these studies, I will propose ways in which *Raising the Bar 5* can be improved in regards to cooperative project-based learning and digital literacy.

Literature Review

Media and Digital literacy

Reijo Kupiainen (2013) provides a synopsis of the changing definition of media and digital literacy. Media literacy was first defined with four parts: 1) access to media (finding information on the Internet, in data banks, etc.); 2) analyze, evaluate (understand and critically evaluate different types of information); and 3) produce (create something using the information found using a media outlet). This definition, Kupiainen says, is an "abstract individualized and

cognitive skill" (p. 10). He explains that the European Commission added a more communicative aspect to the definition and pushed the focus more on the production step.

Digital literacy is defined in the same way as media literacy focusing on four parts: "content evaluation, hypertext navigation, searching, and knowledge assembly" (Kupiainen, 2013, p. 10). The main difference between the two is the perspective of technology and context. Media literacy focuses on mass media (television, newspaper, radio), whereas digital literacy focuses on the Internet. However, both are now almost interchangeable due to the digitization of mass media.

Wilber (2008) adds to this definition of digital literacies by explaining that it is: multimodal (linguistic, aural, visual, and kinaesthetic), networked and collaborative, simultaneous (multiple types of technology and systems used at the same time), communicative, and always changing. The importance of digital literacies lies in its social and economic role. Kupiainen (2013) explains that:

> The social dimension of literacies is shaped with the economic purpose of contributing to the growth and competitiveness of societies. Competitive and innovative knowledge-based economies in the global markers need good literacy skills of citizens and the workforce. Hence, digital literacy is increasingly incorporated into the process of governance, the labor market, and global competition. But at the same time, it includes the themes of democratic participation, active citizenship, lifelong learning, cultural expression, and personal empowerment. (p. 11)

Since media and digital literacies are also then a social practice, they must be placed in the socio-historic and socio-economic context in which they are being published and read. Neither can they be created nor read in a vacuum. Media and digital literacies are thus "a matter of not only how to encode and decode texts but also applying this knowledge for specific purposes in different social contexts" (Kupiainen, 2013, p. 11).

Kupiainen (2013) further states that having an online space may not automatically assure youth a voice in politics at the macro level; yet, by creating content in the digital world, they will communicate, make meaning, and build identities that can form a culture at a micro level. Young people's media practices are creative practices. Leif Gustavson (2008) explained that youth are passionate about their particular craft and will go anywhere necessary to find ways and people to help them master their craft. Schools are not often considered by students as places where they can ask for help for their particular interests. Thus, educators need to be in touch with the interests of youth and help them to build their craft, knowledge, and identity. Teachers can then integrate media literacies into the curriculum using the interests of the students (Rebekah Willet, 2009).

Allowing students to use media and digital literacies that are known to them in a slightly different way or for a different purpose in the context of school creates a space for highly motivated students. These students will find ways to create their project and seek information in their own way. Students will create learning communities outside of the class to build their knowledge (Kupiainen, 2013). Teachers often have difficulty letting go of their "control" of the class for fear of classroom pandemonium. Yet, when students take control of their learning, teachers become mediators or facilitators and better serve students.

Kupiainen explains, "[s]tudents learn in spaces *within* the world and not so much about the world; they learn *how* to get information rather than *what* information, but also information about the world has to be learnt" (2013, p. 126). The main issue in media and literacy education seems to be the gap between the students and the teachers in terms of background knowledge and practical use. To remedy this problem, students need to "bring forth their own tastes and emotions instead of simply being given instructions and experiences by teachers" (Kupianinen, 2013, p. 116).

Role of teachers and school

The main question about teaching media and digital literacy in EESL classes is then, as posed by Kupiainen (2013): "Do we know that teaching media education can enhance media literacy of the youth or do they learn all that is necessary out of school?" and how do we make it relevant for this particular group of students. His study with grade 8 (secondary 3) Finnish students shows that skills in navigating digital systems were quite good; however, their analytical and critical skills, as well as the production skills, were weaker. These findings show, therefore, that schools do have an important role in helping students develop knowledge about how media work, how they can critically analyze the information available, and how they can better understand its effects on a given audience. This is exactly also in line with what the *Progression of Learning* expects from students in secondary 5 EESL classes with regards to audience and register (2011).

Wilber (2008) found similar results in her study. She found that many students did not know how to evaluate research sources or conduct effective searches online. She views teachers' role as someone who will help students make educated choices about the type of technology to

use (speech, telephone, text, e-mail, chat, video, audio, podcast, etc.) and what type of language needs to be used with that particular medium.

Teachers need to create spaces for students to practice and engage in critical analysis as well as to encourage active participation of message and content production in the digital sphere. Wilber (2008, p. 73) suggests that pedagogy based on new literacies should build on the expertise of students; think about the components of texts differently (such as using hyperlinks, images, video, and sound); teach critical reading and researching; and allow students to use technologies in and outside the classroom (for example audio or e-books).

Podcasting as an example

Group projects using multimedia are often intimidating and some teachers do not want to experiment with them. Nevertheless, the results from this following example are so encouraging that teachers must incorporate these types of projects in their curriculum planning. "When students produce a podcast, it develops their skills in team-work, communication, organization, technical literacy, and planning, as well as the ability to research and write up the podcast topic and script." (Armstrong, Tucker, & Massad, 2009, p. 80). Podcasts are easier to manage than video since they take it takes much less editing and there is one less component: the visual. They also oblige students to be explicit since listeners cannot see the objects or subjects about which the people are speaking. "Podcasts are also a creative outlet for students to express ideas, share perceptions, and bring experts to the classroom." (Armstrong, Tucker, & Massad, 2009, p. 88).

Podcasting as "third space pedagogy" defined by Guitiérrez et al. (1999, p. 287 in Smythe 2010, p. 492) as "a classroom community of difference that uses multiple mediating tools and makes use of all the spatial, cultural, and linguistic resources of its participants." This space can be used to help students negotiate and resist dominant cultures in schools and to reaffirm their

identities within the community. Symthe (2010) acknowledges that in her study with grade six and seven students, the "third space" was not always experienced in this particular way.

The teacher's role in this type of project is to guide students through the process and to create teams that take into account students' strengths and skills. The teams should also reflect the desired roles of the students within the project. This allows for more balanced teams and where students will showcase their strengths and learn from others. Although at first glance students spending time going through lists of sounds for their podcasts can seem off-task, researcher Suzanne Smythe (2010) observed that this time, in reality, was spent actively seeking a specific sound to create a mood in a multimodal text. The editing work done in podcasting, Smythe (2010) found, was much more productive and motivational since students had a real audience for the result of their work: their peers.

Cooperative-collaborative learning defined

EESL students have already reached the level for which speaking about routine or daily occurrences is quite natural. What these students need is to be given situations in which they must speak English to negotiate, contribute ideas, take responsibility, evaluate, and create. Promoting cooperation is a specific aspect of the *Progression of Learning* for the EESL program (2011) which should be learned and used in Secondary 5. In order to learn and acquire this skill, students must be given opportunities to practice through group work.

It is important to first understand what cooperative-collaborative learning is in order to comprehend the processes behind it. "John Bransford suggested that collaboration is a problem solving process in which participants work together to arrive at a shared conclusion" (Ballenca and Stirling 2011, p. 23). Roger and David Johnson added to this notion and coined the term "cooperative learning" for groups of students learning together with a shared goal but whose

teacher works as a facilitator to help them learn how to work together. The five attributes of cooperative learning as defined by Johnson and Johnson are: "Positive Interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing" (Ballenca and Stirling, 2011, p. 24).

Furthermore, Soep and Chávez (2010) describe the collaborative learning between students and teachers as *collegial pedagogy*. Collegial pedagogy is based on the framework of community practice, critical pedagogy, and positive youth development. Communities of practice comes from the social theory of learning by Lave and Wenger (1991 in Kupiainen, 2013), which emphasizes the setting of learning. These settings can be anywhere utilizing anyone or anything to gain knowledge and experience. These setting are usually informal but can be part of a classroom setting as well. Since, as Soep and Chavez (2010) explain, learning is something that communities create, teachers cannot force learning but they can create situations and spaces for learning to occur. In this space, teachers are what Henry Giroux calls *public and border intellectuals* (1996 in Kupiainen, 2013). In the context of critical pedagogy, whereby teachers help students navigate and eventually challenge the cultural and social relations as well as the political norms in the world in which they, schools should be a space where students can discuss issues freely and collaboratively. However, schools are often spaces where the dominant structures are encountered but teachers have the power to create spaces to discuss, challenge, and change these structures.

Since cooperative-collaborative learning creates a space for shared and negotiated knowledge, it is important to understand how the following theory adds to this conversation. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping

and transforming experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 41 in Kayes et al. 2005, p. 333). According to this theory, people learn in different ways by choosing which style to use depending on their preference and inherent abilities (these types include: active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and learning styles including accommodating, diverging, assimilating and converging).

In research on team performance, heterogeneous teams, in terms of their learning types and styles, performed much better than those in homogenous teams (Kayes et al., 2005). Research with engineering students found that when students were aware of their learning types and styles, they were able to capitalize on their strengths and value all styles (Halstead and Martin, 2002 in Kayes et al., 2005). The same was found for the division of roles in projects. When students were given roles based on their learning types, both the final product and the satisfaction of the team were greater (Kayes, 2005).

Kayes et al. (2005) explain that there are six functional aspects of team learning that must be taken into consideration if it is to work. There must be: 1) a common purpose; 2) roles or division of labour; 3) a context in which the type of task is explained and the tools to achieve the purpose are available; 4) a process; 5) diversity in the group in terms of learning styles; and 6) actions taken by the members of the groups using the resources and process provided. In each functional step, team members learn. By structuring projects in this way and through the teacher's knowledge of students' learning style strengths and diversity, team projects can be an invaluable structure for students' development.

Finally, research studies have consistently shown that structured collaboration in a lesson heightens achievement, critical thinking skills, and collaborative skills (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 2007; Ballenca and Stirling, 2011). Additionally, in a professional context, "[a] survey of

1,000 *Fortune* 1000 companies in 1993 by the University of Southern California found that 68% of these organizations used self-managing work teams and 91% used some type of team to solve problems" (Kayes et al., 2005, p. 331). Thus, it is of utmost importance that our students are prepared for the type of collaborative work present in the professional world.

Group Projects in Raising The Bar 5

There are three projects in the textbook *Raising the Bar 5*. These projects are independent of the other units but incorporate elements into the two previous units. The first project obliges students to produce a **Radio Show Podcast** about taboos using the analysis they completed in Unit 1 on the influence of people's perception of others' attitudes and behaviours. They will also use their knowledge about how stories can expose and encourage discussion about societal taboos. The second project requires students to produce a **Public Service Announcement video** for their school. They will use what they learned in Unit 3 about the influence of social media as well as what they learned in Unit 4 about healthy and unhealthy choices and their consequences. Finally, in the third project, students create a **Zine**, which is a non-traditional style of mixed media and collage to design a fun layout which values the writers' opinion. For this unit, students use all the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the textbook.

The way in which the projects are organized forces students to be on teams. They also teach and develop a specific Internet skill which necessitates a particular type of technology to be used. The procedure utilizes a process for developing the final project which is outlined in a step-by-step manner and entails what roles must be taken by students based on their interests and abilities. Furthermore, they oblige students to follow specific editing criteria, encourage the

publishing of material through suggested methods, and finally, provide a space for students to reflect on their work and involvement.

An example of each type of project is provided for analysis and practice by the students. Teachers are encouraged to keep previous years' projects to be used as examples. Students must then come up with their own topics and/or themes so that these topics are the most relevant to the students and their circumstances.

As stated in the research, teachers have the role of organizer and facilitator in collaborative group work. From the surveys done by Stephane Leduc for ERPI before the textbook was created, it was noted that teachers were wary of using technology for projects. We hope that the instructions are clear enough for teachers to be willing to try these projects even if they are not familiar with the technology suggested. In my experience as a teacher using *Raising The Bar 5*, podcast projects are much simpler to organize but students much prefer the video projects. Also, many students are not used to having a lot of freedom in terms of choosing topics and many find it difficult and time consuming. Teachers using the textbook may want to consider having topics available from which students could choose.

In terms of team learning, Kayes et al. (2005) explain that there are six functional aspects that must be taken into consideration if it is to work:

1. Common purpose. In each project, students have a specific product that must be created. The direction or theme of that product can differ but must be decided by the group.
2. Roles or division of labour. In each project, there is a section in which certain roles are suggested and students can sign up and create more roles.
3. Context and tools. Students are provided with authentic examples for each type of project and are given tools and step-by-step instructions as to how to achieve their goal.

4. Process. There is a clear process to be followed that was adapted from the MELS.
5. Diversity in the group in terms of learning styles. This is encouraged in the teacher's guide but out of our hands as textbook authors.
6. Using the resources and processes provided. Again, this is difficult to monitor but all the other aspects are present. Since the end product is well-established I am confident that students doing the project will use the resources and processes provided.

Finally, students and teachers should use the projects as a way to practice their analytical and critical thinking skills as well as developing these skills with regard to media. The Project 2 PSA video example helps students to develop their analytical and critical skills as well as how media works to influence its public. Furthermore, students can see the effects of this type of media through research but also students' reactions to their own published productions at the end of the project. , Moreover, in Project 1 students have to evaluate websites for credibility, (which is a skill that will be helpful across the board and this is what Wilber (2008) noticed in her study that students needed).

Implications for Future textbooks

The projects were developed with both students and teachers in mind. We wanted to develop the projects as clearly as possible but with as much room for creativity so that students could feel implicated. Based on the above research there are several aspects of these projects that would have to be added to in order to be more effective.

First, since a final product is not important or significant until it is shared, commented on, and criticized, I believe that emphasizing real feedback from the target audience is necessary. In the current textbook students get feedback from peers and may get it from the target audience but

there is no further step. The 'Postproduction' step consists mainly of self-reflection, which is important, but not enough. For example in **Project 2: Produce a Public Service Announcement Video**, Postproduction consists of 2 steps (*Raising The Bar 5*, p.143):

> **Step 10 PRESENT THE VIDEO**
> • Present your public service announcement video to the class and then to Secondary 2 or 3 students.
> • Have a Q & A after viewing.
>
> **Step 11 REFLECT ON YOUR WORK**
> • Review your production notes from Step 9 and highlight the most significant experiences (both good and bad) that you had.
> • Answer these questions as honestly as possible.
>
> 1. Which steps of the project did you enjoy the most? Which were the most challenging?
> 2. Did your team work well together? How did you contribute to the dynamic of the group? How could you have improved?
> 3. If you had to do the project over again, what would you do differently?

Students must understand and be able to modify their product based on the impact it has on its audience as stated by Kupiainen (2013). I would suggest adding a twelfth step to modify or adapt the product based on the comments and reactions of the students. Or at the very least, have the comments from the audience be included as part of the final product so that the self-reflection component has more of an impact.

Second, closely related to the first modification, is more emphasis on audience and the research thereof. Currently in the textbook, students simply choose their audience and make assumptions about this group of people. What may be interesting and pertinent to add is a section for audience analysis in which students must conduct surveys or interviews prior to production. This will significantly increase the time it takes to complete the project yet provides a more realistic situation for the students' publication.

Third, according to Wilber's research (2008) the critical analysis of a webpage with all its components would be necessary for students to understand the thought process that is behind an effective webpage as opposed to an ineffective on. In the current textbook, the research tools and media analysis consists only of keyword search techniques, evaluation of sources, and rights-free images and sourcing.

Fourth, explicit explanations of the role of the teacher were missing in a lot of the research analyzed. Because the teacher's role in organizing, setting up, and guiding the students in the projects is of utmost importance, perhaps a more explicit set of instructions or tips would have to be included in the teacher's guide of other textbooks.

Finally, it would be interesting to see how the different types of learning could be integrated into the textbook or suggested in the teacher's guide for the students and teacher to understand the type of group learner they are. This could eventually help the teacher make more effective working groups and allow students to either rely on their strengths or try something new in a non-evaluated situation.

CHAPTER 5: RESPONSE PROCESS: PEER EDITING

Introduction

The Response process was a major part of the 2005 Quebec education reform (Response Handbook, MELS). This process required a shift from a simple factual or informational understanding of a text (any type or manner of communication) to a deeper and more connected understanding of the message. According to the *Progression of Learning* (2011), it consists of following three phases: exploring the text, establishing a personal connection with the text, and generalizing beyond the text. In order to do this, students use strategies such as integrating peer and teacher feedback or leaving traces of their understanding of a text through annotation, journal responses, graphic organizers, or even pair or group discussions. *Raising the Bar 5* has made this Response process an integral part of each unit and project.

In this chapter, I will review the literature on the peer response process to explore the advantages of the inclusion of such a process using theory and research studies in both L1 and L2 acquisition and classroom settings. I will also analyze the support and limitations of the process and show how *Raising the Bar 5*, as well as teachers using it, can help their students maximize their experience. Finally, in light of the research, I will propose ways in which *Raising The Bar 5* can take into consideration the peer response process in more appropriate ways.

Literature Review

Theoretical support for peer response/editing

There are four main theories that help to justify the inclusion of the peer response process in any language curriculum, especially one in which writing is an important skill. Since the EESL program expects students to reinvest their understanding of texts and write more elaborate and complex texts themselves (QEP, 2003), students must be taught and given opportunities to practice reacting to others' and their own work. At the EESL level, students are working at a more abstract level and must be understood by others. The peer response process can allow students to check their communication shills before being evaluated. These theories are outlined below.

The first theory is the Process Writing Theory. This process emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in L1 writing "as a response to the traditional product views of writing" (Lui and Hansen, 2002, p. 3). L2 writing theory and practice was influenced by this process, which viewed writing as "dynamic, nonlinear, and recursive" (Lui and Hansen, 2002, p. 3). Now, most L2 textbooks and courses use a similar writing process that includes "*brainstorming activities, outlining, drafting* (focusing on meaning), *rewriting* (focusing on organization and meaning), and *editing* (focusing on style and grammar)" (Lui and Hansen, 2002, p. 3). The Peer response process is supported by this theory because it encourages multiple drafts; creates a plurality of audiences (peer, self, teacher); helps build audience awareness; generates opportunities for reading-writing connections; and it can build rhetorical, formatting, and content awareness through multiple text exposure (Lui and Hansen, 2002).

The second theory is Collaborative Learning Theory. This theory argues that the idea that knowledge is socially constructed. It was widely used in L1 acquisition and is now being used in L2 theory and practice. The main proponent of collaborative learning theory is Bruffee (1984, in Lui and Hansen, 2002) who considers that learning in writing groups is reciprocal and improves students' work as they negotiate meaning and language. Other researchers have found that peer response can allow students to compare notes on what was taught and can increase the opportunities for students to review and apply their knowledge of L2 writing (Hirvela, 1999 in Lui and Hansen, 2002).

The third theory used to justify the peer response process is Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The Vygotskyan view is that social interaction is the way in which children develop cognitively (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005, p. 225). Vygotsky first developed this theory based on child-adult interaction. The adult would have greater knowledge so through their interaction, the child would learn. Since then other L1 researchers (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976 in Lui and Hansen, 2002) have expanded this theory to include peer knowledge that acts as "scaffolding" in the development of greater language skills (Lui and Hansen, 2002, p. 5). Yet other researchers such as Donato, 1994 and Lantolf and Appel, 1994 have used this theory to investigate L2 acquisition and the influence on language learning during peer response activities in writing classes. In each case, the interaction using the peer response process showed positive results (Lui and Hansen, 2002).

The fourth theory is Interaction and Second Language Acquisition. Researchers (Doughty and Pica, 1986; Long et al., 1976; Long and Porter, 1985 in Lui and Hansen, 2002) in L2 acquisition have found clear evidence that learners negotiate meaning in group activities such as

the peer response processes. The process, which obliges students to interact, also enables learners to gain additional practice in the target language (Lui and Hansen, 2002).

Pedagogical considerations and practical support

The following four points describe how the peer response process is pedagogically and practically sound and why it should be used in language learning curriculum whether it be at the ESL level or the ELA level.

1. *Cognitive:* students are actively thinking not passively receiving information (Mittan, 1989). They are engaged in a low-risk learning process in which they are not always graded/evaluated (Lui and Hansen, 2002). Students have "active roles in their own learning"; students can reorganize their writing based on peer reactions; students receive feedback from "authentic readers" (Leki, 1990b; Newkirk, 1983 in Lui and Hansen, 2002 for counter arguments). "Responding to peers' writing builds the critical skills needed to analyze and revise one's own writing" (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005, p. 226). Having multiple readers means that students are getting feedback from people with different perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses. This can help balance the positive and constructive feedback. It also means that students have to consider the feedback carefully and chose to include only the ideas that they deem effective.

2. *Social:* The peer response process encourages students to "express and negotiate their ideas (Lui and Hansen, 2002). Students often realize in doing peer responses that writing is difficult for everyone and each person has strengths and weaknesses (Mittan, 1989). Students can also build relationships with different people in the class, establishing trust and understanding or at least awareness of cultural differences. This can in turn create a writing community in which students feel secure. The peer response process is also a reciprocal process, albeit sometimes unequal, and can help develop a better idea of what the reader needs to know. It also allows for

more critical thinking, which can in turn bring ideas and criticism of one's own work (Mittan, 1989).

3. *Linguistic:* Students have an opportunity to test and revise their L2 hypotheses and reuse previously learned technical terminology. They can improve their ability to read and write because they can draw on the strengths and resources of their peers (Hirvela, 1999 in Lui and Hansen, 2002). Students also have a chance to explore the target language as they go through drafts and discuss "appropriate word choice and grammatical structures" (Lui and Hansen, 2002, p. 10).

4. *Practical*: Peer response activities are flexible since they can take place at any point in the writing process. Furthermore, this process can reduce teachers' workload (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005; Lui and Hansen, 2002; Mittan, 1989), as students' writing generally improves as multiple drafts are written and rewritten. This facilitates the correction and thus reduces the time which the teacher must spend correcting minor errors. The teacher can thus focus effort on evaluating and correcting those elements that were newly learned.

Practical limitations

Despite the obvious benefits of the peer response process outlined above, there are practical limitations that would have to be remedied in order for the peer response process to be as effective as possible. The following limitations have been identified during research that was performed in ESL classes and may be different in the case of advanced as well as older ESL students.

First, researchers (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005; Lui and Hansen, 2002) found that in the peer response process, comments made by students were sometimes vague or unhelpful. They also found that there was a risk of bullying or over criticizing, which can undermine the purpose

of the process. In addition, some research indicates that students felt unsure about the "validity of their classmates' responses" (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005, p. 227) and sometimes had trouble understanding the feedback because of their classmates' accents. Finally, insufficient language ability can be counter-productive if students are not able to recognize the problems.

Second, in multicultural classrooms, cultural differences may be problematic. Differences between collectivist cultures (e.g. Chinese and Japanese), for example, could clash with individualistic cultures (e.g. United States) because priorities and approaches may be different. In collectivist cultures students are less likely to be overly critical of a partner's or group member's work in order to keep the peace in the group. Whereas in individual cultures, being outwardly critical is encouraged in order to produce the best text but may have a negative effect if used on someone from a collectivist culture. Thus, the feedback may not be the most beneficial to the writer (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005).

Response to limitations: Principles of effective peer response

In order to counter the limitations described previously, Berg (1999) suggests that training students in "giving and receiving criticism, articulating ideas about positive and negative qualities of writing, and recognizing different stages of the drafting process" (p. 219) would enable them to become better editors and writers themselves. Some techniques are outlined in Moore's article (1989) which uses example essays to teach students proper editing and evaluating techniques. Other, more recent studies have also shown the advantage of formally training students in the peer editing process to enhance editing and revision quality (Min, 2006).

Furthermore, there are several principles or best practices, which can counter limitations or at least minimize them. First, making the response process an integral and required part of the class and holding students accountable for their corrections and comments (Ferris and Hedgcock,

2005 based on Mittan, 1989 study) can make students more conscious of their peers' feelings. The fact that the teacher will also see the author of the comments may mitigate the problem of bullying or over criticizing. Teachers can hold students accountable by responding to the feedback or even by grading the feedback. Students can also write journal entries on how they reacted to the peer response process so that the teacher can monitor how learners feel about the process (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005, p. 244). This may seem like a lot of work but teachers do not have to look at all of the journals each time. By choosing students' journals randomly, the teacher is able to keep the workload down while keeping students accountable.

Second, modeling the process using other texts and explaining the advantages of the exercise itself will make students more willing to do peer editing, and more effective at critiquing or correcting other students' work (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). Furthermore, in order for the peer response process to be effective, students must have been taught the elements or features that are being revised. For example, if they are asked to revise introductions, they must know or have been taught the characteristics of an introduction (Soven, 1999).

Third, acknowledging individual needs but also acknowledging that in the professional world, writing groups exist in many different areas (business, government, etc.) can help students understand why the peer response process is important. Also, knowing how to work collaboratively on a text is an invaluable skill (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005; Mittan, 1989).

Fourth, understanding on which elements to focus is important. The National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the United States has developed eight categories for revision that can be used together or individually. These are: 1) total or holistic revision: when the original writing piece was off-task and needed complete revision; 2) informational: additions are made based on facts, ideas, and other details or information is deleted; 3) organizational:

sentences, groups of sentences or even paragraphs are moved or reordered; 4) connectional or transitional: transition or connection words or sentences are modified; 5) continuational: the text is continued; 6) stylistic: changes are made to "achieve greater accuracy, precision, concreteness, emphasis, or euphony"; 7) grammatical: changes are made to conform to grammatical conventions; and 8) mechanical: a change is made to the spelling, punctuation or capitalization (Soven, 1999, p. 46). These various categories can be emphasized depending on the type of text which students are creating and editing.

Finally, there are divergent opinions on the structure of the peer response task. Moore (1989 in Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005) advocates using the same peer response form for all assignments so that students become accustomed to the form and the process, while others (Mittan, 1989; Liu and Hansen, 2002; Reid, 1994) disagree. They suggest that the peer response form should be dependent on and change according to the focus of the writing task (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005).

Effects of peer feedback: Student revision and motivation

Cognitively and socially, the peer editing process has a very good track record but for teachers it is essential to know that what the students are doing or learning is actually advancing their writing as well, since that is one of the end goals of peer editing. Moreover, it is important to consider the issue of motivation as students generally fear or dread (or both) writing. So, the main questions to consider are:

(1) Do students consider and act on peer comments when revising?

(2) What types of revisions are made by peer editors and what revisions do students make after peer editing?

(3) Does peer editing lead to high-quality end-products?

(4) What effects does peer editing have on students' motivation?

To answer the first question, in earlier studies of peer editing, the results were mixed with regard to the extent to which students used the editing remarks of their peers. However, in more recent studies (Paulus, 1999; Schmid, 1999 in Ferry and Hedgcock, 2005), researchers found stronger effects of peers' editing comments. These effects serve to provide the answer to the second question above.

Concerning the types of revisions students are making, recent studies show cases of both content meaning (e.g. reordering or changing paragraphs) and surface (e.g. grammar and spelling) edits and subsequent changes being made (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). In Berg's 1999 study, students' prior training in peer response had a positive effect on the type and effect of the changes. She also noted in earlier L1 studies that older (high school) students were able to make more accurate content meaning and surface revisions (organizational and grammatical revisions based on NAEP's categories).

The third question is concerned with the quality of the end-product. Does peer editing lead to high- or higher-quality results. In the studies undertaken by Resh, 1994; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1992; and Schmid 1999 (in Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005), all the results came back positive: students who edited collaboratively produced better quality work than students who either did not do so or who only got teacher feedback

Finally, in terms of students' reaction to peer editing, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) found it to be generally positive. In L1 the reactions tend to be more positive because teachers were inclined to "take over" or "appropriate" (p. 232) student writing, so students liked having their work reviewed by a non-authoritative reader first. Furthermore, in a study of a college level ESL composition class, students were positive despite some doubts about the quality of the advice

given to them by their peers (Lui and Hansen, 2002). Students were the most positive about the help their peers were able to give them at the lowest proficiency levels of ESL and at the highest educational level (graduate classes) (Lui and Hansen, 2002). Students' motivation can also depend on the perception of the student's own proficiency and that of other editors. The peer response process is more effective when student-groups or pairs are well balanced (Lui and Hansen, 2002).

In my own experience with both ESL and EESL secondary students, the older students, are more careful about what and how they communicate their corrections and criticisms but the results are almost always positive in terms of producing higher-quality writing.

Peer response process in Raising The Bar 5

Description of Peer Response checklist in Raising the Bar 5

In each unit of *Raising the Bar 5* there is a final written production to be completed. For each of these productions there is a step in which student must edit their own work and peer edit each other's work. In order to facilitate this process, a checklist of meaning and surface level elements are provided for the students. Each element has been taken directly from what was meant to be practiced and learnt in the unit. Furthermore, the deconstruction of the example text can and should be used to help students identify, understand, and reproduce in their own writing the structural component of the specific text. For example, in *Unit 5: Superheroes*, the checklist includes structural elements of the feature article, which was previously deconstructed and analyzed, such as the angle, headlines, hook, etc. There are also mechanical elements such as grammar structures, rhetorical devices, and vocabulary suggestions that were previously visited and practiced in the unit. Finally, there are elements called "Flow" which include meaning,

paragraph and idea ordering, as well as register for audience monitoring. These three elements: text features, mechanics, and flow are found in each unit but the specific checklist elements are different depending on what was learnt in the unit.

When developing the textbook certain assumptions were made based on the age and experience of the students in secondary 5. In terms of the peer editing process, we assumed that in secondary 5, EESL students would have some experience using the peer response process since it is a required element of the MELS program (MELS, 2011). We included a checklist, which we hoped would prompt students and teachers to use the peer response process. However, for the teachers using the book, it would be recommended that they ensure that students are aware of, and have previously participated in the peer response process in order to reap the maximum benefits of this process.

Since teachers require models to show how the peer response process works, they can use the deconstruction of the model text, found in each unit, as an example of what students will produce. This helps to show how students would identify the elements in the checklist. Moreover, the *Focus on Accuracy* (grammar) workshops, which are almost all created so that students are editing errors, should be used in conjunction with the checklist. For example, in *Unit 2: Gothic Horror*, students must write their own gothic horror short story which integrates dialogues. In this unit, the *Focus on Accuracy* was dialogue punctuation and was thus included in the checklist for the peer response process. Students could see the way in which punctuation is supposed to be used but also notice common errors and how to correct them using the *Focus on Accuracy* workshops.

Since the textbook was designed for secondary 5 students who have already had some experience with the peer response process and who have a higher proficiency in English than

their ESL counterparts, the peer-editing checklist is likely to be understood and useful. Furthermore, Berg's study (1999) did find that older students were better suited for the peer response process. However, with increasing number of foreign students arriving from different school systems, I urge the teachers using the peer response process to ensure that all students are familiar with the process or, if they are not, to train them before introducing it. This recommendation is found in the Teacher's Guide to the textbook.

Another, area in which the peer editing process can bring some risks concerns the comments students make. Some studies mentioned in the literature review found that students' comments could be vague or unhelpful. In *Raising The Bar 5*, we included the checklist in order to help students focus on the text features, mechanical elements, and cohesion structures that were outlined and worked on in the unit. We hoped it would be sufficient, however, there are improvements that could be made, particularly in order to increase the focus of the comments, which are usually more holistic than mechanical (See the section on *Implications for future textbooks* below.).

Not only is it important for students to be trained in the peer response process, to avoid some of the problems that can arise from this process, such as bullying, but also, students must be made accountable for their corrections and criticisms. This is why we have included a space for student editors to write their name, making it possible for teachers to verify and monitor the changes that are being made in the text.

Finally, *Raising The Bar 5* uses the same form for the peer response process in each of its units. We chose to do this for reasons of consistency in the elements on which students were meant to focus. Also, it showed continuity and similitudes despite differing text types. In response to suggestions by certain researchers that the peer response form should be different for

each assignment, we leave it up to the teacher to expand or modify the form. What we found of utmost importance was the inclusion of each element, and we did not find it necessary to modify the form of the checklist.

Implications for future textbooks

From the literature review of theories, research and studies on the peer editing process there are two main elements that I believe could be beneficial to future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* and future EESL textbooks in general. In the current textbook **Step 3 Revise and Edit** is formatted in the following way (Raising The Bar 5, p. 51):

> **Step 3 Revise and Edit**
> • Reread your story and look at the following elements. Check off each one in the circle as you verify it.
>
> **Structure of a Short Story**
> ○ ☐ There is a narrative hook.
> ○ ☐ The rising action develops.
> ○ ☐ The climax is obvious.
> ○ ☐ The falling action and resolution (plot twist) are clear.
>
> **Mechanics**
> ○ ☐ Grammar—Dialogue Punctuation: Verify that the punctuation follows the proper formatting rules.
> ○ ☐ Personification and Imagery: Did you include at least one example of each in the story and were they used effectively?
> ○ ☐ Gothic features—Underline the Gothic features of the story:
> - A castle or haunted house setting;
> - A young innocent hero/heroine;
> - A villain/monster;
> - A dark/oppressive setting;
> - A societal taboo.
>
> ○ ☐ Check difficult words in a dictionary and verify spelling.
>
> **Flow**
> ○ ☐ Ideas flow logically and connect clearly.
> ○ ☐ Vocabulary from the unit is incorporated.
> ○ ☐ The atmosphere and tone are appropriate.

Peer Editing
Name:
Return to the checklist above. As you find and verify each element of the story, check off the squares. If an element is missing, mark it with an X.

The first change is based on Mittan's (1989) work which concludes that the peer review process is successful when there is a combination of writing, and reading (based on a questionnaire), speaking and listening (oral comments), and thinking (self-review) activities related to the process. In most classes that is the way in which the peer response takes place. However, making it more systematic by including space and guiding questions could encourage, both teachers and students, not only to work with this process as a means to an end, but rather to use it more comprehensively as a process. For example, providing open-ended questions such as, in this case for Gothic Horror: Did the story make you feel uneasy?; What parts did you like the most and why?; What would you modify and why?; etc. A particular focus on the listening and speaking component could be interesting with students recording (in writing) the main comments made, what they understood about these comments, and how they might modify the text because of the comments. This brief recording of the conversation could also help the teacher monitor changes and serve as a means to maintain accountability. Furthermore, this would help students self-review and consider the changes that may need to be made to their text.

The second element, which could be modified in the textbook, is closely linked to the first. We have not provided any space or guidance for comments. It may not be possible to include much more space for the peer editing process, but space to write comments would be required at the very least. Adding open-ended questions or even suggested sentence starters would help students write more appropriate and relevant comments. If space is an issue for the

publishers of the textbook, adding this element to the first three units, for example, and then simply adding it as an element to do, would be better than not including it at all.

By making these small modifications, the textbook would be better suited to encourage both students and teachers to follow, monitor, and account for the peer editing process.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This thesis set out to explore the theory and academic research in support of the pedagogical decisions made by the authors of the secondary 5 Enriched English as a Second Language textbook entitled *Raising The Bar 5*. The textbook was created for students with an advanced level of English studying ESL in a French school setting. Most students using the book will be high proficiency ESL students or they will be Anglophone students in a French school system. We expect that a high number of students will have a French L1 but many other languages could also be spoken at home. It takes into account the MELS curricular requirements but offers students quite a bit of creative power. Using research on best practices and case studies on the use of grammar, vocabulary, literary analysis, listening exercises, group projects and media literacy, as well as the peer-response process, I was able to understand how well the textbook reflected and aligned with the results of academic research undertaken in the past. When the textbook elements were not in line with the research findings, suggestions for doing more research were offered. As well, alternative solutions for adapting certain aspects of the

textbook, in future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* and future EESL textbooks in general, to take into consideration these theories were proposed.

Key Points from the Research

On the whole, I believe that *Raising The Bar 5* was in line with most of the current research being done on teaching English as a Second Language, including materials for advanced ESL students, although it was more difficult finding research focussed specifically on advanced ESL students at the secondary level. Most of the research found on advanced ESL was for college or university level students. This information was taken into account but with caution, given the differences in maturity and learners' needs.

In terms of the mechanics of language learning in Chapter 2, the textbook's grammar section was in line with much of the research that emphasized the importance of linking the grammar to real usage in both reading and writing. Also, knowing/understanding students' mistakes was key to helping them progress. The research on vocabulary acquisition showed that more work needed to be done to achieve maximum results. The research suggested the importance of reusing vocabulary in different and diverse contexts, as well as using text analysis to ensure that the newly-learned vocabulary was being highlighted instead of words that students should have already known. As for the research on literacy, it showed that the inclusion of point of view analysis and literary analysis in *Raising The Bar 5* would help students elevate their understanding of texts of all types and eventually allow them to transfer this skill in their own writing.

In Chapter 3, listening exercises and methods were researched to analyze the elements used in the textbook. The interesting finding here was the importance of word families. The

research suggests that students who are academically driven will require more practice at the 2000 word families level. Based on the analysis of three of the transcripts used in *Raising The Bar 5*, there were mostly words from the 1000 word families level, which would suggest that in future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* it may be beneficial to include audio or visual documents with a higher word family level. In order to ascertain whether or not the audio and visual text were actually to simple, it would be necessary to get feedback from the students and teachers who have used the documents. Furthermore, research also suggests that it is beneficial to provide space for students to negotiate meaning orally with a partner, as well as to use technology to reduce the likelihood of the exercise getting in the way of comprehension by timing the questions to certain parts of the audio or video text. Technological components were not integrated as part of the listening exercises of *Raising The Bar 5* but would be a pertinent addition in future editions and other textbooks in the series. Finally, body language was revealed as an important aspect of listening comprehension and was integrated into the curriculum.

In Chapter 4, the importance of fostering media and digital literacy as well as of supporting student group work were researched to analyze the pertinence and effectiveness of the three projects in *Raising The Bar 5*. Based on the research, these projects are excellent examples of how multimedia technology and collaborative projects can, and should, be included in textbooks. In my experience, EESL students are more capable of handling the linguistic difficulties of such projects than their ESL counterparts but need to be challenged to negotiate, explore, discuss, evaluate, and create in a group in English. This language is often well beyond the capacity of ESL students but can be fostered in EESL students. Additionally, the QEP (2003) states that classrooms must be an "interactive, cooperative and investigative community in which students are responsible for actively participating in their learning" (p. 8) emphasizing the

necessity for group projects and the use of multimedia for researching and creating the final product. The research also praises the multifaceted advantages of having students work together towards a common goal. This collaborative work with the teacher as a facilitator is supposed to increase students' sense of responsibility, autonomy, critical analysis skills, and creativity. Some differences with regard to the amount of detail required for projects to be successful will be summarized in the following section.

Finally, the research reviewed and analyzed on the peer response process in Chapter 5, justifies its inclusion as an important step in student's development as writers and critical thinkers. The process also allows students to realize that their writing is a form of real communication, not just a grade at the end of an assignment. By having students read each other's work, they are forced to think about how they are communicating a message.

In conclusion, the research explored for each of the specific aspects of the textbook was very helpful and informative, both in terms of offering insight into the textbook's approach and for pointing out areas for improvements. There are minor changes that could be made in future editions or for textbooks designed for different levels. These changes are outlined in the following section.

Implication and Extension of Research

Grammar

In preparing *Raising The Bar 5,* I believe we had chosen and included the most significant grammar points and provided both the students and the teachers with enough material with which to work. However, feedback from teachers using the textbook will be required to acquire a more detailed assessment of this section.

Vocabulary

As stated in Chapter 1, vocabulary must be taught and learned in several ways. Based on Nagy and Scott's research (2000), which states that learning definitions is not an effective way to learn vocabulary, one recommendation for the next book may be to remove this component completely and replace it with other, more productive types of exercises. For future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* and future EESL textbooks in general it may be worthwhile to add exercises that would encourage the "multidimentionality" of vocabulary acquisition. Also, verifying through text analyzers and/or with teachers who have used the textbook whether or not the vocabulary words chosen are appropriate would ensure that the textbook be more effective. Finally, with new technology it may be possible to insert the words students have chosen into a software program that creates exercises specifically adapted to the student's needs. More research and development at the publishing level may need to be undertaken in this direction.

Literacy

Based on the research, there is a sufficient variety in the text types in *Raising The Bar 5* to provide students with adequate examples of language, register, and point of view. Also, the diversity of types of exercises, ranging from comprehension questions to response prompts, allows students to thoroughly understand and analyze the texts. It may be of interest at a later stage to look at how the texts and their analysis have improved students' writing over the course of the year.

Aural Comprehension

In order to choose appropriate levels of listening comprehension texts for EESL students, running the transcripts through word complexity counters may be constructive to ensure that the student's time is not wasted, unless the text is extremely pertinent for other non-linguistic

purposes. Furthermore, to ameliorate the textbook in terms of the quality of activities for listening comprehension, we could add elements of group or pair discussion between listening opportunities and add self-evaluation questions which would fit into the *Progression of Learning* (2011) program developed by the MELS. Using multimedia tasks for specific sections of the listening text could also increase the ease of evaluating what was understood or not. The research also suggests that using lecture style listening comprehension tasks may help students develop "automaticity in oral language processing" (Rost, 2011, p. 195). Finally, adding more culturally specific listening exercises that demonstrate different types of body language could help students notice and navigate understanding.

Group projects and Media Literacy

There are several small modifications I believe should be taken into consideration. First, that postproduction comments from the audience should be integrated into the final project to show students the impact of their work. Second, the research of the target audience should be more extensive since that is one way students will know how to construct their ideas. Also, perhaps adding an element about website analysis would allow students to understand the work that it takes to create an effective site. Finally, due to the importance of the teacher's role in organizing, setting up, and guiding the students in the projects, perhaps a more explicit set of instructions or tips would have to be included in the teachers' guide of other textbooks. Also, it would be interesting to see how the different types of learning could be integrated into the textbook or suggested in the teachers' guide for the students and teacher to understand better the type of group learner they were. This could eventually help the teacher make more effective working groups and allow students to either remain in groups according to their strengths or try something new in a non-evaluated situation.

Peer Response Process

There are two main elements that I believe could be beneficial in future editions of *Raising The Bar 5* and future EESL textbooks in general. First, making the peer review process more systematic by combining and including writing, and reading (based on a questionnaire), speaking and listening (oral comments), and thinking (self-review) activities as part of the overall process. This would encourage, both teachers and students, not only to work with this process as a means to an end, but rather to use it in a more comprehensive manner.

The second element which could be modified is closely linked the to the first. In the current edition of the textbook, the authors have not provided any space or guidance for comments. It may not be possible to include much more space for the peer editing process but what would be minimally required is space to write comments. Adding open-ended questions or even suggested sentence starters would help students to write more appropriate and relevant comments.

By making these small modifications, the textbook would be better suited to encourage and promote EESL students' language skills, critical thinking skills, and creative abilities. Teaching at the EESL level is exciting and rewarding as these students' linguistic skills are much greater than their ESL counterparts, yet they are not as fluent as the students in ELA. Thus, teachers and students are able to work more specifically on linguistic and cognitive goals that have a visible impact on the student, while using material that is both authentic and pertinent to the students' interests. This being said, as more and more students will need this type of course, there is a real need for more research at the secondary EESL level, to gain a clearer idea of what this particular group of students requires in their education.

Creating textbooks for specific audiences such as EESL students does require knowledge of the target audience. Knowing or finding out the types of needs for this particular group is of utmost importance as this allows people creating textbooks to narrow down the goals and specify the activities that will be necessary to include. Also, if and when possible, testing the material before publication is helpful as students may react differently than we as adults believe. This feedback from my own EESL students was invaluable in the case of *Raising The Bar 5*. Furthermore, in terms of the formatting of the textbook itself, I would highlight the importance of monitoring the balance between necessary diversified repetition of tasks with redundancy of tasks. This is difficult to do, as students need to practice similar tasks in different context but often complain that they are always doing the same thing because visually textbooks must follow coherent patterns. Finally, working with a team with different experiences and expertise was helpful too. Since audiences in private schools and public schools can be quite different, having a team of writers with different experiences with the target audience provides knowledge of different academic needs and even social and cultural values.

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