Interrupted schooling and the acquisition of literacy: Experiences of Sudanese refugees in Victorian secondary schools

■

Jill Brown, Jenny Miller and Jane Mitchell

MONASH UNIVERSITY, VICTORIA

This paper reports data from a study of the schooling experiences of Sudanese students in the mainstream in two Victorian secondary schools. The eight students all had significant gaps in their prior schooling. We look at the implications for literacy of interrupted education, the demands of subject specific language for such students, as well as related cultural and social language issues. The students' perspectives throw light on key issues for schools with these students, and also on the steps needed to support them.

Introduction

Sudanese refugees currently constitute the largest single group of arrivals to Australia under the Humanitarian Immigration Program. Many have been in camps, experienced trauma, lost members of their families, had minimal schooling and arrive with little or no literacy. Although many aspire to attend and to complete secondary school, they constitute an extremely high risk group, which faces great challenges in terms of adaptation to the school system, acculturation, social adaptation, English language learning, and eventual academic success. Even where literacy levels are good, and years of schooling are commensurate with chronological age, many immigrant and refugee students find the mainstream curriculum and its language demands very difficult.

What is happening to Sudanese students placed into the mainstream after one year or less in a language centre? This paper will report on some findings from a small qualitative research project involving case studies of Sudanese students and their teachers in Victorian schools. The study focuses on the links between these students' literacy development and their social backgrounds and practices. Using data from focus groups and interviews, this paper examines, in particular, the perspectives of the students, their views of the kinds of problems they have in adapting to secondary school, their perceptions of the language support

they receive, and their suggestions for ways in which their needs could be met.

Background

On-going civil wars in countries in Northern Africa over the past twenty years have resulted in major humanitarian crises. With complex roots in religious differences, tribal alliances and the remnants of colonialism, the wars have left thousands homeless and in need of refuge from the civil violence. As part of the humanitarian response to this crisis, Australia has been among a number of countries that have begun to accept refugees from this part of Africa. In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, since 2001 Australia has granted a total of 16,759 Humanitarian visas to persons born in Africa (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA, 2004). Almost 11,000 of these refugees have come from the Sudan and it is assumed that this number will continue to rise given the on-going conflict in the country. The majority of Sudanese arriving in Australia are from South Sudan. The south of Sudan is predominantly a tribal African region surviving on subsistence farming with many South Sudanese being Christians, whereas the north is primarily Muslim and Arabic speaking with historic cultural ties to the North African Islamic heritage. Among this group of refugees there is considerable linguistic and cultural diversity based on geography and tribal association. Although Arabic is the official language of Sudan and the medium of instruction in schools, it is only in the North that Arabic is spoken as a first language. Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Zande and Bari are the main languages of Southern Sudan. The diversity of languages signals the diversity of cultural groups with each language spoken by a distinct ethnic group (Rutter, 2001, p. 275).

One experience that is common to many of the young Sudanese refugees is that they have severely interrupted or no substantive schooling. As a result many of the refugees have little or no literacy in either a first or second language prior to arrival. Likewise they may have little knowledge of the routines of school. This poses a new and complex set of issues for those working in schools in which there is a significant Sudanese population. In Australia, practitioners, policy makers and researchers are only beginning to understand and respond to some of these issues. International research does however recognise the compounded difficulties of such children in achieving academic success (Collier, 1995; Rutter & Jones, 1998; Fantino & Colak, 2001; Nsubuga-Kyobe & Dimock, 2002). These difficulties include the trauma and dislocation associated with fleeing war and living in refugee camps, problems in learning English and other mainstream subjects, adjustment to a new educational system and social conditions, physical disability and/or malnutrition and the loss of family and familiar culture. In classrooms,

teachers find that some of these students are withdrawn, aggressive, unable to concentrate, anxious or hyperactive (Coelho, 1998). Other studies indicate that experience of war creates additional specific needs, which should be identified (Pryor, 2001), and that mental health needs often remain unmet for refugee children (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999; Fazel & Stein, 2003). Over two million Sudanese, for example, have died in ongoing war and terror, the majority being men. In the study described below, only two of eight students lived with both parents.

There is little Australian literature that documents the specific issues that these students from Sudan face in their schooling and/or the nature and efficacy of the responses being developed in school. Such research is urgently needed to both understand the educational issues, and more importantly to develop programs, policy, strategies and resources that meet the humanitarian and educational needs of this group of students.

Current educational provision

Provision for refugee students with interrupted schooling, and indeed all ESL students, varies widely from state to state in Australia. In 2005 in Victoria, 46,052 students were eligible for ESL funding, which means they do not use English at home and have been in the country for less than seven years. Of these, 3,762 were newly arrived, including a substantial increase in numbers of students with 'little, no or severely interrupted schooling' (Department of Education and Training Victoria, 2005, p .18). The top five language groups amongst the new arrivals were 'Other African' (460 students), Arabic (412), Mandarin (333), Tagalog (193) and Farsi/Persian/Dari (156). The largest group of new arrivals (19% or 714 students), were born in Sudan (p. 11). A conservative estimate would suggest that perhaps 900 of the new arrivals overall, or 25%, have had limited prior schooling. However, given the difficulty of determining what 'interrupted schooling' means, the number of students in this category may much higher, and there are no statistics available for the numbers of students with severely interrupted schooling amongst the full group of 46,052 ESL students who receive support. This remains a problematic gap in educational reporting, even though defining 'prior schooling' is difficult. One study found that for some students, previous education amounted to 'non-continuous instruction in refugee camps consisting of a few hours a week' (West Coast AMES, 2001, p. 4).

The Victorian State Department of Education and Training provides for 6–12 months of targeted English language support prior to mainstream school enrolment, a period established over many years and designed to cater for students with significant prior schooling. This length of time is not sufficient for students with disrupted schooling to gain adequate language or academic skills (Collier, 1995). One study has strongly advocated extending the funding and period of time for such students, particularly if they have lost a parent, or been in refugee camps

(Nsubuga-Kyobe and Dimock, 2002). In order to address the increasing numbers of students with interrupted schooling and little or no literacy, in 2004 the Victorian Education Department provided additional funds to some schools for literacy support, appointed coordinators to facilitate the move from language centres to the mainstream, developed guidelines for bridging programs for older students, and engaged in consultations with community groups (*ESL in Victorian Government Schools 2004*, Department of Education and Training Victoria, 2005).

Interrupted schooling and the acquisition of literacy

Refugee students with interrupted schooling face the daunting task of acquiring English in the mainstream, often after a brief intensive program. In a study of four school districts, based on data from 10,000 ESL students in Canada and the US, Hakuta, Butler and Witt (2000) found policy provision of one-year programs of sheltered English immersion were 'wildly unrealistic' (p. 13). Students must acquire social communication skills, and also academic writing and speaking skills, while attempting to catch up to native speaking peers who themselves are continuing to develop academic and language competence. The complexity of language acquisition itself can not be overemphasised. Hakuta, Butler and de Witt's study corroborates a body of research and evidence which estimates that in optimum circumstances, it takes three to five years to develop oral language proficiency and four to seven years to gain academic English proficiency. These times are much longer for disadvantaged children, those in poor schools, and those with interrupted schooling, with some studies suggesting it takes up to ten years for such students to acquire academic proficiency (see Garcia, 2000).

So what are students actually missing when their schooling is 'severely interrupted'? In addition to the cognitive development which takes place over many years at school, the language of school classrooms features a highly specific form of English, incorporating particular ways of being and behaving, a great deal of prior knowledge, along with cultural expectations and understandings. There are many and complex challenges confronting students arriving aged 15 plus with minimal or no schooling. In addition, apparent oral fluency achieved by many refugee students quite quickly can be highly misleading for teachers, who expect transfer to and similarly 'smooth' acquisition of academic skills (Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000). Since Cummins' work in the early 1980s on the contrasts between basic interpersonal language and academic language (see, for example, 1984), research has demonstrated the complexity and specificity of cognitive academic language use in schools. This is particularly true of the middle years, as the nature of classroom instructions and texts begin to change as literacy practices become increasingly specialised within the subject areas (Carrasquillo, Kucer & Abrams, 2004). Students with interrupted education lack the

Table 1. Student Participants (all born in Sudan).

Name M/F	Age	Date of enrolment	Prior schooling	On arrival intensive instruction	Languages spoken	Other
Sahal M	18	Mar 04	Sudan: 2 yrs Kenya: 6 yrs (interrupted)	Over age for language school; no intensive course	Dinka Swahili	Can read & write Swahili and Dinka; lives with older brother & younger sister.
Deng M	15	Feb 02	Sudan: 3 yrs Cairo: 2 yrs	6 months	Dinka Arabic	Lives with mother and father, & younger brothers & sisters
Wael M	17	Feb 04	6 yrs (interrupted)	9 months	Dinka, Arabic, English	Yr 10 Lives with mother and sibliings
Jackie F	20	Aug 02	6 yrs	1 yr	Tigrinya Amharic English	Yr 10 Lives alone
Sunday F	17	1/1/03	Kenya 3 yrs Taught others to speak English & Swahili	9 months	Dinka Swahili	Lives with mother, sister & her child. Has brothers in US.
Lual M	15	1999	Kenya 1-2 yrs Couldn't speak English on arrival	4-6 months	Dinka Arabic (minimal knowledge)	7 brothers & sisters, with mother. Lived in Ethiopia, then in refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya.
Gatkath M	17	24/9/03	Kenya as baby, then Uganda 6 yrs interrupted	6 months	Dinka, understands Arabic (can't speak), Swahili	Lives with mother and siblings
Jane F	19?	2002	Completed Yr 10? in Sudan, then Egypt for 3.5 yrs, no school	6 months	Arabic (literate) Learned basic English 4 yrs in Sudan	Lives with family (2 parents)

topic-specific vocabularies of academic subjects, understandings of register and genre, cultural background to scaffold their understanding and learning strategies to process content. Social understandings of how to 'be' in the classroom may be different (Anderson, 2004) or lacking. Often students do not have first language literacy to support the acquisition of a new language, or the concepts and the dispositions needed to succeed in mainstream classrooms (see Garcia, 2000). For many such students print-based materials themselves are part of the problem (West Coast AMES, 2001; Muir, 2004). The language and literacy demands of mainstream classes are further compounded by the high levels of anxiety which students with interrupted schooling experience. Students sometimes compare themselves to English-speaking peers and may avoid class and social interaction, which they fear will reveal their lack of competence (Carrasquillo, Kucer, & Abrams, 2004; Anderson, 2004).

The importance of cognitive development and literacy in the first language for second language acquisition has been clearly acknowledged for many years (Collier, 1989, 1995; Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002). As Davison (2001, p .34) writes,

> a recently arrived Somali pre-literate refugee cannot be treated the same way as a Hong Kong-born student who has studied EFL since primary school and has had successful and uninterrupted L1 literacy development and schooling in Hong Kong.

Acknowledging and responding with appropriate and adequate programs to students with very high needs and no first language literacy remains a great challenge for governments, education departments and schools.

The study

This qualitative study was designed to gain insights into the identity, language and literacy experiences of refugee students with interrupted schooling in the high school mainstream, along with the responses and needs of their teachers. Participants were from two government high schools in disadvantaged outer metropolitan areas of Melbourne, and included eight African refugee students, and eight of their teachers. Both schools were selected because they had large numbers of refugee students from Africa, particularly from Sudan, and through informal contacts, administrators in the schools had indicated an interest in participating in the project. Both students and teachers volunteered to be part of the study in response to an invitation from the researchers to the school. In this paper we report on the student interview data only, as the teacher interview data have been reported elsewhere (Miller, Mitchell & Brown, 2005). The table below provides a snapshot of the participants. Note that only two of these eight students live with two parents. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

All of the participants have experienced significantly disrupted education accompanied by a number of changes in the language of instruction. The prior schooling data gives an indicator of the nature of their previous schooling experiences, with no student having had more than six years, mostly in refugee camps. The age column shows that although students had been placed in Year 10, the majority were significantly older than their peers. In addition, students were not always certain of their date of birth or exact age. Only one student is literate in Arabic, her first language. Others have varying degrees of literacy in a range of different languages. Students have also spent varying periods of time in intensive on-arrival language programs. Although there is, in theory, provision for up to twelve months in a language school prior to enrolment in a mainstream school, only one participant has done so. Seven participants have had between four and nine months intensive instruction in English while one has been denied access to any preparatory program.

Four students in each school were interviewed individually about their backgrounds. Following this, an open-ended focus group interview was done with each of the two groups. These interviews were conducted in groups to offer the students some support, and to generate conversation and exchange of ideas. Students were asked to discuss the positive aspects of school, things they found difficult, what was currently done to help them and what they would like to be done. Some of the topics that developed in these semi-structured groups included talk on specific mainstream subjects, the importance of proficiency in English, future goals, the contrasts between writing and speaking, comparisons of the language school with high school, confidence versus 'struggling' in the mainstream, the amount of reading required in some subjects, concepts in science and maths, social life and work experience.

Both the individual and focus group interviews were audio taped and transcribed by the researchers. Individual students are not identified in the data excerpts due to the difficulty of discerning reliably the identity of individual speakers. To analyse the data we identified and coded key themes and issues, and mapped them across the data from teachers and students to find interrelated areas of interest (Miller & Glassner, 1997). In what follows we outline the main themes from the student interview data. Students across both schools made similar comments and we have not differentiated between schools in the analysis.

Analysis of the student data revealed a number of key themes, relating to language and literacy issues which will, for the purposes of discussion, be divided into academic and social language and literacy needs. It should be noted, however, that the line between the two is often unclear. Students confident in the use of social language are more likely to participate in academic language interactions while those lacking confidence in social language are likely to be reluctant to do so.

Academic language and literacy
Subject specific language
Problems with academic language and literacy loomed large for these students. Areas identified as particularly difficult were grammar, spelling and vocabulary, especially technical or specialised vocabulary in subject areas such as Science and Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE).

The content literacy and assumed prior cultural knowledge of subjects such as Social Studies has been identified in other studies (Carrasquilo, Kucer, & Abrams, 2004) as presenting a major barrier for students with interrupted education, and it is clear that this is so for the students in this study:

> Language like scientific terms this is really giving me a problem and I don't do well in science because I don't really understand and SOSE is another one because SOSE is always a matter of reading.

Even when students had some prior knowledge of the area, language difficulties presented a major barrier to success:

> When I was in my country – I studied in Kenya – science was easy for me … [but now] if the teacher give us a test I can do like 50% but not more because everything is English.

Past success seemed to emphasise what students saw to be their current failure. They were concerned that their ability to demonstrate knowledge of subject content was blocked by language barriers and they were seen to be less competent than they felt themselves to be:

> I like Biology and I was the best in my class in my home country but now here it is difficult for me. The language is difficult.

Limited schooling compounded language and literacy problems. As one student said, 'I didn't learn anything about Maths [before] and I hate it'.

Cultural knowledge
Content literacy is much more than the ability to use reading and writing to acquire subject knowledge. It involves a complex mix of 'cultural, civic, computer, media, scientific and technological literacies [and is] … embedded in cultural, historical and institutional contexts' (Carrasquilo et al., 2004, p.85). The assumed cultural knowledge central to understanding of much subject content was an issue for these students. They lacked the lived experiences necessary to understand Social Studies topics such as Gold Coast Tourism.

> We were learning about the Gold Coast last year – when the test come I didn't do well. I failed that time.

Approaches to teaching and learning

Teaching techniques common to the Australian classroom such as the use of videos and small group work also presented difficulties for these students. Students lacked the language skills necessary to combine watching a video with note-taking.

> If you watch a video and you have to write it down, it's hard … like if you miss the part, they can't rewind it.

In order to complete such a task successfully, students must be able to listen and understand, interpret visuals, identify and record key points while continuing to process incoming information. This is a task of overwhelming difficulty for students who lack fluency in general and subject specific language and who are also struggling with literacy.

Students were reluctant to participate in small group activities both because they were unfamiliar with this approach to learning and because they lacked friendship links with other group members:

> I don't like when the teacher told me to do it in group. I just go and sit, sit and watch at them. I don't like to do that because I don't know it [and] we don't know each other … I don't want to do it because I don't know them.

A feeling of connectedness, of being part of, and accepted by, other students provides a context within which students are willing to take risks with language. If this is missing, students are reluctant to participate in group activities. Group work may also be a new experience, even for those students with some prior learning. Previous schooling is likely to have been in large classes with little student-student interaction.

Use of textbooks

The attitude to textbooks, and in particular to dictionaries, provided a strong point of contrast between teacher and student perceptions. None of the students had textbooks for any of their subjects, teachers providing a range of worksheets and simplified print materials as an alternative to mainstream texts. For students the issue was clear. They made comments such as:

> It helps to have your own book.
> We don't really have a book and I think that is the problem.
> In the culture where I come from there was a book in class.

However, despite this desire for their own textbooks, several students were passionate in their rejection of dictionaries as the solution to their language problems:

> A dictionary will help you if you know the word. If you don't know the word, you might get a word that looks like it but it's not.
> There's no dictionary in our language. In Arabic there is, but not in our language and Arabic is different. In Dinka – there's no dictionary. You can ask the teacher but … you're like the last person who doesn't know.

It is worth noting that the teachers involved in this study gave instructions to use a dictionary as their most frequent response to students asking for explanation of vocabulary. What this issue raises is the need to explore and develop a range of pedagogical resources that might assist students in making meaning in classrooms.

Social language and literacy

Student responses to the question regarding positive aspects of school focussed largely on social aspects of the school experience. As one student commented:

> When we come to school we meet up with some friends … I like this school because my friends are at this school and my cousins and I have many friends.

Success with the social aspects of school was seen as key not only to fulfilling friendship needs but also as an important way of developing academic language and understanding.

> We build a good relationship like sharing ideas, debating on something. [This] will make us divulge some ideas so I think it is very good at putting us in a better position.

Playing sport was popular with the boys and was seen as a good way to met people, to establish new friendships but often their ability to participate is limited by the time taken over homework.

> I like basketball and soccer but now I almost quit because … we get homework. It took so long to do the homework … you have no time for fun and stuff. One day I got like five homeworks for each subject and some are hard. You don't have time to do sport.

A simple homework revision task that presents few difficulties for a local student may require many hours of work for these students. There are numerous studies that recognise the increased processing time for reading and writing tasks required by students who are working in a second language (see Westwood, 2001).

Anxiety and isolation

Many students felt alienated by the transition from on-arrival language centre where 'there everyone is like me' to mainstream school where the other students 'are always ahead of you'. The impact of this sense of isolation and inadequacy in comparison with other students on sense of self-worth and future success both educationally and socially is clear. Students indicated they did not want materials that identified them as different. Yet they are ashamed when they are unable to complete set tasks, or when they fail tests.

> It's really hard. Sometimes you feel like you don't want to come to class because everyone is ahead of you and you don't know anything. Sometimes

it feels like you hate yourself, like why am I not like them? Or why did I come here? They already know everything. Why did I come to this country? They know everything and I don't know nothing. You are thinking a lot of things and so you feel bad.

These feelings toward school and the wider community have potential consequences for students' connectedness to and participation in the school culture, as well as for opportunities post-school.

Plans for the future

Despite the many complex difficulties described above in regard to academic work, the students involved all have high aspirations for the future. Nurse, scientist and engineer are given as possible careers. Mariano Ngor, a social services officer working with Sudanese refugees in South Australia, suggests career choices such as these are often the result of limited understanding of Australian society:

Here you can be a plumber and have a better income that a young doctor. But if you are a tradesman in Sudan you are condemned to poverty and are an insignificant person in every aspect of life. It takes a long time before they understand that the people they see driving in the streets are not all lawyers and army commanders. (Roberts, 2005)

Whatever the reason, these hopes and dreams are mismatched with the students' current language and literacy abilities. The challenge confronting students and schools is a daunting one. The students offer a number of suggestions for ways in which their language and literacy needs may be met, ways that, in the main, require a shift in the way schools are currently funded:

• more teachers
• more help with English in mainstream subjects
• peer support with 'someone from your own culture'
• time to 'learn more before you come to high school'.

The schools involved in the study are trialling a number of different strategies to meet the needs of these students. There are homework clubs, an African girls' group, lunch time activities and parent orientation sessions to name only a few. Despite these efforts, the situation is bleak for the students like those involved in this study. Cummins (2000, p. 251) quotes one study which shows a drop out rate of 95.5% for students with minimal English skills on entry to the middle years of schooling. Without intervention at a systemic level, school for students with interrupted education and poorly developed language and literacy skills will continue to be a place of social and academic isolation and failure, where in the words of one student,

I don't know anybody here to talk me. When the bell rings, I just went to class and I just sit at the back, always at the back.

Conclusion

One of the goals of this research was to begin to describe the language and literacy experiences of refugee students with interrupted schooling in mainstream high schools in Australia. The perspectives of the students in this study provide an important set of insights into their understanding of, and participation in, the literacy practices in the high school mainstream. Our analysis of the students' comments reveals that they are keen to engage with the regular academic and social practices within classrooms and schools, yet acknowledge the dilemmas they face in meeting the language and literacy expectations within particular curriculum content and in relation to particular pedagogical strategies. For teachers working with students in these contexts this poses an incredible tension as they struggle to create conditions in which students can participate in mainstream classrooms, and at the same time meet these students' particular academic, social and linguistic needs in ways that are not underpinned by deficit assumptions. Making the views of these students explicit, we suggest, provides one starting point for not only understanding in more detail their specific backgrounds and experiences, but also for developing educational strategies, resources and policies that might best meet the needs of these students. It is in this area that there is much urgent work to be done.

References

Anderson, A. (2004). Issues of Migration. In R. Hamilton & D. Moore, *Educational Interventions for Refugee Children: Theoretical Perspectives and Implementing Best Practice.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Almqvist, K. & Broberg, A.G. (1999). Mental health and social adjustment in young refugee children 3 1/2 years after their arrival in Sweden. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 38* (6), 723(8).

Carrasquillo, A. & Rodríguez, V. (2002). *Language Minority Students in the Classroom.* 2nd Edition. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Carrasquillo, A. Kucer, S. & Abrams, R. (2004). *Beyond the Beginnings: Literacy Interventions for Upper Elementary English Language Learners.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Collier, V. (1989). How long? A synthesis of research on academic achievement in a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23 (3), 509–531.

Collier, V. (1995). Acquiring a second language for school. *Directions in Language and Education, 1*(4). Washington DC: The National Clearing House for Bilingual Education. Available on the World Wide Web at
 http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/directions/04.htm

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Davison, C. (2001). ESL in Australian schools: From the margins to the mainstream. In B. Mohan, C. Leung & C. Davison, *English as a Second Language in the*

Mainstream: Teaching, Learning and Identity. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 11–29.

Department of Education & Training Victoria (2005). *English as a Second Language in Victorian Government Schools 2004.* East Melbourne: DE&T. Retrieved 20 August 2005, from http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/index/htm

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2004, Released August, 2004). *Immigration Update July - December 2003.* Belconnen, ACT: DIMIA. Retrieved 20 September, 2004, from http://www.immi.gov.au/statistics/publications/immigration_update/update-dec-03.pdf

Fantino, A.M. & Colak, A. (2001). Refugee children in Canada: Searching for identity. *Child Welfare, 80* (5), 587–596.

Fazel, M. & Stein, A. (2003). Mental health of refugee children: comparative study. *British Medical Journal, 327*(7407), 134 (1).

Garcia, G. (2000). Lessons from research: What is the length of time it takes limited English proficient students to acquire English and succeed in an all-English classroom? *Issue and Brief* No. 5. Washington DC: The National Clearing House for Bilingual Education. Available on the World Wide Web at http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/directions/04.htm

Hakuta,K., Butler, Y. & Witt, D. (2000). How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency? Policy Report 2000-2001 for the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Miller, J. & Glassner, B. (1997). The 'inside' and 'outside' : Finding realities in interviews. In D. Silverman (Ed) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (pp. 99-112). London: Sage Publications.

Miller, J., Mitchell, J. & Brown, J. (2005). African refugees with interrupted schooling in the high school mainstream: Dilemmas for teachers**.** *Prospect: An Australian Journal of TESOL, 20*(2), 19–33.

Muir, D. (2003). English and literacy teaching and learning strategies for newly arrived humanitarian refugee students from Sudan. *Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Program.* Retrieved 1 July 2004, from
http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sail/

Nsubuga-Kyobe, A. and Dimock, L. (2002). *African Communities and Settlement Services in Victoria.* Bundoora, Melbourne: Australian Multicultural Foundation.

Pryor, C. B. (2001). New immigrants and refugees in American schools: Multiple voices. *Childhood Education, 77*(5), 275–283.

Roberts, J. (2005) ESL resources failing African refugees. *The Australian*, Monday April 11, 13.

Rutter, J. & Jones, C. (Eds.) (1998). *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field.* Oakhill: Trentham Books.

Rutter, J. (2001). *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain: A Compendium of Essential Information.* Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books Limited.

Wagner, J. (1998). Chapter 3: Power and learning in a multi-ethnic high school: Dilemmas of policy and practice. In Y. Zou and E. Trueba (Eds.) *Ethnic Identity and Power.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 67–110.

West Coast AMES (2002). *Teaching to Learn: Exploring Alternative Teaching Strategies for Oral/Aural Learners.* Australian National Training Authority Adult Literacy National Project. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Westwood, P. (2001). *Reading and Learning Difficulties: Approaches to Teaching and Assessment.* Victoria, Aust.: ACER Press.