Key Points

Participants in the study suggested that the following considerations should be taken into account when looking at ways to improve existing programmes and support for NESB students.

- Teachers’ existing skills and expertise should be capitalised on in programmes and support provided for NESB students.
- Staff (including support staff) should receive (more) specific training in working with NESB students.
- Staff in schools need to feel positively about meeting the needs of NESB students.
- A school’s administration must actively provide backup and support for teachers as well as for students.
- Teachers need to work cooperatively and provide support for one another.
- There needs to be more scope for teachers, especially those with larger classes, to obtain as much in-class support (eg, from teacher aides, parents, bilingual tutors, other community members) as possible.
- Where possible, schools need to provide programmes and support for the parents/families of NESB students, not only for how the parents/families themselves could benefit but also so they can have more and/or improved input into their children’s education.
- Schools need to have greater access to support from outside agencies.
- There needs to be not only greater availability of and/or access to appropriate resources for NESB students, but also improved communication networks about what is available. As well, there needs to be more backup (eg, teacher release time or hands-on assistance from support staff) for the making of teacher- and school-produced resources.

Participants in the study also said that they saw a need for:

- careful attention being given to the selection of effective and appropriate assessment procedures to monitor NESB students’ progress, to keep track of their changing needs, and help steer the programmes and support that are provided;
- systematic and ongoing evaluation of the programmes being offered to see what is working well and what is not;
- ongoing resourcing for NESB students who have developed a reasonable level of proficiency in English but still require subject-specific support in the classroom; and,
- more opportunity for one-to-one and/or small group interaction with students.
Introduction

Those we spoke to over the course of the study had a wide range of suggestions on how the conditions for learning could be improved or facilitated for NESB students. Their suggestions focused primarily on such factors as the preparation and training of teachers for working with NESB students, having sufficient numbers of teachers and support people to work with the students, having more expertise to help in the area of first languages, having greater access to support services outside the school, having greater access to appropriate resources and/or help to make resources, getting parents ‘on side’.

Training for Teachers

The nature and extent of training that teachers have received specifically for working with NESB students varies considerably. Also, whether or not the amount of training received by given teachers can be regarded as sufficient is considerably influenced by characteristics of those teachers — for example, confidence, attitudes, and commitment to the reality of teaching NESB students. Nevertheless, although some teachers appear to cope well, even without a great deal of training specifically on working with these students — some taking the initiative themselves and going to observe other teachers/programmes — there seems no doubt that more training opportunities for teachers and support staff would enhance the teaching and learning of NESB students in all schools. The point was also made that it is important to capitalise on as well as build on the high-level skills and experience, not to mention qualities such as commitment and willingness to share, that many teachers already have.

“I have had absolutely no training [in working with NESB students], as is the case with most teachers. You learn on the job!” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“Initially I had no formal training [with NESB students] although all my teaching life I’ve been working with these types of children. Mainly Pacific Island background children so I imagine I know them pretty well by now. I’ve certainly been on a number of courses over the years to help me with that. But to a very large extent I have just grown into the job and I have expertise that I have picked up along the way.” [ESOL coordinator/special needs teacher, primary school.]

“My training is mainly of an informal nature, dealing with language and linguistic skills and how they are acquired. I question why, when things don’t work out. I work closely with the deans and others, so training is ongoing. But finances can restrict what training is undertaken, and the lack of teacher hours is difficult.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“We need an expert to run staff in-service courses to teach strategies [for working with NESB students], for professional development. And understanding the [NESB student’s]
Culture is very important for teachers too. But there’s not much offering in that [in the way of courses]. I do night courses, I’ve done Tikanga Maori, but there’s not much else on offer. There is a very big lack nowadays [in that area]. We’re not just a bicultural country now, we’re multicultural, and I think it’s time that New Zealand as a whole realised that we need to be looking at that too, instead of just looking at ourselves.” [Reading Recovery teacher, primary school.]

“I did a morning working with a Somali family at College a couple of months ago. The Refugee Council ran that. We were about to get several Somali families at the school. We had [Somali children for a short time] before, and we’d had no training [regarding their particular needs]. I was lucky to have that morning of training and it certainly has helped — just knowing a bit more about their background. They are a most unusual group of children really for us because we hadn’t had a lot to do with them before. And meeting the parents and seeing the way they feel about things, and looking at their culture from the different perspectives, was really useful. Maybe every ethnic group should be given the chance to have specific input about their particular points and their particular cultural perspectives. That would be ideal of course. These people [the Somali family] got half a day, which is never enough, but nobody else to my knowledge has ever had anything like that. So that was really neat.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“I have learnt a few phrases from different ethnic groups which is helpful.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

A comment from one principal suggested that although many of his staff had not received specific training in the teaching of NESB students, their experience and training in teaching and learning generally stood them in good stead:

“Not many teachers [on the staff have received training in working with NESB students] directly. But lots of teachers have received training in relation to inclusive practices of one sort or another and the processes of group cooperative learning strategies. It seems to me that those particular models are very powerful as inclusive practices for children who don’t have English as their first language. [This means that NESB students] are required to work in a variety of ways with those who do hold the language and in a reasonably highly structured model. With cooperative group learning it seems to me that that’s a really good way to involve and develop [NESB students].“ [Principal, secondary school.]

Two classroom teachers from one primary school who were interviewed together pointed out that although they had received little formal training specifically relating to the teaching of NESB students, they felt that staff in the school were very supportive of one another, not only in relation to NESB students but all students. They mentioned that staff were generous in sharing ideas and resources as well as in providing ‘moral support’. They also felt supported...
by the fact that the person in the school who held the position of ESOL teacher/coordinator was able to be flexible with her timetable, so that she could give support to the teachers and students who most needed it.

“Although we have not had much formal training — [eg] ‘a one-day course a few years ago’ [and] ‘it was kind of briefly covered at teachers college when I was there, that was about five years ago, and since then I’ve been on a half-day course’ — we have, as a staff, spent a lot of time discussing ways of best handling these new children when they come into the school. So we’ve had mostly informal, on-site, ongoing training and support. We’ve supported each other a lot on things that have worked and haven’t worked, so probably that’s the way we’ve most valuably handled things. ... And we have support from [our ESOL coordinator] because she knows all the NESB students in the school and has a good overview of them. But it’s very much the continuing support amongst the staff [as a whole] that helps us most and the sharing of ideas and resources.” [Two classroom teachers, primary school.]

These same two teachers, however, further stated that, although they felt well supported within the school, they would nevertheless appreciate further training opportunities to enhance their work with NESB students. In particular, they mentioned how valuable it would be to be able to speak a little of their NESB students’ languages so that rather than the emphasis being solely on the students gaining English language skills there could be more of a dialogue between teacher and students in both English and the students’ first language(s).

“I’d like more [training], especially to do with different cultures. And because [NESB students’] language needs, as I see it, are really linked with their culture I’d really like to know more about their background — for example, about any schooling they’ve had in another country and what that’s been like. For instance, [in the case of] a child coming from China, knowing more about the education system there and how they were taught — which I think is very much rote learning and sitting in rows and that kind of thing — can help me teach them in a way which is at first familiar to them and that they are comfortable with, because often children that come from that kind of environment, you put them in a more interactive teaching environment, where they’ve got choices and that kind of thing, and they find it very hard to cope with [that], as well as the language needs. So, more education about their culture, and the education system that they have come from would be very useful, I think. ... Yes, and probably gaining a bit more expertise with [NESB children’s languages] would be good as well — more phrases, and just basically building up a larger vocabulary. We know how to greet in a variety of languages and one or two other simple things, but not much beyond that.”

Other participants also suggested particular training needs for teachers who work with NESB students. Their suggestions included the need for better understanding of (second) language
acquisition, and more knowledge and understanding of aspects of other people’s cultures and ways of looking at the world. The passages which follow contain some of the suggestions made for training.

“I think that anyone working with NESB students has to have some kind of understanding of basic language acquisition skills, how people actually learn another language. I suppose one of the things I have found helpful to me as a teacher here is that I am actually bilingual, I am an NESB person myself, so I think that has possibly been an advantage or has helped me in my ability to work out what’s going on with these children who are acquiring another language. I tend to find myself going back to my own experiences and relating that to what happens here. But I think basically the training needs for any teacher working with NESB students would be to have some kind of input into general language acquisition. How people learn another language — I suppose the study of linguistics you could call it.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“I don’t think we always actually understand [the needs of our] learners too well and my gut feeling is that the more liberal the education programme becomes, the more empowering [it becomes] for the kid — [eg], a lot of where we are going in terms of problem-solving, in giving kids decision-making, and things like that — the less it does for some Pacific Islands kids.” [Principal, primary school.]

“There is a lack of in-service training, partly for us [as ESOL teachers in the ESOL Department] but definitely for the classroom teacher. ... There needs to be more training specifically for classroom teachers along the lines of how you cope with NESB students in your classroom. And I think it has to be taught by people outside the school.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“I think we know a lot about the cultural backgrounds of our [NESB students] but I think sometimes there are still inadequacies in that direction that could be improved on. I think we can work in conflict in that regard because of parents’ concepts of learning and education. Most [NESB] parents at this school have come from a very, very formal learning experience so their perception of what is done at school here [is not always very positive]. I am always trying to be aware of where they [the students] come from and that all weekend they have probably been speaking Samoan or whatever and then they come back into here [school]. They are really clever kids to be able to do all this but it must be quite confusing for them. It’s family expectations, teacher expectations, and community expectations, and trying to bridge that gap. Maybe we need to make a bit more effort to bridge that gap.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“There needs to be more real understanding of different customs and things. [For example], the fact that the parents will say, ‘Yes, yes, yes, yes’. Our teachers here, even though they
know, [in theory, that in other cultures this response doesn’t necessarily mean either agreement or understanding], they say, ‘Mrs So-and-so, she knew what I was talking about and she agreed’, and all the rest of it, but in fact Mrs So-and-so had no idea [what the teacher was talking about] because [the teacher was] talking quickly and you don’t lose face by saying you don’t understand.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]

“I have real doubts about the maths attainment of the kids here. I would like to do a bit of research myself on technical maths vocabulary and second language learners. Specific courses to help teachers [of Pacific Islands NESB students] are needed.” [Principal, primary school.]

There was also a suggestion that being able to update skills and learn new ideas in a more hands-on or practical way — for example, by having the opportunity to observe other skilled practitioners at work — rather than attend a training course in the formal sense would be preferable or more appropriate. For example:

“I don’t see [formal] training as a priority [for me]. What I would [prefer] is [time for] liaison with teachers who are in a similar position to me in other schools. I would like to see what is going on in other schools in this area. I often find that just talking to other teachers and picking up ideas is far more valuable than going to a course where a lot of what they are talking about I already know. And working ideas are generally far more important for me than the theory and philosophy behind it. So I’d like to see successful programmes in operation, see them working, [so] I could pick up ideas.” [ESOL coordinator/special needs teacher, primary school.]

Finally, some participants simply stated that training for all those who work with NESB students needs to be ongoing, allowing teachers to regularly update or re-evaluate their skills and teaching approaches and strategies.

“I think [training needs for working with NESB students] is just ongoing, it’s almost endless. The sorts of things that you could do, you could go into the sociological aspects of the culture of the students, teaching techniques, resources — .” [HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

“I suppose my main thing [in relation to training needs for working with NESB students] is keeping up with any new ideas coming up. And I suppose, just like for any sort of staff development you do, [after you’ve been] you sort of go off and say, ‘That’s a good idea, I’d totally forgotten about that’, [so regular meetings, discussions, etc] trigger off things that may have gone out of your mind.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“I really think that it [training in the ESOL area] is something that [needs to be ongoing]. I would really like to go overseas and do some training in Australia or somewhere where they’ve been working with NESB [students] for a long, long time and just get practical ideas
ASPECTS OF TEACHERS’ WORK WITH NESB STUDENTS

“Teachers need to understand the previous learning structures that other kids come from. If they’ve come straight from the Pacific Islands or from South East Asia, they’ve come from a very structured group, where they go, “Shut up, sit down, and get on with it.” They don’t question or lateralise, they just do it from the book. It’s asking a lot for students to make a single jump — they need help to make that change from one system to another. They need to understand the new parameters.

“[Teachers] need to understand the issues of multiculturalism. That there are behaviours that offend people. If you offend or upset people, you inhibit their learning. So we’ve had a whole session on things like people who sit like this [puts foot on coffee table]. You don’t show the soles of your feet to an Asian, it’s totally unacceptable. If you’ve got Maori students in the classroom, never sit on the table. It’s just general multicultural awareness. [Teachers] must have that, otherwise they don’t really understand where they [the students] are coming from.

“We ask too much. When they’re suddenly thrown in, we expect them [the NESB students] to just function. When stress sets in, and it does, teachers need to understand that students are out of their own environment and that there are stresses in learning and functioning all day in another language. Students do fall asleep in class, and it’s not that they’re bored with you or that they don’t like you, or the subject. Sometimes they are simply physically too depleted to stay awake. Over there [in the ESOL room], we simply let them fall asleep when they’re first here. We say to other teachers, ‘If they fall asleep, just forget it. Leave it. Just let them get their sleep’, because in the beginning they simply cannot do it any other way. You cannot keep them awake, it’s not possible.

“I have worked individually with several teachers here — we’ve done group work together. I go in and listen to a class being taught and observe the teaching practices and the language being used and then we discuss ways in which that could be changed or adapted. We also team-teach in various departments and [I] act as in-class support.”1


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1 The quotes are excerpts from an interview with an ESOL coordinator/teacher in a New Zealand secondary school. The ESOL coordinator, from a bilingual background, and who has had extensive training in the ESOL area and many years of experience in working with NESB students, was interviewed for the study *Promoting Positive Race Relations in New Zealand Schools: Me Mahi Tahi Tatou* (referred to above).
on how they implement [programmes for these students] in the schools.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“I think as far as training goes, we all need to be continually upskilling ourselves in whatever enlightening skills there are.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

Professional Development Contracts for Assisting NESB Students

When discussing training for teachers working with NESB students, study participants who had taken part in a professional development contract specifically on the teaching and learning of NESB students could not speak highly enough of the experience. It was clear that what they had learned through being part of the contract had helped them feel a great deal more confident and enthusiastic about having NESB students in their classes. Participants from schools where the entire staff — not all of whom necessarily had direct involvement in the everyday teaching and learning of NESB students — had taken part in the contract were particularly enthusiastic, saying that the contract had had many positive consequences for the staff, including the feeling that everyone was ‘on the same wavelength’, thereby strengthening networks of cooperation and support, and that validation of strategies already used with students generally had been received as well as ideas for how to extend or adapt existing strategies or approaches.

“The contract [for assisting NESB students] is the only actual ESOL training that I have had. But a lot of the training that we have had in other areas lends itself to NESB students. I mean your actual teaching quality — your teaching skills — is definitely the most important. I have worked in multicultural schools in Auckland for 16 years and I think that is the best training — what I’ve been doing at the chalk face for the past 16 years. ... But I have to admit that what we have done this year [ie, the contract for assisting NESB students] has been absolutely incredible, just amazing. By far the best. It’s the best thing I’ve done in all my teaching career. We’ve still got lots of practical experience from all those years [of teaching] but this has really put things in a nutshell and gilded the lily so to speak. [The reason for that is] a whole lot of things really. It’s the school getting in behind it. As long as I have been at this school it has been one of my focal points, that we actually did something for the NESB children. There have been a lot of people for a lot of years mucking around, and we never really had the support at the top, the BOT and all that, so there were a lot of people who were given the ESOL hat to wear who were getting very disillusioned. Anyway, it has been very frustrating for a large number of years and finally, this year, because of this contract, we’ve got the school working as a unit and it is succeeding because we have got everyone right from the top supporting us. So this is what has been lacking, a support system. The fact that we have got this, instead of children being dumped on our classroom doorstep which is what happened for far too long, which is embarrassing for the child and embarrassing for the teacher, we have been given prior notice. We can prepare the child, we can prepare the
class, everyone is prepared, amen! Now that has got to be a major plus in this school doesn’t it? And the fact is that we have spent so much time and energy, all of us, making resources, we have actually got a part of the resource room now that is ESOL, instead of us going on for years scrambling around with bits and pieces that we could find here and there. There is organisation, so that is great for us. And we have all made a lot of resources, which have taken an incredible amount of time, but things are under way. I just feel that, suddenly, these kids have been recognised by all and sundry. We are bringing in the populous out there and for once we are working as a unit and it can only be positive moving onwards and upwards, instead of scrambling by and feeling really disillusioned. And thinking to hell with this, we’ve had it. Instead we feel good!” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“Well, I could put a plug in for the contracts. I was amazed [recently to hear] that there were so few of them around when I know what we have gained from it. [I’ve heard that there are] heaps of applications from schools wanting to be part of them. It shows that schools are crying out for them. We [schools] don’t know what to do with these kids and they are always going to be treated as impositions on the school system unless we get that support system built in, not only the money and stuff but us giving the teachers the deal [ie, the backup and support]. I know our people don’t [react] with horror half so much when I walk in with a non-English-speaking [background] child now because [since being part of the contract for assisting NESB students] they think, ‘OK, I’ll do this or that [with them]’, and it’s fine.” [Principal, primary school.]

“[The facilitator of the professional development contract for assisting NESB students that we did] is superb. I would love it if she wasn’t so busy so she could come in [to the school] more. But that’s not to be. And the way they [those who ran the contract] have supported us through this contract, I don’t think they could have done much more really. The evaluations that I have seen from the staff have just been full of praise for what they have done.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

A number of interviewees mentioned that contracts for assisting NESB students were excellent but that, ideally, all members of a school’s staff should participate (even those who are not necessarily directly involved in the teaching of NESB students).

“The contract [for assisting NESB students] was a good idea but we probably all needed to do it [instead of just the two teachers who took part]. It was really interesting hearing [from the teachers who took part] what they’d learned. But you’ve got to work out what your school’s priority for the year is going to be — you can’t do everything [at once] unfortunately.” [Reading Recovery teacher, primary school.]

“The only training I have had is three of the six sessions of the Ministry contract [for assisting NESB students] three years ago [1992]. That was very successful and is the basis of what we
are still doing. The unfortunate thing is that only one of the other three teachers [from this school] who were on that contract is left and she is leaving at the end of the year. So I’m the only one who has done even part of that contract who will actually be left on the staff, and I’m not a classroom teacher. Next year, we’re going to have to see that things that are in place now, stay in place. My role [as ESOL coordinator] is going to become more important. Next year [the school is] involved with three other Ministry contracts [in other areas] and although we hoped to be involved with the contract again, we felt it was too much to ask next year as we’ve got many new teachers and we’re going to have a new principal. The time isn’t right. So in 1997 we’re going to apply to get back on that same contract. ... For myself, personally, I feel the training that I have done is sufficient for my role at the moment. Perhaps the only thing I’d like to do is to be a little more aware of Cantonese or Mandarin. [But] as far as the school is concerned, we certainly need to get onto a contract [for assisting NESB students]. [ESOL coordinator/deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“More schools need to participate in Ministry [professional development] contracts [for assisting NESB students]. But these really need to be whole school contracts, not just two or three individuals. ... I know a school who did it [the contract] as a whole staff development. So they actually closed the school early at 2 pm for two or three days and had two or three hours solid workshops for the whole staff. Now that has been brilliant because although they may lose a couple of teachers at the end of the year, when the two new teachers arrive, the rest of the staff can come in as an umbrella and assist and support. Whereas here [at this school], we have already lost two of our four key teachers from the contract [we went on in 1992], I leave at the end of this year, and [our deputy principal] who was the other one involved, only did part of the contract and she is not in the classroom. So we’ve already lost our resource personnel from that contract, which is really worrying. So we are now looking at doing the contract again, as a whole staff development. There is a definite need for this as we’ve got a big school here now and it can be difficult — I know there are areas of the school that are not coping with the NESB children very well at all [but] I just haven’t had the time [to work with everyone who needs it].” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

Some participants pointed out, too, that an important benefit of schools participating in a contract for assisting NESB students was the opportunity to share resources with other schools:

“At the end of the contract [for assisting NESB students] this year, people from the schools on the contract took [along] two resources that they had made and she [the contract coordinator] is putting them together in a book that she is going to send to us all. So then we can copy those, then laminate and bag them and then we will have at least 36 new resources.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]
“It would be great if there were more resources available, you know, commercially made [ones] or made by [the] Advisory [Service] and available from them, whatever. [And] I think there is a lot of doubling up going on in schools with making resources. That was one of the neat things with [the professional development] contract, because there were a whole lot of other schools on it as well. So there was quite a lot of swapping of resources. Like we were paired with [another] intermediate and they would go off and make resources for their school and we’d make them for ours, and then we would come back together and we would make double copies and swap them over. And that worked out really well. (And one of the first things we bought after the contract was a laminator — great machines! We decided that if we were putting heaps of time into making these resources, they really needed to last.)”

[Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

Training for Teacher Aides/Other Support People

Not all participants in the study necessarily agreed that teacher aides should be used to provide support for NESB students. For example:

“There is a certain sum of [ESOL] money [each year] based on each [NESB] child that is available [for schools] — I think it is $67. Part-time teacher hours are priced at $37.50 an hour so $67 is [about] two hours [part-time] teacher time. [It is implied], ‘Do it on the cheap, use a teacher aide, you can buy four times that amount for a teacher aide’. [But] a teacher aide is [usually] not a qualified teacher, you need qualified, trained teachers to support the children.”

[Principal, primary school.]

However, in reality, all of the teachers of NESB students in the study who had the assistance of a teacher aide or other in-class helper found their help invaluable, stating often that they did not know what they would do without them. However, there were a small number of participants who suggested that some sort of training for teacher aides2 (and a financial reward for volunteers) would be desirable.

“You have got to give them [the helpers] some sort of guidance on what they are going to have to do and now that I have done the contract [for assisting NESB students] it has shown me that there are more things we could do that are quite simple. But I haven’t got time to train the parents and volunteers myself.”

[Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“They [support people] need to be able to access training, in order to be reliable and useful. What I’d really like to see is better training for teacher aides. We rely a great deal on teacher

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2 Teacher aides at some schools, however, were trained teachers, who for various reasons (e.g., retirement) were no longer working as classroom teachers per se.
Exhibit 14: The Rationale and Guidelines for Using In-Class Support at a Participating Secondary School

ESOL In-Class Support: Working Document

Aims of In-Class Support

- Giving the teacher the strategies and skills to make their classroom work effectively for all their students.
- The support teacher is there to help the total class, not simply the targeted students.
- The teacher becomes self-supporting, making in-class support unnecessary, as a result of the training and modelling provided. We aim to empower the teacher to manage the learning of students they teach.
- Challenge teachers to look at their lessons from a different perspective — eg, all students will benefit from the new approaches, it isn’t only students with learning disabilities that fail to understand.
- The classroom teacher is responsible for the curriculum delivery for all students. The support teacher supports the student by supporting the teacher.
- The classroom must be cohesive, not divisive; in other words, the class teacher must have the opportunity to work with all the students during the week, they are the subject specialist. The support teacher must not work exclusively with NESB students.

Possible approaches

- What sections of this topic have given students problems in the past? Why do you think this happened? What approaches have you already tried?
- What can we do together to allow you to work with the students having problems? — eg, vocabulary lists, exercises, suggestions from the LLAC [Learning and Language Across the Curriculum] kit.
- Who are the ones I need to work with today?

3 The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.
Exhibit 14: The Rationale and Guidelines for Using In-Class Support at a Participating Secondary School — *continued*

**ESOL In-Class Support: Working Document — *continued***

**Expectations**
- We need to help the teacher set realistic standards for each student. [Teachers need to] recognise that there are a range of abilities as in all cultures, and that [it is important to] value their cultural differences and their individual personalities. Don’t expect [students] to be what they aren’t. [NESB students may need to learn] social skills or ‘hearing’ English rather than specific subject content.

**Some Other Points**
- As staffing is thin on the ground, we need to channel the resources we do have to the areas/teachers where we can be most effective. We also need to be aware of equity issues and seeing that NESB students are not disadvantaged in the allocation of available time.
- Our approach has to be flexible enough to meet individual circumstances while still providing clear guidelines as to roles and expectations.
- [There needs to be an] awareness of the distinction between product and process.
- Relievers should be provided for in-class support time in the same way that they are provided for other timetabled periods.
- There is a need for a debriefing time after the lesson where both the class teacher and the support teacher can discuss the lesson and possible follow-up.
- There is a need for clear guidelines that set out the responsibilities of both the class teacher and the support teacher.

**Possible Guidelines**

*Support Teacher:*
- Obey the rules of the classroom.
- Avoid singling out students by working with different groups of students and sitting in different places in the room. Move around the room.
Exhibit 14: The Rationale and Guidelines for Using In-Class Support at a Participating Secondary School — continued

Possible Guidelines — continued

Support Teacher: — continued

• Remember that discipline is normally the role of the classroom teacher.
• Provide the help the teacher asks for.
• Be involved in the planning of the lesson where appropriate.
• Be available for a debriefing session.
• Withdrawal of individuals or groups should be an exception and only for specific purposes.

Classroom Teacher:

• Keep the support teacher informed as to topics you will be covering and possible difficulties with resources.
• Be available for a short debriefing of each lesson.
• Involve the support teacher in lesson planning and be open-minded about new approaches. Realise that the support teacher sees a lot of different teaching styles and can be a valuable source of new ideas.

Other Forms of Support

• [Have the support teacher] teach the class for a week so that the class teacher can prepare new resources, or relieve another teacher to do so if it is a specialist area.
aides who are paid a pittance. And it is a very important job that we get them to do.”
[Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“A lot of things these days rely on unpaid love and because of the way things are going, that’s just not good enough any more. People really do need to get paid for what they do. And they need recognition.” [AP/classroom teacher, primary school.]

Some participants also suggested that it was important for schools to provide guidelines for both teachers and helpers on how they could work together to best meet the needs of the students. An example of one secondary school’s guidelines relating to in-class support (in this particular instance, the focus is primarily on support from other teachers) is provided in Exhibit 14 above.

Teacher Attitudes

Teachers’ attitudes towards having NESB students in their classroom may often be integrally related to the amount of support they receive, both through the school’s management structure and overall philosophy, and through the amount of ‘hands-on’ support they receive in the classroom (from the school’s ESOL coordinator, from teacher aides, parents, and other supporters). Teachers who already have a large class of students with widely diverse needs, for example, may, quite understandably, feel less able or willing to cope with the additional needs of NESB students.

“There are a tremendous amount of stress on the classroom teacher when they have a class of 34 [children] and within that a group of [NESB] kids who are from different ethnic backgrounds.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

However, although the nature and extent of support for teachers is clearly critical (this is discussed further in the next section), especially for those with large, or particularly demanding classes, other factors also play their part in how teachers respond to having NESB students in their classes. These factors include personality variables — such as how flexible they are, how receptive they are to change, how positive they are about cultural differences, how
willing they are to seek advice and assistance, how ‘warm’ they are. Other factors may include personal health and well-being, the extent of other demands on their time, participation in relevant training, and nature and extent of skills [eg, in a second language] and experience [of teaching generally and of working with students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds].

“But it doesn’t really matter what training they’ve undertaken, it is the teacher’s attitude that makes a difference in whether they can work in this school and fit the make-up of the school. The make-up [of the school] is multicultural, therefore the teachers that we employ are hopefully teachers who have some empathy towards children of other cultures, so that the understanding comes through quite clearly that if you are different it is OK to be different.” [AP and class teacher, primary school.]

“Programmes in schools are dependent on human frailty. Some teachers feel that NESB students are an imposition but would never express it publicly but you can see through body language and what is happening that it [their attitude] is not as good as it should be. This is a minimal problem [at this school] but it is still there. I’m proud that it is so minimal [but] in spite of [the school] being involved in the contract [for assisting NESB students], such feelings exist.” [Principal, intermediate school.]

“[Having teachers who] come from a bicultural or multicultural background and have other languages [is very important]. That’s that attitude thing again [too], if you’ve had to learn a new language yourself, that’s good training [for working with NESB students].” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“There are still parents and teachers out there who think that these [NESB] children are a problem generally. It is an attitude thing. Training needs need to cover the whole spectrum, a community thing, because we are very multicultural [as a society now] and it is very much [a] community-based [issue]. So I think training needs to be spread wider than just the school or just the teachers.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“The willingness to want to include other groups besides the children [in programmes is vital] — the willingness to want to include parents in the school environment. Some teachers don’t see parents as being helpful. There also has to be a willingness [on the part of teachers] to contact agencies [for help with NESB children] when they need to, without waiting until the last minute.” [AP and class teacher, primary school.]

“[Sometimes] it [the need for training for coping with NESB students in the classroom] is also getting the teacher to accept that it is their problem and that we [staff of the ESOL Department] are here to help them deal with their problem. There has to be a perceived need by the teachers to acquire coping strategies.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]
Sometimes, positive attitude changes can be fostered through well thought-out, sensitively presented, appropriate learning opportunities. The passages which follow, for example, illustrate how some teachers, initially opposed to the idea of hearing about teaching and learning strategies found to be valuable when working with NESB students, became much more tolerant once they discovered that these strategies were valuable for teaching any students and that they weren’t being ‘told how to teach’.

“The filtering process at staff meetings and professional development meetings, where the group [who had been on the contract for assisting NESB students] was taking the staff meeting, didn’t work very well at first but I think that has been addressed now. People realised that ESOL doesn’t have to be taken in isolation because it is just an approach that you can use in your classroom and it can benefit all of your classroom. It is just another approach to teaching. We are not saying, ‘Stop teaching your class now and go with ESOL, while the rest of your class does some silent work, sheet work’. But we have said that it is part of the whole classroom programme and a lot of the things that you are doing now are good for NESB students, but here is a way to put them in a structure that will also help your NESB kids. So that was certainly something that wasn’t working very well right at the start.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“Definitely [what hasn’t worked particularly well in the past] is transferring the information and the philosophies behind the [professional development] contract [for assisting NESB students] back into the school and trying to enthuse the rest of the staff. That’s difficult because this is a big school. Staff are supportive of each other if they are all involved but it’s difficult when it’s only one person, or four people, going to a workshop and then [them having] to demonstrate to everyone else and pass on [what they have learned]. You can only do so much at a staff meeting so it is far more valuable, and I think people are more likely to retain what you are trying to do, if they see it demonstrated with a group of children within the classroom. [Because] this is what teachers are concerned about: ‘How do we deal with these children when we have all these other [students in the class] as well?’ So if it can be demonstrated that it can be done, the teachers can see it being done, then they are more likely to try themselves. [But] finding the time to demonstrate or observe what’s going on in other classrooms [can be very difficult].” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

A comment from another participant in response to a question about training in relation to working with NESB students, highlights the need for an open attitude and a sense of cooperation. She stated that:

“… being prepared to listen to and learn from others [is a vital element].” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]
Support for Teachers

Approaches to teaching and learning, refocuses in curricula, and more general changes in society all contribute to a state of ongoing change in schools. In recent times, in particular, it appears that more and more is being demanded of teachers. In order to ensure that teachers keep providing an effective, quality service for their students and for their school’s community underlines a corresponding need to ensure that teachers receive appropriate and sufficient backup and support. Participants in the study identified such backup and support as needing to come both from within the school and from outside sources as well. They also indicated that ‘support’ was necessary on different levels — that is, ‘moral support’ and practical, ‘hands-on’ support — and in a variety of ways — for example, having helpers able to work one-to-one or on a small group basis with students in the class or having someone able to make or follow-up on obtaining suitable books and other materials for use with students.

A number of participants referred to some of the particular difficulties and pressures that classroom teachers can encounter when working with NESB students. For example:

“When the Somali children who are Muslim, their cultural background is that they do not encounter female figures of authority, and do not respect those, until it is pressed home to them, really, that the female teacher is in authority and [that] there will be consequences for [disruptive] behaviours. And so that takes time before they can start learning, I mean, that’s a barrier to them working and learning in the classroom environment. They don’t respect female authority and the teacher has to spend [a lot of] time — sometimes 95% — monitoring them when they first come in. It makes it very difficult for the rest of the class. And not only that, but once I, as a female teacher, have established my authority with a child and some kind of relationship has formed, that does not cross over to any other female teacher in the school. So every female teacher they encounter has to go through this too. This isn’t with all Somali children, it’s particularly bad with just some — but every female teacher they encounter they test and try and push their boundaries. So it’s a time-waster and an energy-zapper.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“I have a class of 34 children, seven- and eight-year-olds, year 3, [including] 15 NESB children. I have just been on the contract [for assisting NESB students] which has been comprehensive and has been a learning thing for me throughout the year. I got landed with these 15 children (I have got Asian, Russian, Macedonian, Yugoslav, Fijian Indian, and Samoan children so there is a whole mixture of them) not knowing exactly what I was supposed to do with them, but I have learnt a bit more during the year. About six of them had been in the country about a year and I also have a number who are New Zealand-born but speak an Island language at home [which is probably] the first language that they learned and you can still notice the [English] language gap in the way they speak. They don’t appear to be [NESB at first] but when you are talking to them or asking them to follow instructions you suddenly notice that they don’t understand. In fact, most of them can’t actually paraphrase
and it’s not until you actually stop and talk to them [that you realise] and those are the sort of children who won’t put up their hands and say, ‘I don’t understand’ — it’s just not part of their nature to ask for further information, whereas some of the Russian girls will ask if they don’t understand.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

Other participants explained that students’ previous education and life experiences (eg, the trauma of war and its aftermath) can make students very hard to handle initially: the difficulties in adjusting to a new country and new systems in school and in all aspects of everyday life can make it very difficult not only for these students themselves — in terms of making reasonable progress in their work and in learning how to behave in ‘acceptable’ ways — but also for other students in their class, and for teachers. Participants also mentioned that understanding the expectations of students from different cultures and taking into account the expectations that families have of their children and of the school can also be difficult at times.

“Some children don’t adjust quickly or as quickly as we would like. They just find the school difficult. Then our children might not make friends with them and they are put into a situation where they don’t like it here and the other children don’t like them. We had a child from Somalia last year and she was form 2 and she had a lot of anger within her and we found it so difficult to help her. I guess [too] the child that has low ability and is also learning their [first] language may really struggle and it’s really hard going with them. We had one child bordering on special needs. He actually thinks in Samoan — when you ask him to do something he has to interpret it in Samoan and then say yes or no to you in English and that is quite a different process. So he really struggles with instructions and things like that. [And] it’s so hard when you get a page of writing and you’re changing so much that you almost can’t recognise the original draft and for those children it’s quite shattering that you have to change the whole thing and of course they respect us and [believe that] we know the correct way to do it. It’s difficult really. Sometimes you do leave things the way they have written it [so as not to upset them too much].” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“Cultural expectations, they’re quite noticeable in Asian students. And then family expectations, they can vary a lot. And, of course, their background — children who have had to deal with war and refugee camps and that kind of thing cannot be expected to learn as quickly perhaps. Also how different the culture is that they’re coming to. If their culture is radically different [from that in New Zealand] and they’re dealing with different cultural expectations [it can be hard]. Like with the Somali children, [for example], especially the ones who have been in refugee camps, where they’ve had no need to hurry or no specific tasks [to do], no routines, for the first few months and often for a long time after that you are orientating them to work within routines, and that’s got to happen before you can sit down and really make progress with teaching them.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]
Although the issue of resourcing in the ESOL area is specifically discussed later in this report, it seems pertinent to include here the statement which follows which sums up the opinion of most, if not all, participants in the study that many of those who work with NESB students have to grapple with a very heavy workload:

“More money [is needed]! You are not going to get the ideal programmes that we have been talking about unless you fund them. You are not going to get people who are already working 40–60 hours a week to take time out from their families to come down here to develop resources for NESB children. They can’t do it, they can’t physically do more than they are doing, neither can we. We’re stuffed!” [Principal, primary school.]

The Need for (More) Support from Outside Organisations

In the next several passages, participants discuss the importance of having access to support from organisations outside the school.

“To have support within the school is vital. Support from Teacher Support Services is [also] needed. I would like a support person from Teacher Support Services to come and assist, and to support teachers — someone to ask, ‘What can I do?’ ” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“We [teachers] need extra support. It’s difficult in a school situation where you’ve got these [NESB] children and you don’t know what to do with them. You really do need someone from Teacher Support Services, or someone like that, who is an expert, that you can go to. It’s all very well having Language Centres with people who are experts in their language but you need someone who is an expert in the transference of their language to our language. You need someone you can go to and say, ‘I’ve got this many children, I need to know what to do with them. What can I do to help them?’ ... Any help on an expert level would be better than no help at all. We are not trained in this area, we’re expected to learn on the job. We need someone to tell us how we can do it [cater for NESB children].” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“It’s been great to have the support [from the facilitator of the contract for assisting NESB children] and having her give you ideas — she has heaps of wonderful ideas of different things you could do with [the NESB] children — so that you are not always doing the same type of programme with them but you have some variety in the programme [that you provide]. You just want to constantly have her there so you can go ask: ‘What shall I do on this topic?’ We have had a whole year with her [through being on the contract] but there is still a lot more that you could pick up from having somebody like that around all the time. It would be great if you had somebody to come in and work alongside you as you planned your units to know what things you could cover.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]
“[It is hard when the contract for assisting NESB students ends] because you have had all this wonderful support and input and then suddenly you are at the end of it. [But we are lucky here because our ESOL coordinator] is going on to be a facilitator next year as part of next year’s contract so we can see that we are actually going to be hooked into ongoing support and new knowledge that comes out because she will be getting all that training to share with her schools and we are going to have it too.” [Principal, primary school.]

“I think it’s vital that the people at Teacher Support Services continue in their role. [Due to funding restrictions], this year was the first year that we’ve been able to really implement a separate programme [for NESB students] over and above a classroom programme. And that was quite difficult to get started: ‘Where do we start?’, ‘What do we do?’, ‘What’s the best thing for these children within the finite time that we’ve got?’ And that’s where Teacher Support Services were very helpful.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

“The [Head of ESOL] and I are going to a meeting at the Correspondence School on Wednesday night, when they want to know what else they can provide for us [in relation to NESB students]. They are attacking issues and are open to our suggestions.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

A disappointment expressed by many participants in the study, however, was that outside support organisations were often too stretched, due to lack of staffing, to provide the level of support that they, the participants, needed or would have liked.

“The New Settlers advisers [at the Education Advisory Service] are run off their feet because there are not enough of them for the amount of input that schools in Auckland especially are wanting from them. Everybody is floundering. [They are really helpful] but I know you have to make an appointment to see them. We were lucky [recently] that we got her [the adviser] within three weeks of our asking for her but that’s another three weeks that that little one didn’t learn, because we didn’t have the skills to communicate. The Pacific Islands Resource Centre has been really good because they have got the resources and they have got people who can assist. But [again] it’s being able to tap into them when we want. It’s those sorts of things that we would value, to ring up [when we need help] and be able to talk to somebody who understands those children — whether Tongan or Chinese or whatever — and their learning and [who] can communicate effectively with both the home and school. That would be a huge advantage.” [Principal, primary school.]

“We need more advisers [at teacher support/advisory services] — for most of this year there has only been one acting adviser after [the person who held the position] left earlier in the year. You actually need more advisers to be able to support the [ESOL] coordinators in schools to provide more effective and appropriate programmes of work. [Our
part-time ESOL coordinator] does a lot of extra preparation outside her one-and-a-half hours a week actual contact time to provide appropriate support for these children. In this regard I am fortunate with the commitment and the effort she puts into her work.” [Principal, primary school.]

“I think that they need to have more staff available at [teacher advisory/support services] to come out to schools and they need to have a bigger network so that when we do need help it’s not a matter of having to wait to go through all the red tape before we get the help. Sometimes it takes too long and by the time they come out we have tried to attend to the problem ourselves. But there is only so much they can do because of [lack of] personnel.” [Assistant principal/classroom teacher, primary school.]

“Providing schools with notes on cultural background [is necessary]. We suddenly, [for instance], get a whole lot of Macedonians, and most of us never knew where Macedonia was, and suddenly you have got to do the work [to find something out about them] yourself. I have built up cultural notes on those groups now, but that has taken time.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

The principal from one school made the point that, because of the pressures on outside support agencies, with the result that individual schools can usually obtain only limited access to their services, it may be preferable, where possible, for schools to be proactive and take steps themselves to obtain the information or support that they require.

“It would be wonderful to see [someone] come out [from teacher advisory/support services] and spend time in the school and support teachers. But if it were possible, I would rather see the funds spent on the teachers understanding more about student needs than having advisers come in [to schools] to advise people on how to do it. ... Paying for [our deputy principal] to go to Australia to have a look at a school where they are running exceptional programmes [for NESB students] is probably [a] better [investment] than paying for an adviser from training college to come and advise us. It is $700 to go to Australia. So that sort of thing sounds more sensible to me when you can learn more in a visit to a specific institution and get the data that they have got, and hook it back into the school, than piece-meal advice from advisers who come in and work ten minutes with a teacher.” [Principal, primary school.]

The Need for More Support within the School

Participants also stressed the importance of (more) support within the school for both students and teachers. For example:

“[More support for NESB students such as] more withdrawal and more one-to-one interaction daily, whether it is with a peer or with another teacher, is crucial. And [it is needed in]
There is a need for more support in the classroom – for both teachers and NESB students. fairness to the other children in the class as well, you have to look after them as well. I think they need continuity. They need to know where they’re going, they need to see that there is some kind of organisation. That it is not just a knee-jerk reaction on the part of the teacher. You know the sort of thing: ‘Help, I haven’t got anything for Johnny, I’ll just give them that.’ But now we have the planning in place and there is a progression [of tasks at different levels for NESB students to work through] which I think is really important. But I think if that is going to work effectively then you’re probably going to need more help for the classroom teacher. I think that is what it comes down to, time after time. This year I haven’t had any NESB children because I have an extension class, but other years I have and I know what it’s like. And I know that sometimes teachers just think, ‘Oh, they [the NESB students] can just do anything.’ They [the teachers] get to that stage of just total ‘had enough’. And that’s if we are being totally honest with you and I guess that is what you want.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

Other participants made a similar point. For example:

“I know that for teachers of older [NESB] children removing [these students from the regular classroom programme] takes a huge load off them, because as a junior teacher with reasonably young children, some of what I do is still appropriate to my NESB students, whereas further up the school, often little of what you do is appropriate [in terms of difficulty level], except perhaps PE and art and music. And so you have to have an individualised programme for them — [our ESOL teacher] withdraws them as much as she can, but that support could certainly be a lot more [if there were enough teaching hours available]. At the same time, they need to have as much time as possible in the class so that they are also interacting with their peers but it is certainly much, much harder for those students the older they get.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“[More in-class support is needed because] teachers find it difficult to find the time for those students as well as meet the needs of all the other students in the class. Being able to work at the [appropriate] level for the other students plus being able to find time to take a small group [of NESB students] within their class to do the extra language work that’s needed [means], I think, that the teachers often get totally frustrated with the whole thing. [But] if they know those children are having [language] support outside the classroom, [that although] they still obviously have to spend time with them [in the classroom], at least they know the students have had that introduction to the language that’s needed and are not just sitting there blankly [in class] wondering what is being talked about. So from the teachers’ point of view, they find [support from teacher aides, etc] really quite useful.” [Teacher aide, ESOL, primary school.]

“I think more support in the classroom is needed, somebody in the classroom helping. Or smaller classes. There are times when it would be really useful to have a support person like
a disabled student has, someone to work alongside [the NESB student]. And support in the classroom all the time for a group that is not coping. If you have students, especially older students, who come in with no English, to have a programme where they are entitled to a period of time each day, say four hours a day, where they had somebody with them helping them through [would be excellent]. Resources [materials] are important but unless there is somebody there to help [the students work with them they are not very effective].” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“I am in a junior class. Thinking quickly, I don’t think any child [in the class] wouldn’t have two languages [ie, have a non-English-speaking background]. So there is a definite need [to provide support]. Even though some of them have reasonable oral language, sometimes you realise that they haven’t understood what you’ve said, and you have to re-phrase. Sometimes behavioural problems develop because they are not really understanding. It’s not really that they are being naughty. When you basically get down to it, it is because they haven’t understood what you required of them.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“[More support for teachers with NESB students is needed], because they’ve got so many of them, and a lot of them [NESB students] come in at the same level and because of age, they’re in the same class. So in some classes you’ve got three, four, five, even six, NESB students. That’s quite a drain on the classroom teacher, and probably, if I had more time I could take them out [of the classroom] and work with them as a small group for short periods of time, and give them what they specifically need, and put them back in their classroom. I’m sure that would help.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“We would like to have more bilingual teachers actually working alongside classroom teachers.” [ESOL coordinator/Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

In respect of in-class support, however, some participants introduced a note of caution. It was felt — see, for example, the third point in Exhibit 14 on page 191 of this report — that there can be a danger of teachers becoming over-reliant upon assistance from teacher aides and volunteer helpers. It was suggested, therefore, that, after taking into account factors such as class size, support for teachers should be carefully balanced by ensuring that teachers are provided with relevant and sufficient ongoing training opportunities to ensure that they continue to have the skills and knowledge to cope well with the students they have in their class.

**Suitable and Sufficient Resource Materials**

As shown in the previous two chapters on the programmes that schools provided for their NESB students, access to as many suitable — in terms of the interest, relevance, and cultural appropriateness of content, as well as difficulty level — resource materials as possible for
use with NESB students was considered fundamental. However, many participants in the study expressed the belief that there were not nearly enough suitable resource materials (readily) available.

“One of the biggest problems is getting appropriate resources in different languages at the various levels to support children and the [ESOL] coordinator often has to do a lot of it on her own or through enquiry and support from the adviser from Teacher Support Services.” [Principal, primary school.]

“The NESB child needs to see material in their own language and parents need to have access to it so they can be going over that at home with their children. And there are not enough of those [sorts of resources], nowhere near enough.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

“The material resources — there certainly aren’t enough of those. [The need for materials] is being addressed within the Pacific Island areas but we need to be looking at all of our NESB students within the whole of New Zealand and developing material resources for those children and their parents as well.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

“There really just aren’t enough resource materials [available for NESB students]. There are reading books that are written in various languages, which are good, but it would be really good to have more hands-on resource materials — booklet style, ready made up, that you could buy, that the child can use for reading, for language, that they can write in. I think that would be really good. Because it just takes a huge amount of time to prepare all these things. I know that each child is individual but it would be really good to have some resources readymade that you could just pick up and use with the child. And they wouldn’t be difficult to make [produce] I’m sure.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“The BSM maths resource was really good for NESB children because it had a lot of activities which focused a lot on everyday items such as animals and cars and household utensils and toys. But for new maths we don’t get that, and so we’re on our own again [as far as suitable materials for NESB students’ maths in the junior school].” [AP/classroom teacher, primary school.]

“We can always do with more resources. Books with picture matching with words type activities. More appropriate material that depicts things that the children have in their own homes but also introducing things that they find in New Zealand homes such as refrigerators. Some children may not have seen a ‘fridge before. Books with simple sentence structures. A lot of the readers we get at the moment have more complex sentence structures — they are still simple but they are [too] complex in terms of an [NESB] child learning English.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]
A major consequence of the perceived lack of resource materials available was that teachers had to make their own.

“Teachers are constantly having to make resources, and they always will do. And when you’re spending hours at home at night-time making one ‘Big Book’ — that can take you two or three nights or whatever — it becomes very difficult to keep up that impetus. You can’t keep operating like that, because you’ve got to run a classroom as well as constantly making resources.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

Making their own resources was clearly an extremely time-consuming and demanding business, with teachers reporting a great need for assistance in this area. For example:

“Having someone making resources for you would be wonderful. We have learnt some great strategies throughout the year [from the contract for assisting NESB students] on things you could do with [NESB] children [and] if you had somebody making up resources for you in line with the topic you were studying that you could use with those children to help build up their vocabulary, that would be great.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“I find it frustrating that we don’t have [more resources readily available, for example], some sort of text book, a guide that you could work with that’s aimed at the whole language structure — I’m just trying to think how to put it. I mean, I’ve got a neat book, which presumably [is available] all over the place, in Cantonese [which has] pictures of the house and [household] articles and things. It [is written in the] mother language, and it has blanks for the second language [to be written in]. It works really well. But I wish there could be [more things like that] that I could just grab, so I’m not running all over the place trying to make equipment [and so on] because I haven’t got the time.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]

One school, however, had a different method for helping overcome the constant problem of making time to prepare resource materials:

“[We used some of our discretionary resourcing to pay for teacher release time]. We released all the staff [who were on the contract for assisting NESB students] for two days, in the second half of this year. One of those days was for resource making, because it is tremendously time-consuming and it is not really something you can educate a teacher aide to do or, [rather], it is false economy of time [because] by the time you’ve told them how to do it, and trained them up to do it, you may as well have done it yourself. So we got the staff together to do that, and employed relievers for the day.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

Although it was evident that a perception of there being a serious lack of suitable resource materials for use with NESB students is prevalent, and, undoubtedly, to a large extent true,
sometimes, rather than there being a lack of resources as such — (“Compared to people, there are plenty of books, paper resources. What I need is more hours and more time to do things in.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]) — it may be more a case of lack of knowledge about where to access these resources. The reason for this possible lack of knowledge or awareness may be two-fold: firstly, that very busy teachers may not have the time or energy to effectively locate the resources they need, and, secondly, that those who produce the resources may not, for various reasons, be advertising the availability of such resources as effectively as possible. This is perhaps an issue which has relevance to teacher training — that is, that there may be a need to provide teachers with specific training or information on how best to access and use resources:

“We need advice on what resources are available and how to use them effectively — what resources would be useful to these children.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

It may also be that schools need to consider the question of whether the systems they have in place for teachers borrowing resource materials for use with NESB students, and how and where these materials are stored within the school, are the most effective for ensuring that teachers have best possible access to the materials that they require.

“Something else that we haven’t really got working well, is a system of borrowing [resources]. It sounds awfully simple but when you have got a pack with half a dozen little packs inside, with lots of little words and phrases and things like that, [a system for] ensuring that they are going to go out and come back complete, still needs to be refined.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

The information presented in this section also suggests a need for more effective consultation and liaison between schools and those who produce resource materials for use with NESB students. (Chapter 13 provides a list of organisations which produce materials.) Also, as previously indicated in this report (see, for example, discussion earlier in this chapter relating to participation in professional development contracts for assisting NESB students), there is an identified need for schools to share resources, or ideas for resources, with one another.

Parental Involvement

Schools in the study mostly found parental help very valuable; but most participating schools also acknowledged that obtaining parental help, especially on a consistent basis, can be very difficult. Despite the difficulties, however, many participants felt that when schools are able to devote time and effort to involving parents and getting them on side this can have very positive outcomes for the school generally, for the teachers, for [NESB] students, and for the parents themselves. (See the previous two chapters and also the next section within the present chapter for further comment on this topic.)
“We have parents who help with the translating. We have a few parents who come up and work in small group situations, just to withdraw children occasionally from some classes. We have got [one parent] who is a paid helper but we’ve tried to get parents to help on a cultural level and it really hasn’t been successful. They say we’ve got a lot of parents who are willing to help and that a lot of the Asian parents have got nothing to do — the mothers, because the father is back in Hong Kong or wherever. I don’t know whether it is because of shyness or whatever, but we don’t get an enormous amount of support. We have got two or three [parents] at the moment who are helping us put together a few cultural activities. But when you think of the number of children in the school, it is quite a disappointing response. I think maybe they need their confidence boosted. We tried a group where we had meetings with them and talked, but that fell off a wee bit too. Again, that is something we have definitely got on for 1996, to try and improve parent liaison. We’ve got a few parents that come in to help with Reading Recovery, which is quite apart from ESOL. And they’ll come on camps and they’ll support any concerts or any activities that are on at school, they always come to those. But as far as anything very, very specific, it seems to be hard to get them involved. So I think that is what we are learning, we have to say, ‘Would you do a, b, c, and d?’ And then I think maybe we would get a better response. But if we leave things too general I think they find it too threatening.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“It is very difficult bringing some of the parents in [to help or get involved]. Sometimes with the children whose needs are the greatest, the parents are the least interested. Other parents are more than helpful or offer all sorts of help. A lot of the children that I see take books home to read [and] often their parents will read through the books with the children and do a lot of home help. Other children, I don’t send books home [with them] at all because I know that the parents couldn’t care less and the children will lose them. So what I might do instead is that we will publish a story on the computer and that story may go home. But some parents are excellent and some parents are not.” [ESOL coordinator/special needs teacher, primary school.]

“The liaison with home still needs some work. Many of us are just not going in the same direction. And I think we’ve got to fix that up. But there is not much wrong with what we do [ie, programmes and support provided]. I mean, the old money thing comes back into it, we could do a lot more. But I think if we keep reviewing what we are doing, looking at the individual needs of our kids, we’ll be right.” [Principal, primary school.]

Providing Language and Support Programmes for NESB Parents / Families

Schools providing language and support programmes for the parents and families of NESB students and/or improving liaison between home and school (eg, teachers and parents having more opportunities to talk) was said by participants in the study to be of importance for two main reasons. The first reason was to improve the quality of life for parents/families by
Exhibit 15: A Course Outline for an English Course for NESB Adults Run at a Participating Secondary School

| English Conversation Course for Adults

Course Description
This is a part-time course for new settlers wishing to develop and improve their communication skills.

Entry Requirements
Entry is open to any adult from a non-English-speaking background (NESB).

Course Duration
Normal school year. Course begins 12 February 1996.

Hours: 10.00 am-12.30 pm
or
1.00 pm-3.30 pm

(Times depend on language level.)

Venue
ESOL Department [at the school].

Course Outline
The course aims to develop and extend students’ communication skills which will enable them to participate confidently in day-to-day activities within the community.

To ensure students’ needs are met, the content will be discussed at the beginning of the course.

* The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the course outline document supplied by the school in question.
Exhibit 15: A Course Outline for an English Course for NESB Adults Run at a Participating Secondary School — continued

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Course Outline — continued
Topics covered will generally include:
- developing friendships
- developing confidence
- becoming a consumer
- reading newspapers and other material
- using the telephone
- understanding New Zealand history and culture
- learning about community services
- discussing accommodation
- using health services

How To Apply
Complete application on the back of this form and forward to [the school] office.

Fees
$50.00 per term (4 terms)
or
$200.00 full year
(A course subsidy from Income Support may be granted to students receiving a benefit.)

Fees are payable during the first week of the course. Interpreters can be arranged if required.
“We would like to do something in the parent education area and set up a parent support group.”

giving them, within a relaxed, social situation where they can meet with others in their community, some of the language and other skills to help them operate more effectively within New Zealand society. The second reason was to help parents communicate more with their children about school, and have more involvement in their children’s education, a potentially positive outcome for all parties. (The comments on the next page from a bilingual tutor reflecting on his involvement in language and support classes for NESB adults reinforce this view.) Exhibit 15 above provides a course outline for an English course run for NESB adults at a participating secondary school.

“We haven’t the [resourcing] to do it [but] I feel that somehow parents need to be given some support too but it’s very difficult trying to get parents involved in school, particularly [parents of] the NESB children and many of them I think are quite self-conscious, particularly ones who have had little education prior to coming to New Zealand.” [Principal, primary school.]

“There needs to be more community-based facilities for parents where they could go and it didn’t cost them $200 [to enrol in a polytechnic-run English language course]. In this area there is nothing, nothing.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“[More] home visiting by the schools would allow teachers to advise families of children’s progress, allow parents time to speak with them, and give [teachers the opportunity] to advise on how parents can help [their children] and the importance of working with them. This would be of particular benefit to NESB students.” [Team leader, Samoan bilingual unit, primary school.]

“We need [more] money for the language centre. We could use the centre in the afternoons, when it is not being used by the children, to run classes for the parents. The parents could then support their children and their children’s education would be enhanced.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“If we had more support [resources] we would like to do something in the parent education [area] and set up a parent support group where the parents feel supported, so that they feel they can come into the school, that the school is theirs.” [Principal, primary school.]

“If you help to attend to outside school needs as well, things that sort of fudge the issues and make them [NESB students and their families] feel uncomfortable living where they do and [uncomfortable] trying to access everything, [it can make a big difference to how they settle]. For example, knowing how to join a soccer team, or how to get free library books and return them without getting a fine. All these things that we are so used to. How to find food parcels if you need them, where is the local church, or whatever — all the signs are in English. So if you can [help] make their lives much more comfortable, then learning is easier for a start. And you can get the parents on your side too, if you are willing to help [them]. ... [But] there
“I joined the team about four or five months ago. I work [under] the Taskforce Green [scheme] and somebody approached me and asked me if I wanted to join the team [here]. And I said, ‘Yes, all right.’ I’m not trained for these kinds of things, I’m trained as an engineer! But I’ve been involved in the [Cambodian] community for quite a long time. My job [here] is probably just to help children — I mean, with their school work, [and I help them] with our language also. [I also help] with the parents. Here at school, once a week I come here to help with the adult literacy class. I’m just there to interpret and help them to learn. Some people, our own people, they are illiterate in our own language so it’s helping them to learn English and our language at the same time.

“Some of them are working part-time but once a week on Friday they are able to come here and learn some more English. One reason [for their coming to classes here] is just so they can communicate with other people, and another reason is so that in the future they can work full-time. They need the language to [do that]. It’s just another step.

“Probably most often I work at school but I also do some work with [the families’] social problems. [For example] I take people to hospital, take parents to speak to the teacher. Also we are running a road code class. People need to drive to be able to be independent, to go to work. So they need to learn [the road code]. And because they’re older they are a little bit — they find to retain memory really hard. And because of the trauma [they’ve suffered] and everything that happened in the past, directly and indirectly that causes them to forget things. But so far, they enjoy the team work. They are more cooperative, they are happier. They are more relaxed in a way than before. They find it [the unit] a common place to meet. They have literature class, they have lunch together, they meet all the people! At school there, you bring your children to learn things. And so they feel more relaxed [being able to come here]. Because we don’t have any [other] common place round here to meet at all. So there is only one place [to meet and that is the unit].

“When I first joined the [adult] literacy class [it suffered from] lack of attendance. Motivation was probably one of the obstacles, and there was no transport — they don’t [like to] take the bus sometimes, and just to get out of there [away from home] was really hard but now there’s a growing number attending and husbands want to come along also and bring the [little] children along. They [husbands] want to know what’s going on in here and they want to learn also. Before they would rather do something else at home [instead of come to class] but now they actually value this time. [For example], they used their spare time to go to the orchards to pick some fruit to earn a little bit more money but they found that [when it came to] Friday they would rather finish at 12 o’clock and come home and have a bit of lunch and come straight here [to the class] to learn English and just to meet all the people. Last week, for the first time I saw a woman — her father, she couldn’t write [to him] — but for the first time I saw she was making an effort to write things. It was amazing. Maybe it was because she was discouraged [before] in some way, a bit frightened to see people who can read and do all things. Just like, I suppose, if you are illiterate in computers and you walk into a room of people who know a lot about computers and talk the jargon [it is intimidating].”


5 The quoted passages are excerpts from an interview with a Cambodian bilingual tutor/community worker who was working part-time in a primary school which had set up a unit particularly for refugee and other NESB students and their families/communities.
We would like to have an intensive programme established for the [NESB] child and the family during those first six weeks of their arrival, as an induction into living in a New Zealand school. And there would be a huge intensive support programme put into place to help them, from the moment that they walk into the office. We can’t provide that right now. We want a package available so that the parents can take it home, with photographs, and in video and cassette form [too], so that children know exactly what life is like in a New Zealand school — what happens at lunchtime, what are the expected norms when you do bits and pieces in the school. We have actually got that in plan form now but we haven’t done it because we haven’t had time and we haven’t got the money to do it. [But if we could do it] we would do it in their own language — having it in about 19 languages would be useful in this school. If we had the resources to do that, we would do it now. We would have that ready for the start of next year. [Principal, primary school.]

Effective and Appropriate Assessment of NESB Students

“There are no common assessment methods or placement tests in New Zealand [for NESB students] so that what is labelled ‘minimal’ by one teacher may be seen as ‘adequate’ by another.”

Pat Syme (1995, p.4.)

Participants in the study stressed that collecting as much information as possible from the outset about each NESB student’s background, together with information about facility in English and knowledge and skills in other areas of learning, helps to get these students off to a good start in the school and in the classroom [so long as steps are taken to ensure that the data collection process does not cause undue stress for the students and their families]. Obtaining appropriate and sufficient information about a new student and ensuring that it is passed on to those who need to use it reduces the possibility of teachers feeling that they have had a student foisted onto them without the opportunity to prepare for them or to develop an appropriate initial programme of work for them.

This study did not yield a great deal of precise information on specific assessment approaches or techniques used by schools or whether the methods used for assessing NESB students represented the best [most valid] ways to obtain necessary information. Nor is it possible to
state conclusively whether or not schools were collecting all or most of the information that would best facilitate the teaching and learning of NESB students. However, the research literature reveals that the whole area of ‘assessment of NESB students’ is one that needs careful consideration if optimal programmes and support for NESB students are to be achieved. It is also an area where many teachers may have a particular need for ready access to backup and support, at least until they gain experience in suitable assessment procedures for NESB students.

It was evident that most assessment procedures used by schools in the study were teacher-developed. These were supplemented, where seen to be appropriate or necessary, by existing assessment tools developed for use with the general population. For example, in answer to the question ‘Apart from the initial assessment, what ongoing assessments are carried out on NESB students?’ one participant responded as follows:

“All, the classroom teacher giving them work. I mean, any piece of work that a child does you will give them some form of assessment, whether they are NESB or not. So in your marking book you would just have some sort of policy. I mean, each teacher varies in the way they assess their child. So it would be part of the classroom programme. We certainly don’t have a system whereby every six weeks there is a test in English or anything. Nothing of that nature. ... [Any assessment information gained is used] in planning — how you group them, what sort of activities you are going to do, whether you still need to use specific NESB material with them. For instance, we have just done ‘The Godwits’ and you may say, ‘Well, that child can’t cope with what the rest of the class is doing’, so I’ll go and get the ESOL work on ‘The Godwits’ which has very specific tasks in it and also needs peer help [which means] you have to use other kids in the class quite a bit for that.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

The following two participants responded in a similar vein.

“In terms of any form of assessment [of NESB students] outside of what we have normally in the classroom, no there isn’t. Apart from discussions, there isn’t anything actually written on paper. There would just be a lot of conferencing between teachers rather than an actual formal assessment. ... Our support staff [teacher aides] come to our team meetings, so we do a lot of conferencing. We have these every week. And these are aside from our own staff meetings as a school as a whole. [Also], when they are buddied up, we’ll ask the children how they are getting on with their buddy they are helping. So there is a buddy type of assessment. Basically, we use it [the information that we collect] to be able to change or sort of upgrade the programmes that we need for them. It also tells us whether they still need the support that they are getting one-to-one [or whether they are ready for us to] maybe bring them back into the group work-type situation that we have in the classroom.
So they might be ready to move up, move on, from where they are at. If they come at the beginning of the year then it is very unlikely, it usually takes a very long time for them to actually fit in with the rest of the reading groups in the classroom. Especially if they come in as an older child. If they come in as a younger child then they do pick up things fairly quickly and I just introduce them [to topics] together with all the other children. They are not that far behind them really. It is only when they are older [that it’s more difficult]. We’ve got a few that have come in at standard 4 and the problem is that they are only reading at a reading age of six or seven years. So it would take more than a whole year to get them to a level where they could come back and actually join the rest of the class.” [Team leader, Samoan bilingual unit, primary school.]

“As far as ongoing assessment of our NESB students go, the more formal assessments are basically the assessments we give all of our children. Once they have been here a little while and settled in and we have made our initial observations of them, then they would start to undergo the normal assessments, the running records, the language [tests], the BSM checkpoints [in the junior school maths programme]. Their writing skills would be assessed the same way as the other children are assessed. I don’t think there are any specific tests we do on any particular child, it’s part of the integrated testing programme that every child undergoes. [The classroom teacher carries out the testing] but sometimes if the teacher is really concerned about the needs of a particular child I will do a specific running record or one of (Marie Clay’s) Record of Oral Language (ROL) tests. I have done the ROL testing quite extensively in the past with certain groups but I have found that ROL testing is not particularly good for use with NESB [students]. It’s a test designed, I think, at assessing the oral language of a child who is a speaker of English anyway. I don’t think you get an accurate diagnosis of the [NESB] child’s oral language with the ROL test. I don’t think there are any formal tests [for NESB students] that we can say, ‘This is the test that we use for such and such a person’. What we do is we use various books and things that have got different activities to show whether a child can do sequencing, for instance, or whether a child has got basic sentence structure or various grammar skills that they need to have. So although there is not a particular test, by giving a child a range of different language activities you can then make an assessment based on how the child’s actually performed on those particular tests.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

Participants did, however, stress that many factors need to be taken into account in order to achieve valid assessment. For instance:

“Assessments are not always good at the beginning of the year, especially with new teachers who don’t know the students. These [assessments] are now being completed at the end of the year (mid November) which gives a more realistic assessment by the teacher who actually knows the children.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]
Another factor teachers mentioned was that students from other countries may have learned to read in a different way from that taught in New Zealand (e.g., they may have learned to read using a strongly phonetic-based approach) which can result in some students appearing to read in English at a high level, only for it to be discovered later that they are reading largely by rote and that their **comprehension** of what they are reading is at a much lower level than first thought.

“When you work really, really hard with these children over a short period, they can actually learn very quickly but they still don’t have a lot [of understanding] of the way we teach in New Zealand [which] is quite different from [the way they teach in] most of the countries we receive children from. I am talking about children who are older, like eight-, nine-, ten-years-old. It is like re-learning almost. They have got their own set rules and their own culture for behaving in a certain way, and within our school system [those rules, etc] are only going to carry them so far. Like reading, for instance, some children have been taught a lot of phonics — sound it out. Then the kid comes up with ‘father’: ‘Fat her’, Oh fat her, I went to the shop with my fat her’, and is quite happy with that because in their culture this is the way they learn to read. No understanding whatsoever but can read quite fluently for their age group. That person needs quite a lot of support in learning how to comprehend. And yet, on these [the Ministry categories of English competence] it would appear that they are actually doing quite well [and] they can come out at their age level on the Burt [Word Reading Test] or whatever reading test you use. But they have no comprehension: you ask them any kind of open-ended question, and they will come up with nothing.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

There was also seen to be a need for more teachers to have the training and the second language skills to be able to assess NESB students properly — and to avoid use of possibly inappropriate, but available, tests designed primarily for New Zealand [born] students who have English as their first language.

“We have had some children bilingually assessed [using outside help] this year. But what we want to do is get one or two staff trained to do bilingual assessment so that as soon as a new child arrives we can do a bilingual assessment on them. ... But mostly they have the same assessment as every other student in the school which is quite a lot of assessment, until [we] get the bilingual assessment up and running. ... Running records [and all the other informal techniques that are part of everyday teaching help] to some extent so the teacher has some indication of what they [the NESB students] know and what they need to know. But PAT tests are just the worst things in the world [especially] for NESB [students]. It is totally out of their range. It is all in the English language and they are just not that competent [in English]. They shouldn’t even be subjected to it. ... The bilingual assessment is very, very [comprehensive] and it tells you where they are at in their own language, even what letter sounds they know in English — everything. But you have to be trained properly and that is what we want to do.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]
Some pointed out that time factors made it difficult to carry out assessment of NESB students to the extent and degree that they would like or felt necessary.

“We have also got a test if, say, we are trying to get them from ‘Category 1’ to ‘Category 2’ that we can use — it is from [the Education Advisory Service]. But it is a very, very time-consuming test — it takes about half-an-hour to do. And we have to release a teacher to do it and do one child at a time. We did actually one year do that for all our [NESB] children but it is just not practical.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“Ideally, every single child who comes into the school should have the privilege of being assessed so that when we get them into our classroom we know what [the student can do] — letters of the alphabet, sounds, what they can write, what they can read, what they can speak. As a classroom teacher you just don’t get the time to do that. I feel that we do these children short and until there is more time and money given so that we can assess them, then really you just go by the seat of your pants. They are plonked in your classroom and you just have to again use a multitude of ways to kind of get an idea of what they know. It really isn’t good enough.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

Participants stressed the importance of careful assessment so as not to get the wrong impression about what a student can do — for example, some commented that it can be difficult to accurately categorise students who have considerable proficiency in their own language and in such subjects as mathematics and science yet do not perform as well as they could when put in ‘assessment situations’.

“I don’t [have a set of guidelines for assessment]. Perhaps I should. But what it is [ie, what it comes down to], is how is that student coping in the class when I’m teaching or when my colleagues are teaching? We often get a teacher saying, ‘Look, this student, they don’t understand a thing’. But I’ll say that I’m sure they do, because when they’re in my [ESOL] class, they’re performing quite well, but they get lost in the mainstream because, you know, there’s another conversation going on around them, the teacher’s speaking too quickly, there’s all those other things they have to cope with and so they look as if they’re closing right down again, and yet in my class the student is reasonably able and I’m sure they understand everything. So it [making an assessment of their performance and progress] is partly [based on] how they’re performing in my [ESOL] class and how they’re performing in [mainstream classes according to] what I’ve heard from other teachers.” [HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

“I would say that most of my [NESB] students in the sixth form would be effective orally but most of them would need subject-specific support. Sometimes it’s very difficult to tell if these ones are having difficulties with English because of their language difficulties, or whether they’re having difficulties because academically they’re not very able. And that takes a
While, I think, to come to the surface, because the [English] language deficiency will hide everything else.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

While teacher skills, experience, and judgement undoubtedly go a long way, in many cases, to producing effective, practical or ‘workable’, assessments of NESB students, it may be that the whole process needs to be looked at more carefully. For example, some of the teachers themselves commented that although some of the tests for the general population were not entirely suitable for their NESB students, they used them nevertheless, due to a lack of any alternative, more suitable assessment tool (or, sometimes, perhaps, due to a lack of awareness of alternatives and/or training or skills to use them). Also, as different teacher’s skills, experience, and judgement vary, and given the added complexity that inevitably occurs when an English-speaking teacher must communicate with a non-English-speaking background student, this suggests a need for the development of assessment procedures or guidelines which are not simply reliant upon individual teacher expertise in particular schools and which are not unduly limited by language barriers.

“There is a need for nationally-based units and assessment [in the ESOL area] — a lot of these kids are quite mobile and they go from school to school and every school is doing their own thing. So more coordination and a little more guidance [would be desirable] … It needs someone in overall charge, but [who] works closely with schools — I mean, it’s no use imposing something on schools unless they have got some sort of input. I think that ESOL has to recognised as being like a subject in its own right. That it’s not part of English, that these kids are doing their own subject and that needs to be recognised as such. In a lot of schools, ESOL is just an extra that is tagged onto things, and that’s not right.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

Evaluation of Programmes

When asked to comment about the ways in which they evaluated their programmes for NESB students, it was evident that although schools evaluated constantly, their methods for doing so, like those for NESB student assessment, were largely informal rather than formal in nature. Some schools also indicated that they had had to develop approaches to ‘seeing what worked’ largely by trial and error, which reflected the ad hoc history of the development of programmes and support for NESB students in some schools, as mentioned in various sections of the report.

“At first, it [programme monitoring or evaluation] was very laissez-faire, but we’ve slowly got evaluation sheets and we’re trying to follow things through. But at first it was very, very informal because there was nobody backing things up, nor did we have any special education person [ESOL coordinator] here with whom I could confer.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]
“There’s not much standardisation of anything [in relation to working with NESB students] so it’s quite bad. You have to find out what evaluation system works for you. There wasn’t anything here [when I came to this school], it was so unorganised. There needs to be more training provided.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

However, despite the often informal methods of evaluation used — for example, discussion or ‘conferencing’ among staff — all schools in the study stressed the need for constantly reviewing the programmes they were offering to check that they were suiting student needs. The outcomes of the review procedures were used as the basis of decisions for altering or refining programmes. For example:

“[In terms of programmes or support being monitored or evaluated], our own staff are evaluated all the time. But I also have [our ESOL coordinator] in to work with some of my students and we would get together every so often — say at the end of every six weeks — to discuss how the child has gone: ‘Do you need to continue to work with that particular child or group or is there somebody else with a greater need at the moment?’ And if you are changing the group what specific things do we as classroom teachers want to focus on?’ So there is quite a bit of discussion that goes on. We [classroom teachers] don’t really get a chance to come down and see what is happening when she [the ESOL coordinator] withdraws [students] but if she comes to the classroom for maths, [say], we discuss how particular children have gone during that session. For each maths unit I would target specific [NESB] children and say [to the ESOL coordinator], ‘These are the children I want you to focus on this time and these are the things that we are covering’, and so we can look at the end of each session to see whether this child has got it [learned the concepts] or that one hasn’t. Then we can just [target] that particular child next time [on a one-to-one basis]. And then for children who actually go to her [for out-of-class support time], we discuss what specifics I want her to work on with them and then later we talk about how they actually met the [objectives set]. We are constantly evaluating every day of the week, you have to with these children. What doesn’t work you wouldn’t try again, [and] what works one day doesn’t [necessarily] work the next.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“There is always informal evaluation going on. And children do lots of their own self-evaluation too and that is often the most effective. Because what we [as teachers] set out to achieve may not [always coincide with what] the children have [in mind] but then they will feedback and say, ‘Great, I’ve learnt such and such’. They [feedback like that] all the time. That is the essence of teaching, continually evaluating. It might be just, ‘How did you go today?’ ‘What have you learnt today?’ Incidental evaluation, but occurring all the time. You know, sharing. And we have got many ways in our classrooms that we evaluate. It could be mind-mapping, it could be writing up on charts what we have learnt, going back sharing with another person. There are many techniques, it doesn’t have to be very formalised.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]
“Anything that doesn’t work well we change pretty quickly. One thing that we tried was a two-year School Certificate course and the idea was that the students sat School Certificate at the end of the two years but that was an absolute failure and I was very sad because I put a lot of time and effort into it and I was sure kids would do better than they did but it was the exam that did it. They knew the material very well but they just froze in the end. So we dumped that after the first two years.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“There are lots of things that could always be improved on — we’d be poor if we weren’t reviewing and making sure. And we’ve done a lot of reviewing this year, because we used to take the students out of English, but now we’ve decided that they can go into English classes in forms three and four, and that we will give them extra support in ESOL classes.” [ESOL coordinator/HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

Being Able to Work with Students for a Longer Period

All participants in the study were very definite about the need for more extensive programmes and support for NESB students and their families. In particular, they were concerned about students who, while they had developed some proficiency in English, were not yet at a stage where they could fully cope in the classroom, but, because of resourcing issues, they often had to be ‘dropped’ from the school’s programme of support for NESB students to make way for other students coming into the school. In the review of literature (Chapter 2), Kaplan [1980] and Waite [1992a] stressed how lengthy a process second language acquisition can be and stated that students often do not receive the necessary time and input over a sufficiently long period to achieve adequate mastery of English beyond that of simply ‘conversational English’. [Watt et al, 1996, stated that it can take second language learners five to seven years to master complex, academic [subject-specific] language.]

“I would like to see a more extensive language programme being made available through adequate staffing and resourcing for schools to help these children.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Our programmes, our set-up with staff and so on, I think probably provide as much as any school in the country for overseas students but I think they are stretched with what they are trying to do. So we need more even than we’re putting into the ESOL Department at the moment. But I also think, on top of that, we need support, at least for a limited amount of time, for every NESB student when they go into the mainstream. And that’s not what we’re providing a lot of. I mean, we’ve got some support, but not a lot. At the beginning of the year, we’ll bring in the equivalent of teacher aides to support students when they’re first mainstreamed. We tend to use university students who are fairly fluent in whatever the family’s language is, plus English, and that’s a luxury you have living in a place like Christchurch — people like that are available. And the students, once they’re mainstreamed,
have timetabled opportunities to go back to the ESOL Department to get help with the language of the subject that they’re dealing with. But I still think we need more. I actually think we put the [NESB] students out into the classroom too soon. We would like them to be able to be in the [ESOL programme] longer but because we keep getting new students right throughout the year, we just have to roll them on — up to a point. I mean, not everybody’s put into a class. Some students who are considered not ready are kept back [in the ESOL programme]. And there are a number of those young people. But I think sometimes we are putting them out a bit early.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“There was, for example, no continuing support for a nine-year-old child, who had [very little] English, once the [funding for the ESOL] programme finished — he didn’t fit into the special needs category, didn’t need Reading Recovery. He was left in limbo. We need a person [specifically] for NESB children to go around schools and give support to such children, if there is no-one available in the school to meet their needs.” [ESOL teacher, primary school.]

“Compared to the past, the number of new ones [NESB students] entering the school at the junior level is increasing all the time. What I have been doing with the new ones is that the assistant principal has been giving me a lot each term or half-term and saying, ‘These children are the number one priority at the moment’, so I take them for a term and then perhaps they have to finish and another lot start the following term and that is no good because you are just making progress and [then] they can’t have any more time because there are too many other ones starting who need it so those have to stop and a new lot start. Whereas if they were to have an ongoing time right the way through that would make a big difference. For some, they have a little break for awhile and then perhaps start with me [again] in the third term.” [Teacher aide, ESOL, primary school.]

“It’s not just new immigrants [who need additional programmes and support]. Those [who have been] up to two or three [or more] years in the country still benefit from extra intensive teaching. And within that time [in a one-to-one or small group session] you can do so much more oral language work which is where it is needed. Getting really effective communication going is much better in a small group situation, which is where they tend to miss out in a classroom situation. It is very easy for them to sit back and not actually say anything.” [ESOL coordinator/Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“They [NESB students] are excellent kids. I mean they are delightful and they are anxious to learn. And it seems awfully hard on them sometimes that they do just sort of sit and wither a wee bit but I guess they eventually get there. There seems to be a cut-off point, a kid will get to this Step [Category] 4 or even [Category] 5 where they are very, very independent in English and they are coping really well, but there are still real major flaws in terms of using good grammar, their oral language, their tensing and things like that. And I think that is possibly a gap [in the programmes that are provided] — we also need material for perfecting and refining their English.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]
“What I do have problems with is that we don’t get funding in Category 4 and yet those kids need an awful lot of help. [At this school] they are given [this help] because of ‘fiddling funds’ and we are very grateful that [our principal] sees this as a priority. But I feel very sorry for schools that don’t have that. OK, so they [Category 4 students] pass the criteria for not needing to be in a special ESOL programme but put them into a mainstream programme and they fail. (We do give them support [here though] by giving them additional English support.) “ [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

There were participants, too, who felt that NESB students in the upper secondary school also needed continuing input to improve their opportunities for academic success beyond secondary school.

“There is a gap [in programmes and support for NESB students] at the top. There is a Vietnamese boy in my sixth form class who has also come through the ESOL programme. He has moved very heavily into maths, science, tech drawing, graphics, those types of areas. I also had his brother last year in my form class. Their language skills are not as fully developed [as they should be], and it is partly because they go into these [types of] courses. Then they go on to university, and they have this lack of language. And it hampers them when they come to do assignments. And because they are doing so well in their other subjects they don’t really acknowledge that there is a problem. I used to say to the older brother, ‘You have to spend your holidays reading English’, but he claimed he didn’t have the time. [We ran an] English-for-specific-purposes class [which] was an attempt to address this area of need, but it didn’t work. The class clashed with the computer studies course and those students who would have benefited preferred the computer course.” [Class teacher, secondary school.]

“One of the things I think we have to do is to become much more focused on the educational needs of those NESB students who are very ambitious in terms of educational experiences outside of secondary school. In terms of their writing and reading levels. There is always a reaction to that, that the language is really focused and technical. But I think that if the students have an expectation and they have that sort of aspiration and motivation, then we’ve got to deliver the wares that will allow them to access those sorts of opportunities. So that is something that we really have to sharpen up on.” [Principal, secondary school.]

Being Able to Work with Students More Intensively

As well as being able to provide programmes and support for NESB students over a longer period, (or, in other words, to continue working with students beyond the stage for which they are eligible for formal resourcing), participants also often stressed the need for more opportunity — either in a ‘withdrawal’ situation and/or within the regular classroom — to provide one-to-one and small group work for NESB students to ensure their best progress.
“Yes, [we] definitely [need to provide more support for NESB students]. It is very difficult for them to fit into the mainstream group without having additional support. It’s a much longer road for them without that extra support. [What is needed is] small group work — small groups of between five and eight children, eight being the maximum, so you’ve got maximum participation [from each student] — [where the students are] withdrawn from the classroom. Intensives, preferably with a bilingual teacher.” [ESOL teacher/class teacher, intermediate school.]

“I still think one of the huge things that is really needed is that one-to-one [interaction with NESB students]. And that is one thing I know other staff will say when you talk to them. It is that tremendous time factor that you need to spend with these kids, sitting alongside them. One of the strategies we learnt on the [professional development] contract [for assisting NESB students] was designed to cope with that [ie, not being able to have as much one-to-one interaction as desirable]. But they are strategies for coping — that’s exactly what they are for, acknowledging that the one-to-one is [usually] not possible. [But] if we could get support [resourcing] for teacher aides to actually be in the classroom alongside these kids, working with them within the classroom programme, [it would be excellent]. It would be one-to-one in the classroom, rather than withdrawal. [This would provide] support for the teacher, and support for the kid in the everyday learning situation that they are in. I don’t think pulling them out [of the classroom] any more than we do already is very healthy for the kids. And the staff agree with that, they say they should be in the classroom, but that there is a need for more support in the classroom [in order for that to happen].” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“If there was more resourcing in this school, for example, we would feel that we could do a lot more with the NESB children who are not [so] at risk, so the children who have developed a reasonable [level of] language could be sustained within the classroom, rather than just the children who have very significant needs. I’m thinking of two children in particular who are in standard 3, who don’t get seen, because there isn’t the resource for that, there isn’t enough money. Now both of these children, they’re OK in the classroom. They can understand instructions, they’ve got reasonably good language, but there are big gaps in their learning, and that’s showing now, particularly in their reading and their understanding of their reading. So it would be good to feel that those children could be brought in and have one-to-one work. But it’s just not possible, so the most we can do with those children is to help the teacher to help them. But teachers are just so under stress, that it’s difficult for them to do that. So, like everything, it’s coming down to money, isn’t it, more money! It would just mean, in this instance, that it would take the pressure off us, the feeling that, ‘No, we can’t take this child because we’ve got to prioritise, and we’ve got to take the children who are most at risk.’ So the children who might succeed with a little bit of support don’t get it, because they’re not eligible. … There are many, many Samoan children here who are just
left, because they don’t have such glaring needs. And it’s a pity, because they would do very well, I think, [with some additional assistance].” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“We would like extra staffing just to be able to provide for smaller groups of children to have intensive English education or English teaching within the school timetable. At the moment, there are several of our staff doing that after school of their own accord. They get paid ($10 per hour) for doing the extra English lessons. And the students who go to those classes very definitely make more rapid progress because they’re working in a smaller group. They have more intensive teaching and they really make good progress. We’d actually like to see that happening within school time, for all NESB students, so they didn’t have to pay for it. For after-school lessons with private tutors out in the community [parents] pay up to $30 an hour. The thing that really concerns us is that often the tutors are not trained teachers or are other immigrants who have a degree of language competency but really are not good models for hearing spoken English.” [ESOL coordinator/Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“I would like to see a more extensive language programme being made available to help these children by providing adequate staffing and resourcing to schools. [The NESB] children are all varied and all have different needs. No doubt there are some children who may be slower learners than others and there are some children who are very able learners and they need to be boosted along too. So among NESB students we need to cater for the slower learners and the able learners just as we do for [other] children in the class.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“[More] money would make a difference, more people who are professional in their ability to teach and do what they do. Smaller classes. I don’t think we should have permanent classes for NESB kids, I don’t think we should stick them in a room and leave them there by themselves all the time. But I think if you can get them off the ground, that’s the whole purpose [of out-of-class support time]. You withdraw them first but as fast as you can you get them back in the classroom.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Out in the playground five or six years ago [NESB] children were picking up English very, very quickly because it was a do or die situation, as there were very few children they could communicate with. But now we have got such a large Asian population, you actually find they are not picking up colloquial English in the way that they used to because they just talk whatever their first language is in the playground. I think it would really benefit the kids if they could have daily access to a teacher who is just going to work with them in a small group situation. It would be absolutely superb and we just can’t do that. We just haven’t got the funding or the teachers. [But if we did], those kids could be withdrawn for, say, at least an hour a day. Small group situations I think would be absolutely ideal. And then they’d go back to their classroom so they were mixing in with the class and getting as many and as
varied amounts of learning as they could. So they’d be doing oral learning and written learning, and getting a variety of [other] skills.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“NESB students entering college with limited formal education — those coming from Somalia, for example — require an intensive language programme to cater for their needs linguistically and emotionally. Now I do that [as much as I can]. But we need a proper programme that is going to carry them through. The type of programme will depend on individual or group needs. It could [perhaps] be a morning programme with integration into chosen subject areas such as PE, art, woodwork, music. [But there is] inadequate staffing to cover in-class support for [such a] programme. To allow the [ESOL] Department to continue its excellent programmes — the adult classes, in-class support, and [attending to] new arrivals — and to enhance areas of weakness, another full-time, qualified staff member, and some clerical assistance, is required, as staffing in this area has operated on too many staff having too few hours over the years.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

Concluding Comments

Schools in the study had clearly made a great deal of progress since the arrival of their first NESB student in developing and implementing programmes and support for NESB students. However, participants from all schools in the study believed that more (some saying a great deal more) needed to be done to improve the circumstances which contribute to effective learning for NESB students. The suggestions that participants made for improving learning conditions were wide-ranging and complex. The more major issues that they felt needed to be addressed related to: the nature and extent of appropriate training opportunities for those who work with NESB students; whether those who teach NESB students feel positively about doing so; the question of sufficient support for teachers; the availability of suitable and sufficient resource materials; how to involve [more] NESB parents/caregivers in the school and in their children’s education; the provision of language and support programmes for parents/families; effective and appropriate assessment of NESB students; programme evaluation; the need to provide support for NESB students as long as it is needed; and, finally, the need to provide more support for NESB students on a one-to-one or small group basis.
CHAPTER 8: IMPROVING THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO NESB STUDENTS' LEARNING