**Instructional Focus:**

**English Language Learners**

**1. Ministry of Education and Training. (1999). The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12, English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development. Retrieved February 16, 2011, from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/esl18.pdf.**

The Ontario Ministry of Education website links teachers to the curriculum documents for ELL students participating in the ESL program in secondary schools. These documents outline the program ESL students participate in as well as provide a rich perspective on students’ background knowledge and experience as they enter mainstream Canadian schools.

This resource is particularly helpful for new teachers because it addresses the process of educating ELLs in terms of the role of schools, individual teachers, students and parents. The section provided for teachers includes an extensive collection of teaching strategies to help promote the success of ELL students in mainstream classrooms. In addition, this guide prepares the teacher to provide assessment and evaluation accommodations as well as effective communication with both parents and students.

The most relevant section for the purpose of integrating strategies in the politics classroom suggests that social studies (politics included) is often the most difficult subject for English language learners because of a strong focus on literacy and an expectation of common cultural knowledge. This guide suggests an approach to instruction that targets the needs of English language learners but should also benefit all students in a mainstream classroom. By focusing on reading and writing processes as skills that can be taught in partnership with political content, teachers can help develop more general literacy skills of all students. In addition, to help foster greater student understanding of the material, teachers can reinforce content-based vocabulary and make ‘real world’ connections between the lives of the students and the political content.

This guide also suggests that more traditional sources generally do not address literacy strategies that can assist all student readers. Teachers can explicitly incorporate literacy strategies in to their lessons (ex. graphic organizers, KWL charts, before/during/after reading), as well as present political content by non-verbal means (ex. artwork, games, drama). This focus can benefit the teacher looking to incorporate more differentiated instruction in to their repertoire.

The strength of this document lies in its extensive presentation of the English language learner experience in combination with a wealth of teacher strategies to help approach diverse instructional environments.

**2. Coelho, E. (2004). Adding English: A guide to teaching in multilingual classrooms. Pippin Publishing Corporation.**

Author and educator Elizabeth Coelho works at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto). Coelho brings her wealth of experience and research to the Faculty and instructs teacher candidates in the practice of teaching multilingual classes. Her text can be seen as a teaching guide that includes effective classroom strategies as well as philosophical rationale for her approach to teaching. For example, Coelho’s main argument is that teachers should remember to add English, in an effort to encourage the inclusion and maintenance of a diversity of languages in the classroom. Coelho argues that in this way, teachers can participate in the process of cultural development rather than “replacement.”

In addition to offering practical classroom strategies for teachers, Coelho includes extensive descriptions of the second language acquisition process. Coelho cites her own research to argue that traditional models of teaching and assessment do not accurately reflect ELL student progress and success, nor do they help the learning process. Coelho’s guide offers a vision of differentiated instruction and assessment to provide ELL students various avenues for success. Teachers can use her strategies to create lessons and assessments that will benefit students in all stages of learning English.

Coelho has a wealth of experience as an ESL teacher in Ontario and her guide offers an extensive collection of her teacher resources. Every chapter of her text concludes with an extensive list of academic sources as well as avenues for the reader to conduct further research. In addition to these useful connections, Coelho speaks to the ESL program and English language learner experience in Canadian communities. This is one of the major strengths of this resource because teacher education programs often lack relevant, Canadian pedagogical materials and resources. However, Coelho’s text offers an expert’s inside look at the Canadian English language learner experience. More specifically, her teaching strategies and suggestions mesh seamlessly with the Ontario curriculum expectations for ESL programs and all other course programs.

Coelho’s final most significant contribution is her analysis of traditional textbook resources. She argues that these textbooks do not include the literacy strategies necessary to help support English language learner students. Coelho suggests that teachers incorporate strategies like graphic organizers and reading tools to assist the learning process, and look to (often newer) resources that make use of research surrounding the language acquisition process in mainstream classroom settings.