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The Canadian Modern Language Review / La revue canadienne des langues vivantes, Volume 66, Number 4, June / juin 2010, pp. 557-582 (Article)

Published by University of Toronto Press

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Abstract: This article reports on two components of a micro case study of a Grade 8 Core French teacher's experiences in meeting the various learner needs in her classroom. Using sociocultural theory (SCT) to unite the constructs of special education and second language (L2) education, this analysis explores the role of both global and discrete teaching strategies in balancing curricular expectations with student needs. Results suggest that the creation of an inclusive classroom environment in this classroom context is likely linked to a teacher's ability to implement known effective practices for L2 education, as these strategies seem to naturally scaffold many of the needs of the students who are included. Further, the teacher's beliefs about supporting a wide range of student needs within this classroom are also revealed as a key influence in this process.

Keywords: learning disabilities, inclusion, Core French

Résumé : Le présent article porte sur deux éléments d'une micro-étude de cas qui explique comment une professeure de français de 8^e année a répondu aux divers besoins des apprenants de sa classe. La présente analyse emploie la théorie socioculturelle pour réunir les concepts d'éducation spécialisée et d'enseignement d'une langue seconde (L2). Elle explore le rôle des stratégies d'enseignement à la fois globales et distinctes, afin d'équilibrer les besoins des étudiants et les attentes à l'égard du programme. Les résultats suggèrent que la création d'un climat favorisant l'intégration dans la salle de classe repose probablement sur la capacité de l'enseignant à mettre en oeuvre des pratiques reconnues en enseignement de langue seconde, parce que ces stratégies semblent naturellement superposer bon nombre des besoins des étudiants intégrés au cours. En outre, la conviction de la professeure à l'effet qu'on doit soutenir certains des besoins des étudiants à ce cours représente un facteur clé du processus.

Mots clés : troubles d'apprentissage, inclusion, français de base

Within the past several years, there has been a broader discussion of the special and diverse learner needs found in French as a second

language (FSL) programs in Canada (e.g., Arnett, 2003, 2008; Bournot-Trites, 2004; Genesee, 2007; Mady, 2007; Turnbull, 2008). This increased discussion is likely attributable to several factors, including the increased identification of various special education needs (Hutchinson, 2002), the rising immigrant population (Mady, 2007), and the recent push to acknowledge the diversity in students' approaches to learning (Hutchinson, 2002; Tomlinson 2004). Thus, for those familiar with the day-to-day work of FSL teachers, the results of Lapkin, MacFarlane, and Vandergrift's (2006) study of FSL teachers' perspectives were not surprising; the study revealed that Canadian FSL teachers are most concerned about how to meet the needs of the rising 'at risk' and special education populations included in their classes.

For many years, because of early research on students with learning disabilities in French immersion (see Mannavaryan, 2002, for a review of much of this research), there has been an underlying assumption in many arenas (policy, practice, and research) that FSL study is only for a certain student population. With the advent of the inclusion movement in the last decade, the perception that all students with special education needs are at a disadvantage in the FSL classroom has begun to be challenged, but teachers still need information about what can and cannot be done to support these diverse populations (Hutchinson, 2002). While a corpus of research from the United States on foreign language (FL) learning difficulties (for references to much of this work see Sparks & Ganschow, 2001) has endeavoured to address that need, that research is not applicable to this study, because it considers students whose learning challenges are largely unique to studying an FL; the present study, by contrast, considers students with 'pre-existing' issues that may (but will not necessarily) influence their FSL learning experience. Further, the research mentioned above has been conducted with a learner population older than the students in the classroom studied here; developmental differences among the learner groups make comparison of adaptive strategies less feasible.

This article draws on the results of the classroom observation and teacher interview components of an exploratory case study of a Grade 8 Core French (CF) classroom to demonstrate how the teacher may facilitate inclusion when a variety of student needs are present. A CF classroom was chosen because CF has largely been excluded from discussions about inclusion in FSL, despite being the most populous FSL program (LeBlanc, 1990). The classroom described here was helmed by a teacher henceforth known by her pseudonym, 'Julie';

this article outlines Julie's approach to her overall classroom environment and the specific adaptations she uses to support students' learning needs. To depict this classroom accurately, it seemed important to move the focus away from what students with various challenges could or could not do in the classroom and toward the role of the teacher's beliefs and actions in shaping the learning experience. Further, once we had made this shift, it seemed possible to examine the second language (L2) and special education constructs present in this research under one lens – that of sociocultural theory – that explores the role of context and mediated exchanges led by more knowledgeable individuals in facilitating learning.

Theoretical underpinnings

Sociocultural theory in second language and special education

This article uses Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) to explain both the L2 and the special education issues implicated in the study, not only in isolation from but also in conjunction with one another. Both fields have employed SCT to explore phenomena resulting from exchanges in support, and interest in using this theory is on the increase in each area (e.g., Gindis, 1999; Lantolf, 2006). Though several studies have explored the supports offered in L2 contexts to help struggling learners and/or meet wide ranges of learner needs (e.g., Arnett, 2003; 2008; Bournot-Trites, 2004; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Rousseau, 1999), this study seems to be the first to examine special and L2 education concurrently under the one lens.

There are three basic tenets of SCT: (1) the cultural, historical, and institutional contexts surrounding a child influence his or her learning experience; (2) the social actions and interactions carried out within this environment alter a child's development; and (3) the child's development is formed and transformed through the use of language and other mediational means (Kraker, 2000). As this article will show, the grounding of this study within the SCT framework was instrumental in determining how the teacher's implementation of certain teaching practices was linked to her conceptions of inclusion within a CF context and what this could mean for other CF teachers facing equally diverse classes.

Sociocultural theorists maintain that the environment and the actions carried out therein can modify the course of a child's cognitive development and consequently, his/her learning (Gallimore & Tharp,

1990; Keogh & Speece, 1996). Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) have described the interactions offered by the expert (a teacher) to support the novice (a student) in a learning situation using the metaphor of scaffolding. Scaffolds exist to help a student move from his or her current state of knowledge to a more advanced state, and they come to be through careful exchanges with the teacher. As Wertsch (1985) points out, it is important to remember that scaffolds are not introduced to the negotiation process at any particular point or in any certain order; instead they arise dynamically as the expert learns of the novice's needs during the execution of the task. The teacher is responsible for determining when the student needs support and, consequently, which supports are needed to help the student progress. Sfard (1998) points out that this conception of learning requires viewing learning as active participation, not as a passive accumulation of knowledge.

Inclusion within an SCT framework

When this study was initially designed, it was assumed that the teacher's approach to adapting his or her pedagogy would adhere to the conventions of 'additive inclusion' (students with special learning needs are integrated into the regular education classroom, and their learning needs are addressed through specific adaptations to the pre-planned teaching strategies and/or pedagogical resources; Pugach, 1995, p. 216). This assumption was made because that has been the traditional approach to inclusion in most contexts and because it is advocated by the Ontario Ministry of Education (1998, 1999) in its references to meeting the needs of exceptional students in FSL programs. From the standpoint of SCT, this view of inclusion acknowledges the importance of carefully calibrated scaffolds that respond to learner needs as they appear in the classroom that may be further refined through teacher-student interaction. The scaffolds in the additive view tend to be more discrete, meaning that they are aligned to specific students within specific activities as the exchanges unfold.

'Generative inclusion' is the converse of additive inclusion. Pugach (1995) defines 'generative inclusion' in much the same way that practitioners and researchers in recent years have defined 'universal design'; this inclusion model advocates that the teacher design and implement differentiated instruction that is as applicable to as wide a range of student needs and learning styles as possible, rather than trying to adjust a lesson retroactively to accommodate a learner's

needs (Council for Exceptional Children, 2005; Pugach, 1995; Tomlinson, 2004). From an SCT standpoint, this view of inclusion emphasizes the role that the overall classroom context plays in the learning experience and how the way in which the teacher initially structures that environment shapes a student's progress. The scaffolds offered in the generative model tend to be more global, in that they are designed to reach multiple students at once by altering certain elements of the learning context from the start. Part of that context is the teacher's 'natural' approach to teaching, which will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

Methodology

The observation and interview data presented in this article are part of an exploratory case study. The case study also included individual and focus-group interviews with about 25% of the students in the class, as well as a document analysis of the papers and texts provided to the students during the observation period; the results of the student interview portion of the study have been published elsewhere (Arnett, 2008). The case study was conducted over a five-week period at the end of the 2002/2003 school year in a suburban school board in Ontario. A Grade 8 classroom was chosen deliberately because a prior study by the author (Arnett, 2003) found that because of Ontario's exemption policies,¹ fewer students with special needs pursue FSL study at the secondary level.

It is important to note that this study was not initially conceived as an exploratory case study; rather, the goal was to implement a comparison study of several CF classes across a school board to see how various teachers' beliefs about inclusion ultimately affected their teaching. However, participant recruitment was a significant challenge, perhaps because at the time there was some tension about inclusion in CF in Ontario as a result of the exemption issue. Three teachers responded to a board-wide call for intermediate CF teachers who had experience with inclusion; however, two days before data collection began, two of them dropped out, for reasons unknown. The remaining participant, Julie, became the sole focus of what was now an exploratory case study.

The classroom context: Julie and her Grade 8 Core French class

At the time of the study, Julie had been teaching for 15 years; for 13 of those years she had taught at least one CF class, and for five years she

had taught in French immersion. Her teaching experience ranged from primary to secondary levels, but she had spent most of her time at the intermediate level. Julie had been at her current school for two years and taught both Grade 7 and Grade 8 CF classes. Throughout her teaching career, she reported, she had always had students with learning difficulties and other special needs included in her classroom. Julie also indicated that she had never received any specific training relating to the inclusion of students with special needs in her classes, apart from the occasional evening class or weekend seminar. Julie is a native speaker of French who has achieved a native-like level of proficiency in English.

There were 29 students in the class observed for this study (14 boys and 15 girls). Because of the school's staggered schedule, the class was held at a different time every day that it met (seven of the eight schedule days). The class was ethnically diverse; the majority of students were either first- or second-generation immigrants from regions in South Asia. During a show-of-hands survey, 19 of the 23 students present reported speaking at least one other language, besides English and French, at home. Such diversity in the students' home language backgrounds was not anticipated in the design of the study, and, unfortunately, I have no data about how Julie addressed the needs of these students, though I do know, based on Julie's description of the class, that only a handful of the English language learners (ELLs) in the class were in the early stages of learning English.

During the same in-class survey, 12 students indicated that they planned to enrol in Grade 9 Academic French for the next school year, while nine indicated that they planned to take Grade 9 Applied French.² The two students who did not respond to this question had previously told me that they were already exempted from the Grade 9 CF requirement because of learning difficulties not necessarily related to French. These two students were part of the group of five students who either had formally identified special education needs and had individualized education plans (IEPs) or were undergoing special education assessments for the purpose of developing an IEP. These students' needs included giftedness, physical disabilities, math-related learning disabilities, language-related learning disabilities, and attention deficit challenges. Within this group, only one student, Casey,³ reported problems learning French because of the nature of her language-related learning disabilities; the other four felt that their learning difficulties did not limit their ability to learn French (Arnett, 2008).

Data collection

This article draws on the data collected through the teacher interview and classroom observation components of the case study. I conducted three semi-structured interviews with Julie – two before and one after the observation period – which combined to last about three hours in total. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. I was able to observe the selected class six times over a five-week period, for a total of 270 minutes (five full 50-minute classes, plus one shortened class period because of end-of-year schedule changes).

Semi-structured teacher interviews

A key goal of the interview process was to establish a link between Julie's beliefs and her actions in the classroom. The three semi-structured interviews used in this study were the context interview, the post-observation interview, and the pathognomonic-interventionist (P-I) interview (Jordan-Wilson & Silverman, 1991; Jordan, Kircaali-Iftar, & Diamond, 1993).

The 30-minute context interview occurred prior to the start of the observation period and provided much of the information about Julie's teaching background that I have shared above. It was during this interview that I learned that Julie favoured the less common, and not provincially favoured, generative view of inclusion previously described, which proved highly important in understanding how Julie approached her teaching. The 90-minute post-observation interview occurred over the course of two days. During this interview, I asked Julie about events that had occurred while I was observing her class, paying particular attention to specific activities and the strategies she used to implement them. I used this interview to learn more about the decision-making processes Julie went through when using strategies to make activities and/or language more accessible to students.

The 60-minute P-I interview – a format developed by Jordan-Wilson and Silverman (1991) and later revised by Jordan et al. (1993) – is designed to determine how teachers' descriptions of their actions with respect to their treatment of a student with special needs can serve as indicators of their beliefs about including these students in the general education classroom. The titular terms refer to the ends of the continuum along which the teachers' beliefs about disability can be placed. *Pathognomonic* refers to a medical-cognitive orientation that considers the students' problems to be the result of a pathological, internal condition that cannot easily be surmounted without outside

support from additional personnel, rendering moot any efforts by the teacher to respond to unique learner needs (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Jordan-Wilson et al., 1993; Jordan, Lindsay, & Stanovich, 1997). At the other end of the continuum, *interventionist* refers to a more socio-cultural orientation that considers the students' challenges to be the result of interactions between the student and the environment in which he or she is placed (Jordan et al., 1993); teachers at the interventionist end of the continuum generally believe that students with exceptional needs should be included in the general education setting, that adaptations to help these students should be part of their customary teaching style, and that the onus for making inclusion successful is on the teacher (Jordan et al., 1997).

During the P-I interview, the teacher is asked to provide a chronological narrative description of the actions he or she has taken with a student or students whom the teacher has designated 'at risk' and with another student or group of students who have been formally identified as 'exceptional'; topics range from assessment through programming, review, and communication to evaluation (Jordan et al., 1997). The interview is later transcribed and coded according to the three-point Pathognomonic-Interventionist Coding Scale (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001; Jordan et al., 1997). Teachers whose scores have a low numerical value (close to 1) are identified as 'pathognomonic,' while teachers with higher numerical scores (close to 3) are deemed 'interventionist'; those teachers whose scores fall at the mid-point of the continuum (close to 2) are described as 'mid,' meaning that they hold beliefs found in both perspectives (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001).

I received permission from Anne Jordan to use the P-I interview in this study after having worked as her research assistant; prior to conducting this study, I received approximately 17 hours of training in giving the interview as part of a previous study. Though I did not code the results either in that study or in this one, the member of the research team who scored the P-I interview for me had achieved, on average, an inter-rater reliability score of 83.5% with other team members on scoring activities, and was considered one of the more consistent scorers on the research team.

Classroom observations

To guide the observation component of the study, a revised version of the author-designed Teaching Adaptations in the Language Classroom (TALC) scheme (Arnett, 2003; see Appendix A) was used. This observation scheme is designed to depict the context and content of the

language classroom before identifying the ways in which the teacher adapts the lesson to address student needs. The newly revised scheme more completely addresses distinctions between academic and non-academic interaction patterns and adaptation strategies. These revisions were propelled by the findings of Jordan et al. (1997), who also discovered that the ways in which teachers interact with students and the kinds of adaptations they make to their pedagogies vary, in part, according to the status of the student as 'included' or 'typically achieving.'

Prior to its implementation, the TALC Revised was piloted in a colleague's classroom with the help of another colleague whom I had trained in using the scheme. The inter-rater reliability of the TALC Revised was assessed at 86.1%. The kappa coefficient was 0.421, a reasonable indicator of agreement given that there are 117 items to compare on the observation scheme. As an observer-participant, I coded all six of the observations in real time, and on completing each classroom observation, I added field notes of any events or descriptors that would help to further contextualize the events that occurred in the classroom. While real-time coding of observation schemes is less accurate than coding videotapes of the classes, it was not possible to secure permission to videotape Julie's class.

The data generated by the observation scheme were analyzed according to the procedures outlined in Spada and Fröhlich (1995), in which the percentage of time devoted to each descriptor was calculated in relation to the total observation time. My aim was to identify the level of focus for each activity. Activities are indicated by a unifying theme or content; within each activity, there are often several episodes, indicated by shifts in the focus of the task students are being asked to complete. One checkmark in a particular descriptor category indicated that Julie had an 'exclusive focus' on that feature. Two or more checkmarks within a single category indicated that Julie had devoted an 'equal focus' to two or more descriptors within a particular category. This method of analysis offers insight into the overall organization and content of a class in relation to the types and prevalence of adaptations.

Results and discussion

In keeping with the tenets of SCT, my discussion of the study results is organized according to two elements of Julie's pedagogy that would indicate the extent to which she was able to include all of her students:

the nature of the classroom environment she fostered and the kinds of supports she extended to her students within that environment to meet their particular learning needs. This approach more easily demonstrates the interplay between Julie's beliefs and her classroom practice than would a discussion organized according to data-collection method. It is also important to mention that while this study did not include mechanisms to determine whether or not the classroom environment and various scaffolds Julie incorporated in her teaching actually led to improved student learning, the data from the student interviews (Arnett, 2008) reveal that all the students believed Julie to be successfully meeting their needs.

The classroom environment

As Jordan et al. (1997) point out, a teacher's beliefs about disability and inclusion seem to play a significant role in setting the tone for the classroom environment. Thus, it is important to first consider the results of the P-I interview. Of the 20 items considered for analysis in the P-I interview, Julie was evaluated on 16 of the criteria; the four omitted items were not raised during the interview because they did not apply to Julie. On 15 of these 16 criteria, Julie's response scored 3; the remaining item scored 2. Julie's total score for the 16 questions was 47; thus, her overall score for the interview was 2.98 (47/16), meaning that her belief systems are highly representative of the 'interventionist' end of the continuum. A meta-analysis of 30 teachers who completed the P-I interview in various other studies found a mean score of 2.14 ± 0.49 (McGee, 2004). Julie's score of 2.98 on the P-I interview places her in the top 10% of scores on this measure; her score is also equal to the highest score in the range found by McGee's meta-analysis. From the start, Julie believed that students with special education needs should be part of the CF learning experience, and, as revealed in the context interview, she also believed in the generative approach to inclusion, meaning that she was interested in creating and nurturing a classroom environment and a teaching approach in which as many needs as possible would be met from the start.

The role of the classroom environment in shaping the learning experience was also evident in the results of the observation scheme. Using the first page of the TALC Revised scheme, I was able to determine the global context of Julie's classroom. Though the two most prevalent descriptors from each category are summarized in Table 1, my narrative will focus on the descriptors that most defined the classroom environment during this time period and which, in my view, set

TABLE 1
Selected results from the TALC observation scheme

TALC Revised context category	Observed descriptor and its prevalence (minutes, % of total time)			
	Most prevalent		Second most prevalent	
Participant Organization	Teacher leads student or class in instruction	84 min., 36.5%	Students work in groups on the same task	60 min., 26.1%
Student Modality	Equal focus on reading, writing & speaking	58 min., 25.2%	Exclusive focus on listening	34 min., 14.8%
Teacher Language Use	Exclusive French	215 min., 93.5%	N/A	
Student Language Use	Balanced French/English mix	151 min., 65.7%	Exclusive French	53 min., 23%
Presentation Emphasis	Exclusive visual emphasis	84 min., 36.5%	Exclusive auditory emphasis	73 min., 31.7%
			Equal auditory and visual emphasis	73 min., 31.7%
Type of Interaction	Exclusive monitoring student comprehension of material	44 min., 19.1%	Exclusive partial cognitive extension:	41 min., 17.8%
			Exclusive assessment/evaluation of student knowledge	41 min., 17.8%
			Exclusive classroom procedures	41 min., 17.8%
Content	Exclusive focus on language function	103 min., 44.8%	Exclusive focus on language form	65 min., 28.3%

up the potential for a wide range of student needs to be accommodated in the classroom without compromising the goals of the CF program. The observation scheme yielded data on Julie's classroom environment in the following seven categories: *participant organization*, *student modality*, *teacher language use*, *student language use*, *presentation emphasis*, *type of interaction*, and *[activity] content*.

Rather than examine each of these categories in a linear fashion, I will examine what I consider to be three key features of Julie's classroom environment and how they set the stage for meeting the needs of her diverse student population. These features are how she situated herself and the students in the classroom; the target language (TL) use patterns; and the balance of visual and auditory⁴ information presented to the students. These criteria are based on the results generated by the *participant organization*, *teacher/student language use*, *presentation emphasis*, *type of interaction*, and *content* categories, respectively, and

are summarized in Table 1. Each row in the table represents a category in the TALC Revised scheme. The totals across the rows do not add up to 100% because other descriptors, which were omitted from this analysis because of limited frequencies, were also checked off in those categories.

Participant organization

The two most common ways in which Julie organized the classroom activities were 'Teacher presenting information to Student/Class' (T ◇ S/C on the TALC Revised scheme; see Appendix A) and 'Students working in groups on the same task' (Group, Same Task). These organizational alignments accounted for 36.5% (84 minutes) and 26.1% (60 minutes) of total observed class time, respectively. While the prevalence of teacher-led instruction in Julie's class runs somewhat counter to calls for language teachers to be facilitators in the learning experience (e.g., Shrum & Glisan, 2005), there is some evidence in the inclusion literature that teacher-led instruction can actually minimize student confusion about content (e.g., Lerner, 2008). With respect to the second most prevalent organizational approach, it should be noted that student-centred learning has been strongly advocated as a way to make students involved in language learning experiences (e.g., Brown, 2001; Shrum & Glisan; Turnbull, 1999) but also as a way to make a classroom more inclusive to a wide range of student needs (e.g., Lerner; Tomlinson, 2006). Given that these two participant structures accounted for almost 60% of observed time, it is reasonable to argue that Julie structured her classroom instruction in a way that supported both inclusion and the goals of L2 learning.

Language use

When Julie was speaking in class, she used French as the dominant language of communication (215 minutes, 93.5% of total observed). The prevalence of this behaviour is not 100% because there was one episode during which the students listened to a CD of someone reading a story they were studying, so Julie was silent for this task. Field notes and notations on the TALC Revised indicate that Julie used gestures, images, repetition, written reinforcement of oral language, and simplified language – strategies often recommended to increase the saliency of L2 input (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) – to help students interpret her TL input. The following excerpt from the P-I interview also support these findings:

Excerpt PII-A (P-I interview, ll. 362–377)

- 362 K: You mentioned that you speak French almost all of the time. What do
 363 you do if the students don't understand?
 364 J: Um, I rephrase. I act out. I give them examples that are sometimes silly
 365 but obvious to help them understand.
 366 K: How do you engage the modalities?
 367 J: You have to engage multiple modalities with these students. Sometimes I
 368 draw things on the board if I have to and uh, anything to get them. At one
 369 point, one of the students said, 'Wouldn't it be easier if you just told us in
 370 English?' And I said, 'Oui.' 'But you're not going to?' And I said, 'Non.'
 371 K: When do you use English?
 372 J: Um, if I have to deal with a discipline problem with pretty much the whole
 373 room because they're being off-task or really noisy or whatever, then I
 374 might use English then. I might use English if I come down to whisper to a
 375 kid who's really having a tough time with something and just didn't
 376 understand anything. And just to that individual student, I will whisper in
 377 English to explain what is going on.

As for the students, it was common to hear them whispering amongst themselves in 'Franglais' to ascertain what was happening or to work their way through an activity (written or oral). Thus, the students most typically mixed the two languages (151 minutes, 65.7% of total observed time); the second most frequent student language pattern was exclusive use of French (53 minutes, 23% of total observed time). Student use of English never occurred at the whole-class level, except during an activity in which the students were asked to give the English translation of a French word already written on the board. In other words, the students used their English to help them negotiate their understanding and expression of French amongst themselves, but not as a means of conveying their knowledge to Julie. Research in L2 education has addressed students' use of their L1 as a tool for negotiating the L2 as a valid strategy for accessing the content of the language (e.g., Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; DiCamilla & Antón, 1997). Although I do not have empirical data to support such an assertion, then, it appears that the students' use of English likely helped them to organize their output in French.

Presentation emphasis

This category seeks to determine the modality by which the material is presented to the students (auditory, visual, tactile, or other). As Table 1 indicates, there was a good balance between auditory and visual emphases in the presentation of lesson content in Julie's class. The results clearly indicate how Julie tried to make her classroom accessible to all students through a near-equal treatment of these two modalities.

Tailoring input to student learning modalities has elsewhere been recommended as advantageous for students with learning disabilities or other special needs (e.g., Winebrenner, 1996). Though tactile and kinaesthetic vehicles for conveying information were used in Julie's classroom, as described in Excerpt PII-A above, in practice, they always followed the use of auditory and visual input and were used to help clarify that information. Sparks et al. (1998) report favourable impacts on student proficiency in a foreign language when teachers simultaneously use strategies that appeal to multiple senses to deliver instruction; the use of these strategies in this study were predetermined to coincide with the teaching events. This does align with the generative approach Julie used, but the data from this study do not reveal whether Julie's use of the strategies was as scripted as the strategies in Sparks et al.'s Multisensory Structured Learning (MSL) model, so further comparisons are not easily made.

However, Kavale's (2001) meta-analysis of seven commonly suggested adaptations for students with special needs reveals that despite popular support for such a practice, there has been no documented benefit from instruction that allows students to use their preferred modalities. Kavale argues that this perception is deeply entrenched in the psyche of most classroom teachers but has yet to be empirically proved and that in fact, based on existing data, most students have either shown no gain in their knowledge or scored lower when their learning modality was considered. Given the near-equal treatment of auditory and visual modalities in Julie's classroom, students' preferred learning modalities could almost be viewed as a moot issue in this circumstance. Clearly this topic merits further exploration, especially in light of the work of Sparks et al. (1998), which shows the value of multisensory teaching practices.

Scaffolds to support student learning

Again, Julie's high scores on the P-I interview reflect her belief in her ability to scaffold students with special education needs in her classes. I begin this section by considering some excerpts from the P-I interview in which Julie describes several scaffolds in her teaching repertoire that are not easily coded on the TALC Revised scheme. I then discuss the kinds of interactions she negotiated in the classroom and the content of those interactions, as noted on the observation scheme, since in themselves they represent a particular kind of scaffold. The section concludes with a consideration of several discrete adaptation strategies that figured prominently in Julie's efforts to scaffold student learning.

Strategies revealed in the P-I interview

Though the TALC Revised scheme includes components related to helping students get organized and making certain resources available to them, it is not set up to identify these features if they are simply 'there' in the classroom for students to access. The P-I interview, however, was able to capture several of these scaffolds, as brought out initially in a discussion of Julie's perception of her role in supporting the included students:

Excerpt PII-B (P-I interview, ll. 236–269)

236 K: How do you see your role with these students in the classroom?

237 J: The students who are identified?

238 K: Yes.

239 J: Um, I make sure that I help them get organized. I have a student whose
 240 biggest problem, I think, is the fact that she always forgets pencils, pen,
 241 never has her *cahier* with her, so she just leaves her *cahier* in the
 242 classroom, so there's no problem. And I have pens and pencils on my
 243 desk that she just goes and uses if she doesn't have hers. Her biggest
 244 problem is being totally disorganized and not knowing where her notes
 245 are, and I can't do a lot with her notes all the time, but, uh, at least her
 246 *cahier* is safe and findable. So little things like that, teaching them to keep
 247 all their stuff together, making sure that they're putting their stuff in their
 248 binder or their duotang immediately. I think that is another big thing
 249 because if it's not, if it doesn't get in there, Heaven knows where it is
 250 going to wind up, but never back in my class. So, just helping them get
 251 sort of – with other kids, it's just reminding them where they can look for
 252 the information. So I always go around and really praise when they're
 253 using, like I provide them with vocabulary sheets, which they can use to
 254 do all the work, so it's like when they're using them, I'm like, '*Excellent!*
 255 *Regarde! Tu utilises ta feuille de vocabulaire !*' And I say it loud enough
 256 that those that aren't using it will quickly pull it out and use it. And when
 257 they ask me questions, I often ask them a question in return, and then I'm
 258 looking around the room because I have posters all over, things that we're
 259 taking in class so that it's there to help them. So they've gotten to the
 260 point now where I, they sometimes ask me, 'Don't forget [*whispering*],'
 261 when they come in and we're having a test, 'Don't forget to move me so
 262 that I can see the posters better,' so that they know where to look for the
 263 information, but that's a real, uh, with all the students, not just those
 264 students, but it's a real stepping block to get them to realize that it's not
 265 cheating to look at those and they're saying, 'But aren't you going to pull
 266 down the posters?' And that must be what they're used to. And they ask,
 267 'Well, aren't you going to hide them?' And I say, 'No. I put them up for
 268 you to use. If you aren't quick enough to figure it out that the information
 269 is there and you can just copy it off, then too bad, but it's there, so use it.'

The P-I interview was also able to capture the preparation Julie undertook in order to become familiar with her students' particular needs. While

this could be viewed as a glaring omission from the TALC Revised scheme, in light of recent strong pushes for teachers to thoroughly know their students' needs and interests (e.g., Hutchinson, 2002; Tomlinson, 2004), it is not really a strategy that is implemented in real time during an activity; rather, it reflects a more generative, universal design strategy that is best captured at the planning stages (Council for Exceptional Children, 2005). The excerpt below begins with Julie explaining how she gathered the information about her students, then suddenly switches into a discussion of the role of note taking in her class – again, a scaffold that figured prominently but could not be readily captured using the TALC Revised scheme. The *assist note-taking* strategy on the scheme is more about a teacher finding a scribe or providing students with a note-taking guide during a lecture, not about how notes in themselves can be viewed as scaffolds, as Julie clearly believes:

Figure 3 Excerpt PII-C (P-I interview, ll. 48–69)

48 K: What sort of work on your part does this entail?
 49 J: This does require a little bit more time for me, but not that much. I work
 50 with, really closely with the ESL teacher and the special ed. teacher in our
 51 school. So, when I notice a problem, I immediately go to see these
 52 people, and I say, 'Is this student identified?' If the student is not identified
 53 because they're new to the school, and we look at the OSRs⁵ to see if
 54 there is something there, and if not, then we start looking into why there is
 55 a problem here in French. Maybe there are problems elsewhere also,
 56 because I mean, when it's French, sometimes problems just kinda pop up,
 57 but they haven't been noticed in other places yet because they're still sort
 58 of able to manage. Um, so it doesn't really take up that much more time,
 59 because, like I said, I work really closely with those people, so we're able
 60 to do stuff. And I have stuff that I automatically do with these kids. I let
 61 them know that if they take really good notes, then they can use their
 62 notes, so it's an incentive for them to pay attention in class. And then they
 63 can use all their notes on tests. I place them strategically so that they're
 64 surrounded by a lot of stuff and away from the other kids during the tests,
 65 so even though they're using their notes, nobody knows, so they don't feel
 66 singled out or bad or the other kids are saying, 'They're really dumb
 67 because they are using their notes.' So nobody knows, so they're still
 68 able to manage to get 50s and 60s. I also structure my tests so that they
 69 can be successful on the Level 1 questions.⁶

Type of interaction/content

Two categories of the TALC Revised scheme – *type of interaction* and *content* – were used to learn more about the exchanges Julie negotiated with her students during classroom activities; these exchanges

represent their own scaffolds. The classroom interactions were broken down into two categories: *academic* (for those interactions pertaining to the lesson content) and *non-academic* (for those interactions pertaining to classroom management issues). The most prevalent interaction was *comprehension monitoring*, indicating instances when Julie sought to gauge how students understood the content of the lesson, usually through oral questions that required students to give specific information rather than yes-or-no answers (44 minutes, 19.1% of total time). Three different interaction patterns were exclusively used with equal prevalence: *cognitive extension partial*, *assessment/evaluation*, and *classroom procedure* (41 minutes, 17.8% of total time). Respectively, these three categories describe exchanges during which the teacher asks the students additional questions beyond the comprehension level; exchanges in which the teacher monitors students' comprehension in a more formal manner, such as through a test, a quiz, or other formally marked exercise, or instances in which student production of oral language results in teacher feedback regarding pronunciation or language mechanics; and exchanges in which the interactions focus on classroom organization and processes, such as directions for an activity (Jordan et al., 1997).

Overall, academic interactions outnumbered non-academic interactions nearly four to one in Julie's classroom. Jordan et al. (1997) found that teachers closer to the interventionist end of the continuum – like Julie – use more academic interactions than teachers who hold more pathognomonic views; Julie clearly supported those findings, but further research is needed to see whether this ratio of academic to non-academic interactions is representative of the 'typical' inclusive CF classroom, since in CF the language is both the content and the process for learning.

The *content* category was used to determine *what* the students were actually doing with the language of the classroom. The most common content of the exchanges occurring in Julie's class focused on *language function* (103 minutes, 44.8% of total time); *language form* was the second most prevalent exclusive theme (65 minutes, 28.3% of total time), accounting for all instances in which Julie addressed language mechanics. However, it is important to note that Julie often used a discussion of language form to segue into a functional language activity, so she did establish a link between the two entities in her teaching.

Thus, based on this breakdown of events and in consideration of the definition of a communicative approach to language teaching as emphasizing using language to communicate meaningfully rather than practising verb conjugations (Brown, 2001), it would appear from this section of

the TALC Revised that Julie was supporting simultaneously supporting the goals of a communicative CF curriculum and those of an inclusive setting. However, as this study did not measure student outcomes in the course, there is no sense of whether the communicative approach, coupled with the scaffolds and various multisensory inputs, had any sort of impact on the skills and success of the included students. This question is another necessary future direction for research.

Discrete strategy use to support inclusive teaching

As mentioned earlier, Julie believed in the 'generative inclusion' model, which views adaptation strategies as pedagogical features that are incorporated into a lesson from the beginning, not as features that are added after its creation to respond to learner needs. Given this revelation, the way in which the TALC Revised functioned as a coding device for the discrete strategies outlined on pages 2 and 3 of the scheme needed to change somewhat; it needed to record which strategies Julie was 'automatically' using because they were a standard part of her pedagogy rather than strategies she was using to respond to individual learner needs. As reflected in the excerpts from the P-I interview and in the data presented so far, however, it is possible to group Julie's strategies into two broad categories: *strategies to build language comprehension* and *strategies to build meaning in the messages*. The two groups of strategies worked in tandem during her lessons.

Strategies to build language comprehension

As noted above, the French language was a constant source of input and expression in Julie's classroom. Julie's use of the TL must be addressed at two levels: first, the language Julie was teaching to the students (i.e., vocabulary for stories) and, second, the language she used to teach these language points to the students. For the sake of clarity, the former conception will be labelled 'isolated vocabulary' and the latter 'classroom language.' Both of these language levels were used to help scaffold language comprehension.

The results from the TALC Revised adaptation subcategory *presentation of content* describe strategies Julie used during lessons to enhance isolated vocabulary knowledge, but since these exchanges occurred within the context of her classroom language, they also offer insight into how Julie made her message linguistically accessible to the students in her class. The most prevalent adaptation involved simplifying her language when speaking to the students in French and using English

to clarify what she was saying when the simplified language did not work (34 minutes, 14.8% of total time). For 33 minutes (14.3%) of the observed time, Julie employed the strategy of using English to clarify on an exclusive basis, making this her second most prevalent accommodation; however, this strategy was used when French was marked as the exclusive language of communication. Because Julie always made her initial statements in French, her eventual decision to give a few key words in English when students were struggling to understand (which happened about one-third of the total observed time) was thus viewed as an adaptation of her teaching and not as characteristic of her typical language patterns (represented by 93% figure given earlier in the article). If Julie had used more than one or two English words at a time to clarify her French, or had switched directly to English without evidence that students were struggling, her language use patterns would have been described as more of a mix between French and English. Julie's approach to using English in her CF class is consistent with Turnbull's (2001) contention that English (i.e., L1) support can be advantageous for student learning, but only when it is used in a judicious manner.

In the exploratory analysis of the students' impressions of Julie's classroom (Arnett, 2008), the students identified Julie's language use as a key reason for their perceptions of success in CF. In particular, the students felt that she created a French-immersion-like environment by surrounding them with materials and resources that were in French, from the labels of the classroom furniture to the posters on the walls that could help them with the finer points of the language. The students also contended that Julie's use of simpler language to restate questions, and the way she always spoke clearly and enunciated her words (which could not be captured on the TALC Revised), also made it possible for them to easily follow classroom events in the TL (Arnett, 2008).

Strategies to build meaning

The primary goal of the FSL curriculum in Ontario is to enable students to communicate their ideas effectively – but not necessarily 100% accurately – in French (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998). This understandably requires students to build meaning with their language, and Julie typically did this by having the students start by considering the language forms that would enable them to do so.

For example, following a trip to Montréal with several students from the observed class (and others), Julie wanted to have students complete an activity describing what they did during the trip. However, she

began the lesson by having the students help her complete a table depicting the 'Dr & Mrs Vandertrampp' verbs⁷ on the board. Students offered verbs to add to the list, and Julie wrote them on the board. After the class finished compiling the list, the students were asked to pair up and talk about activities they did while either in Montréal or at home, using the Dr & Mrs Vandertrampp verbs in their sentences. Julie reminded the students that they could also use the 'house poster' (*La Maison d'être*, another visual representation of the targeted verb group) hanging on the left side of the room as a reference to recall the meaning of the verbs if they got stuck during the activity. At the end of the activity, the students shared some of their sentences, working from the model she provided.

Whenever students were expected to produce a language sample (i.e., responses to comprehension questions, sentences re-written in past tense), Julie provided them with an example or model (a descriptor in the *assignments/test* category); this strategy occupied 22.6% of the observed time (52 minutes total, 15 minutes as an 'exclusive' strategy and 37 minutes as an 'equal' strategy), making it one of the most common strategies Julie used to support language function. While some may question the use of examples/models because they lessen students' responsibility for creating accurate language forms, it is important to refer once again to the Ontario Ministry of Education's goals for the CF classroom (1998): it is the primary goal of the program to instil in students an ability to communicate their ideas and knowledge effectively; completely accurate language use is not necessary. If students are given a model from which they can work to convey their knowledge, then, I believe, the essential goal of the Ontario CF curriculum is achieved. Further, if the student can manipulate the model accurately, this may indicate understanding of the nature of the language and its forms; since the student is able to analyze and subsequently synthesize discrete language features to change the meanings conveyed in communication, the student has achieved a meta-awareness of the TL (Ramírez, 1995).

Similarly, when students were asked to produce oral language, Julie often provided the less proficient students with a starter expression. The use of such oral cues and prompts was evident during 22.6% of the observed time (52 minutes total, 16 minutes as an 'exclusive' strategy, 36 minutes as an 'equal' strategy). Using the starter expression, the students were expected to complete the sentence with their own ideas. On other occasions, when the students had trouble finding the correct word in French, Julie often pointed to a poster on the wall or to something on the board that might help them find the right word for the

situation so that they could continue with their thought. She never gave them the word outright, instead prompting them until they produced it. Hutchinson (2002) recommends the use of oral cues with students with learning difficulties both as a means of modelling correct language use and as a strategy to diminish student anxiety. Because the students typically experience challenges in knowing how to organize their language to correlate with their ideas, the use of such cues helps them focus their attention and limit the language corpus they need to access for their response (Hutchinson, 2002).

Conclusion

It is not plausible to drawing significant conclusions from the results described here, given the small data corpus and the exploratory case study design. Yet what has been revealed about Julie's teaching practices underscores how much more there is to learn about effectively including students with special needs in CF. There does seem to be evidence that Julie's teaching practices were simultaneously addressing both the goals of the communicative curriculum and learner needs, based on what has been recommended in the literature for including students with learning disabilities (e.g., Hutchinson, 2002; Lerner, 2008). Further, the scaffolds that Julie featured in her pedagogy are congruent with what has been recommended in the literature about general effective L2/FL teaching methodology (e.g., Brown, 2001; Shrum & Glisan, 2005) and align peripherally with some research on the positive influence of language teaching that addresses multiple senses (Sparks et al., 1998). However, it would be helpful to have more data about what other CF teachers are doing in their classrooms to establish a more conclusive link between effective L2/FL methodology and inclusive teaching practices. While measures gauged to assess Julie's effectiveness in teaching French to such a diverse group (e.g., student test scores) were lacking from this overall study, if the students' perceptions of her teaching practices (Arnett, 2008) are considered in conjunction with these results, it would seem that what Julie is doing in her classroom adds another layer to our understanding of the potential rapport between inclusive teaching in L2 classrooms.

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Notes

- 1 In Ontario, some students may be exempted from the Core French graduation requirement because of the severity of their learning challenges; policies and practices vary across school boards (Mohindra, 2001).
- 2 In Ontario, FSL at the high school level is divided into two different 'streams' – Academic and Applied. In the Academic stream, students are encouraged to interact with the material in a more theoretical manner, while the Applied stream uses more concrete methods to explore French (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).
- 3 All participant names are pseudonyms.
- 4 For the purposes of this study, 'auditory' information was defined as lexical or musical knowledge presented aurally to the students; 'visual' information was defined solely as lexical information that the teacher conveyed to the students in written or pictorial form. The teacher's use of manipulatives was classified as 'tactile' in terms of presentation emphasis, and the use of gestures was assessed as 'other' emphasis. The presentation emphasis was designated based on how the teacher *first* presented the information in the activity. If a gesture or object was introduced in the second 'telling' of the information to help students decode meaning, this action was classified as an adaptation, as outlined on the second page of the TALC Revised.
- 5 The OSR (Ontario Student Record) is a file that contains a student's academic information.
- 6 In Ontario, students' skills are evaluated according to a four-level rubric. Students who are achieving at Level 4 are performing beyond the current grade-level expectations for that task; students who are achieving at Level 3 are meeting the provincial expectation for that standard; students who are achieving Level 2 are viewed as 'approaching the standard.' Level 1 students are achieving at a level that is well below the provincial expectation for that skill (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998).
- 7 These are the most frequently used verbs requiring the auxiliary *être* in a compound past tense in French (e.g., *passé composé*), which are often a source of confusion for students studying the language. These verbs are referred to as the 'Dr & Mrs Vandertrampp' verbs because the first letters of the 17 most frequently used verbs requiring *être* spell out 'Dr & Mrs Vandertrampp.'

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Appendix A

TALC: Teaching Adaptations in the Language Classroom Observation Scheme Part I Revised

School _____ Grade _____ Visit No. _____ Observer(s) _____
Teacher _____ Date _____ Page _____

[illegible]

TALC: Teaching Adaptations in the Language Classroom Observation Scheme Part III Revised

School _____ Grade _____ Visit No. _____ Observer(s) _____

Teacher _____ Date _____ Page _____

[illegible]

TALC: Teaching Adaptations in the Language Classroom Observation Scheme Part II Revised

School _____ Grade _____ Visit No. _____ Observer(s) _____
Teacher _____ Date _____ Page _____

ACADEMIC INTERACTIONS										
PRESENTATION OF CONTENT			MATERIALS		GRADING	ASSIGNMENT/TESTS			REINFORCEMENT	ASSESSMENT
Discussion/analysis										
38	40	Use computers			Student help determine if value					
41	42	Use English to clarify			Use calculator					
43	44	Use English to clarify			Peer assessment					
45	46	Use English to clarify			Modify practice system					
47	48	Use English to clarify			Other					
49	50	Use English to clarify			Other					
51	52	Use English to clarify			Other					
53	54	Use English to clarify			Other					
55	56	Use English to clarify			Other					
57	58	Use English to clarify			Other					
59	60	Use English to clarify			Other					
61	62	Use English to clarify			Other					
63	64	Use English to clarify			Other					
65	66	Use English to clarify			Other					
67	68	Use English to clarify			Other					
69	70	Use English to clarify			Other					
71	72	Use English to clarify			Other					
73	74	Use English to clarify			Other					
75	76	Use English to clarify			Other					
77	78	Use English to clarify			Other					
79	80	Use English to clarify			Other					
81	82	Use English to clarify			Other					
83	84	Use English to clarify			Other					
85	86	Use English to clarify			Other					
87	88	Use English to clarify			Other					
89	90	Use English to clarify			Other					
91	92	Use English to clarify			Other					
93	94	Use English to clarify			Other					
95	96	Use English to clarify			Other					
97	98	Use English to clarify			Other					
99	100	Use English to clarify			Other					