2016

Teachers' Preparation to Teach English Language Learners (ELLs): An Investigation of Perceptions, Preparation, and Current Practices

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Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2016.531

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TEACHERS’ PREPARATION TO TEACH
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS): AN INVESTIGATION OF
PERCEPTIONS, PREPARATION, AND CURRENT PRACTICES

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

by
Pamela Knuckles Correll

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Mary Shake, Ed.D.

Lexington, Kentucky

2016

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

TEACHERS’ PREPARATION TO TEACH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS): AN INVESTIGATION OF PERCEPTIONS, PREPARATION, AND CURRENT PRACTICES

This qualitative case study examined the perceptions of 79 elementary teachers regarding their preparation to teach students learning English as a second language (ELLs). The focus of this inquiry centered on factors related to the preparation of teachers for serving non-native English speaking students. The research questions that guided this study are: (a) What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English learners?; (b) What types of preparatory experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs?; and (c) How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their practices with ELL students?

Findings of this study indicated that most participating teachers perceived that they were not prepared by their teacher education programs for teaching ELL students. Many participants related that they lacked preparatory coursework that included strategies for teaching ELLs, had few observational experiences in classrooms with ELL students, and lacked experiences in working with ELLs during field placements and student teaching. Teachers related that coursework in ESL methods, classroom observations and fieldwork placements in classrooms with ELLs, and hands-on experiences would benefit teachers’ knowledge and skill development for teaching ELLs. Further, teachers’ current classroom practices were consistent with their perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs. Focal teachers with perceptions of lower levels of preparation rarely provided alternative forms of assessment, ensured that ELLs comprehended directions, or implemented scaffolding during instruction for ELLs. The focal teacher who perceived that she was extremely well prepared by her teacher education program for teaching ELLs often modeled learning tasks, utilized varied strategies to facilitate comprehensible input, and provided options for alternative assessments for her ELL students.

Teacher educators are encouraged to re-examine their pre-service course objectives and content to ensure that teacher candidates are provided with the knowledge and skills to teach non-native English speaking students. In addition, opportunities for
classroom observations and field placements in school contexts with linguistically diverse students are encouraged for all teacher candidates. School administrators are encouraged to provide professional development opportunities that include strategies for teaching ELLs. This study provides additional evidence that classroom teachers may not be adequately prepared by their teacher preparatory programs for meeting the literacy and learning needs of ELL students. Providing teachers with strategies and experiences related to ELL students will enable teachers to meet the language and literacy needs of their non-native English speaking students.

KEYWORDS: Teacher preparation, English language learners (ELLs), teachers’ perceptions, ESL instruction, teacher education

Pamela Knuckles Correll

12/15/16

Date
TEACHERS’ PREPARATION TO TEACH
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Acknowledgements

- Rick – your patience, love, and encouragement have carried me through this journey.

- Shawn, Matt, Jason, and Ryan – thank you for the many long-distance conversations we have shared; you mean the world to me, and I am so proud of the young men you are.

- Mom and Dad – your unwavering love, support, and encouragement over the years have helped me more than you’ll ever know.

- The four focal teachers in this study – thank you for allowing me to come into your classrooms and for sharing your thoughts, beliefs, and personal reflections with me.

- All of the participants in this research study – thank you for your time and your willingness to share your perspectives.

- Dr. Mary Shake, Dr. Susan Cantrell, Dr. Kristen Perry, and Dr. Jennifer Grisham-Brown – I am sincerely grateful for your helpful advice, suggestions, and time as you served on my committee. A very special note of appreciation for Dr. Shake, who chaired my committee and invested her time and energy to support me as I completed this process.

- Thank you to my family and friends for your encouragement, love, and support as I undertook this project!
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In this dissertation project, I present findings from an instrumental case study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach English language learners (ELLs). To investigate the dimensions of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to serve ELLs, I administered teacher surveys, conducted observations in teachers’ classrooms, and conducted semi-structured interviews. Through this research inquiry, I aimed to explore teacher preparation for serving ELLs, along with components of pre-service coursework and field experiences that teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation. I also sought to illuminate how teachers’ sense of preparedness shaped their current classroom practices with non-native English speaking students.

In this chapter, I present demographic data relevant to students learning English as a second language that supports the critical need for this study. In addition, I discuss the historical and political influences that have prescribed the instruction of ELLs in US public schools. This chapter includes general descriptions of programs of instruction offered by public schools for the instruction of ELLs, government policies prescribing ELL instructional programs in public schools, and the impact of implementing legislative mandates. Instructional factors that influence the academic achievement of ELL students provide rationale for conducting this research inquiry of the preparation of teachers for working with ELLs. In this chapter, I delineate the research problem, purpose of this inquiry, and research questions which frame the study, and I discuss significance of the research and potential applications.
Background

English Language Learners in US Public Schools

According to The Center for Public Education (2012), approximately 20% of students in public schools speak a language other than English at home. Shifts in US immigration policies in recent years have led to unprecedented growth of immigrant populations representing diverse ethnicities. According to the Census Bureau (2012), the foreign born population in the United States currently numbers nearly 40 million, with over one-third of this population entering the country since 2000. The number of people who speak a language other than English at home has increased at approximately four times the rate of the country’s population growth (US Census Bureau, 2010). The US Department of Education estimates that 21% of students currently enrolled in public schools have limited proficiency in English, and those numbers are predicted to continue to increase in coming years (Fast Facts, 2010). As non-native English speaking students enroll in public schools, they are faced with monumental tasks of acquiring proficiency in English language usage and achieving academically.

While linguistically diverse students are usually referred to ELLs, an additional consideration for teachers is the recognition that these students are diverse in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, abilities, strengths, and learning needs. Although ELLs represent a wide spectrum of socioeconomic levels, they are more likely to come from households in poverty and to have parents with limited formal education (Garcia & Cuellar, 2006). The level of needed support in learning English also varies among students according to their prior schooling and literacy achievement in their native language. Thus, some ELLs may require specific linguistic and content area
instructional supports. Students’ primary languages also affect English language acquisition, as ELLs whose primary languages use alphabetic systems and styles of written communication have unique language abilities and learning needs. In addition, ELLs who have immigrated to the U.S. from other countries may exhibit stress or anxiety as they enter public school classrooms.

In general, educational risks for students are related to multiple background factors, including parents’ level of income, education level, and proficiency in English, along with single versus dual-parent household attributes (NCES, 2005). Because non-native English speaking students on the average experience these risk factors with greater frequency than native English speakers, ELLs are at greater risk of academic failure (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2008) and are more likely to be retained than native English speakers (Garcia & Cuellar, 2006). Thus, the need for teachers to be adequately prepared for recognizing and affirming students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds and abilities is critical as teachers provide appropriate instructional accommodations.

In light of increasing linguistic diversity, mainstream classroom teachers in public schools will likely be teaching ELL students (Siwatu, 2007). Meeting the language and learning needs of these students is a struggle for many classroom teachers, who come from middle-class, white backgrounds with little exposure to culturally diverse students and few experiences teaching non-native English speakers (AACTE, 2002). Li and Protacio (2010) contend that changing demographics “have highlighted an ill-prepared teaching force that is struggling to deal with the cultural and linguistic diversity these new students bring to the schools” (p. 353). Further, in many cases it appears that
classroom teachers “lack the necessary knowledge base for planning and implementing effective educational programming for ELLs” (Adams & Jones, 2006, p. 78).

In order to meet the language and academic needs of these students, educators continue to grapple with implementing effective teaching practices as significant achievement gaps persist between English language learners (ELLs) and native English speakers in almost every content area (Goldenberg, 2010; Short, Fidelman, & Lougit, 2012). The adoption of national curriculum standards by most states, passage of No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation, and increased measures of school accountability at the state level have resulted in greater focus on the literacy and language development of non-native English speaking students. Preparing classroom teachers who have the ability to meet the language and literacy needs of ELLs is critical as it is likely that children who are non-native English speakers will be enrolled in their classrooms.

**Historical Foundations of Instruction for English Language Learners**

The approaches in educational public policies for the literacy instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) have changed dramatically in recent years. For decades in U.S. history, assimilation theories dictated the educational policies for children of foreign-born individuals. Children of immigrants attended public schools in English-only classrooms along with native-English speakers, without specific language instruction or accommodations. This approach of total English immersion was reflected in schools’ “submersion”, or “sink or swim”, policies for non-English speakers, as students struggled to learn English while confronting curricular academic demands (Adams & Jones, 2006; Porter, 2000). Results of such assimilationist practices were dismal, as students speaking languages other than English in their homes were less likely
to graduate from high school, enroll in academically challenging coursework at the secondary level, or enroll in post-secondary programs (US Department of Education, 2010). The adoption of these policies of assimilation has been denounced by some as inflicting “the experience of subordination upon the minority speaker . . . which is devalued by the dominant culture” (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006, p. 4).

In 1964, civil rights legislation drew public attention to educational inequities and addressed discriminatory practices in US public schools. Passage of the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, resulted in a shift in policies and practices from assimilation to pluralistic (multilingual) models. Provisions of the legislation encouraged, but did not mandate, bilingual instruction for students with limited English proficiency (LEP) (de Jong, 2008; Porter, 2000).

Additional support for the instruction of non-English speaking students was gained as a result of the 1974 Supreme Court *Lau v. Nichols* ruling which stated:

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the education program, he must have already acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful (414 U.S. 563).
The ruling further clarified that schools must provide specific instruction to meet the language and academic needs for students with limited English proficiency. While specific guidelines for instructional programs were not required by the decision, transitional bilingual models, in which language instruction and academic content is provided for ELLs in their native languages, became the most common approach adopted in public schools (Porter, 2000). The goals of these Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs include facilitating English language and literacy development, increasing student achievement in content areas, reducing high-school drop-out, and building students’ self-esteem. However, research findings related to TBE program effectiveness are inconclusive, as achievement gaps for ELLs in these programs have persisted (Porter, 2000; Vang, 2005). In addition, significant gaps in dropout rates between Whites and Hispanics have remained (Fast Facts, 2012).

In response to the *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court decision, some school districts implemented two-way bilingual education models, combining first and second languages for all grade levels to foster bilingualism for both native and non-native English speaking students. Other schools adopted practices of including non-English speaking students in mainstream classrooms, supplementing instruction with English as a second language (ESL) pull-out programs.

**School Reform and Accountability Measures**

School reform movements in the 1990s resulted in increased accountability measures and public scrutiny of schools. Educators and policy makers have disagreed regarding the most effective instructional programs to meet the academic needs of students learning English as a second language. A comprehensive review of bilingual
education research published in 1997 suggests that research of transitional bilingual programs, two-way bilingual models, and English immersion approaches has not confirmed a single program as most beneficial for ELLs (August & Hakuta, 1997; Porter, 2000).

In the last 20 years, school reform movements have resulted in mandatory measures of school accountability and standardized testing prompted by passage of the 2001 No Child Left Behind legislation. NCLB policies emphasize proficiency in English, rather than bilingual education, and legislate yearly student assessments in order to gauge student academic progress. Standards based instructional guidelines prescribe classroom curriculum in science, social studies, and math, but provide insufficient accommodations for the literacy and language acquisition needs of non-native English speakers.

In 2002, renewed efforts to facilitate non-native English speaking students’ proficiency in English led to the passage of the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act in 2002. This legislation allows states to use federal funds for English instruction of students with limited proficiency in English and enforces school accountability through standardized testing to demonstrate students’ academic progress. The legislation has significant implications for students with limited English proficiency who struggle to achieve academically when compared with English-speaking students (NAEP, 2013).

**English-Only Policies**

Further changes in education for ELLs have been prompted in recent years by English-only policies adopted in many states, which declare English as the official state
language and specify that all government actions are to be conducted in English. English-only legislation has now been passed in 31 states, as proponents of these policies emphasize the need for a common language for government purposes and point to the historical perspectives of immigrants in the past who assimilated into American culture by learning English.

Critics of such political shifts in educational policies argue that English-only initiatives are products of xenophobia, or fear of foreigners. A movement entitled “English for the Children”, requiring that all schools provide English-immersion programs for students with limited proficiency in English, gained public support as California voters approved Proposition 227 in 1998 (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006; Porter, 2000). Provisions of the legislation requires schools to provide special instruction in English for one year or longer, depending on student needs, and to offer native-language instructional programs if enough parents within a community request such instruction. Similar laws have been passed in Arizona in 2000 and in Massachusetts in 2002 (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006). Supporters of these initiatives believe that instruction provided in languages other than English restrict the opportunities for academic success of ELLs and that full immersion in classrooms with native English speakers will benefit English acquisition and academic achievement. Others have asserted that California’s Proposition 227 has resulted in reductive literacy programs for ELLs and limited students’ use of their native languages in English immersion classrooms (Guiterrez, Bacquedano-Lopez, & Asate, 2000).
English Immersion Models of Instruction

Results of program changes due to these legislative actions have been conflicting. Proponents of English immersion programs point to increased academic achievement for students with limited English proficiency across grade levels after one year on state standardized tests (Porter, 2000). Advocates of this model also cite survey reports that most bilingual parents request English immersion programs for their non-English speaking children. Opponents of the English immersion model adopted in California report that only 42% of those California students identified as limited English learners in 1998 had achieved English fluency five years later (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006).

Sheltered English Immersion

Arizona’s Proposition 203 mandates that Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs are implemented in all school districts and that ELLs are to receive English instruction during their first year in pull-out, English-only immersion classrooms for at least four hours per day. Educators express concerns that requirements of the program separate ELLs from mainstream classrooms for most of the school day, marginalizing them within schools, and restricting opportunities for students to maintain their native language (Garcia, 2011). Further, achievement gaps in math and reading for ELLs persist in the state, based upon National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data (Garcia, 2011).

In Massachusetts, a 2002 legislative referendum called Question 2 eliminated Transitional Bilingual Education for ELLs in public schools, and replaced the model with Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). The required SEI program aims to transition ELLs into regular classrooms after one year (de Jong, 2008). Critics of the legislation cite Title
VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act, which places no time limits on students’ English language instruction, but provides for student services until the student is proficient in English (Adams & Jones, 2006). Further, research evidence suggests that bilingual instruction supports second language acquisition and academic success (de Jong, 2008). SEI opponents also argue that few ELLs achieve fluency in English in one year (Adams & Jones, 2006; Cummins, 1984). Since the implementation of SEI, results of state English and math assessments in Massachusetts have revealed that significant achievement gaps persist between ELLs and their English-speaking peers (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2013). Debates continue over the most effective school instructional programs to benefit the language acquisition and academic achievement of ELLs.

It should be noted that initially, Sheltered English Immersion programs were conceptualized to provide intermediate level English learners with language instruction as they participated in content area instruction in mainstream classrooms (Adams & Jones, 2006). In SEI programs, teachers in content areas, including science, social studies, and math, scaffold instruction so that instruction is comprehensible for ELLs and provide opportunities for students to develop proficiency in English. These types of subtractive approaches to ELL instruction emphasize the acquisition of English, but fail to acknowledge the value of additive language instructional approaches, which have resulted in improved academic achievement for bilingual students (de Jong, 2010, Goldenberg, 2010).

Critics of SEI programs, which have been mandated by legislative actions in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, contend that such mainstreaming of ELLs has
led to the segregation of non-English speakers within classroom settings where students have difficulties in communicating with their peers. In addition, classroom teachers often lower their academic expectations for non-English speakers, thus contributing to a continued lack of academic progress for ELLs (Adams & Jones, 2006).

The placement of ELLs in settings where instruction is provided in English and is the dominant language has been adopted by school districts across the nation (Iddings, 2005; Short et al., 2012). Bilingual programs continue to be offered in some schools, but nationally, the numbers of such bilingual instructional models have declined significantly (deJong, 2008). Currently, it is common instructional practice for ELL students to be placed in mainstream classrooms with supplemental instruction in English provided by an ESL teacher through pull-out programs. Thus, classroom teachers are primarily responsible for the language development and content-area instruction of their non-native English speaking students. Decisions regarding curriculum, placement, and instructional guidelines for non-English speaking students are policy driven. Practitioners, administrators, and policy makers continue to struggle with implementing instructional practices that support the literacy development and academic achievement of English learners.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Meeting the language and literacy needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students is of critical concern for educators, as achievement gaps persist between white, middle-class students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in virtually every content area (NAEP, 2013). Further, government mandates at the state and federal levels enforce accountability measures for all students, as state and federal
policies dictate the instructional program options for non-native English speakers. Scholars, researchers, and policy makers continue to debate the most effective methods of supporting the language development and academic achievement for these students. As a result, non-native English speaking students are often placed in mainstream classrooms with teachers who are inadequately prepared for meeting the language and literacy needs of their ELL students (AACTE, 2002; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Moreover, there is a paucity of research exploring how teacher preparation can effectively improve teaching effectiveness for diverse students and connections between perceptions of preparation to classroom practices (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; National Research Council, 2010). Teacher preparation is critical for teachers of ELLs, as the results of some studies indicate that teacher preparation is linked to teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students (Conaway, Browning, & Purdum-Cassidy, 2012; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010); knowledge of factors related to teaching ELLs (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010); and classroom practices (Curtin, 2005; Darling-Hammond, Eiler, & Marcus, 2002). The study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language is critical as teacher educators strive to prepare pre-service classroom teachers to meet the needs of these students and for school administrators as they plan professional development for in-service teachers.
Purpose of the Study

Through this research study, I aimed to examine teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach English language learners. Teachers’ perceptions of preparatory coursework and field experiences that benefit classroom teachers’ preparedness for teaching students learning English as a second language are additional components of this inquiry. To further inform this analysis, relationships between teachers’ of preparedness for teaching ELLs and their classroom instructional practices were examined.

Research Questions

The research question that guided this study was: What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English language learners? Subordinate questions for this study were: (a) What types of preparatory experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs?; (b) How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their practices with ELL students?

Definition of Terms

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS): Emanating from the work of Cummins (1999), Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) describe the language uses that individuals draw upon for social and conversational purposes. Referring to second language acquisition, Cummins (1999) emphasized the social nature of language learning, as he argued, “all children acquire their conceptual foundation (knowledge of the world) through conversational interactions in the home” (p. 4). Non-native English speaking students may require up to three years to acquire basic communicative skills in English.
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): Cummins (1999) used Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) to refer to the types of language that students use for specific academic purposes. According to Cummins (1999), BICS and CALP overlap, yet are “conceptually distinct” (p. 4). For ELLs, acquiring CALP is a continual process that occurs throughout schooling and may require from five to seven years to develop (Cummins, 1984). To promote students’ CALP, “instruction should be cognitively challenging” and “academic content should be integrated with language instruction” (Cummins, 1999, p. 6).

Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE): Researchers at the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) studied instructional strategies for supporting the academic development of diverse students. Their recommendations, often referred to as the CREDE standards in the extant literature, include opportunities for students to engage in “joint productive activity, language and literacy development, contextualizing teaching and learning, complex thinking, and instructional conversation” (Rueda, 1998).

Culturally responsive instruction (CRI): Culturally responsive instruction is typically described as an approach that recognizes and affirms students’ cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds and uses students’ prior experiences to guide planned learning experiences, curriculum, and opportunities for engagement in discourse. Educators who implement CRI seek to “empower students and their families by valuing their resources and by helping them to interrogate and act upon real-world issues” (Powell, Cantrell, Malo-Juvera, & Correll, 2016).
English as a second language (ESL): English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to instructional programs, models, and practices that facilitate English language development for non-native English speakers (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010; Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011; Short et al., 2012). ESL may also be used to describe teachers that implement language supports for ELLs (DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014) and degree or certification programs for teachers (Short et al., 2012). While the terms ESL and ELL are often used interchangeably by in-service teachers, school administrators, and others to describe both linguistically diverse students and instructional programs, strategies, materials, or teachers for ELLs, I use ESL in the current study to describe specific strategies, practices, or models of instruction and ELL to refer to students whose primary or home language is a language other than English. However, when teacher participants in this research study used the terms ESL and ELL interchangeably to describe students, instructional models, methods, or teachers, I maintained the integrity of participants’ original statements and refrained from revising their terminology.

English language learner (ELL): The term English language learner (ELL) describes an individual with a primary language other than English, who is in the process of acquiring proficiency in English. Other terms used to describe ELLs in the extant literature include English as an additional language (EAL), which refers to an individual with a primary language other than English, who is learning English as an additional language (Kibler, Valdes, and Walqui, 2014) and English learner (EL), an individual with a dominant language other than English, who is acquiring English (Calderon et al., 2011). In response to criticisms that the term ELL implies a deficit perspective, a more recent
term found in the literature for students learning English as another language is *emergent bilinguals* (Garcia, 2009). Garcia (2009) argues that “the term emergent bilinguals refers to the children's potential in developing their bilingualism; it does not suggest a limitation or a problem in comparison to those who speak English” (p. 332). Kibler, Valdes, and Walqui (2014) present another view, as they affirm the social, cultural, and linguistic resources of non-native English speaking students and describe ELLs as:

... students whose home languages are other than or in addition to English, and those who are deemed by assessments and educational decision-makers to be still in the process of acquiring English. In doing so, we do not discount the importance of examining the experiences and practices of successful multilingual students with advanced proficiencies in both languages or the need to understand these students as diverse individuals and populations that have varied linguistic, cultural, and social repertoires and experiences that may play different roles in their educational performance (p. 436-437).

Given that most of the extant literature at the time of initiating the current research study utilized the term ELLs, I use the term ELL throughout this dissertation to refer to non-native English speaking individuals with varying levels of language proficiency.

**Sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP):** The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is a “system for lesson planning and delivery that incorporates best practices for teaching academic English” (Short et al., 2012, p. 336) designed to be integrated within content area instruction for ELLs. The SIOP model offers guidelines for teachers to plan and implement instruction for students learning
English as a second language as they engage in content specific learning (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010).

**WIDA:** Originating in 2003, the acronym WIDA signified World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment for designating work on standards of language development conducted at the Center for Applied Linguistics (WIDA, nd). However, WIDA currently refers to the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which delineate specific English language skills and abilities for ELLs. The WIDA ELD Standards are used in conjunction with the administration of annual ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for ELLs) assessments in U.S. schools to provide teachers with information regarding areas of ELLs’ language strengths and knowledge. Classroom teachers are encouraged to use the WIDA standards as a resource in instructional planning to enhance the language and literacy development of their ELL students.

**Significance of the Study**

Through this research, I aimed to explore the perceived preparation of practicing classroom teachers for teaching linguistically diverse students while illuminating those components of teacher preparatory experiences that benefit teachers’ knowledge and skills for teaching ELLs. Further, relationships between teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs and their current instructional practices were investigated. This research inquiry is intended to add to the field of study surrounding teacher preparation for supporting the language and literacy development of non-native English speaking students.
Scholars have observed that an adequate knowledge base for preparing classroom teachers to support the academic achievement of linguistically diverse students is ELLs is lacking (AACTE, 2010; Goldenberg, 2013). In addition, there is a dearth of research demonstrating how elements of pre-service teacher preparation contribute to teaching effectiveness in general (AACTE, 2010). The current study is important for teacher educators to build understandings of teachers’ perceptions of experiences offered within teacher education programs that facilitate teachers’ understanding of factors that influence the language and literacy development of students learning English as a second language.

Through this inquiry, I used a sociocultural lens as I explored participants’ lived experiences and feelings, or perceptions, about those experiences (Esterberg, 2002). From an interpretivist paradigm, “accessing the perspectives of several members of the same social group” (Glesne, 2011, p. 8) facilitates understandings of the topic of study. Because this study was not intended to be a program evaluation, but an investigation related to participants’ perceptions of preparation for ELLs, my “emphasis [was] on understanding how individuals construct and interpret social reality” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 16). Further, including perspectives of multiple participants in a particular institutional context benefits understandings of the topic, in this case, teachers’ sense of preparation for teaching ELLs (Traverse, 2001).

The study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs offers valuable insights when considering that research evidence has shown correlations between teachers’ sense of competence and successful teaching (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Factors related to personal teaching self-efficacy have been linked to
teachers’ beliefs that they have had sufficient training or prior experience to create and implement practices to transcend impediments to student learning (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Because teachers who have positive perceptions of their preparation are more likely to have confidence in their abilities to build positive relationships with students, to facilitate student academic success, and to manage classroom difficulties (Darling-Hammond, Eiler, et al., 2002), this research investigation provides valuable considerations for school administrators, practitioners, and teacher educators.

The paucity of research related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to their actual classroom instructional practices after program completion (Brownell & Pajares, 1999) provides a strong rationale for this study, as one facet of this proposed study is dedicated to examining this very relationship as applied to instruction for ELLs. These observations have significant ramifications when considering the preparation of teachers to teach non-native English speaking students, as teacher preparation programs bear the responsibility of ensuring that pre-service elementary teachers develop knowledge of factors affecting language acquisition and instructional strategies that enhance students’ English language and literacy.

In this era of increasing local, national, and global diversity, the English literacy development of children in public schools is an issue that will have profound effects for present and future generations. Researchers contend that the implementation of effective teaching practices that support student academic achievement is dependent on adequate teacher preparation (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009). Other researchers suggest that approximately 87% of classroom teachers are underprepared to
teach linguistically diverse students (NCELA, 2005). When considering the rapidly expanding population of non-native English-speaking students, scholars have concluded that today’s classroom teachers are underprepared to meet the linguistic and academic needs of ELL students (Li & Protacio, 2010; Mueller, Singer, & Carranza, 2006). Preparing mainstream teachers to teach students learning English as a second language is a primary concern, as assertions have been made that “a major reason for the poor progress shown by ELLs as a group is that they seldom receive the high-quality instruction necessary to build their knowledge of literate discourse” (Au & Raphael, 2010, p. 209).

In this study, I explored elements of coursework and field experiences that develop teacher knowledge and skills for teaching ELLs. Findings from the study may inform teacher educators as they analyze course objectives, components, and requirements to include elements that support the development of the content and pedagogical knowledge of pre-service classroom teachers. This research may also benefit school administrators as they plan professional development experiences that support teachers’ knowledge of instructional practices that contribute to the language and literacy development of students learning English as a second language. Findings from the study may be important for practitioners as they examine their personal instructional practices and preparedness for teaching non-native English speaking students. While the findings of this research inquiry may not be generalizable to larger groups, the data may be informative and is intended to contribute to the field of study of preparation of teachers for teaching ELLs.
Summary

Recent population trends in the US reflect increasing diversity as our foreign born population has grown significantly. As non-native English speaking students enroll in public schools, they are faced with the immense tasks of acquiring English proficiency and achieving academically. Of particular concern are the persistent achievement gaps between ELLs and native-English speaking students on standardized assessments (Mueller, Singer, & Carranza, 2006; NAEP, 2013; Short et al., 2012).

As public schools implement instructional programs for ELLs, it is critical that teachers are well prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teacher preparation is essential for both teaching effectiveness and student academic achievement (Boyd et al. 2009). Moreover, teachers of English learners need specific content and pedagogical knowledge for teaching these students (Gandara et al., 2005).

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach English language learners. As part of this research, I investigated teachers’ perceptions of the components of teacher preparatory experiences that benefit teachers’ preparedness to support the language and literacy development of non-native English speaking students. In addition, teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for working with ELLs and connections with teachers’ classroom instructional practices were examined. Exploring teacher preparatory experiences that enhance teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge for teaching linguistically diverse students was a goal for this study.

This dissertation research contributes to the field of study of pre-service preparation for teaching non-native English speaking students. This study also illuminates components of preparatory coursework and fieldwork experiences that foster
the development of teachers’ knowledge and skills for working with ELLs. Further, the examination of how teachers’ classroom practices shaped their preparedness for teaching ELLs highlights factors contributing to the instructional decision making of mainstream classroom teachers.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

Introduction

For this dissertation study, I conducted an investigation of teachers’ sense of preparation for teaching ELLs. This research included an examination of teachers’ perceptions of the coursework and field experiences that support the development of knowledge and skills for teaching linguistically diverse students and the relationships between teachers’ current instructional practices for ELL students and teachers’ sense of preparation. The research question that guided this study was: What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English language learners? Subordinate questions for this study were: (a) What types of preparatory experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs?; (b) How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their practices with ELL students?

Through this study, teachers’ conceptualizations of factors that support the learning and literacy development of these students were illuminated. In this chapter, I contextualize the study in relationship to theoretical foundations of teacher preparation, teacher self-efficacy, and second-language acquisition and consider the literature relating to instructional models and language pedagogy for ELLs. A review of previously conducted research of teachers’ preparation for teaching ELLs provides additional rationale for this study.

This chapter includes the conceptual framework for the study and review of literature in three major sections. In the first section, I situate the study relative to theoretical perspectives of teacher education, perceptions of preparation and self-efficacy for teaching, and second-language acquisition. I then review literature pertaining to
teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching for ELLs. I present research findings related to factors associated with preparing teachers to serve ELLs, the relationships between perceptions of preparation and teachers’ practices, and links between teacher preparation and teacher self-efficacy.

In the second section of this chapter, I examine characteristics of teacher education programs for preparing classroom teachers to support the language and literacy development of linguistically diverse students. I consider preparatory experiences for teaching ELLs provided for pre-service teachers through teacher education programs and discuss the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge necessary for ESL instruction. I also present research-based instructional strategies benefitting the language development and achievement of ELLs. I approach this study through a sociocultural lens based upon literature related to instructional practices that support the language and literacy development for non-native English speaking students.

As I conducted this research, I considered the relationships between teacher participants, preparatory experiences for classroom teachers of ELLs, and pedagogical and content knowledge for ESL instruction. Elements relating to the content and pedagogical knowledge needed by classroom teachers of ELLs, preparatory experiences that support preservice teachers, and characteristics of effective teacher education programs will be discussed in greater detail in the second section.

**Theoretical Framework**

The preparation of classroom teachers for teaching linguistically diverse students has become a critical issue in light of persistent achievement gaps between these students and their native English speaking peers (NAEP, 2013). A critical entry point for this
study is a discussion of the theoretical foundations that undergird teacher education. I then present theories related to self-efficacy for teaching and second language acquisition.

**Theoretical Perspectives of Teacher Education**

Schools of education have ascribed to varied theories of teacher education that have affected the types of experiences offered to teacher candidates. As suggested by Richardson (1997), teacher education programs have been grounded in two views: constructivist views and transmissionist views, although in recent years, sociocultural views have been emphasized (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008). Tenets of a transmission approach focus on the direct transmission of content knowledge (Barr, Watts, & Yokoto, 2000). As such, the goals of teacher education are to transmit the skills and knowledge needed for preservice teachers to become competent. Mastery of specific teacher behaviors, skills, and areas of knowledge are expected to lead to student achievement, which may be evidenced through students’ achievement test scores (Risko, et al., 2008). These transmission approaches, as observed in didactic teacher-student interactions, include experiences for pre-service teachers to build knowledge of “basic literacy skills” (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008, p. 66). A related perspective, labeled the positivist/behavioral theory of teacher education, has been described as “a process where knowledge and teaching behaviors are hypothesized and documented as being acquired within teacher education courses or activities and then applied in supervised teacher situations” (Risko, Roller, Cummins, Bean, Block, & Anders, 2008, p. 254).

Constructivist learning theories of teacher education shift from transmission models and emphasize linking teacher candidates’ prior knowledge with professional
learning, leading to the construction of new understandings of teaching and knowledge (Risko, et al., 2008). Learning for pre-service teachers is cultivated through their interactions with teacher educators and students in classrooms (Daniel, 2014). According to Shulman (2004), the goal for teacher education programs is to provide both theoretical preparation and opportunities for supervised experiences in the field for pre-service teachers. Educators who hold constructivist views of literacy teaching espouse beliefs that learners build knowledge and understandings of meaning through interactions and experiences (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008). The integration of instruction and experiences is affirmed by Shulman (2004), who contends, “teacher education therefore requires substantial instruction . . . combined with the experiences needed to learn how to apply them well to particular cases” (p. 177). Thus, constructivist foundations for teacher education include experiences that foster construction of meaning for preservice teachers.

Sociocultural theories relate not only to cognition, but also to the influences of social contexts and interactions with others (Risko, et al., 2008). Purcell-Gates, Degener, and Jacobsen (2004) emphasize the cultural and cognitive aspects of learning as they state, “we see cognition as occurring always within cultural contexts, which we define as settings for human activity shaped by social structures, languages, conventions, history, and goals” (pp. 26-27). Moreover, learners acquire knowledge when they experience situations within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1998), prompting higher levels of performance and knowledge construction through collaboration with another individual. Thus, teacher candidates develop understandings for teaching through cooperation with teacher educators, providing an example of the learning experienced through “collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 86). Hopper and
Sanford (2008) support conceptualizations of the sociocultural nature of learning for preservice teachers as they contend, “teacher knowledge is not separate from the knower, but is constructed within his or her intellectual, social and cultural contexts of teaching” (p. 58). In recognition of the sociocultural nature of teacher education, Shulman (2004) lists principles for educating teachers using a “community of learners” model (p. 493) that includes community, content, and collaboration.

Sociocultural theory has “had an impact on teacher education because it helps educators to better understand the possibilities for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students” (Risko, et al., 2008, p. 2008). Recognition of the impact of social factors on teaching and learning has resulted in an emphasis on meaningful, holistic perspectives in teacher education (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008). As such, sociocultural theories of learning have influenced the focus of teacher education to address culturally and linguistically diverse students. Pre-service teachers who develop sociocultural consciousness recognize that individuals are affected by their cultural memberships and that relationships of power may be disparate (Daniel, 2015). As applied to instruction for ELLs, pre-service teachers who develop sociocultural consciousness recognize that “speakers lacking the legitimate competence are de facto excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence,” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 55) and that it is imperative that educators provide the most effective instructional strategies in order to facilitate the language development of non-native English speaking students. Thus, I approach the current research through a sociocultural lens, which enables me to capture the social aspects of teacher-student relationships, interactions, and influences on teachers’ preparation and classroom practices.
Teachers’ Perceptions of Preparation and Self-Efficacy

Because teachers’ sense of preparedness has been linked with teaching efficacy, it is important to examine the relationships between perceptions of preparation and self-efficacy. Specifically, teachers who have a higher sense of preparation are more likely to believe in their ability to help all students achieve academically, to relate positively to students, and to deal with difficulties in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, Eiler, et al., 2002). Teachers’ perceptions of their preparation have been linked to teachers’ beliefs that they are able to provide instruction for all students, to support increased academic achievement, and to influence students’ lives (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). While teacher preparatory programs attempt to develop teachers’ knowledge, scholars, psychologists, and researchers have proposed that an individual’s “beliefs are so strong that they are more influential in determining actions and behaviors than is learned knowledge” (Pappamihiel, 2007, p. 44).

Because a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy has a powerful influence on students’ motivation and the classroom environment, it is important to acknowledge the influence of teacher preparation on teaching self-efficacy. Researchers have demonstrated that an individual’s self-efficacy relates significantly to performance in the workplace, even when confronted tasks are challenging (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). Other research findings suggest that after controlling for factors of years of teaching experience, students’ grade levels, and area of certification, teachers’ perceptions of their preparation are the strongest predictor of teachers’ self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002).
Factors related to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, or an individual’s level of confidence that he/she has the ability to be successful with a specific task, has been described by Bandura (1995) as the beliefs in one’s abilities “to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Further, self-efficacy may predict the level of persistence and effort exhibited by an individual when confronted with a task. Bandura (1995) postulated that the development of self-efficacy occurs through four sources – mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social models, and emotional and physiological states. Mastery experiences have been hypothesized to have the most dominant influence on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and are developed through prior successes in attaining particular goals. Individuals who undertake a challenging assignment and achieve success will experience increased self-efficacy. Conversely, failure to reach a goal or objective results in lowered self-efficacy.

Vicarious experiences occur as individuals observe the successful completion of tasks by others, which result in a greater sense of confidence in individual ability to likewise complete the specific task. “Vicarious information gained from others perceived to be similar in ability yields the most influential comparative information, but the experiences of those perceived as having similar attributes (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity) are often powerful sources of self-efficacy information” (Usher & Pajares, 2008, p. 753). Thus, by observing the achievements of others, students may increase their self-efficacy (Schunk, 2003).

The concept of social persuasion refers to the roles of significant others in influencing an individual’s perceptions of his/her ability to complete a task successfully. The assessments and observations offered by family members, peers, or teachers may
increase a student’s self-efficacy, although Bandura (1997) has asserted, “it is more difficult to instill endurably high beliefs of personal efficacy by persuasory means alone than it is to undermine such beliefs” (p. 104). Positive statements from others may result in an increase in efficacy, although failure to reach a specific targeted objective may negate these effects.

The fourth source of self-efficacy is related to an individual’s physiological or emotional states as he/she faces a particular assignment (Bandura, 1995). When faced with a specific challenge, individuals with low self-efficacy may feel apprehension, fatigue, or distress, while those with high self-efficacy may feel excitement or anticipation. “Students often interpret their physiological arousal as an indicator of personal competence” (Usher & Pajares, 2006). Typically, enhanced feelings of well being result in increased self-efficacy, and negative emotional reactions lead to decreases in self-efficacy.

**Teacher self-efficacy.** A teacher’s self-efficacy has been defined as “a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult of unmotivated” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783). Teachers’ sense of preparedness has been found to be linked with teaching efficacy, and significantly correlated with teachers’ self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002). Bandura (1997) has contended that, in general, successful performances by individuals are affected by many factors, including the “knowledge, skills, and strategies they have at their command rather than solely on how much they can excel themselves” (p. 126). Novice efficacious teachers perceive their level of preparation higher than beginning teachers with lower self-efficacy.
(Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Studying the perceptions of teachers’ preparation for teaching linguistically diverse students is supported by researchers who conclude that after beginning teachers’ sense of self-efficacy is developed, it is difficult to change (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

**Theoretical Foundations of Language Acquisition**

For a number of years language theorists have debated the factors that support second language acquisition as theories of learning primary and second languages have evolved. Language scholars contend that processes of second language acquisition are similar to development of first language processes (Krashen, n.d.). I begin this section with a discussion of major theories of first language acquisition and their relevance to second language acquisition.

**Behaviorist perspective.** B. F. Skinner’s (1957) theory of behaviorism, which gained much attention in the 1950s, is grounded upon beliefs that individuals learn through stimulus and response cycles, eventually leading to the development of habits. The behaviorist perspective holds that children learn through mimicry and memorization, and language learning occurs in the same way. Skinner (1957) proposed “verbal behavior is shaped and sustained by a verbal environment – by people who respond to behavior in certain ways because of the practices of the group of which they are members” (p. 226). Children learn to use language by imitating others as they make sounds and receive reinforcement of specific sounds.

**Cognitive perspectives of learning language.** Cognitive-constructivist theories of language development are informed by developmental cognition views and socio-constructivist beliefs. Piaget’s (1969) theories of language development suggest that an
individual’s conceptual knowledge precedes his/her language ability. The social nature of language is emphasized, as Piaget argued that, “without originally imitating others and without the desire to call his parents and to influence them, the child would probably never learn to talk” (Piaget, 1969, p. 17). Through practice, language learners develop automaticity, which allows them to focus their attention on the meaning of conversations or print language forms.

**Innatist perspective of language development.** Constructive theorists posit that as children engage in language practices, they develop and test hypotheses of language. Chomsky (1975) rejected the behaviorist view, and his psycholinguistic theory was based upon language as an innate process. Common languages within communities of individuals are generated, and he contended that individuals develop language abilities “fairly rapidly and with little if any conscious effort” (Chomsky, 1975, p. 27). Chomsky proposed that individuals possess an innate knowledge of Universal Grammar, which determines the sounds, semantics, and syntax of acquired language, although this proposal has been increasingly challenged.

**Sociocultural perspectives and language development.** Observations of the interactions between children and adults led to Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s (1986) conclusions that social interactions lead to language development. In contrast to Piaget’s theories of language and cognition, Vygotsky (1986) postulated that “the child’s intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is, language” (p. 94). Relative to second language acquisition, Vygotsky (1986) proposed that “success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity
in the native language” (p. 195). Thus, a learner’s previously acquired knowledge of language systems transfers to learning another language.

Sociocultural theorists view cognitive development as a result of social interactions that occur as language between individuals. The work of anthropologists, psychologists, and linguists have contributed to beliefs that language acquisition is influenced by sociocultural factors including personal experiences, environment, and culture (Bakhtin, 1986; Cummins, 1984; Hymes, 1974; Labov, 1972; Vygotsky, 1986), in addition to the instructional activities conducted within school settings (Heath, 1982; Krashen, n.d.; Wilkinson & Silliman, 1990). Sociocultural theories of learning and language development are strongly connected to current thinking. These theories that language development occurs through socially constructed, purposeful practices have important implications for second language learners, for teachers who strive to support English language development and academic achievement for these students, and for teacher educators in preparatory programs.

**Language and social context.** Sociocultural theories of language acquisition are supported by Labov (1972), who theorized that “the social situation is the most powerful determinant of verbal behavior and that an adult must enter into the right social relation with a child if he wants to find out what a child can do” (p. 212). Labov’s research with the language practices of urban Black children in the northeast United States led to his conclusions that previous assessments of cognitive delays among Black children were based upon faulty assumptions of observers and false premises of the recognition of logic. Sociocultural theories of language acquisition and development hold that verbal language usage requires logic and abstract thought and that language dialects incorporate
rules and systems of grammar to convey logical meaning (Street, 1984). In addition, social influences create meaning for the conventions of language.

Sociocultural theories of language development acknowledge that “all learning [is] mediated by tools, of which language is the primary tool, and a learner’s development occurs through assisted performance” (McIntyre, 2010, p. 63). Those who hold sociocultural theories of second language acquisition emphasize the critical nature of practice in speaking and writing for ELLs and opportunities for collaboration with others. Bakhtin’s (1986) observation, “we know our native language . . . not from dictionaries and grammars but from concrete utterances that we hear and that we ourselves reproduce in live speech communication with people around us,” supports theories that language is acquired through social interactions (p. 78).

**Purposeful interactions and language.** The function of language as a process of making meaning is evidenced in Halliday’s (1975) work. These theories of language acquisition are grounded upon the belief that “the distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language” (Halliday, 1993, p. 93). As non-native language speakers engage in language practices for specific purposes, their language development is enhanced. According to this view, the focus of functional language is purpose, a critical point of consideration for teachers of students learning English as a second language.

Additional evidence of the sociocultural nature of language acquisition is provided by Heath’s (1982) extensive ethnographic research of three diverse cultural communities in the southeastern United States. This work revealed the influences of
family and societal experiences on children’s language development and practices. Heath (1982) argued that “a unilinear model of development in the acquisition of language structures and uses cannot adequately account for culturally diverse ways of acquiring knowledge or developing cognitive styles” (p. 73).

**Language learning and language acquisition.** The distinction between *learning* a language and *acquiring* is a critical consideration for teachers of non-native English speaking students. Stephen Krashen’s theories of second language acquisition provide an important foundation for current language and literacy instructional models. Krashen contrasts language *learning* with language *acquisition* as he posits that learners acquire language in the same way that children develop proficiency in first languages, through input and exposure to language that occurs independent of specific instruction.

Krashen’s input hypothesis emphasizes that comprehensible input is a requirement for language acquisition (Krashen, n.d.) Individuals acquire languages when they receive input that is comprehensible at a level just beyond the language already acquired, or \( i + 1 \) (\( i \) represents the individual’s current level of language and \( +1 \) signifies language at one level higher).

The natural order hypothesis is based upon Krashen’s theory that languages are learned in predictable sequences, although rules of language that are easiest to learn may not be applied consistently until language users reach more advanced levels. Further, individuals experience a preproduction stage, or silent period, when they have the ability to comprehend language before they are able to produce spoken language. The monitor hypothesis describes an individual’s ability to edit, or monitor, language that is self-produced (Krashen, n.d.). Monitoring is productive for individuals to practice self-
correction when they have sufficient time and knowledge of language forms, although
overuse of the language monitor may delay language fluency and language acquisition.
Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis refers to affective factors, including anxiety, stress,
or boredom, that may filter language input, thus delaying language acquisition and fluency.

**Interpersonal and academic language.** Language acquisition theories of
context-imbedded communication proposed by Canadian linguist Jim Cummins (1984)
have had implications for the pedagogical and content knowledge needed by practitioners
for instructing ELLs. Cummins (19984) has identified two critical aspects of language
use: basic interpersonal skills (BICS), referring to oral communication practices which
enable individuals to participate in everyday events and social interactions, requiring up
to three years for proficiency; and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), the
language skills that students need to succeed in academic settings, requiring five to seven
years for proficiency. Cummins’ theories suggest that:

A major aim of schooling is to develop students’ ability to manipulate and
interpret cognitively demanding context-reduced tasks. The more initial reading
and writing instruction can be embedded in a meaningful communicative context
(i.e. related to the child’s experience), the more successful it is likely to be. The
same principle holds for second language instruction” (1984, p. 136).

**Academic English vocabulary and conventions for ELLs.** Proficiency in basic
communicative English and access to wide vocabulary is necessary for learners in order
to develop academic English (Scarcella, R., 2003). As learners practice language, they
develop their knowledge of pragmatics (Wilkinson, Wilkinson, Spinelli, & Chiang,
Wilkinson and Silliman (1990) contend that societal influences prescribe the conventions, usage, structure, and semantics of language in order to achieve communicative purposes. Further, systems of language are not taught explicitly, but are inferred by individuals.

**Summary**

Language is a product of a learner’s social and cultural background and comprises reading, writing, listening, and speaking for social and communicative functions. The sociocultural foundations of primary language acquisition are applicable to students learning English as a second language as well. Oral and written forms of language are acquired through interactions with others and influenced by social and cultural factors. As learners interact with peers and other proficient speakers in social contexts, language for basic communicative purposes is developed.

While communicative competency describes the ability to use language in social settings and for everyday purposes, the ability to use language in academic contexts also involves conceptual knowledge and knowledge of content-specific vocabulary. The development of academic language is supported through linking concepts with learners’ prior learning and background experiences. Specific vocabulary instruction, using primary language for conceptual learning, and using language for authentic purposes through interaction with peers are elements that benefit second language learners. Assistance from other proficient language speakers enhances learners’ acquisition of academic language. Theories of second language acquisition provide conceptual underpinnings of this proposed study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach.
ELLs. Understanding the processes of secondary languages and the factors that affect students’ language development provides context for this study.

**Literature Review**

In this section, I examine literature relating to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach ELLs, relationships between teachers’ perceptions of preparation and classroom practices, factors associated with teachers’ sense of preparedness, and connections with self-efficacy. I then consider literature related to characteristics of effective teacher preparation programs and examine coursework and preparatory experiences for pre-service teachers of ELLs. A review of research of instructional strategies that benefit the language and literacy development for linguistically diverse students provides background for this study.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of their Preparation for Teaching ELLs**

While a number of studies have examined teacher preparation and components of effective instruction for ELLs, few researchers have explored teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching non-native English speaking students specifically. Survey research of 3000 beginning teachers yielded findings suggesting that both graduates of teacher education programs and alternatively certified graduates regarded their preparation for teaching ELLs as inadequate (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002). Other researchers have concluded that classroom teachers are inadequately prepared to provide instruction to meet the language and literacy needs for ELLs (Mueller, Singer, & Carranza, 2006) and that this lack of preparedness contributes to high levels of teacher attrition in schools with high populations of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
Previously conducted research inquiries have examined attributes associated with teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching non-native English speaking students. For example, teachers with a greater sense of preparedness tend to have more positive attitudes toward ELLs, while those with lower perceptions of their preparation held more negative beliefs (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). In another study, teachers who felt more prepared for teaching ELLs had higher scores on a knowledge test about ESL pedagogy, while those who were less prepared scored lower on the ESL knowledge test and were observed during classroom observations to neglect their ELL students (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010).

While studies that focus on teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs are rare, findings suggest that classroom teachers have perceptions of low preparation for teaching linguistically diverse students (Gandara et al., 2005; O’Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008). O’Neal, Ringler, and Rodriguez (2008) collected survey data and conducted focus group interviews with 21 elementary classroom teachers from one rural school in their study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for ELLs. Findings of the research reflect that 75% of teacher participants responded that they felt that they were not prepared for teaching ELLs. Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) utilized surveys of 4500 California teachers and focus group interviews with selected participants to examine teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about teaching ELLs. Among the study results were findings that teachers rated their teaching ability for ELL students as “good” or higher in only one of six content areas, teaching reading at the
elementary level (Gandara et al., 2005). While one portion of the survey used in the research related to teachers’ confidence about their teaching abilities with ELLs, teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs or components of teachers’ preparatory experiences were not addressed.

Survey research of teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and practices with ELL students was conducted with 729 teachers in a suburban school district by Karabenick and Noda (2004). Study findings reflect that the majority of these teachers were quite confident in their general instruction practices, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge for teaching in mainstream classes, but were significantly less confident in teaching ELLs. Researchers noted that considerable variability was observed in teachers’ responses, with many teachers scoring in the lower ranges of the ELL efficacy scale.

Some studies of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation have included teachers’ sense of preparedness to teach ELLs as part of their data collection, findings, and analyses. A mixed-methods study of pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching revealed that these beginning teachers did not feel that their teacher preparation program adequately prepared them for classroom teaching (Siwatu, 2011a). Further, participants acknowledged that their preparation program stressed theory and declarative knowledge, but inadequate attention was devoted to candidates’ development of procedural and conditional knowledge, and instructional strategies for teaching ELLs were lacking in their preparatory coursework.

A number of studies reveal that in general, graduates of teacher education programs perceived themselves as well prepared, although they did not rate their preparation for teaching ELLs as adequate (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002).
Research evidence has linked teacher’s sense of competence with success in teaching (Gandara et al., 2005). Accordingly, examining teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness for teaching linguistically diverse students is important and warranted.

**Teachers’ Preparation and Relationships to Practices**

While some researchers have investigated the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for classroom teaching in general, few studies address perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs and classroom practices of in-service teachers (Brownell & Pajares, 1999). A study of the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP) utilized surveys and teacher self-reporting to examine relationships between teachers’ sense of preparedness for teaching in general and their instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, Eiler, et al., 2002). In this study, researchers used teacher surveys to investigate teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching and relationships between elapsed time, school placements, self-efficacy, and teachers’ practices. Correlations were observed between teachers’ sense of preparedness, their self-efficacy, and in their implementation of student-centered teaching strategies. Significantly, the instructional strategies that were strongly correlated with perceptions of preparation included allowing students to engage in personal goal setting and self-assessment of their work, adapting instruction for students’ learning styles, and utilizing research findings as a basis for decision making. Other studies that implemented classroom observations and interviews with classroom teachers who had not received training in teaching ELLs suggest that the instructional practices of underprepared teachers may actually be detrimental to students learning English as a second language (Curtin, 2005; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010).
College preparatory coursework was cited by teacher participants in Ullucci’s (2007) qualitative analysis as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs. Teachers also reflected that their student teaching experiences and opportunities to work with ELLs was beneficial to their teacher development. Milner’s (2005) work demonstrated that course content in teacher preparatory courses could benefit pre-service teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and instructional decision making with students in culturally diverse classrooms. Further, many participants in Milner’s study expressed a desire to teach in culturally diverse schools and did not convey a lack of confidence for teaching diverse populations.

**Teacher Preparation and Self-Efficacy for Teaching ELLs**

Because teachers’ sense of preparedness has been linked with teaching efficacy (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Siwatu, 2011b), it is important to examine the relationships between perceptions of preparation and self-efficacy. Specifically, teachers who have a higher sense of preparation are more likely to believe in their ability to help all students achieve academically, to relate positively to students, and to deal with difficulties in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, Eiler, et al., 2002). When considering teachers who work with students learning English as a second language, Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) contend that “good ELL teachers . . . have a sense of self-confidence regarding their ability to teach ELL students, a finding that echoes a broader body of research on teacher efficacy in general and its effect on student achievement” (p. 3).

While teacher preparatory programs attempt to develop teachers’ knowledge, scholars, psychologists, and researchers have proposed that an individual’s “beliefs are so
strong that they are more influential in determining actions and behaviors than is learned knowledge” (Papamihiel, 2007, p. 44). Given that a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy has a powerful influence on students’ motivation and the classroom environment, it is essential to consider the influence of teacher preparation on teaching self-efficacy. Researchers have demonstrated that an individual’s self-efficacy relates significantly to performance in the workplace, even when confronted tasks are challenging (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). Other research findings suggest that after controlling for factors of years of teaching experience, students’ grade levels, and area of certification, teachers’ perceptions of their preparation are the strongest predictor of teachers’ self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002).

While numerous studies have explored teacher efficacy in general, few research efforts have been dedicated to teachers’ self-efficacy related to ELLs (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Paneque and Barbetta, 2006). Of these, findings of studies examining teachers’ self-efficacy for teaching ELLs have been mixed and in some cases, contradictory. Research conducted by Paneque and Barbetta (2006) with special education teachers of ELL students with disabilities revealed that teachers had high self-efficacy for teaching ELLs. In addition, these researchers found no statistically significant relationship between teacher preparation and teachers’ self-efficacy for teaching ELLs (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006). These results should be interpreted carefully however, as the majority of these study participants held advanced degrees in special education, were endorsed to teach English as a second language, or spoke the language of target students, factors which have been correlated with higher teacher self-efficacy for teaching ELLs (Gandara et al., 2005).
Studies conducted by Shinde and Karekatti (2012); Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010); and Siwatu (2007, 2011a, 2011b) examined preservice teachers’ self-efficacy for teaching ELLs. Findings of these research efforts reflect varied levels of teachers’ efficacy for teaching ELLs. Surveys of 100 preservice teachers in India which explored teachers’ beliefs about teaching English to primary-grade students indicate that participants had high self-efficacy for teaching English learners (Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). Conversely, two studies conducted by Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010) with 62 student teachers examined teachers’ self-efficacy regarding ELLs and perceived preparation for teaching. Analysis of the data reflected significant correlations between participants’ sense of preparation and self-efficacy. Findings revealed that respondents who believed they were well prepared had higher self-efficacy for teaching ELLs. Researchers concluded however, that overall, these preservice teachers did not feel well prepared to teach ELLs, and scores on knowledge questions administered at the time of the surveys confirmed participants’ assessments.

Results of Siwatu’s (2011b) mixed methods study suggest that school and community contexts affect preservice teachers’ sense of preparedness. Specifically, preservice teachers in this study felt more prepared to teach white, African American, and Hispanic students and ELLs in suburban school settings rather than in urban classrooms. Possible explanations offered by the researcher include field experiences for preservice teachers that often occur in middle-class, predominantly white classroom that closely resemble teachers’ own elementary school backgrounds. When teachers are confronted with the challenges of culturally and linguistically diverse students, their lack of experiences in these environments results in a “reality shock” and lowered self efficacy
(Siwate, 2011b, p. 359). In addition, Siwatu (2011b) noted, “regardless of the context, preservice teachers felt most prepared to teach White American students and less prepared to teach African American and Hispanic students, and ELLs” (p. 363).

Pre-service teachers’ weekly journal reflections provided data for Pappamihiel’s (2007) qualitative study of their beliefs about teaching ELLs. Participants enrolled in a university course participated in a community-based service-learning project (CBSL) in which they tutored an adult ELL. Findings from the analysis reflect that preservice teachers’ confidence related to teaching non-native English speaking students increased as a result of their tutoring experiences.

Studies of teachers’ preparation and self-efficacy related to teaching ELL students have implications for both teacher educators and those charged with planning teacher professional development opportunities. Research has provided evidence that teachers’ self-efficacy related to teaching ELLs students is increased through teacher preparation coursework and professional development (Gandara et al., 2005; Paneque & Barbetta, 2006; Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012; Siwatu, 2011a). Conversely, teachers’ lack of self-efficacy related to teaching ELLs has been linked to a lack of preparation in teacher education programs (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; O’Neal et al., 2008; Siwatu, 2007).

**Factors Associated with Teachers’ Perceptions of Preparation**

The results of some studies suggest that infusing coursework and field experiences with issues related to cultural diversity helped preservice teachers feel well prepared for teaching in diverse classrooms (Wiggins & Folio, 1999). However, these researchers note that findings also suggest that pre-service teachers participating in the
study did not exhibit enhanced understanding of diverse cultural expectations, nor did they feel comfortable teaching in diverse classroom settings. Other research initiatives have examined changing beliefs of teacher candidates throughout a four-year teacher education program involving fieldwork experiences in culturally diverse urban schools (Conaway et al., 2012). Researchers concluded that teachers’ perceptions of students’ abilities from urban communities changed as a result of tutoring and participating in an internship and that teachers’ stereotypical attitudes decreased.

A lack of college preparatory coursework including strategies for teaching ELLs has been cited by teachers as contributing factors to perceptions of lack of preparedness for teaching ELLs. Findings from research conducted by O’Neal, Ringler, and Rodriguez (2008), which suggest that the majority of classroom teachers in the study did not feel prepared to teach ELLs, reflect that only 14% of the teachers interviewed had taken a course in language acquisition, and almost half of the teachers had received their teaching certification within the last ten years.

While a number of studies have revealed that classroom teachers did not feel that they were adequately prepared for teaching ELLs, some research findings suggest that practicing teachers believed that they were prepared for working with linguistically diverse students (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). Further, teachers who fulfilled specific certification requirements for working with non-native English-speaking students rated themselves as significantly more capable for teaching these students (Gandara et al., 2005). When examining perceptions of novice teachers, researchers have concluded that graduates of specific preparatory programs felt that there were significantly more prepared to teach ELLs than a national sample (Darling-Hammond, Eiler, et al., 2002).
For example, pre-service teachers who met requirements for the Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) credential required for teachers were very satisfied (60 percent) or satisfied (36 percent) with their preparations for teaching ELLs (Mora & Grisham, 2001). Of particular concern are the assessments of cooperating teachers assigned to these teacher candidates, which revealed that 66 percent of the pre-service teachers demonstrated insufficient practices for working with non-native English speaking students. These findings further confirm the value of exploring how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for working with ELLs shaped their classroom practices.

While some researchers contend that the school context of pre-service teachers’ field experiences is correlated with teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to work in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms (Siwatu, 2011b), others suggest that teachers’ sense of preparedness is not correlated with their placement for pre-service field experiences, but with their teacher preparation program, while cautioning that the lack of correlation may be due to limitations of the survey used (Darling-Hammond, Eiler, et al., 2002).

The research reviewed here provides evidence that teachers’ perceptions of their preparation is linked to attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs and the implementation of instructional practices that support the language and literacy needs of these students. This dissertation study is relevant and critical in light of changing student demographics, increased teacher and school accountability, and the need for providing equitable educational opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Through this research inquiry, I endeavor to suffuse the examination of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs with conceptualizations of preparatory experiences.
provided through teacher preparatory programs and considerations of the intersections of teachers’ beliefs and practices.

**Significance of teacher preparation.** Numerous research investigations have confirmed the impact of teacher preparation on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Gandara et al., 2005) and teacher beliefs (Dunst & Bruder, 2013; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Pappamihiel, 2007; Siwatu, 2011a). Moreover, the preparation of teachers has been linked to influencing teacher beliefs and attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students (Conaway et al., 2012; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010) and to teacher self-efficacy (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Paneque & Barbeta, 2006). Findings suggest that a majority of teachers are inadequately prepared to work with students learning English as a second language (Cummins, 1997; Dorgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Mueller, Singer, & Carranza, 2006). A number of scholars have affirmed the need for changes in teacher education programs to prepare preservice teachers for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Costa, McPhail, Smith, & Brisk, 2005; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter & Owuor, 2011). The development of teaching competence in linguistically diverse settings has been addressed by teacher education programs through coursework, field experiences, and assessments of teaching practices in classroom settings. In this section, I review literature related to teacher preparation for teaching ELLs.

**Effective Preparation for Teachers of ELLs**

The theoretical foundations that undergird teacher education programs and models of instruction for students learning English as a second language situate the
context for this study. In this section, I consider characteristics of effective teacher education programs, coursework applicable to teaching ELLs, and preparatory experiences for preparing classroom teachers to support the language and literacy development of linguistically diverse students. I then turn to exploring tenets of content and pedagogical knowledge requisite for teachers serving non-native English speakers. A review of literature related to instructional practices that benefit the language and literacy development of ELLs provides background and provides additional underpinnings for the study. The following figure presents my conceptualization of the relationships among factors that contribute to the knowledge that pre-service teachers need for implementing instructional practices that support the language and literacy development for students learning English as a second language.

Figure 2.1

*Factors Influencing Instructional Decision-making of Teachers of ELLs*
Characteristics of effective teacher preparation programs. The enactment of English-only policies has profoundly affected the instruction provided for non-native English speaking students in self-contained classrooms. To meet the language and literacy needs of these students, mainstream classroom teachers must be prepared to teach ELLs, and teacher education programs across the US have implemented various approaches to preparing teachers to work with these students. When evaluating teacher preparation programs in general in the US, researchers have noted a paucity of comprehensive data (National Research Council, 2010). Program evaluators and researchers have also recognized that the field of teacher preparation for teachers working with ELLs is evolving and that research regarding these programs is still needed (August & Hakuta, 1997; Siwatu, 2011; Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). Teacher preparation programs for teachers serving linguistically diverse students ground their coursework and fieldwork experiences on the developing knowledge base related to effective teaching practices for ELLs. Research evidence exploring the attributes of effective teaching for ELL students is still emerging, and further research inquiries in this area are recommended (August & Hakuta, 1997; National Research Council, 2010).

The structure of teacher preparation programs in the US varies and may comprise traditional university-based coursework supplemented with fieldwork experiences or may take place entirely in professional development schools. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) issued teaching standards that apply to ELLs (Ballantyne, Sanderman & Levy, 2008):

- Teachers should acquire pedagogical content knowledge which addresses ELLs.
• Assessment and evaluation data should measure teachers’ preparedness to work with ELLs.

• Field experiences should provide practice and opportunities to see successful teachers model effective techniques in working with ELLs.

• Candidates should understand the range in diversity among ELLs.

• Unit should provide qualified faculty and sufficient resources to support teachers’ learning about ELLs.

The description of qualities or characteristics of effective teacher preparation programs is complex, as a lack of agreement persists among researchers pertaining to the methods of evaluating program effectiveness (National Research Council, 2010; Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). The lack of agreement on implementation of components of those programs precludes identifying specific effects of particular field experiences, methods courses, or pedagogical strategies that contribute to teaching effectiveness (National Research Council, 2010). Zeichner and Conklin (2005) substantiate these findings as they observe that a “lack of success in finding empirical support for a particular model of teacher education at the preservice level is consistent with other analyses of research on teacher education programs” (p. 704). Differences among programs in their “visions of teaching” (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005, p. 702) and difficulties in utilizing student achievement data, due to potential problems from random assignment of students to classrooms, were listed among reasons for a lack of empirical data. Thus, when considering the attributes of effective teacher preparation programs, the findings of qualitative studies of teacher education programs are well suited to illuminate common characteristics of these models.
Darling-Hammond’s (2000) case study of seven teacher preparation programs, identified as successful for educating “learner-centered” teachers, examined the goals and content of the programs, along with the competency of teachers completing the programs. The researcher conducted surveys of graduates from the program, interviews with teacher educators, observations of teacher educators during classes, and surveys and interviews with administrators in schools of program graduates. Shared characteristics of these programs included a common understanding of good teaching shared among faculty and students that was integrated throughout coursework and field experiences. Curriculum in these seven preparation programs comprised content area pedagogy, theories of learning and motivation, and work in child and adolescent development. The field experiences offered for participants in these programs extended for at least 30 weeks and were strategically located in schools, which supported educational goals consistent with those presented in university coursework. In addition, the preparation programs emphasized teacher research, portfolio evaluations, assessments of performance, and case studies to relate learning to authentic problems of teaching practices.

Case studies of six distinguished teacher education programs in the Midwest identified through national awards, state education departments, and research journals were conducted by Howey and Zimpher (1989). These researchers identified attributes of the programs, which exemplified researchers’ definitions of best practice and coherence in elementary teacher preparation programs. Common characteristics of focal teacher education programs included shared program goals, which were integrated thematically through coursework and field experiences. These programs also exhibited rigorous academic standards and balanced general and pedagogical knowledge. An
integrated approach to core teaching practices was implemented across subject
disciplines, and campus-based and school-based activities were firmly connected. The
researchers concluded that excellent teacher education programs provide adequate “life
space” opportunities within the curriculum for teachers to acquire learning to begin their
teaching careers and that curriculum, instructional, and technology resources are
available to teachers.

The difficulty of identifying and examining effective teacher preparatory
programs is illustrated through Goodlad’s (1990) case study of 29 teacher preparation
programs, which revealed that the dimensions of effective programs, as delineated by the
researcher as needed for successful teacher education, were missing or minimally evident
in these models. The researcher asserted that varied conceptualizations of desired
outcomes for teachers and students preclude a common definition of effective teacher
preparation. Goodlad offered several components of effective teacher prepare programs,
including thoughtful selection of candidates accepted into the program and program goals
that produce graduates with robust literacy practices and critical thinking. In addition,
Goodlad (1990) advocated that effective preparatory programs enable graduates to
participate in diverse field work experiences and to practice inquiry related to their own
knowledge, pedagogy, and schooling.

Across research findings of these programs, several themes emerged. Programs
that incorporate diverse field experiences for teacher candidates (Goodlad, 1990) that are
connected with university-based experiences (Howey & Zimpher, 1989) were identified
as successful. Strategically selected school locations for candidates’ field experiences
also enhanced effective teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goodlad,
1990). Shared program goals integrated between coursework and field experiences were additional characteristics of effective programs (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Howey & Zimpher, 1989).

**Elements of preparation for teaching ELLs.** Researchers suggest that preparatory coursework is a valued component of teacher education programs in general and provides a knowledge base for pre-service teachers as they begin classroom teaching (Maloch et al., 2003). In order to address the knowledge needed by teachers of ELLs, Fillmore and Snow (2000) have suggested possible teacher preparatory courses, which address foundations of language instruction for students learning English as a second language. Possible course offerings include classes in language and linguistics, language and cultural diversity, sociolinguistics for educators in a linguistically diverse society, language development, second language learning and teaching, the language of academic discourse, and text analysis and language understanding in educational settings. The researchers also note that concepts related to these course offerings may be integrated into other teacher preparatory coursework.

**Preparatory coursework.** A number of researchers highlight the value of college preparatory coursework as benefiting the preparation of teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Mora & Grisham, 2001; Panaque & Barbetta, 2006; Pappamihiel, 2007; Siwatu, 2011; Ullucci, 2010; Wiggins & Folio, 2010). Moreover, teachers’ beliefs and classroom practices for teaching in culturally diverse contexts may be influenced by college preparatory coursework (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Milner, 2005; Wiggins & Folio, 2010).
Researchers have suggested that inquiry-based approaches and reflection on teaching practices facilitate teacher learning (August & Hakuta, 1997). Findings from Pappamihiel’s (2007) qualitative inquiry of preservice teachers’ journaling of field experiences support the value of these methods. Other positive learning outcomes for preservice teachers are reflected in the application of teaching strategies from preparatory coursework (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). Student teachers in Durgunoglu and Hughes’ (2010) study applied cooperative learning techniques, think-alouds, and implemented student chosen projects during their field experience placements, indicating application of learning from their coursework.

Some studies have explored teachers’ knowledge base for teaching ELLs, while examining the influences of coursework and field experiences during teachers’ participation in teacher education programs. Panaque and Barbetta’s (2006) research of 202 special education teachers serving ELLs revealed that participants identified preservice preparatory coursework in second-language acquisition as supportive of teacher knowledge. These teachers also reflected that university coursework in teaching English as a second language benefitted their knowledge of teaching ELLs. Fieldwork experiences with ELLs during their pre-service preparation programs were identified by study participants as facilitative of their pedagogical knowledge. Teacher participants recommended early and multiple field-based experiences with supervisors who are proficient in ESL pedagogy to facilitate the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers serving linguistically diverse students.

Interestingly, these teachers also recommended that coursework in the primary language of ELLs would promote teacher knowledge for assisting students learning
English as a second language (Panaque & Barbetta, 2006). This suggestion may be problematic, as the identification of the primary language of students in potential placements is unlikely. Researchers emphasize the critical nature of teachers’ knowledge of students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, along with the ability to communicate with families and community members of ELL students, to promote students’ language and academic proficiency.

The perceptions of six practicing teachers in culturally diverse settings, who had been identified as successful teachers by school administrators, were examined by Ullucci (2010). During interviews, these teachers reflected that strategies for working with ELLs during their teacher preparation courses were invaluable in the classroom. Specific instruction related to comparisons of BICS, basic interpersonal communication skills, and CALP, cognitive academic language proficiency, were cited by teachers as important to their understanding of language development. These teachers also mentioned specific lectures during class sessions that were meaningful and which helped them approach language and cultural diversity differently. In addition, simulations and videos portraying immigrant communities were beneficial to teachers’ learning.

Mora and Grisham’s (2001) qualitative analysis of preservice teachers’ coursework assignments and subsequent interviews provides evidence that information presented through a university class benefited teachers’ abilities to teach ELLs. As part of a reading methods class, teacher candidates administered a language assessment with a primary student from a bilingual classroom. Further, study participants analyzed a writing sample from the student using a scoring rubric, examined the students’ school cumulative record, and wrote a case study of the focal student. Four teacher candidates
participated in focus group interviews with the professor/researcher two weeks after the class ended. Study participants’ responses reflected their knowledge of instructional strategies from their methods class for ELL students with varying levels of language development. Specifically, these preservice teachers discussed using realia, word study, explicit vocabulary instruction, and knowledge of students’ cultures as instructional strategies for linguistically diverse students. The results of these research findings provide evidence that preservice teacher coursework supports teacher development and knowledge to work with ELL students.

**Preparatory field experiences for teachers of ELLs.** Studies have confirmed the value of field-based experiences as beneficial to classroom teachers in general (Maloch et al., 2003). For example, in-service teachers who had attended one of eight colleges and universities that had been designated as Sites of Excellence in Reading Teacher Education (SERTE) identified components of their teacher preparation programs that they valued, including “college classroom practices, field experiences, and the knowledge base gained from coursework” (Maloch et al., 2003, p. 449). Conclusions from the study included the observation that teacher preparation programs that provide coursework with a purpose; opportunities for field experiences, and adequate preparation for instruction of reading help teachers with facing the challenges of the classroom, a finding that is certainly applicable to the purposes of this inquiry.

The NCATE diversity standard for teachers of ELLs requires preservice teachers to work with these students during their preparation program. The NCELA (2008) report suggests that preservice teacher education programs integrate various configurations of coursework and field experiences (Ballantyne et al., 2008). The structure of these
programs ranges from complete field-based learning to traditional formats in which most of the coursework is based at the university site. Typically, universities structure teacher preparation programs to align with certification requirements of the state. Programs leading to certification generally include foundations of education, instructional methods, and practicum or field experiences.

The Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States, sponsored by the National Academy of Science, conducted research on teacher preparation programs, and reported that teachers perceive field experiences as valuable components of their teacher preparation program (National Research Council, 2010). However, researchers have also concluded that delaying multicultural awareness until teachers’ student teaching assignments is too late to have significant effects on teachers’ beliefs and practices (Wiggins & Folio, 1999). Therefore, preservice teachers need multiple experiences with issues of linguistic and cultural diversity infused throughout their preparatory programs (Conaway et al., 2012; Wiggins & Folio, 1999).

Researchers contend that providing opportunities for preservice teachers to have experiences with ELLs during their teacher preparation program is essential, as they will likely teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Panaque & Barbeta, 2006; Siwatu, 2011). Recommendations for early and varied field-based experiences with ELL students have been suggested as critical for preparing teachers (Panaque & Barbeta, 2006). Further, fieldwork experiences provide opportunities for preservice teachers to practice pedagogical content knowledge strategies with non-native English speaking students (Panaque & Barbeta, 2006; Pappamihiel, 2007).
Fieldwork placements in schools with culturally and linguistically diverse students provide opportunities for preservice teachers to observe more knowledgeable teachers as they model effective teaching strategies for ELLs. Research suggests that opportunities for field experiences with guided practice in settings with culturally and linguistically diverse students benefit preservice teachers (Conaway et al., 2012; Panaque & Barbeta, 2006; Wiggins & Folio, 2010). Ullucci’s (2010) case study substantiates the value of field experiences, as practicing teachers related that opportunities to engage with ELLs during student teaching placements benefited their development as teachers. These types of field-based experiences also provide opportunities for mastery experiences of preservice teachers, thus prompting teachers’ self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Panaque & Barbeta, 2006; Siwatu, 2011).

Pappamihiel’s (2007) qualitative analysis of 130 pre-service teachers’ journals as they participated in a community-based service learning project indicates that tutoring experiences with ELLs altered participants’ negative attitudes and biases toward immigrants and linguistically diverse individuals. These field-based experiences prompted participants to link strategies learned in university coursework with actual teaching practices. The researcher observed that “these authentic, situated experiences were much more powerful than any concept I could have taught in class” (Pappamihiel, 2007, p. 56).

Teaching ELL students is a complex task, and there are no “one size fits all” answers for preparing teachers to meet the language and literacy needs of linguistically diverse students. Researchers, educators, and policy makers disagree on the program models and instructional practices which benefit the language acquisition and academic
achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The challenge for teacher preparation programs is to provide teacher candidates with an understanding of effective instruction for ELLs, adequate content and pedagogical content knowledge, and preparatory experiences through coursework and field placements. This study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs adds to the field of knowledge of the components of effective teacher education programs.

**Summary.** The paucity of research devoted to evaluating teacher education programs for preparing preservice teachers to work with ELLs calls for an examination of elements of these programs. As I surveyed characteristics of experiences affecting teachers’ preparation, I applied elements of ESL instruction to preparing teachers for working with ELLs. In light of current demographic trends and the need for classroom teachers to be prepared to meet the language and literacy needs of linguistically diverse students, this is clearly an area that is worthy of future research efforts.

**Teacher knowledge for ESL instruction.** The knowledge that teachers need to provide instruction for linguistically diverse students has been a concern among researchers, teacher educators, and teachers. Due to prescribed instructional models for ELLs, elementary level classroom teachers must be prepared to provide language, literacy, and content specific instruction for their non-native English speaking students. When considering the knowledge base recommended for teachers generally, Shulman (1987) provides categories for the knowledge base needed by teachers:

- Content knowledge
• General pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom managements and organization that appear to transcend subject matter

• Curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as “tools of the trade” for teachers

• Pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding

• Knowledge of learners and their characteristics

• Knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group of classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures

• Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds

Incorporating these objectives into elementary teacher education programs is a complex task, and addressing these learning goals for pre-service teachers while aiming to incorporate coursework and field experiences that prepare teachers for linguistically diverse students has been a challenge for teacher educators. Part of the difficulty, as noted by Goldenberg (2010), stems from a paucity of research findings that address “comprehensive policies and practices – including, very critically, guidelines for determining the skills and knowledge teachers need to be effective with ELLs” (p. 20).

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Content Standards Applied to ELLs address components of teacher knowledge (Ballantyne et al., 2008, p. 24):
Teachers should understand the cultural backgrounds of their students.

Teachers should acquire pedagogical content knowledge, including knowledge of accommodations and assessments, which address ELLs.

Teachers should know how to involve their student’s families and communities in education.

Other researchers acknowledge the critical nature of teachers’ ability to collaborate with families of their non-native English speaking students, while identifying skills and knowledge for teachers that engender success in teaching ELLs, including the capability to communicate with students, a knowledge of English forms, mechanics, and purposes and the ability to provide instruction in these, and self-efficacy for working with ELLs (Gandara et al., 2005). In addition, teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students need “knowledge about the linguistic structures of various ethnic communication styles as well as contextual features, logic and rhythm, delivery, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures, and body movements” (Gay, 2002). Recommendations offered by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (2002) for preparing teachers to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students include acknowledging sociocultural factors that influence language acquisition, learning theories of second language acquisition, incorporating students’ native languages in teaching, and utilizing strategies for scaffolding instruction in all content areas. Thus, teachers of ELLs are encouraged to recognize and affirm students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds and strengths and to incorporate language objectives into content area instruction. In addition, teachers should understand how to incorporate students’ native
languages in instruction and how to build collaborative relationships with families of their ELL students.

Content knowledge for elementary teachers. According to Shulman (2004), teachers’ content knowledge generally comprises research and literature in the content areas, the historical and theoretical foundations of the field, and the knowledge that is to be learned by students. The report of the National Academy of Science contends that the content knowledge of elementary teachers should include a strong background in liberal arts (Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States, n.d.) The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) recommends that teachers of English language arts have the ability to:

- illustrate the close relationship between how home language, native language, dialect, and a second language are acquired, developed, and utilized in the classroom and can articulate the importance, therefore, of helping students strengthen their language abilities through the provision of developmentally suitable experiences throughout their schooling (Ballantyne et al., 2008, p. 42).

For teachers of ELLs, content knowledge includes theories of second language acquisition and historical and political factors that influence instruction for ELLs in the U. S. Research findings related to instructional practices which facilitate English language acquisition and dimensions of student engagement and learning are components of content knowledge for teachers of non-native English speaking students.

In addition to content knowledge in mathematics, science, social studies, and the language arts, elementary classroom teachers serving ELL students require content knowledge specific to teaching non-native English speakers. The content knowledge for
teachers of ELL students includes elements of theories of second-language acquisition, uses and purposes of language, and language skill development. Fillmore and Snow (2000) have delineated the content language necessary for teachers of ELLs. Their recommendations comprise fundamental understandings of aspects of oral language related to the basic units of language, regular and irregular word forms, and structures of vocabulary. Further, the researchers contend that teachers need knowledge of the dimensions of written language, including English spelling irregularities, structures of narrative and expository writing, and methods of assessing students’ written products.

Research conducted by Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) suggests that successful teaching for ELLs requires that teachers have adequate “knowledge of language uses, forms, mechanics, and how to teach these” (p. 3). Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy (2008) recommend that content knowledge for teachers of ELLs relevant to language theories should comprise an understanding of the differences between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), along with an appreciation for students’ cultural backgrounds and linguistic experiences. Moreover, teachers need an understanding of the various uses of language in community and school settings (Fillmore & Snow; 2000; Heath, 1983).

Harper and de Jong (2004) assert that teachers of ELLs should understand that the process of second language acquisition differs from first language acquisition. Further, students’ cultural differences related to schooling may contrast with classroom expectations in mainstream classroom. Other specific recommendations for teachers’ knowledge address the recognition of student progress in second language acquisition.
Students acquiring English as a second language may use invented spelling or incorporate codeswitching within their written or spoken language as they transfer native language practices to English. In addition, as students acquire a second language, they may enter a silent phase, or a period when listening comprehension precedes language production (Krashen, n.d.).

A lack of adequate content knowledge related to theories and stages of second-language acquisition may have significant implications for teachers of ELL students. Research of 729 teachers in an area with a large population of culturally and linguistically diverse students reflects that 42% of these teachers agreed that the academic achievement of ELLs would improve if they acquired literacy in their native language; 27% believed that they would not improve academically; and 32% were unsure (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). Researchers concluded that these findings reflect a lack of teacher knowledge of theory and research regarding the influence of students’ primary language on academic achievement.

**General pedagogical knowledge.** General pedagogical knowledge is defined by Shulman (1997) as “broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter” (p. 8). When considering issues of classroom management and organization for teachers of ELLs, the classroom environment and teachers’ expectations exert a powerful influence on creating a classroom community that reflects respect among students and toward culturally diverse populations (Powell, 2011; Rightmyer, 2011). Gay (2002) states that preservice teachers need “a more thorough knowledge of the specific cultures of different ethnic groups, how they affect learning behaviors, and how classroom interactions and instruction can be
changed to embrace these differences” (p. 114). Recommendations for preservice teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students further encompass the study of literature related to students’ cultures, the development of understandings of students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and preparation to implement student inquiry projects and projects using students’ cultural resources (Paris & Ball, 2009).

The NCELA (2008) report for building teacher capacity includes criteria that teachers of ELL students will have knowledge of cultural differences and “interpret student behavior in light of different cultural beliefs” (Ballyntyne et al., 2008, p. 39). Pedagogical knowledge of practices that promote interaction and collaboration enable students to practice academic discourse while constructing meaning (McIntyre, 2010; Powers, 2011; Waxman & Tellez, 2002). As teachers communicate high expectations, assess student understanding, and provide feedback according to high standards, students are viewed as capable learners (McIntyre, 2010; Powell, 2011; Rightmyer, 2011).

Sociocultural theories of language and learning emphasize pedagogical knowledge of values of respecting and empowering students and the knowledge that “learning occurs through social interaction” (Hammerberg, 2004, p. 655). A number of researchers assert that teachers’ ability to communicate with ELLs and to involve students’ families in classroom and school activities are elements of successful teaching practices (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Gandara et al., 2005; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994).

The components of teachers’ general pedagogic knowledge related to teaching ELLs presented here are not inclusive. The constructs of pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are interwoven and in many cases, indiscriminate. Literature published in recent years relating to pedagogy for teaching ELLs confirms
generally accepted views of teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge. It should be noted that examples of pedagogical knowledge often overlap with elements of pedagogical content knowledge.

**Pedagogical content knowledge for classroom teachers.** Shulman’s description of pedagogical content knowledge, “the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (2004, p. 28) is particularly applicable to working with non-native English speaking students. The Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States (2010), reports that pedagogical content knowledge, referring to “an understanding of how students’ learning develops in that field, the kinds of misconceptions students may develop, and strategies for addressing students’ evolving needs” is a critical component of teaching proficiency (National Research Council). The first NCATE standard applies to the “knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers, including their content area knowledge, their pedagogical content knowledge, their knowledge of learning styles, strategies and differences, and their professional dispositions” (Ballantyne et al., 2008, p. 13). In order to facilitate quality instruction for students learning English as a second language, teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge should encompass the knowledge to facilitate the language development of ELLs while teaching content related knowledge (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Pedagogical content knowledge is discipline specific; teachers of ELLs integrate language and content instruction to facilitate student learning. Effective pedagogical content knowledge is
demonstrated through teachers’ ability to support students’ English language acquisition for both social and academic purposes.

Elements of pedagogical content knowledge that enhance student learning for both native English speakers and for ELLs are delineated within the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) for effective classroom instructional practices (Powell, Cantrell, Correll, & Malo-Juvera, 2014). By grounding instruction in students’ family and cultural backgrounds, teachers build on student prior knowledge, thus promoting student engagement and academic achievement (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; McIntyre, 2010; Cantrell & Wheeler, 2011; Waxman & Tellez, 2002).

Pedagogical content knowledge related to prompting student engagement through hands-on, authentic learning activities provides opportunities for students to practice language while developing conceptual knowledge. Setting goals for the practice and development of ELLs’ academic vocabulary facilitates language proficiency and academic development (Cantrell & Wheeler, 2011; Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Goldenberg, 2010). In addition, teachers need pedagogical knowledge related to instructional strategies that scaffold student learning and enhance students’ conceptual knowledge (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; McIntyre, 2010; Cantrell & Wheeler, 2011). These instructional practices may include adjusting speech, modeling, demonstrating, using graphic organizers, and using gestures, pantomime, and movement to prompt student comprehension (Goldenberg, 2010; Echevarria & Vogt, 2010). In addition, using visuals, pictures, realia, and illustrations enhances comprehension for ELLs (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Goldenberg, 2010; Waxman & Tellez, 2002).
In this section, I presented literature related to preparing teachers for working with ELLs. I created Figure 2.2 to conceptualize the intersections of constructs that contribute to the preparation of teachers to implement practices benefitting the language and literacy development of non-native English speaking students.

Figure 2.2

*The Multiple Dimensions of Teacher Preparation for Teaching ELLs*

### Instructional Strategies for ELLs

Scholars and researchers recommend multiple specific instructional strategies for supporting the language and literacy development of non-native English speaking students (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Krashen, n.d.; Purcell-Gates, 2004), In this section, I examine the literature pertaining to recommendations from scholars and researchers for elements of instruction that benefit the academic achievement of ELLs.

The National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth issued recommendations for the instruction of ELLs in their 2006 report (August & Shanahan, 2006). Major findings suggest that direct instruction, which may include phonics,
fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, as one component of literacy programs, benefit non-native English speakers. In addition, the panel concludes that oral proficiency and literacy in students’ native language supports language and literacy development in English. Other factors affecting instruction for ELLs are students’ proficiency in their primary language, prior schooling, literacy development in the primary language, and similarities and differences between English and the primary language.

**CREDE standards of effective pedagogy for ELLs.** The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) identified five standards of effective pedagogy for ELLs, which have informed other instructional models. The CREDE standards include joint productive activity, which includes teacher created opportunities for the teacher and students to work together to achieve learning goals through common experiences and collaboration. Examples of instructional practices that indicate joint productive activity in a classroom include opportunities for student collaboration to pursue a common learning goal or learning objective and flexible grouping of students by language usage, mixed ability levels, and student interests.

Addressing the language development needs of students is another component of effective instruction for ELLs identified by CREDE. Because school knowledge and thinking depend on language, the development of language for social and academic purposes is essential for student academic achievement. Teaching strategies which facilitate the language development of students learning English as a second language comprise abundant opportunities for students to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening during content-area instruction; promoting students’ use of native and English
during learning activities; and using wait-time, eye-contact, and turn taking to encourage students’ verbal responses.

CREDE recommendations also include contextualization of classroom curriculum to students’ cultural backgrounds and making connections with students’ home and personal experiences. “Schema theorists, cognitive scientists, behaviorists, and psychological anthropologists agree that school learning is made meaningful by connecting it to students’ personal, family and community experiences” (CREDE, n.d.) Incorporating challenging activities, the fourth CREDE standard, supports students’ cognitive development while encouraging students’ thinking and analysis. Classroom instructional tasks that encourage complex thinking while building on students’ prior knowledge benefit student learning and successful performance.

The fifth CREDE standard applies to students’ engagement in instructional conversations. As teachers listen to students’ responses and infer intended meanings, they adjust instruction to facilitate student comprehension and learning. Instructional conversation strategies involve teachers reducing the amount of teacher talk to encourage student conversations, listening to make assessments of student learning, and prompting students to support their views with text and other evidence. Students’ participation in instructional conversations supports their abilities to formulate and express ideas while creating a classroom learning community.

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).** The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is an instructional model providing guidelines for the instruction of ELLs (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010). The SIOP approach emphasizes incorporating teaching strategies that support students’ English language development,
while facilitating students’ content learning. The SIOP includes eight components of effective teaching practices for ELLs: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment.

Examples of instructional techniques consistent with sheltered instruction include providing opportunities for students to engage in academic discussions with peers, asking students to use graphic organizers, and journal writing. Reading and writing workshops are examples of process approaches related to this instructional model. Studies of schools where teachers implemented the SIOP model reflect that incorporating these methods supports the academic English language proficiency of students, even when language instruction is provided in content area courses, such as science, math, and social studies (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006; McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Munoz, & Beldon, 2010; Short et al., 2012).

While the CREDE standards and the SIOP model both emphasize student collaboration, English language development, connections to students’ backgrounds, and student verbal interactions, the CREDE standards also include challenging activities for students. In contrast, the SIOP model includes recommendations for comprehensible input and lesson delivery and assessment.

**Vocabulary instruction for ELLs.** The effects of limited proficiency in academic English become more evident when students reach about the third grade level, and demands upon reading comprehension increase with higher levels of content-specific vocabulary. Vocabulary development is crucial for ELLs at higher grade levels, and educators are encouraged to provide direct vocabulary instruction, activities to support
content area knowledge, and opportunities for oral language practice (August & Hakuta, 1997; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Goldenberg, 2010). Varied forms of visual representations related to concepts and vocabulary, and verbal activities including poems, songs, and repeated readings are recommended strategies for students learning English as a second language (Goldenberg, 2010). Additional recommendations for ELLs include using students’ native language for restating or clarifying, explaining new concepts in student’s native language, and comparing English with students’ native language.

Instructional strategies recommended by Garcia and Garcia (2010) include vocabulary instruction through reading and writing experiences, inquiry practices implementing KWL (what we know, what we want to learn, and what we found) charts, and pictures, posters, and charts. The writers offer other suggestions for teachers, including strategic use of Tier 1 vocabulary, or high frequency, conversational words; Tier 2 words, or academic vocabulary; and Tier 3 vocabulary, or content specific words; in their classroom instruction. Teachers are encouraged to implement teacher modeling, making text predictions, and creating graphic organizers as practices that enhance ELLs’ language development and academic achievement.

**Generally effective teaching practices for ELLs.** Examples of effective teaching practices for native English speakers that also benefit ELLs include explicit student objectives; authentic learning contexts; engaging and motivating activities; opportunities for transfer and application; assessment, feedback, and reteaching as appropriate; and interactions with peers. Cooperative learning, opportunities for reading in English, classroom discussions, and mastery learning are additional strategies identified by the National Literacy Panel as supportive of ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). However,
simply pairing ELLs with native English speakers will not necessarily result in ELLs’ literacy development, as research findings suggest that English speaking students lack knowledge of how to help their ELL peers (Goldenberg, 2010).

McIntyre (2010) integrates recommendations from the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) and CREDE, to frame six principles for curriculum accommodations for ELL students. Specifically, teachers are encouraged to learn about students’ backgrounds, to avoid deficit perspectives of ELL students, and to assess students’ level of achievement. Students learning English as a second language benefit from cooperative learning experiences, making connections with other content areas, opportunities for academic discourse, and involving families in school and classroom instruction. McIntyre confirms principles from CREDE standards, which include maintaining high expectations for learners and instructional conversations, to enhance student learning.

Also noteworthy are the CREDE findings that process approaches, which de-emphasize explicit instruction, were “‘not sufficient to promote acquisition of the specific skills that comprise reading and writing . . . [F]ocused and explicit instruction in particular skills and subskills is called for if ELLs are to become efficient and effective readers and writers’” (Goldenberg, 2010, p. 29). The NLP review is consistent with this report, describing a lack of research of culturally compatible strategies that result in ELL’s increased academic achievement (August & Shanahan, 2006). The review also notes that print materials in students’ preferred languages promote performance and that texts which are culturally meaningful facilitate student comprehension.
Much of the extant literature supports the value of providing explicit instruction in English literacy to enhance the language development and academic achievement of ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Barone, 2010; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Kamps et al. 2007; Mathes, Pollard-Durodola, Cardenas-Hagan, Linan-Thompson, & Vaughn, 2007; McIntyre et al., 2010). These types of instruction include phonemic awareness, phonics, and strategies for reading comprehension (Barone, 2010). Explicit vocabulary instruction is critical for students to acquire language for both social and academic purposes (August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2010).

Findings of research reflect that comprehensible input is critical for construction of meaning for ELL students (Curtin, 2005; Kim, 2008). The benefits of activating ELL students’ prior knowledge are supported with research findings from studies conducted by Brown and Broemmel (2011) and Pacheco (2010). In addition, integrating classroom instructional methods related to topics of interest to ELL students, while incorporating multiple opportunities for students to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking, has been observed to facilitate language development (Brown & Broemmel, 2011; Curtin, 2005; Pacheco, 2010; Ranker, 2009).

Implementing scaffolding to support students’ language acquisition was identified in a number of studies as an effective strategy with ELL students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Brown & Broemmel, 2011; Curtin, 2005; Reyes & Azuara, 2008). Enhanced language development of ESL students was observed in classrooms which were oriented to reducing student anxiety and which encouraged student conversations (Curtin, 2005).
Summary

Using sociocultural theories of language and learning as a framework (Cummins, 1997; Heath, 1983; Vygotsky, 1986), this study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach ELL students attempts to conceptualize the components of teacher preparatory experiences that benefit preservice teachers. Undergirding the study are theories of teacher education and second language acquisition and the influence of sociocultural factors, including personal experiences, environment, and culture (Bakhtin, 1986; Cummins, 1984; Hymes, 1974; Labov, 1972; Vygotsky, 1986), along with the instructional activities conducted within school settings (Heath, 1982; Krashen, n.d.; Wilkinson & Silliman, 1990). Contextual issues of prescribed models of instruction for non-native English speaking students (Garcia, 2011; Iddings, 2005) and legislated constraints limiting models of instruction provide another point of entry for this research.

The research literature providing background for this study includes studies of instructional practices that benefit linguistically diverse students (Echevarria, et al., 2006; Goldenberg, 2010; Purcell-Gates, Jacobsen, & Degener, 2004), content and pedagogical knowledge that teachers need for teaching ELLs (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Gay, 2002; Shulman, 1987); and the relationships between teacher preparation and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Gandara et al., 2005). As I undertook this dissertation research, these studies substantiated the critical nature of teacher preparation and the need for research in this field.

The literature reviewed for this study comprises research of broad areas of teachers’ perceptions of preparation (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008; Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002) and focal areas of teachers’ perceptions of preparation for
linguistically diverse students (Paneque & Barbeta, 2006; Siwatu, 2011a). These studies indicate that research devoted to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for linguistically diverse students is important and warranted.
Chapter 3: Methods

Study Design

To answer the research questions related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English language learners, I conducted a qualitative research study. The question that guided this dissertation research was: What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English language learners? The subordinate questions for this study were: (a) What types of preparatory and professional development experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs?; (b) How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their practices with ELL students?

Qualitative research is “empathic, working to understand individual perceptions” (Stake, 2010, p. 15) and involves thick description to interpret findings (Althiede & Johnson, 1994). By undertaking this research inquiry, I sought to understand teachers’ perceptions of their preparation and of experiences that benefitted their preparation for working with ELLs. Further, this study included narrative descriptions of classroom teachers’ perceptions. I asked participating teachers to think deeply as they practiced reflection, evaluation, and analysis while describing their preparatory experiences for teaching ELLs. Because qualitative research examines the intersections of narratives and actions, this approach was particularly applicable to the research question devoted to examining how teachers’ perceptions of preparation shaped their classroom practices (Glesne, 2011).

To conduct this investigation of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language, I implemented case study
methodology. Case studies are a type of qualitative research that allow researchers “to probe the meanings of situations and to report to readers the complexity of personal performance” (Stake, 2011, p. 65). The questions that I pursued through this research are well suited for case study design, as I conducted a detailed examination of teachers’ perceptions of their own preparation, along with their conceptualizations of preparatory experiences that facilitate teachers’ content and pedagogical knowledge related to teaching ELLs. As a particular type of case study, instrumental case study research is designed “mainly to provide insight into an issue” (Stake, p. 445). I undertook this research project as an instrumental case study with the objective of adding to the field of knowledge of teacher preparation for linguistically diverse students. In addition, instrumental case studies allow researchers to select cases for their typicality (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Thus, the selection of four public elementary schools for this research study is appropriate, as similar to public schools in general, the experiences of the in-service teacher participants in these four schools represent a wide range of teacher preparation programs, prior teaching experiences, and personal attributes. I was familiar with these four schools, as I had visited each of them on several occasions in my role as a research assistant for the evaluation of a professional development grant. To conduct this research, I invited 120 in-service teachers from these four selected schools to participate in the study, 79 teachers volunteered to take part in the study, and four of these teachers were selected as focal participants based upon their survey responses. A detailed description of the method for selecting these four focal participants is provided in the section addressing site and participant selection. These teachers’ perceptions represent a range of higher and lower levels of preparation for ELLs, and the four focal teachers
demonstrate a wide spectrum of classroom practices. As such, I undertook this instrumental case study to explore dimensions of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs and how teachers’ sense of preparedness shaped their classroom practices.

Stake advocates, “selecting a case of some typicality but leaning toward those cases that seem to offer opportunity to learn” (p. 451). For this research, the diverse community contexts of selected schools within two rural counties, the social, cultural and economic attributes of these four school sites, the unique characteristics of the student populations, and the diversity of preparatory experiences of participating teachers provided rich data and facilitated depth of analysis. The opportunities to explore teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach ELLs, teachers’ impressions of preparatory coursework and field experiences that benefit the development knowledge and skills for serving linguistically diverse students, and the connections between teachers’ sense of preparedness and their classroom practices are appropriate for this instrumental case study research.

**Researcher Position**

Because this qualitative research relied on my observations, interpretations, and analysis, acknowledging and describing my own experiences, background, and perspectives were important considerations for this study. Janesick (2000) contends that “there is no value-free or bias-free design . . . the qualitative researcher identifies his or her own biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study” (p. 385). As other writers have observed, researchers have a responsibility to address their own biases and to describe the impact of those biases on the study design, data collection, and
findings. The design of this study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs emanated from my personal and professional background and interests. The selection of data collection methods that I employed was also influenced by my experiences in working with preservice teachers as a college instructor and student teacher supervisor. Informing readers with descriptions of the researcher’s personal histories, their methods, the settings, and their relationships with study participants is important in qualitative studies (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). As observed by Borland (2004), “When we do interpretations, we bring our own knowledge, experience, and concerns to our material, and the result, we hope, is a richer, more textured understanding of its meaning” (p. 532). As I conducted this research, it was my intention to use my experiences as a teacher, undergraduate instructor, and researcher as I interpreted the data. Thus, my interests in this study topic, the theories of language, learning, and second language acquisition that I hold, and my experiences as an educator provided the lens through which I framed this study.

As I undertook this project, I was mindful that my background, theories, beliefs, and biases have influenced my understandings and interpretations. My background experiences are similar to most of the pre-service teachers whom I have taught and supervised in the field. As a monolingual, middle-class White female who grew up in a Midwestern suburban area, I had few experiences with culturally and linguistically diverse students when I began teaching in elementary classrooms. My preparatory college field experiences and student teaching assignment were in predominately White elementary schools, and although I subsequently taught in elementary schools in four states, my students primarily came from White, mostly middle-class families. As I
began my graduate studies in literacy, I struggled to examine my own biases as I reflected and questioned my beliefs and assumptions. As part of my graduate coursework, I tutored non-native English speaking adults in English language and literacy and was challenged to check the lens through which I view language, culture, and privilege.

While teaching undergraduate education classes in teacher preparation programs at two major universities, my students were mostly mono-lingual, middle-class White females. Although these prospective teachers aspired to teach in public schools, they struggled with learning to plan and implement instruction for their non-native English speaking students. Further, after receiving their student teaching assignments, some of these novice teachers expressed their reluctance to teach in high-poverty, culturally diverse schools and stated their preferences for teaching in middle-class, White, higher-achieving schools. As a student teaching supervisor, I observed the challenges that these beginning teachers experienced as they struggled at times to develop positive classroom relationships with students of color, to plan instruction using students’ cultural backgrounds and experiences, and to meet the language and literacy needs of their ELL students. Yet, the reality is that upon completion of their programs, these novice teachers will likely have non-native English speaking students in their classrooms and will need to be adequately prepared to facilitate learning for these students.

An additional factor influencing my decision to conduct this research inquiry was prompted by my observations as I served as a university student teaching supervisor. Two of the student teachers with whom I worked were assigned to classrooms in a local public elementary school with a large percentage of Hispanic ELL students. Due to the nature of my supervisor responsibilities, I visited the school on at least six occasions and
observed instruction in a first-grade classroom four times in one semester. During those classroom observations, I had the opportunity to talk with the first-grade cooperating teacher on several occasions and to observe reading and writing lessons conducted in her class. In addition, I met the school ESL teacher who talked with me about the accomplishments of Hispanic students in the class who had begun the school year in August without speaking or understanding English. By the second semester of school, these first-graders were reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English, and I was amazed at the progress these young learners had made during the course of the school year. As I observed these students reading and writing one-syllable words during their literacy block, I began to ponder the types of instruction that had helped these students acquire English reading and writing skills. I was profoundly impressed with the English reading and writing achievement of these first-grade students who had begun the school year speaking no English.

During my previous visits to the school, I had learned that approximately 80% of the students are Hispanic, that 50% of the students enter school with limited proficiency in English, and that 95% of the student population qualifies for the free or reduced lunch program. I also learned that school-wide student scores on the state mandated achievement test had increased significantly from previous years. (School test scores released subsequently to that school year have declined. However, first-grade students do not participate in that testing program.) As a result, I began to question the preparation that these classroom teachers had received for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, as almost all faculty members in the school were monolingual White females. My personal observations in this classroom had confirmed ELL students’
acquisition of English reading and writing practices and prompted my interest in pursuing a study of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs.

As I framed this study, acknowledging my personal beliefs and assumptions were important as I collected and analyzed data, as these beliefs influenced my perspectives and situated the study. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), “the process of analysis cannot but rely on the existing ideas of the ethnographer and those that he or she can get access to in the literature. What is important is that these do not take the form of pre-judgments, forcing interpretation of the data, . . . but are instead used as resources to make sense of the data” (p. 163). Prior to beginning my project, I reflected on Esterberg’s (2002) questions for researchers, “What are your own biases and preconceptions? What are your own investments in particular issues and in particular ways of seeing the world? What do you already think you know, and how do you know it?” (p. 13). My background of experience and study has led me to beliefs consistent with constructivist theories of learning, language, and literacy, and the implications of these theories have deeply influenced the research questions, the methodology, and the methods used for this study. Moreover, the connections of my personal theories of teaching and learning influenced the analysis of data collected for the research (Esterberg, 2002).

The framework for my research evolved as I examined Flyvberg’s (2004) theory that “the constructive perspective creates the point of departure for the development of an alternative concept of social science, one based on context, judgment, and practical knowledge” (p. 24). The connection of constructive, sociocultural perspectives with my study was clear, as I conducted observations within the contexts of public school
classrooms, utilized personal judgments as I gathered and analyzed data, and formulated assertions through a sociocultural lens of language and literacy. My background and beliefs have been influenced by Bourdieu’s (1991) theories related to language and society as he argues that “speakers lacking the legitimate competence are *de facto* excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence,” (p. 55). If we are to help prepare children to function as productive members of an equitable society, it is imperative that educators provide the most effective instructional strategies in order to facilitate the English literacy of non-native English speaking students.

When considering the theories of second language learning and literacy development that would provide a framework for my study, I also examined the cultural and cognitive influences on literacy presented by Purcell-Gates, Degener, and Jacobsen (2004), “we see cognition as occurring always within cultural contexts, which we define as settings for human activity shaped by social structures, languages, conventions, history, and goals” (pp. 26-27). The challenges for students learning English as a second language are enormous as these students negotiate a language that may be unfamiliar in their homes, cultures, and previous experiences.

This research study emanated from the ontological perspective that meaning is complex, fluid, and socially constructed as individuals interact with societal beliefs and language (Glesne, 2011). While I developed questions and methods to guide this study, the inquiry process followed a reflexive, emergent design, and I recognized that changes and shifts in the process would possibly occur as a result of participants’ responses or emerging data (Creswell, 2009).
My role within this study fell within a participant-observer continuum, leaning toward mostly observation within classroom settings (Glesne, 2011). As a guest in participating teachers’ classrooms, I conducted observations of teachers’ instructional practices, and I did not want to interfere with instruction in any way, nor did I plan to participate in classroom discussions with students or the teacher. However, as Esterberg notes, “while it is possible for you to participate minimally in a setting and for participants to be unaware that you’re observing, most researchers participate at least in some ways” (p. 61). Interactions with teachers and students occurred informally during the course of this research, although I expected this, as in my prior experiences conducting classroom observations, students at times asked questions or initiated conversations with me. Further, I developed personal relationships with participating teachers as I visited their classrooms and asked for their consent to use their surveys, classroom observations, and interview responses for my research.

It should be noted that prior to beginning the current study, I had visited each of the four participating schools on multiple occasions in my role as a research assistant. One of my primary job responsibilities in this capacity was to conduct classroom observations and teacher interviews for evaluative purposes as part of the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) professional development grant. I had also participated in writing annual evaluation reports for the CRIOP project, and I was involved in research presentations and publications surrounding this work. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that my involvement in the CRIOP program may have influenced my perspectives and the lens through which I conducted classroom observations and interviews for the current study, along with my interpretations and
analyses of data. Due to the nature of my visits as a research assistant and the fact that I often spent entire days at each school in this role, I had developed a relationship with many of the teachers, support staff, and school administrators, although I was not involved in providing professional development or classroom support for teachers participating in the CRIOP project. However, I acknowledge that due to the nature of my personal experiences in conducting classroom observations and teacher interviews with a purpose of evaluating culturally responsive practices, my views, impressions, and interpretations may be colored.

To summarize, as I gathered and analyzed data, the focus of my observations, my personal judgments of what I consider significant, and my interpretations and analyses were shaped by the lens through which I approached this study. From a stance as interpretive *bricoleur*, this research evolved through the interactions of my personal perspectives, prior experiences, and those of the participating teachers (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). For example, while working with beginning teachers as a student teaching supervisor, I developed approaches to classroom observations of teachers’ practices, teacher-student interactions, and classroom learning events that were framed by state teacher-assessment guidelines. My previous experiences as a field researcher in conducting classroom observations for a professional development program in culturally responsive instruction and evaluating teachers’ implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices fostered my focus on teachers’ instructional decision making for curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy. Thus, findings from this study evolved from my experiences as a course instructor in teacher education programs, my perspectives on literacy and second-language acquisition, and my sociocultural theories of learning. As a
researcher, these influences were inescapable, while lending depth and perspective to the study.

**Site and Participant Selection**

One of the goals of implementing purposeful site selection relates to choosing particular settings that encompass the heterogeneity of the population (Maxwell, 2005). The selection of teachers from four elementary schools in three school districts located in the southeastern United States was particularly appropriate due to the locations of the schools and the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student populations. Because the focus of this research was teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness for teaching ELLs, conducting data collection in diverse school locations with student populations that included non-native English speaking students was a critical consideration.

**Community Settings**

Among the four elementary schools in this study, two schools were located in a county that is primarily rural with increasing populations of ELL students. The student population of the school district in this county included over 300 students with limited English proficiency (LEP), and 7% of enrolled students were Hispanic (Legislative Research Commission, 2014). The third participating school was part of a county school system in an adjacent rural county where Hispanic students comprised 11% of the student population, 4% of students were migrants, and 4% of the school’s student population had limited proficiency in English (Legislative Research Commission, 2014). In the same county, the fourth elementary school was part of an independent city school district where students with limited proficiency in English numbered 6% of the total school
enrollment, and students of Hispanic descent comprised 13% of the student population of this school.

**Purposeful Selection**

The goals of purposeful selection include obtaining a representation of the chosen context, in this case, elementary level teachers with ELL students in specific elementary schools. A “purposive strategy” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 93) for inviting teachers from four specific schools was appropriate for this research, as it enabled me to collect a sample comprising a wide range of teacher participants and to investigate diverse perspectives. Further, each of the selected schools had taken an immersion approach for ELLs, which required classroom teachers to provide literacy and content area instruction for non-native English speaking students. Because I was attempting to gather multiple perspectives regarding instruction for ELLs, the participation of teachers in varying school contexts with diverse backgrounds and experiences was important. These teachers had fulfilled the requirements of many different teacher preparation programs, were teaching in classrooms representing various elementary grade levels, and possessed unique personal characteristics, thereby offering distinct perspectives to the study.

**Site and Participant Information**

In this section, I present demographic data for the school sites and descriptive data of the teacher participants.

**Participating Schools**

Teachers from four elementary schools in the area participated in the study. Schools A and B are located in a county school district in a rural area that comprises eight elementary schools. School C is one of three schools in a rural school district
adjacent to the county where schools A and B are located. School D is an independent elementary school district located in a town with a population of approximately 10,000 (US Census Bureau, 2013). Each of the participating schools has had attendance rates slightly above the state average. Percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch varied across schools. Table 3.1 includes student enrollment, free/reduced lunch participation, spending per student, and attendance rates for each of the participating schools, and Table 3.2 presents student ethnicity at participating schools.

Table 3.1

**School Demographic Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Free/Reduced Lunch Status %</th>
<th>Spending Per Student</th>
<th>Attendance Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>$10,426</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>$ 6,589</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>$ 6,949</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>$ 9,222</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>$ 8,490</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Data obtained from Kentucky School’s Report Card (2015).*

Table 3.2

**Student Characteristics by Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Data obtained from Kentucky School’s Report Card (2015).*
Participant Information

In-service teachers from four elementary schools were invited to participate in this research, and of the 120 teachers who were invited, 79 volunteered to take part in the study. Four focal teachers were then selected from the 79 survey respondents, one teacher from each participating school, to participate in classroom observations and semi-structured interviews.

In the first phase of this study, survey data were drawn from 79 teachers employed at the four school sites. Survey respondents were mostly female (females $n = 73, 92.4%$; males $n = 6, 7.6%$), and were all Caucasian ($n = 79, 100%$). All participating teachers were native English speakers, and three were fluent speakers in another language ($n = 3, 3.8%$). Surveys were collected from 49 elementary classroom teachers (kindergarten $n = 6$, first grade $n = 10$, second grade $n = 9$, third grade $n = 8$, fourth grade $n = 7$, fifth grade $n = 9$, 28 special area teachers, and two school administrators. Among the 79 study participants, 37 (46.9%) had earned their initial teaching certification within the last ten years, and 18 (22.8%) had earned initial certification within the previous five years (See Table 3.3 for years that teachers earned initial teaching certification).

Participants’ teaching experience ranged from 1 to 34 years, and almost half of the teachers had fewer than 10 years of teaching experience. Six participants had earned National Board Certification. Participants’ teaching assignments, areas of certification, and degree attainment are included in Tables 3.4 and 3.5.
Table 3.3

*Year of Participants’ Initial Certification Attainment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4

Participants’ Teaching Assignment, Certification and Classroom Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Teaching Assignment</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Area of Certification</th>
<th>Previously Served as Classroom Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Special Education K- 12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interventionist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learning and Behavior Disorders (n = 1)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English 5-12 (n = 2)</td>
<td>Yes (n = 1) No (n = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Interventionist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Music Ed. K- 12 (n = 3)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Physical Education K- 12 (n = 2) Kinesiology and Health Promotion P- 12 (n = 1)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Intervention</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Special Education (n = 1)</td>
<td>Yes (n = 3) No (n = 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language Pathologist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Speech Therapy K – 12 (n = 2)</td>
<td>No (n = 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.5

*Education Level of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Specialist/ 30 hours post-Master’s</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of these teachers had been enrolled in a four or five year teacher education program of studies (n = 71, 89.9%) and most had completed student teaching assignments of 16 weeks to one semester as part of their teacher preparation program (n = 71, 89.9%; 8 weeks to three months (n = 4, 5.1%), one year (n = 3, 3.8%), missing data (n = 1.3%). Almost all teachers had participated in professional development or in-service training within the last 12 months (n = 78; missing data n = 1), and 34 (43.0%) of the study participants reported that prior to the current school year, they had not participated in professional development that included techniques for teaching ELLs.

It should be noted that in the two years preceding the current study, a number of teachers in Schools C and D had participated in a year-long intensive professional development program in culturally responsive instruction, the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) model, which was funded by a grant sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. In addition, a number of teachers in all four participating schools were involved in the CRIOP professional development program at the time of the current study. Among participants in this research, 17 teachers in Schools A and B had participated in the CRIOP during the 2012–2013 or 2013–2014 school year, and 18 teachers from all four
schools were participating in the CRIOP project at the time of the current study. While the CRIOP project aims to support teachers’ implementation of culturally responsive practices for all students, the CRIOP initiative also encompasses practices designed to facilitate the language development and academic achievement of linguistically diverse students. However, the focus of this research study was teacher preparation for ELLs, rather than in-service professional development, and the data collected through survey questions, classroom observations, and teacher interviews reflected that focus on participants’ experiences within their teacher education programs. This will be addressed as in Chapter Five as a possible limitation as well.

In the second phase of the study, four focal teachers were selected from the 79 survey respondents to participate in classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. To explore how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shaped their classroom practices with ELL students, I utilized maximum variation sampling (Glesne, 2011) to select “cases that cut across some range of variation” (p. 45). I wanted to gather “the greatest possible insight into [my] topic” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 93) by selecting focal participants representing a wide range of perceived preparation with whom to conduct classroom observations and interviews. For these observations, I purposely selected four focal teachers, one from each participating school, with either high or lower levels of perceived preparation for working with ELL students. Using teachers’ responses to items on the two survey subscales related to preparedness for implementing specific practices for ELLs and for providing instruction in six content areas for ELLs, I ranked participants according to their overall scores. After ranking participants by the total of their scores in these two areas, I then grouped participants by school, as I wanted to ensure that focal
teachers represented the diverse contexts afforded by the four school locations and attributes.

Other factors that I considered in selecting the four focal teachers were their teaching assignments, as I was specifically looking for mainstream classroom teachers who were responsible for providing instruction in most content areas. I had undertaken this research with a goal of investigating teachers’ preparation in their teacher education programs, so it was important that I observe and interview classroom teachers who had earned certification for teaching in mainstream classrooms. Also, I looked for teachers whom had ELLs currently enrolled in their classes, so that I could observe teachers’ practices with these students. Finally, I specifically identified teachers who had not participated in the CRIOP professional development model, a year-long intensive project that provided coaching and support for increasing culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. The four focal schools each had faculty cohorts who had participated in this professional development program, and I wanted to observe teachers who had not experienced this training in order to understand the relationships between teacher preparation and practice, without potentially confounding factors of participation in intensive professional development. The CRIOP embeds instruction for linguistically diverse students with culturally responsive practices, and I was interested in studying links between teachers’ preparation and classroom practices, rather than professional development.

I then asked one teacher from each participating school to engage in classroom observations and interviews for this study. I provide more detailed descriptions of this process in the section addressing data collection procedures. Among the focal teachers
were one teacher with high perceptions of her preparation for teaching ELLs, two teachers that they were “somewhat prepared” for teaching ELLs, and one teacher with perceptions of low preparation for teaching ELLs. See Table 3.5 for characteristics of the four focal teachers. Pseudonyms are used to describe each focal teacher.

Table 3.5.

*Characteristics of Focal Teachers from Survey Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ms. Conner (Teacher 01)</th>
<th>Ms. Williams (Teacher 02)</th>
<th>Ms. Mason (Teacher 03)</th>
<th>Ms. Todd (Teacher 04)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Masters; Rank One -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Teaching</td>
<td>2014/ Elementary</td>
<td>2013/ Elementary</td>
<td>2014/ Elementary</td>
<td>1999/ Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Obtained/</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Background</td>
<td>Native English Speaker</td>
<td>Native English Speaker;</td>
<td>Native English Speaker;</td>
<td>Native English Speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>some Spanish in college</td>
<td>Spanish minor in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“Not really”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for Teaching ELLs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for</td>
<td>Extremely Prepared</td>
<td>Adequately Prepared</td>
<td>Extremely Prepared</td>
<td>Adequately Prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching in General</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for</td>
<td>Extremely Prepared</td>
<td>Somewhat Prepared</td>
<td>Somewhat Prepared</td>
<td>Not at all Prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching ELLs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Data and Data Collection

Data were collected for this study through teacher surveys, three classroom observations with four focal teachers selected from the participant sample, and three semi-structured interviews with the four focal teachers. Teacher surveys were utilized to answer the research questions related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs and teachers’ perceptions of the types of pre-service experiences that would prepare them for teaching ELLs. One of the advantages of using surveys for qualitative research is that it enables the collection of data from a large number of participants (Stake, 2010). By distributing surveys to a large number of participants in varying school contexts, I was able to gather data from teachers representing a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. Teacher surveys and semi-structured interviews of selected focal participants provided details pertaining to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs and teachers’ beliefs regarding preparatory coursework and field experiences that benefit teachers of ELLs.

Data collection for this study was conducted in two phases, as a layered study design was implemented. To answer the first research question, the first phase of this study was the administration of a survey to examine teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English language learners (see Appendix A for the survey used in this study). Open-ended response items included in the survey related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English language learners. In addition, survey items relating to teacher education coursework, field experiences, professional development opportunities, and classroom teaching experiences with ELLs were included. By administering the teacher survey to all teachers in the study, I was able to
collect a broad range of data from participants from various teacher preparation programs with diverse coursework and field experiences.

To answer the research question related to how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shaped their classroom practices with ELLs, I conducted classroom observations and teacher interviews. These types of data are appropriate for this study, as “there are distinct advantages in combining participant observations with interviews; in particular, the data from each can be used to illuminate the other” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.102). Some researchers suggest that teachers’ classroom practices are influenced by their college preparatory coursework and beliefs (Milner, 2005). Thus, in the second phase of the study, conducting observations in the classrooms of teacher participants provided opportunities to investigate how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation with ELLs shaped their classroom practices and contributed insights related to the research goals for the study.

**Measures**

Measures for this study consisted of teacher surveys, the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol with supplemental indicators of ESL instruction, and a semi-structured interview protocol.

**Teacher survey of preparation for ELLs.** To gain understandings of the dimensions of teachers’ sense of preparedness for ELL students, components of their teacher education preparation, and additional background experiences, I collected participants’ responses to The Perceptions of Preparation to Teach ELLs Survey. This survey, consisting of 55 Likert-type survey items and five open-ended questions, included four sub-scales that addressed components of participants’ teacher preparation
programs, specific areas of preparation for teaching ELLs, preparedness for content area instruction, and sources of ideas for classroom practices. (See Appendix A for items included in the survey). In addition, one section of the survey addressed teachers’ demographic information and academic backgrounds. Items in the demographic and academic experience section of the survey included questions related to participants’ gender, ethnicity, language background, academic degrees earned, areas of certification, years of classroom teaching experiences, and prior experiences with ELLs. While the survey was not piloted, a classroom teacher with 27 years teaching experience reviewed survey items and wording of the questions. Questions from the survey were revised and one typographical error was corrected prior to distributing the survey to participants.

One subscale of the survey included questions related to teachers’ preparedness for teaching ELLs and for implementing specific practices associated with teaching students learning English as a second language. This section of the survey consisted of 24 Likert-type items that were designed to allow participants to rate their preparedness in areas of instruction using numerical indicators of 1 (not at all prepared), 2 (somewhat prepared), 3 (adequately prepared), or 4 (extremely prepared). Examples of questions within this subscale are, “After completing your teacher education program, how well prepared were you to: give ELLs specific feedback on how they can meet learning expectations?; ask ELL parents for suggestions on how best to instruct their child?; evaluate curriculum materials for ELLs?” Questions in this subscale were designed to measure participants’ sense of preparedness in the areas of classroom relationships, family collaboration, assessment practices, instructional practices, discourse, and sociopolitical consciousness (Powell et al., 2014). Items in this subscale were adapted
from previous surveys of teacher preparation and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Eiler et al., 2002; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Imbimbo & Silvernail, 1999; Powell, Cantrell, Carter, Cox, Powers, Rightmyer, Seitz, & Wheeler, 2011), and three items in this subscale were original for this study. Teachers’ ratings for items within this subscale were added to produce a holistic score. Higher summed scores on this measure indicated higher levels of teachers’ perceived preparation for teaching ELLs than lower summed scores, which reflected lower levels of preparedness.

A second subscale within the survey related to specific components of participants’ teacher education programs included 17 questions about pre-service coursework, field experiences, and aspects of student teaching experiences. Questions in this section were aimed to elicit information regarding teachers’ actual experiences and characteristics of required coursework and field experiences. Response options for these questions were “yes”, “no”, or “not applicable”. Seven items in the subscale were adapted from a previous survey (Cogshall, Bivona, and Reschley, 2012), and the remaining items were original for this study.

The survey for the current study also included a third subscale containing six areas of content-area instruction for ELLs and teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs in these areas. This subscale included three items adapted from a study of teachers’ preparation for ELLs conducted by Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005) and three original items. Teachers responded to a four point Likert-type scale for these questions, using options of “extremely prepared,” “adequately prepared,” “somewhat prepared,” and “not at all prepared.” The fourth subscale in the survey related to sources of teachers’ current practices for ELLs, links between preparatory coursework and pre-
service field experiences, and perceptions of the value of field experiences. Respondents were asked to indicate agreement/disagreement with statements using a four-point scale ranging from “1 – strongly disagree” to “4 – strongly agree”. Five of these items were adapted from other surveys of teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002); Darling-Hammond, Eiler et al., 2002); four items were original.

In addition to the four subscales, the survey also included five original open-ended questions that elicited information related to teachers’ preparation for teaching ELLs, implementation of techniques for teaching ELLs that were learned in pre-service courses, and recommendations for the types of preparatory experiences that would be helpful in preparing classroom teachers to teach ELLs. These open-ended questions asked (a) “Were the methods courses that you took as part of your teacher education program helpful in preparing you for teaching ELLs? Please explain.”; (b) “Were you able to utilize techniques for teaching English language learners that you learned from your pre-service courses after you began teaching in your own classroom? Please explain.”; (c) “In your opinion, how could the content of methods courses be adjusted to be more beneficial in preparing teachers for teaching English language learners?”; (e) “In your opinion, what kinds of preparatory experiences would be helpful in preparing classroom teachers to teach ELLs?”; (d) “In reflecting on your teaching experiences, how well prepared were you for teaching students learning English as a second language?”

**Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol.** For the three classroom observations conducted with the four focal teachers in this study, I used the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) as the assessment instrument (see Appendix B for holistic areas and indicators comprising the CRIOP
The Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) is an instrument used for assessment of teaching practices demonstrating components of culturally responsive instruction. The CRIOP is particularly relevant for this research, as the CRIOP incorporates elements of the five CREDE standards and components of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). While the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for linguistically diverse students includes components of lesson preparation; building background; comprehensible input; strategies; interaction; practice/application; lesson delivery; and review/assessment (Echevarria et al., 2011), the CRIOP adds holistic areas of classroom relationships, family collaboration, and sociopolitical consciousness, elements which are critical for the literacy development and academic achievement of ELLs. In addition, components of the CRIOP emphasize instruction, assessment, curriculum, and discourse practices for these students. In August, 2012, a team of reviewers representing the University of Florida, Georgetown College, James Madison University, North Carolina State University, and the University of Kentucky met, and inter-rater reliability of the CRIOP was established (alpha = .95). The US Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition approved the CRIOP in 2012 as an evaluative tool for assessing teachers’ implementation of instructional practices targeted toward culturally and linguistically diverse students as part of their funding of the multi-year CRIOP professional development grant. In addition, the CRIOP has been used by researchers to investigate culturally responsive practices of teacher candidates in secondary math and science (Brown & Crippen, 2016), teachers’ use of culturally responsive pedagogy in low-income culturally diverse schools (Tricarrio & Yendel-Hoppey, 2012), and teachers’ self-efficacy for CRI and classroom
practices with refugee children (Meka, 2015). In my prior role as a research assistant, I had used the CRIOP as an instructional evaluation instrument for over 100 classroom observations and teacher interviews, so I was familiar with the elements and ratings of the protocol.

To use the CRIOP for evaluation of instruction specific to ELL students, I added twelve additional indicators of teaching practices that benefit linguistically diverse students for the holistic areas of classroom relationships, assessment, instruction, discourse, and socio-political consciousness. While not inclusive, these indicators describe essential practices for facilitating the learning and language development of ELLs (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Krashen, n.d.; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; McIntryre, 2010). Examples of these indicators include: “Teacher promotes a comfortable classroom environment that is safe, anxiety-free, and conducive to learning for ELLs”; “Teacher provides options for alternative forms of written or verbal assessment for ELLs”; and “ELL students have abundant opportunities throughout classroom activities for verbal interactions with peers for social and academic purposes”. These supplemental elements of classroom instruction for linguistically diverse students supplement the CRIOP protocol elements (See Appendix C for list of supplemental classroom observation indicators for ELLs.)

Utilizing the CRIOP instrument for each of the classroom observations with focal teachers enabled me to capture the multiple dimensions of teachers’ practices and their implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. While conducting each observation, I took detailed field notes at five-minute intervals as I described the teacher’s instruction, student learning activities and engagement in
discourse, curricula, and classroom environment. As I analyzed my field notes, I added my interpretations of the practices that I observed in a separate column and reviewed these interpretations to assign ratings related to the degree of implementation of each of the six holistic areas of CRI. Specific indicators of practices within each of the six CRIOP elements enabled me to more readily assess teachers’ implementation of practices for ELLs and for their students in general. For example, as I observed in one teacher’s classroom, I noted that she frequently modeled during her instruction, often related lessons to students’ lives and personal experiences, and often provided opportunities for her students to participate in hands-on learning activities. As outlined in Appendix B, these practices are listed as indicators of culturally responsive practices within the CRIOP element of Instruction. Thus, I was able to assess more readily the frequency of implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices by this focal teacher. Using the CRIOP as an evaluation tool enabled me to analyze components of focal teachers’ culturally and linguistically responsive practices for ELLs. The additional elements of instruction specific to ELLs further facilitated my analysis of teachers’ implementation of practices benefitting their non-native English speaking students.

**Teacher interviews.** As part of a CRIOP evaluation, a teacher interview is conducted for the family collaboration components of the protocol. Each of the four focal teachers in the current study were asked these CRIOP questions about family collaboration within the interviews conducted after classroom observations. For each interview, I used an additional semi-structured interview protocol as a guide. Questions about teachers’ prior classroom experiences with ELLs, their current practices with their
ELL students, and components of their teacher preparation program that facilitated their knowledge and skills for teaching ELLs were included in the interview protocol. Teachers’ responses to survey items informed some interview questions, as I asked teachers to clarify or elaborate on some of their responses. The interview protocol was semi-structured, with open-ended questions to allow me to ask for clarification, examples, or for additional information. The interview protocol also included queries pertaining to teachers’ instructional strategies, assessment practices, and methods of facilitating classroom relationships with their ELL students. These questions were intended to clarify specifics from the classroom observations, to gather additional details from the observations, and to explore the rationales for teachers’ instructional decisions. Including interview questions linked to teachers’ observed practices provided additional data to further inform findings. (See Appendix D for questions from the semi-structured interview protocol.)

Data Collection

In this section I describe the procedures that I used for teachers’ surveys and classroom observations and interviews with focal teachers.

Teacher surveys. For the first phase of the study, I collected teacher survey data from the four participating schools over a period of approximately three weeks in April of the 2014-2015 school year. Each of the four school principals granted me permission to explain my research during a regularly scheduled school-wide faculty meeting and to ask teachers for their willingness to participate in the research. At each faculty meeting, I was given a time slot on the agenda and introduced to teachers. I then explained the focus of my study and the consent process and asked teachers to volunteer to complete a 60-item
survey, which also included demographic questions related to participants’ gender, ethnicity, primary language, and academic background. After explaining my study and distributing consent forms and surveys, I stayed at each school after the meeting was concluded to collect completed forms. I also gave teachers the option to complete the survey at a later time, and I returned to each school building the day following the initial distribution of surveys to collect any additional completed surveys. Of 120 surveys that were distributed to teachers among the four participating schools, 79 completed surveys were collected (65.8%). At School A, 92% ($n = 23$) of the teachers completed the survey, and at School D, 100% ($n = 26$) completed the survey, contrasting sharply to School B, where 39.5% ($n = 15$) of the faculty completed surveys and School C, where 48.4% ($n = 15$) of the teachers returned completed surveys. Response rates at the four schools varied, as teachers at Schools A and D completed surveys during their faculty meetings, and teachers at Schools B and C completed surveys after the conclusion of their meetings. These response rates indicate that teachers were more likely to participate if they were provided time within their scheduled faculty meeting to complete the survey.

As mentioned earlier, as a research assistant, I had conducted multiple classroom observations and teacher interviews in the four participating schools as part of a professional development project in culturally responsive instruction. At the time that I administered surveys at each of the schools for this dissertation, I had visited School C and School D on many days for the previous three years, and I had visited Schools A and B often during the fall and spring semesters of the current school year. Thus, when I approached school administrators with my request to be allowed to invite teachers to participate in my study, they were receptive to my request. Before I distributed any of
the surveys, I had also obtained approval at the district level for two of the schools for my research, per school district requirements. The other two participating schools were in districts that required approval from building principals only. Teachers’ surveys were identified by numerical code only, and teachers’ identities were not revealed through their survey responses.

**Classroom observations.** Phase two of the data collection narrowed the focus for the study, as I conducted three classroom observations with four focal teacher participants, one from each participating school, in order to examine teachers’ practices with their ELL students. Completed teacher surveys were sorted by teacher responses to identify four teachers with perceptions of varying levels of preparation for teaching English language learners. Specifically, teachers’ numerical rating responses to the Likert-type survey items related to preparation for implementing classroom practices for ELLs were totaled to obtain a total score. These total scores were compared to identify teachers with perceptions of higher or lower levels of preparation.

I began classroom observations and interviews in focal teachers’ classrooms in May of the 2014-2015 school year. Three observations and interviews with the four focal teachers took place over a three week period in May, concluding before the administration of mandatory state-wide achievement testing in schools. I conducted each observation for at least two and one-half hours and recorded field notes digitally at five minute intervals throughout each observation. During these classroom observations, I observed literacy and content-area instruction during whole-class lessons, small-group instruction, and students’ independent activities. Student cooperative groups, learning events, teacher-student interactions, and students’ conversations with peers were included
in the observations. Classroom activities or lessons that did not include the focal teacher were not components of these observations. For example, I did not formally observe during a health lesson conducted by a school nurse, as the classroom teacher did not participate in any of the instruction, conversations, or student activities. Field notes of the observations were coded subsequent to the observation.

Comparing classroom observation data from contrasting participants with high and lower levels of perceived preparation for ELLs provided opportunities for multiple layers of analysis and increased insights for the study (Esterberg, 2002). As asserted by Mertler (2009), qualitative researchers implement “systematic observation in order to gain knowledge, reach understanding, and answer research questions” (p. 31). I applied these concepts to these classroom observations, as they provided data for the research question pertaining to how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shaped their classroom practices. Further, observing teachers’ instructional practices in their classrooms afforded additional components for data analysis and checking of inferences. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note, “it may be possible to assess the validity of inferences between indicators and concepts by examining data relating to the same concept from participant observation, interviewing, and/or documents” (p. 184). In this study, conducting observations and interviews with the four focal teachers illuminated nuances of the relationships between teachers’ beliefs related to preparation for ELLs, their unique attributes, and the implementation of classroom practices.

**Teacher interview procedures.** Teacher interviews conducted with the four focal teachers after each of three classroom observations provided an additional layer of data for this study. As stated by Esterberg (2002), the goal of semi-structured interviews
is “to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words” (p. 87). I re-read and revised questions from the semi-structured interview protocol several times, as I attempted to develop questions that would provide thorough, deep responses. The interview questions that I wrote were open-ended, and I included prompts of *please describe, how, and in what ways* in order to facilitate in-depth responses. As recommended by Miller and Crabtree (2004), queries are designed to address “research themes through questions designed to elicit narratives detailing the informant’s conception of the identified domains” (p. 191).

After contacting each focal teacher and asking for her willingness to allow me to conduct three classroom observations and interviews, I scheduled times with each teacher to conduct an interview after each observation. All interviews were conducted on the same day as the classroom observation, and I met with each teacher in her classroom. Students were not present in the classroom at the time that interviews occurred. Interviews conducted on the days of classroom observations lasted approximately 40 minutes, although there were times when teachers’ classroom schedules precluded finding a time of that duration. On those occasions, we scheduled two or three shortened interview times of 15 – 30 minutes, according to each teacher’s teaching schedule and other responsibilities. Interviews were held during teachers’ planning times, during student’s recess periods when other teachers supervised students, and after school, according to each teacher’s schedule and preference. I was careful to honor teachers’ schedules and time, as I understood the many demands of teachers’ time and daily schedules. I made efforts to develop a positive relationship with each focal teacher and often had short, informal conversations with teachers in the hallway while students were
transitioning between activities during the day of the observations and interviews. During these times, I was able to ask general questions relating to the number of students in the classroom, number of ELLs, and instruction or learning activities planned for the day.

These teacher interviews provided data for deep analysis and comparison of teachers’ classroom practices with their stated beliefs, perceptions of preparation, and rationales for instructional decision making. During the interviews, I allowed participants’ answers to inform my follow-up questions. Esterberg (2002) notes that “the interviewee’s responses shape the order and structure of the interview” and “the researcher needs to listen carefully to the participant’s responses and to follow his or her lead” (p. 87). I followed this advice while conducting teacher interviews. Also, I took hand-written notes during each interview, as Miller and Crabtree (2004) recommend in their article on Depth Interviewing, to “facilitate the remembering of key names and terms” (p. 199). I also wanted to ensure that in the event of a technical failure, I would have notes preserved of the interview. While conducting these interviews, I wrote descriptions of events and speech in detail, while noting specific quotations. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) encourage researchers to record quotations and speech as accurately as possible, as “speech should be rendered in a manner that approximates to a verbatim report and represents nonverbal behavior in relatively concrete terms; this minimizes the level of inference and thus facilitates the construction and reconstruction of the analysis” (p. 145). I attempted to follow these guidelines by including specific quotations that illuminated key points and by noting details, terms, and phrases that were emphasized by participants. Transcriptions of the audio-recorded interviews provided
context and exact wording of participants. Comparing interview responses from contrasting teachers with high and lower levels of perceived preparedness for ELLs illuminated variances and similarities between teachers and facilitated the exploration of patterns and trends.

After all teacher interviews were transcribed, I contacted each focal teacher to ask questions related to the interview data that I had collected. These follow-up conversations served as a form of member-checking, as I verified each teacher’s demographic information and asked questions to verify specific information from interviews.

**Data Analysis**

Multiple forms of data were collected and analyzed for this dissertation research. As asserted by Stake (2010), utilizing varied data sources, such as administering teacher surveys, conducting classroom observations, and conducting teacher interviews in the current study, facilitates both quality and confidence in the evidence collected for the study. Moreover, processes of triangulation and data analysis serve to validate case study research (Stake, 2004). In addition, triangulation of data enables a “process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2010, p. 454). For this project, open-ended survey responses, field notes from classroom observations, and interview transcripts were analyzed and coded. The CRIOP and additional indicators of instruction for ELLs were also sources of data to be interpreted. Stake recommends that case study researchers conceptualize “the object of study”, identify research questions, identify “patterns of data”, use data triangulation, select “alternative interpretations to pursue”, and use the data to formulate generalizations
As I collected data for this research project, these recommendations for case study research guided my data analysis and interpretation of findings.

Data from teachers’ surveys were categorized and summarized to answer the research question exploring teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach ELLs. For the first phase of data analysis, I compiled all 79 teachers’ survey responses to demographic questions, Likert-type scale items, “yes” and “no” questions, and open responses and entered this data into an Excel spreadsheet. I then totaled and recorded the numbers of responses within each category and reviewed the data within subscales as I began the process of analysis. Subsequently, I compared totals of responses for items within each subscale. My analysis continued as I compared responses related to similar constructs between subscales. Initially, I grouped teachers’ survey responses according to the location of the school where they were employed. In a subsequent round of analysis, I created an Excel spreadsheet and highlighted the responses of participants who had completed their teacher education programs within the last ten years. In another Excel sheet, I highlighted responses of teachers who had participated in professional development that included strategies for ELLs. I also created a spreadsheet with highlighted responses of teachers who had engaged with ELLs during pre-service fieldwork experiences. As I reviewed the survey data, these categorizations provided insights for deeper data analysis before I began the coding process.

Teachers’ responses to open-ended survey items were coded according to topics, themes, and issues (Stake, 2010). To gain a general sense of the range of participants’ beliefs, I began the coding process by reading each open-ended survey question and all of the corresponding responses. I implemented two cycles of coding as I analyzed teachers’
narrative responses to the five open-ended survey questions. In the first cycle of coding for two open-response items that asked teachers’ opinions about the kinds of experiences that would be helpful in preparing teachers for ELLs and how the content of methods courses could be adjusted to be more beneficial in preparing teachers for ELLs, I used descriptive coding as an initial step in categorizing participants’ responses. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) define the process of descriptive coding as assigning “labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase . . . the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (p. 74). For example, in answer to the question relating to the kinds of experiences that would be helpful in preparing teachers for ELLs, the descriptive codes that emerged from the data comprised CW, for “coursework”, FW for “field experiences”, and PD for “professional development”.

In the first phase of coding for three open-response items related to preparatory coursework and teachers’ overall preparedness for ELLs, evaluation codes of positive, negative or neutral were assigned to each participant’s response reflecting patterns of responses. Following the approach of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) of using evaluation codes to “assign judgments about the merit, worth, or significance of programs or policy” (p. 76), I utilized codes of P for a positive reflection of benefit or preparation, N for a negative reflection of benefit or preparation, and NEU for a neutral observation. The evaluation codes used for teachers’ responses to this question, positive, negative, or neutral, reflect the value of methods coursework to the respondent.

After assigning these initial codes, I utilized an inductive process to create a table of subcodes to represent the attributions and dimensions of teachers’ written comments (Coffey & Atkinson, 2005). For example, one teacher’s response that her methods
courses were helpful in preparing her to teach ELLs and that her coursework included principles of second language acquisition was coded as P-CWcm, as the P signifies a positive response, CW denotes coursework, and cm signifies components of preparatory coursework (See Appendix E for list of codes.) Another response reflecting that fieldwork placements with ELL students would benefit teachers’ preparation for ELLs was coded as P-FWell, denoting fieldwork experiences with ELLs. As additional concepts from teachers’ responses emerged, I expanded the code list to introduce new codes.

After assigning codes for each survey response, I began the second coding cycle as I noted recurring patterns and conceptual links and collapsed subgroups into categories (Coffey & Atkinson, 2005). For example, inductive codes of using environmental print for ELLs and modeling for ELLs were collapsed into teaching strategies for ELLs. This second coding cycle enabled me to look for common threads that emerged from the survey data. Patterns that encompassed categories, causes, and explanations were generated, thus providing an additional level of analysis of common themes that emerged from the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). A constant comparative method of coding was utilized to compare and contrast data within categories (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). These multiple passes of reviewing the data enabled me to use diverse lenses as I analyzed teachers’ interviews.

**Classroom observations.** Classroom observation data from the CRIOP and additional indicators of ESL instruction were analyzed for teachers’ implementation of teaching practices related to ELLs. I reviewed the transcripts of field notes taken during observations for evidence associated with elements of culturally and linguistically
responsive practices as delineated in the CRIOP and additional indicators of instruction for ELLs to assign codes representing those practices. See Appendix F for an example of coded field notes from one classroom observation. Teachers’ ratings of classroom practices for ELLs provided critical considerations as I compared teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness for teaching ELLs and their classroom practices.

**Teacher interviews.** Interviews with the four focal teachers representing high and lower levels of perceived preparation were transcribed and coded for themes or categories, as “the identification of categories is central to the process of analysis” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 153). My analysis of interview data began as I read through each interview transcript in its entirety to formulate a general sense of each teacher’s responses. I then read all of the interview transcripts for each focal participant as I sought to expand my understandings of her preparation during her teacher education program, sense of preparedness after completing her TEP, and current classroom practices.

For analysis of the interview data, I implemented a two-phase coding process. In the first round of coding, I used holistic areas of culturally responsive instruction, as delineated within the CRIOP (classroom relationships, family collaboration, assessment practices, instruction, discourse, and sociopolitical consciousness) to assign a priori codes to each interview (Powell et al., 2014). Coding by these elements of culturally responsive instruction facilitated comparisons of classroom observations and teachers’ interview responses. As I reviewed the interview data in segments, or chunks, I assigned these codes to signify elements of classroom practices that teachers directly referenced or inferred. As I analyzed interview data, I utilized a “recursive, thematic process” (Milner,
2005, p. 772) as I made multiple passes of reading and reviewing teachers’ statements. (See Table 3.6 for an example of a priori coding from Teacher 03’s third interview.)

Table 3.6

Sample Coding by Elements of Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Response</th>
<th>Element of CRI</th>
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<tr>
<td>. . . It requires support at home [helping ELL students] and sometimes it's hard to get that, not because they [parents] don't want to help, but they don't know what to do. And there's not that open, that small community of people working together for the betterment of that one particular child. It's mostly me sending stuff home through the child in Spanish for them to interpret, and I don't get to explain to them or have that open communication that we talked about before, where I've got some parents that I can text and can email regularly. I don't have that with them. I can send home notes but if they have any questions, it's an ordeal for them to call the school and have that person call me and ask them. And it's too many lines of translation I think for them to be able to contact me if they feel like there's a concern.</td>
<td>Family Collaboration (FC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that the biggest success is that they [ELL students] don't stand out. I mean if you look at their scores, you would probably see them in the lower 25% in general . . . But I don't want them</td>
<td>Classroom Relationships (CR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to, I don't want any particular student to stand out in my room. Whether they're on the high-end or on the low-end, I want them to kind of blend in together, so that when they're in groups that they're not feeling like they're the smart one that's going to have to carry all the work or the feeling like they're the dumb one that's going to be struggling the whole time. . . . Or to make them feel like they're going to be struggling because they're an English language leaner or that they are going to struggle because they're in special education or they get extra help.

Note: A priori codes from the CRIOP: Classroom Relationships = CR; Family Collaboration = FC; Assessment Practices = AP; Instructional Practices = IP; Discourse = D; Sociopolitical Consciousness = SC

The coding process has been described as “(a) noticing relevant phenomena, (b) collecting examples of those phenomena, and (c) analyzing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures” (Seidel & Kelle, 1995, p. 55). For the second round of coding of interview transcripts, I implemented “analytic induction and reasoning” (Milner, 2005, p. 772) to develop descriptive codes for each teacher’s responses. Following the approach proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), I re-examined each interview transcript in detail and began looking for themes and patterns among teachers’ responses to develop categories. As new themes emerged from the data, I added categories to the code set, made notes for further examination, and compared and contrasted responses. Categories of codes were expanded or collapsed through the analytic process. (See Appendix G for list of inductive codes.) Further re-reading of transcripts enabled me to compare and contrast participants’ responses using a
constant comparative method (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) as I interpreted the interview data. (See Appendix H for samples of interview transcriptions with a priori and inductive codes.) The second phase of inductive coding of interviews provided deeper understandings beyond the more generalized coding by holistic areas of culturally and linguistically responsive instruction. See Table 3.7 for an example of interview data coded inductively and by holistic areas of culturally responsive instruction.

Table 3.7
And then again, with being able to empathize with the students and make it very clear that they are not, that you don’t want to put them in a stereotype . . . And I think it leaves you open to being positive about the relationship that you can build with that student, and just having that mindset. Because how you treat a child has a huge impact on how they perform for you and what they can do throughout the year. And so I think that, I think that if I had treated her [ELL student] like she didn’t belong here or that I didn’t want her here, that . . . I didn’t know how to talk to her so I wasn’t going to bother trying, that she would have been miserable and not work for me. But I think because I had a positive outlook on who she was and that she has value in my room, and that she got to be incorporated with the classroom as best we could, that that made a big difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Interview Response</th>
<th>A Priori and Inductive Codes</th>
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<td>And then again, with being able to empathize with the students and make it very clear that they are not, that you don’t want to put them in a stereotype . . . And I think it leaves you open to being positive about the relationship that you can build with that student, and just having that mindset. Because how you treat a child has a huge impact on how they perform for you and what they can do throughout the year. And so I think that, I think that if I had treated her [ELL student] like she didn’t belong here or that I didn’t want her here, that . . . I didn’t know how to talk to her so I wasn’t going to bother trying, that she would have been miserable and not work for me. But I think because I had a positive outlook on who she was and that she has value in my room, and that she got to be incorporated with the classroom as best we could, that that made a big difference.</td>
<td>CR; TRell-e</td>
</tr>
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I honestly think that it's kind of lacking on those sides [communication with ELL parents], because I mean it's my job. If there is a big concern, . . . and I guess that's what the big issue is, I don't know how to establish that open communication and have a relationship where a parent feels like that they can talk to me regularly. . . . I think it's a language barrier. Because the two ELLs that I have have parents that speak only Spanish at home, and those are the parents that I feel the most disconnected, because I can't call them by myself. I can't just call on them if I have an issue or concern or if I know that they left their homework at school. So, that's something where I need that third party involved.

Note: A priori codes from the CRIOP: Classroom Relationships = CR; Family Collaboration = FC; Assessment Practices = AP; Instructional Practices = IP; Discourse = D; Sociopolitical Consciousness = SC

Inductive codes: Teachers’ Relationships with ELLs/Empathy = TRell-e; Language barriers with parents = LBp; Translating Support = TS

Summary

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to explore teacher’s perceptions of their preparation to teach ELLs, perceptions of elements of pre-service teacher education that facilitate the development of knowledge and skills for supporting the language development and academic achievement of ELL students, and connections between teachers’ perceived preparation and their classroom practices. I implemented a tiered research design, as 79 participants completed surveys in phase one of the study. I then narrowed the focus in phase two of the study as I conducted three classroom
observations and interviews with four focal teachers representing high and lower levels of perceived preparation. Interviews were conducted with these four teachers to examine dimensions of their teacher education programs and to explore these teachers’ beliefs and rationales for their instructional decision-making for their ELL students.

In-service teachers from four elementary schools were invited to take part in the study. These teachers present a range of grade-level teaching assignments and represent an amalgam of teacher preparatory experiences, thus providing rich data for this study. All 79 teacher participants in this study responded to a survey investigating components of their preparation for teaching ELLs. Four selected teachers, representing each of the four schools in the study and chosen for high or lower perceived levels of preparation according to their survey responses, were observed for three days while teaching in their classrooms and participated in three semi-structured interviews. The Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (Powell et al., 2014) and supplemental indicators of ESL instruction were used as evaluative tools for the classroom observations. Teacher surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews comprised the data for this study. Using a priori and inductive coding of open-ended survey questions and interviews and ratings from the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol, data were analyzed in a recursive process.

Multiple data sources comprising teachers’ surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews served to triangulate the data for this study. As I analyzed teachers’ survey responses, classroom observation data, and teachers’ interviews, these multiple forms of data facilitated in-depth analysis of classroom practices relative to ELL students and perceived preparation for serving these students. For example, during teacher
interviews, I was able to ask teachers to elaborate on their survey responses pertaining to their preparation for teaching ELLs and to describe practices related to their ELL students that I had observed in their classrooms. As I analyzed classroom observation data, I was able to use teachers’ survey responses about their preparation for ELLs and their interview responses to inform my analysis. Triangulation of data sources afforded opportunities for me to check inferences, validate assertions, and illuminate patterns of interest. Implementing multiple methods of data collection facilitated depth of descriptions and findings while ensuring trustworthiness of the data.
Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this research project was to explore teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach students learning English as a second language (ELLs). Accordingly, the principal research question guiding this study is “What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach ELLs? Subordinate questions of the inquiry are (a) What types of preparatory experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs?, and (b) How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their practices with ELL students? Through analyzing participants’ survey responses, classroom observations of four focal teachers, and interview responses of the four focal teachers, I was able to glean broad understandings of teachers’ perceptions, insights related to teachers’ classroom practices for ELLs, and conceptualizations of valued elements of pre-service teacher preparation for linguistically diverse students. In this chapter, I present findings related to each of the research questions.

I conducted this instrumental case study to gain insight into the issue of preparing teachers for serving non-native English speaking students (Stake, 2011). Johnson and Christensen (2014) assert that the purpose of an instrumental case study allows a researcher “to understand some important issues better” while “extending the findings in research literatures on various topics” (p. 436). Thus, through findings from this case study, I present considerations related to teachers’ self-reflections of their teacher preparatory experiences. Through in-depth surveys, I explored teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to serve non-native English speaking students. The survey data also
allowed me to examine related dimensions and nuances of teachers’ preparatory experiences and perceived supportive preparatory course work and fieldwork experiences related to ELLs. Further, the classroom observations and in-depth interviews with four focal teachers in different schools with varying levels of perceived preparation for teaching ELLs provided insights related to the relationships between perceived preparation and classroom practices.

To answer the question related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching English Language learners, I collected survey data from 79 teachers in four participating schools. The Perceptions of Preparation for Teaching ELLs survey comprised 55 Likert-type items and six open-ended questions associated with preparatory coursework, field experiences, and perceptions of preparation for implementing specific ESL practices. After analyzing the survey data, I selected one focal teacher from each of the four participating schools and conducted three classroom observations with each focal teacher. Each classroom observation of 2 ½ hours was conducted on three different days. I used the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) as a framework for evaluating teachers’ classroom practices, and also evaluated teachers on 12 additional areas of instruction specific to ELL students. Each observation was followed by an audio-recorded interview, using a semi-structured interview protocol to gather information about teachers’ relationships with their ELL students, family collaboration practices, and instructional practices for their ELL students.

Teachers’ survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the open-ended response items were coded inductively (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Open-response items were coded thematically using categories of Positive, Negative, or
Neutral responses or by area of recommended preparatory experience, followed by inductive subcoding. Observation field notes and interview data were analyzed through an a priori coding of six elements of culturally responsive instruction as delineated by the CRIOP and 12 indicators of ESL instruction and inductive coding.

In the first section of this chapter, I begin by presenting findings from teachers’ survey responses related to their perceived preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language. Within this section are participants’ responses to questions about coursework required by their teacher education programs of study, field work assignments, and student teaching experiences. Teachers’ perceptions of preparation related to specific areas of classroom practices with ELLs are also presented, along with perceived preparation to implement content area instruction for ELLs. Participants’ conceptualizations of preparatory coursework and field experiences benefitting teacher preparation for serving linguistically diverse students are included in this section. In the next section of the chapter, I present findings from observations and interviews with four focal teachers for considering how teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs shaped their actual classroom practices.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Preparation to Teach Students Learning English as a Second Language**

To gain understandings of teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to serve non-native English speaking students, I examined participants’ survey responses to questions about required coursework within their teacher education programs and questions about fieldwork and student teaching experiences. I begin with presenting survey findings related to perceptions of teacher preparatory coursework and elements of coursework that
teachers perceive as supportive of their understandings of instruction for ELLs. It should
be noted here that survey items did not include questions related to the specific teacher
education program or college that participants attended. This dissertation research was
not intended to serve as a program evaluation, thus survey questions did not address
where participants had completed their teacher education programs.

When the 79 teacher participants in this study were asked about their level of
preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language, many indicated
that they were not at all prepared (n = 43, 54.4%), and an additional 30 (38%) responded
that they were somewhat prepared. In contrast, when asked about preparation for
classroom teaching in general, only six of these teachers responded that they were not at
all prepared for teaching in a mainstream classroom. Among the 79 participants, four
indicated that they were adequately prepared for teaching ELLs, and two responded that
they were extremely prepared. Of the two extremely prepared respondents, one teacher
was fluent in Spanish and commented, “I'm at an advantage speaking fluent Spanish.”
The other extremely prepared respondent indicated that she completed her student
teaching assignment in a classroom with several ELLs and planned and implemented
instruction for ELLs while student teaching.

These survey results are even more striking when contrasted with teachers’
perceptions of their preparation for teaching in mainstream classrooms. Although few of
the 79 teachers indicated that they were either adequately prepared (n = 4) or extremely
well prepared (n = 2) for teaching ELLs, a majority of study participants answered that
they were adequately or extremely prepared for classroom teaching in general (n = 47,
59.5%).
Included in the survey was an open-response question that asked: In reflecting on your teaching experiences, how well prepared were you for teaching students learning English as a second language? Almost all teachers responded that they were not well prepared for teaching ELLs, as they described, “I was not prepared to work with ELL students after teacher prep.” Others commented, “I do not feel that I was prepared at all,” “My courses did not prepare me,” and “Not as prepared as I would have liked/need to be.” Others mentioned that enrolling in graduate coursework was beneficial.

A few teachers responded that they were somewhat prepared, and some of these teachers described factors that contributed to their preparation. Some participants attributed their preparation for teaching ELLs to actual classroom teaching experiences, as one teacher reflected, “Hands on experience with my own students has been the greatest learning tool for me.” Another teacher answered, “Most [of my] knowledge gained about working with ELLs came from ‘on the job’ training.” Others attributed professional development opportunities, specifically referring to the CRIOP year-long professional development project, as beneficial. One teacher related, “Participating in the CRIOP helped me considerably address the needs of ELLs in my classroom.”

**Preparation for ELLs in Methods Coursework**

Overwhelmingly, the teachers in this study did not perceive their preparatory methods courses as beneficial for their preparation to teach students learning English as a second language. Most of the study participants responded that they did not receive information about teaching ELLs in their methods courses or in other required coursework \(n = 57, 72.2\%\). In their survey open responses, few teachers responded affirmatively to the question that asked if the methods courses that they took as part of
their teacher education programs were helpful in preparing them for teaching ELLs. One first-grade teacher responded, “Yes, I was well equipped with reading/language strategies, but ‘no’ in the sense that I could've used more ELL specific teaching strategies.” Another teacher answered, “Yes, these courses prepared me for teaching with a whole child mind frame,” while another participant commented, “Yes, because they taught about diverse learners across the board in every subject.” One teacher stated that ELL preparation, “. . . was not the focus of any of my courses, but there was some good take-away related to ELLs.”

**Lack of ESL strategies in methods courses.** Several teachers stated that the content of their methods coursework did not include instructional strategies for non-native English speaking students. While some teachers stated that ELL coursework was not offered or required in their teacher preparation programs, one teacher commented, “There wasn't a focus on ELL. It was mentioned but no useful strategies [were] given.” Another teacher responded, “There was no focus on diversity of any kind except for special education.” Interestingly, teachers who had graduated within the last five years also commented on the limited content of coursework related to ESL instruction, as one 2012 graduate wrote, “I needed more direction.” While teachers mentioned issues of diversity as included in their methods courses, they also did not perceive the inclusion of diversity as supportive of their own preparation. One recent graduate (2011) wrote, “I think it was a good base for understanding diverse needs, but no practical tie in or ways to help ELLs.” Another teacher who obtained her certification in 2004 responded, “I only had [courses] that honed in on diversity, but not directly focused on ELLs.” A 2009 graduate wrote that her courses, “. . . may have touched somewhat on diversity, mainly
socioeconomic, not cultural or ELL specifically.” A teacher who graduated in 2013 reflected, “Teaching ELLs was not really addressed in methods classes,” while another recent graduate wrote, “It [coursework] focused more on all poverty and less on just ELL students.”

**ESL instructional adaptations.** Some teacher participants indicated that while their university program of studies didn’t address ELLs specifically, the instructional strategies that they learned for working with diverse students benefitted their preparation for teaching ELLs. As one teacher wrote, “They [methods courses] were not specifically for ELLs, but based on what I learned, I have been able to adapt and modify for ELLs.” Another teacher responded that the methods courses that she took were somewhat helpful for ELL students, as she stated, “You can apply some (but not all) of the strategies taught for working with 'struggling students’ to ELLs.” One special education teacher reflected on her coursework as she responded, “My coursework centered around teaching special education students and data keeping. While some strategies I learned to help those with special needs would also help ELLs, that was not our focus.” One teacher described her preparatory coursework:

> The emphasis of methods coursework were structured to adequately plan for a general educational classroom with diverse learners. However, the emphasis was geared toward resource structure for whole group teaching, and not for ability groupings or differentiating to a necessary current standard.

**Considerations of elapsed time since enrollment in preparatory programs.** More than 75% \((n = 60)\) of the 79 participating teachers responded negatively to the open-ended survey item that asked: Were the methods courses that you took as part of
your teacher education program helpful in preparing you for teaching ELLs? Various explanations were offered by teachers for the lack of perceived benefits from methods courses for teaching ELLs. A number of respondents who had obtained their teaching certification over fifteen years ago attributed the time period in which they obtained their initial teaching certification as a factor in their lack of ELL preparatory coursework. One teacher who completed her certification requirements in 1992 stated, “At that time, the ELL population was virtually non-existent.” Other responses from teachers who had completed their preparatory programs prior to the year 2000 included, “The push of ELL population had not started,” “I graduated 26 years ago - ELL training was non-existent,” and “No, we did not prepare at all for ELLs. There was not a focus on this at the time.”

**Lack of required coursework for teaching ELLs.** Among participants in the current study, few were required to take a course in teaching ELLs \( (n = 12, 15.2\%) \) or in second language acquisition \( (n = 10, 12.7\%) \). One participating teacher who completed her preparation program within the last five years reported, “I wasn't really required to take many education classes pertaining to ELLs.” However, a larger percentage of teachers reported that their teacher preparation program required completion of a course in teaching culturally diverse students \( (n = 34, 43\%) \).

**Elements of preparatory coursework.** Several teachers affirmed the value of their methods coursework in preparing them to teach ELs and named specific courses or components of courses that were beneficial. One teacher answered that among her methods courses, “Everything felt generalized except for a literacy course which was very cultural and dynamic.” Another teacher commented on specific courses as she mentioned, “Literature classes that introduced literature from different cultures or had
characters in stories from various cultures.” Among participants who had obtained initial teaching certification within the past five years, one teacher answered that her methods courses were helpful, “In teaching diverse students we learned a little about BICS versus CALP and second language acquisition,” and another teacher responded, “Yes, many of the courses I took were helpful in giving ideas for differentiating curriculum for all learners.”

**Preparation for Implementing Practices for Linguistically Diverse Students**

As part of the *Preparation for Teaching Students Learning English as a Second Language* survey, participating teachers were asked to rate their level of preparation for implementing specific elements of instruction for students learning English as a second language. Some survey items compared preparation for instruction for ELLs with preparation for students in general. When asked how well prepared they were to develop positive relationships with students in their classrooms in general, almost all teachers (*n* = 67, 84.8%) answered that they were adequately or extremely prepared. In contrast, when asked about their preparation to develop positive classroom relationships with the ELLs in their classrooms, 30 (38%) indicated that they were adequately or extremely well prepared.

When participants were asked about their preparation for maintaining regular communication with parents and caregivers of all students in their classrooms, a majority of teachers answered that they were adequately or extremely prepared (*n* = 54, 68.4%). However, when asked about their preparation for maintaining regular communication with parents and caregivers of ELLs, 11 (13.9%) of the 79 participants indicated that they were adequately or extremely well prepared. Most teachers answered that they were not
at all prepared \((n = 35, 44.3\%)\) or somewhat prepared \((n = 32, 40.5\%)\) for maintaining regular communication with their ELL students’ families.

Two of the survey items related to teachers’ preparation for using varied forms of assessment to monitor student learning in general and learning for ELLs. While about half of the teachers \((n = 39, 49.4\%)\) responded that they were adequately or extremely well prepared for using various assessments for their students in general, when asked about using varied assessments for ELLs, a majority of participants \((n = 43, 54.4\%)\) indicated that they were not at all prepared. A majority of teachers \((n = 49, 58.2\%)\) answered that they were adequately or extremely well prepared for encouraging students in general to examine real-world issues and engage in problem-solving, yet when asked about their preparation to encourage ELLs to do this, almost half \((n = 37, 46.8\%)\) of these teachers were not at all prepared, and few \((n = 11, 13.9\%)\) rated their preparation as adequate. See Table 4.1 for participants’ responses regarding specific elements of instruction for ELLs.
Table 4.1.

*Perceptions of Preparation for Teaching English Learners*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Ratings of Preparation To:</th>
<th>1 Not at all prepared</th>
<th>2 Somewhat prepared</th>
<th>3 Adequately prepared</th>
<th>4 Extremely prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach in a mainstream classroom</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach students learning English as a second language</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop positive classroom relationships with students in your classroom in general</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop positive classroom relationships with ELs in your classroom</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give ELL students specific feedback on how they can meet learning expectations</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage ELLs to collaborate with their peers during learning activities</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain regular communication with parents of all students in your classroom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain regular communication with parents of ELLs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage parents of ELLs to participate in classroom and school activities and events</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask ELL parents for their suggestions on how be to instruct their child</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use varied forms of assessment to monitor student learning overall</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use varied forms of assessment to monitor ELL students’ learning</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer constructive feedback to ELLs</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate curriculum materials for ELLs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop curriculum that builds on interests, prior experiences, and abilities of ELLs</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use strategies to make verbal instruction comprehensible to ELLs</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate hands-on activities that allow ELLs to apply concepts and learning</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use real-world examples to make learning meaningful for ELLs</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach methods to ELLs for independently understanding new vocabulary</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use technology to support ELLs’ learning</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach ELLs skills for engaging in academic conversations</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set language objectives for ELLs along with content area objectives</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students in your classroom in general to examine real-world issues and engage in problem-solving</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage ELLs to examine real-world issues and engage in problem-solving</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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When rating specific areas of instruction for ELLs, most participating teachers’ survey responses \((n = 54, 68.4\%)\) revealed that they were not at all prepared to teach ELLs skills for engaging in academic conversations, with only four respondents \((5.1\%)\) indicating that they were adequately or extremely prepared for this practice. Other areas where few teachers believed that their preparation was at least adequate were in giving specific feedback to ELLs on how they can meet learning expectations \((n = 5, 6.3\%)\), in teaching ELLs skills for engaging in academic conversations \((n = 5, 6.3\%)\), and in evaluating curricular materials for ELLs \((n = 5, 6.3\%)\).

When asked about the source of ideas for teaching ELLs, almost half of the teachers \((n = 37, 46.8\%)\) responded that their ideas came from their own experiences as a student in school. When asked if many of their ideas for teaching ELLs came from their teacher education courses, almost all teachers \((n = 70, 88.6\%)\) indicated that their teacher education coursework did not include ideas for teaching ELLs. Further, almost all teachers \((n = 69, 87.3\%)\) expressed that their teacher education coursework did not include theories of learning and instruction for English language learners or methods of classroom instruction for ELLs.

**Implementation of strategies from preparatory coursework.** When answering an open response survey item that asked if teachers were able to utilize techniques for teaching ELLs that they learned from their pre-service classes before they began teaching in their own classrooms, many expressed that they were not. Some teachers responded that they did not have any strategies or techniques to use, and others answered that they learned from “hands on experiences,” “actual experience in the classroom”, “trial and error,” or from the “advice and guidance of my colleagues.” One teacher wrote, ‘I didn’t
have much of a toolbox for teaching ELLs in teacher prep,” while another teacher who obtained certification in 2005 wrote, “we did not learn methods for ELL students.”

**Preparation for Implementing Practices for Linguistically Diverse Students**

More than half of the participating teachers reported that they did not work with ELLs during their college fieldwork experiences or during student teaching. Few participants agreed that their student teaching experience allowed them to practice instructional techniques for ELLs that they had learned in their methods courses. Of the 79 participants, almost half (n = 36, 45.6%) reported that student teaching was helpful in preparing them to teach ELLs, and almost all of these (n = 30) had worked with ELLs during their student teaching placements. In all, 40 of the 79 participants (50.6%, missing data = 3) answered that student teaching was not helpful for preparing them to teach students learning English as a second language, with 36 of these teachers reporting that they had not worked with ELLs during their student teaching placements. Among the 40 participants who reported that student teaching was not beneficial in preparing them for ELLs, 37 had earned their teaching certification more than 10 years previously, thus indicating that elapsed time since teacher education completion was a factor, given the dramatic increase in numbers of ELLs in the US in recent years.

**Student teaching beneficial for preparation.** Among those who answered that student teaching was helpful in preparing them for teaching non-native English speaking students, one teacher reflected that her student teaching included, “Lots of experience with ELL/ dual-language students, culture, discourse.” Another teacher commented, “The exposure to the various cultures allowed me to gain some experience and knowledge that my students brought to the classroom. This helped build my ‘funds of
Another teacher responded that student teaching was helpful in preparing her to work with ELLs, “Yes! Opened my eyes to other cultures, languages, and how they learned different.” Other positive comments regarding student teaching experiences included, “Learning to pair them [ELLs] with other students that may help them,” and “Gave real experience working with students and their cultures.”

One teacher described specific strategies as she described her student teaching experience with ELLs, “I realized the students required more time with tasks and had more involvement with audio recordings of stories in centers. Witnessing the first grade centers and how ESL students interacted was a valuable experience.” One teacher who obtained her initial certification in 2013 wrote, “I feel like I understand more about ELL challenges but not how to tackle ELL obstacles.” Another teacher described, “I felt prepared for diversity and being culturally sensitive, but not academically prepared to instruct them.”

Among specific strategies that teachers named that they used within their own classrooms, teachers affirmed the value of student teaching for their own practices with ELLs. As one classroom teacher in her first year of teaching reflected on her the teaching strategies she used for her ELLs, “I gained most of the knowledge from first-hand experience during student teaching.” A teacher who obtained certification in 2013 commented “I took lessons from student teaching to adapt current lessons to meet the cultures of ELLs”. A physical education teacher who earned her certification in 2013 also commented that student teaching was helpful in preparing her to work with ELLs.

**Preparation for content-area instruction.** One section of the teacher preparation survey asked teachers to indicate their preparation after completing their
Six Likert-type items asked to teachers to rate how well their preparation programs prepared them to teach English language skills, reading, writing, mathematics concepts, science concepts, and social studies concepts to ELL students. The majority of participants ($n = 58, 73.4\%$) responded that they were not at all prepared for teaching English language skills to ELLs, while 19 teachers (24.1\%) answered that they were somewhat prepared in this area. Only two participants indicated that they were well-prepared to teach English language skills to linguistically diverse students. One of these participants is a speech and language pathologist who has worked as a speech therapist with K-5 students, and earned her bachelor’s degree in electronic media/communications. The other participant who responded that she was extremely prepared to teach English language skills to ELLs had completed her teacher education degree program and earned certification the previous year. This teacher related her perceptions of being well-prepared to her field placement experiences as she explained in an open response section of her survey, “[Students in] my student teaching classroom spoke a total of eight different languages natively.”

When responding to items about perceived preparedness to provide instruction to ELLs in other content areas, a majority of teachers’ responses indicate that they were not at all prepared by their teacher preparation program. Some participants responded that they were somewhat, adequately, or well prepared for teaching reading to ELLs ($n = 25, 31.6\%$), teaching writing to ELLs ($n = 21, 26.6\%$), teaching mathematics to ELLs ($n = 22, 27.8\%$), teaching science to ELLs ($n = 23, 29.1\%$), and teaching social studies to ELLs ($n = 21, 26.6\%$). In general, few differences in perceived preparation are observed across instructional content areas of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.
See Table 4.2 for ratings of preparation for teaching ELLs in designated content areas after completing teacher education programs.

Table 4.2.

*Preparation for Teaching ELLs in Content Areas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After completing teacher preparation program, degree of preparation to:</th>
<th>Degree of Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach English language skills to ELLs</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach reading to ELLs</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach writing to ELLs</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach mathematics concepts to ELLs</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach science concepts to ELLs</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach social studies concepts to ELLs</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While a majority of study participants were K-5 classroom teachers, \((n = 49)\), 28 special area teachers and two school administrators also took the survey. With the exception of five teachers, all participants responded that they had earned baccalaureate degrees in elementary education or related fields. Among special area teachers, three had earned certification in physical education or kinesiology and health promotion, three had earned certification in music education, and two had earned certification in speech therapy or communication disorders. It should be noted that certification requirements in these areas may not have included preparatory coursework or methods classes specific to teaching elementary level language arts, reading, mathematics, science, or social studies,
thus affecting preparation for teaching in these areas. All other participants were certified in elementary education (61), middle grades education (1), interdisciplinary early childhood education (3), English education (1), or special education (3), and had taught in mainstream classroom settings.

**Perceptions of Preparatory Experiences that Benefit Teachers for Teaching Students Learning English as a Second Language**

The first subordinate question guiding this research study was, “What types of preparatory experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs?” As described in Chapter 3, one section of the *Perceptions of Preparation to Teach English Language Learners (ELLs) Survey* consisted of open-ended questions. In response to a question that asked about preparatory experiences that would be helpful in preparing classroom teachers to teach ELLs, participating teachers described coursework components and fieldwork opportunities related to ELLs. Inductive coding of the data revealed a number of patterns and emerging themes descriptive of the kinds of experiences that teachers believed beneficial for pre-service teachers. Participants’ responses suggested major themes related to preparatory coursework, fieldwork experiences, and ESL strategies as beneficial for teachers. See Table 4.3 for coded responses to the open-ended survey item that asked participants about preparatory experiences that would be helpful in preparing classroom teachers to teach ELLs.
Table 4.3.

*Teacher Recommendations for Preparatory Experiences for Teaching ELLs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Preparatory Experiences for Teaching ELLs</th>
<th>Number of Teacher Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork Experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Placements with ELLs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Teaching in Classrooms with ELLs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Observations in Classrooms with ELLs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Experiences with ELLs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hands On Experiences”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework in Teaching ESL</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework in a Second Language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Teaching ELLs</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Responsive Instruction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Communicating and Collaborating with Parents of ELLs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Categories of fieldwork experiences and coursework in table were derived from participants’ original responses to open-ended survey items.

**Fieldwork Experiences with English Learners**

When considering the preparation of teachers for serving non-native English speaking students, teachers in the current study emphasized the value of fieldwork placements in classroom contexts with linguistically diverse students and opportunities for classroom observations, experiences with ELLs in classrooms, and “hands on experiences”. Some teachers suggested opportunities for classroom observations that included “observations of master ELL teachers,” “observing teachers in action, [and] project-based activities with ELLs,” and “shadowing someone who is successful at teaching ELLs” as beneficial for preparing teachers. Teacher respondents used a variety of terms as they recognized and affirmed the value of “hands-on experiences”, “field experience working directly with ELL students”, and “time spent in classrooms where
teachers are teaching ELL students”. Other participants recommended placements “in classrooms with high ELL student populations” and “real world experience working with a group of ELL students.”

Additional examples of recommendations to facilitate teachers’ preparation for ESL instruction include student teaching in classrooms with ELLs and working directly with ELL students, as one teacher recommended student teaching in “a placement that has a large ELL population.” Other teachers described “going to the schools and classrooms and experiencing firsthand” and “teaching a small group lesson to ELL students” as beneficial for preparing teachers for ELLs. Some participants recommended opportunities to connect classroom experiences with preparatory coursework, as illustrated by one teacher, who recommended, “hands on teaching experiences allowing teachers to practice what is taught [in preparatory coursework].”

A few teachers acknowledged the critical nature of communicating and collaborating with parents as they expressed that learning, “how to communicate with [ELL] parents” and “how to incorporate ELL families into the classroom environment in an inviting way” were valuable in preparing teachers to work with linguistically diverse students. Among specific recommendations for the types of experiences that would facilitate teachers’ preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language were pre-service experiences in “communicating and working with parents [of ELLs].” Some participants expressed opinions that conducting home visits would be helpful during their teacher preparation programs. Further, teachers acknowledged the value of meeting families in their communities as one teacher recommended that teacher
preparation include, “experience in communities/outreach programs, experience trying to get ELL parents involved.”

**Perceptions of Preparatory Coursework Beneficial for Teaching ELLs**

Coding of teachers’ responses to open-ended survey questions revealed a number of themes that described participants’ perceptions of preparatory coursework that would benefit preparation for teaching ELLs. Major themes that emerged from coding the data reflected that teachers perceived the need for improved preparation for teaching ELLs, coursework specifically related to teaching linguistically diverse students, strategies for ESL instruction included in coursework, and fieldwork placements in diverse classrooms. Many teachers mentioned that they had not been well-prepared for teaching ELLs through their own coursework and emphasized the need for a specific course in teaching ELLs. Participants recognized a critical need for improving teacher preparation for meeting the needs of ELL students, as indicated by one teacher who asserted, “I would definitely have ELL coursework a standard option due to the fact that we are experiencing higher numbers of ESL students enrolling.” Another teacher recommended a course in ESL instruction, “Make it available. I don't believe it was a concern when I was in school. It would have been much more beneficial than learning to play recorder.”

**Coursework required within teacher education programs.** While a number of participants recommended that coursework specific to teaching ELLs should be offered within teacher education programs of studies, others expressed that a course in ESL instruction should be required for elementary teacher certification. One participant observed, “A class to teach ELL as a general ed requirement would be beneficial for all education majors.” Other teachers’ comments included, “ELL course or courses should
be required,” “Require more ELL preparation,” and “ELL courses/methods should be mandatory.” Another teacher who recommended a course specific for teaching ELLs reflected, “None of my education classes were "real life" until student teaching”. About half \( (n = 39, 50\%) \) of the survey respondents suggested that coursework in teaching ELLs would be helpful for preparing teachers to work with linguistically diverse students.

**Components of coursework.** While many teachers \( (n = 27, 34.2\%) \) recommended that a course specific to teaching ELLs would be helpful in preparing pre-service teachers, others responded that including strategies for teaching ELLs within preparatory or methods courses would be helpful \( (n = 12, 15,2\%) \). As one teacher illustrated, “Methods courses should include detailed and specific instruction on how to instruct ELL students such as dealing with their silent period, BICS, etc. Strategies need to be given on how to effectively teach these students in their area/ stage of development.” Another teacher commented, “Teachers need to learn more about language acquisition and strategies for working with ELLs.” One recommended, “Add that component to each methods course. Teach specific strategies of how to teach ELL students.” Specific recommendations for preparatory coursework included elements of theories of language acquisition, “strategies for working with ELLs”, “how to communicate with families” (of ELLs), “how to relate to cultural differences at home vs. the classroom.”, “models and examples”, and “videos of classroom teaching showing lessons and techniques for teaching ELL students.”

**Strategies for teaching ELLs.** Many participants in the current study described specific strategies for teaching ELLs as beneficial components of teacher preparatory programs. A number of teachers expressed that lesson planning for ELLs was a valued
component of teacher preparation as recommendations included, “how to plan lessons, content strategies to help ELL students,” “lesson planning within the WIDA framework,” and “learning about WIDA and how to use language assessments for ELLs.” Other specific strategies named by teachers included “differentiation, providing resources, interest inventories, involving families,” and “strategies for English Language Learners learning to read.”

**Culturally responsive instruction.** Some of the participating teachers had participated in a year-long professional development program in culturally responsive instruction, the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) model. Several teachers indicated that including culturally responsive instruction (CRI) within a teacher preparatory program would be helpful in preparing teachers to work with ELLs, although teachers did not list specific instructional practices or components of CRI. Some teachers recommended, “[A] specific course like CRIOP as a class. More strategies focused toward ELL,” and “Perhaps adopt the CRIOP model.” An emphasis on understanding students’ cultures was described by some respondents, as one teacher observed:

> Expose student teachers to the cultures within Kentucky (poverty, farming, social history) that students deal with on a daily basis. Often we think of "culture" as being different languages and customs. It needs to include traditions of the current population, too.
Teachers’ Perceptions of Preparation and Classroom Practices with ELLs

The second subordinate research question guiding this study was “How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their classroom practices with ELL students? In this section, I present data from classroom observations and interviews with four focal teachers, one teacher from each participating school. As described in the previous chapter, I used teachers’ survey data to identify four teachers, one from each participating school, with varying levels of perceived preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language. By observing classroom teachers with perceptions of high and low preparation for serving non-native English speaking students, I aimed to investigate teachers’ implementation of classroom practices with their ELL students.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I used the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) as an evaluative tool for each of the three classroom observations conducted with each teacher, along with additional indicators of teaching practices that benefit linguistically diverse students. These supplemental elements of classroom instruction for linguistically diverse students are listed in Appendix C and supplement the CRIOP protocol elements (see Appendix B for CRIOP holistic areas and indicators of practices). Following each observation, I assigned ratings for teachers’ classroom practices and implementation of strategies specific to ELLs. Ratings for classroom practices were assigned using a 4-point scale: 1=not at all, 2=occasionally, 3=often, and 4=to a great extent. See Table 4.4 for ratings indicating general impressions of teachers’ implementation of ESL classroom practices across all three days of observations.
Table 4.4.

Implementation of Classroom Practices for Teaching English Language Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Relationships</th>
<th>Ms. Conner (Teacher 01)</th>
<th>Ms. Williams (Teacher 02)</th>
<th>Ms. Mason (Teacher 03)</th>
<th>Ms. Todd (Teacher 04)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- ELLs participate fully in classroom community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Safe, comfortable classroom environment for ELLs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment**

| - Options offered for alternative assessments for ELLs | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| - Steps taken to ensure ELLs comprehend directions | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

**Instruction**

| - Additional scaffolding provided for ELLs as needed | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| - Strategies implemented for comprehensible input | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

**Discourse**

| - ELLs have opportunities for verbal interactions for social and academic purposes | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| - Language objectives for ELLs | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

**Sociopolitical Consciousness**

| - Curriculum connects with ELLs’ backgrounds/experiences | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| - ELLs’ culture and language affirmed | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| - Bilingual texts in ELLs’ native language(s) available | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

**Holistic Score for Classroom Practices for Teaching ELLs**

| 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

*Note:* Numerical ratings of observed practices: 1 = not at all, 2 = occasionally, 3 = often, 4 = to a great extent
Teachers’ interview responses expanded the information gleaned from the
*Perceptions of Preparation to Teach English Language Learners* initial survey, provided
additional information about teachers’ backgrounds and teacher preparatory experiences,
and revealed teachers’ understandings of their ELL students’ language and learning
needs. In the following section, I present findings from classroom observations and
interviews with each focal teacher.

**High Level of Perceived Preparation for Teaching ELLs**

**Teacher 01 - Ms. Conner.** When Ms. Conner completed the *Perceptions of Preparation to Teach English Language Learners* survey, she indicated that she felt very
well prepared to work with linguistically diverse students. Specifically, she rated her
level of preparation for classroom teaching after completing her teacher education
program as “4”, or “extremely prepared”, and her preparation for teaching student
learning English as a second language also as “4”, or “extremely prepared”. Ms.
Conner’s ratings for specific components of preparation for teaching ELLs were among
the highest of all participants’ ratings. Further, she indicated that she was extremely well
prepared by her teacher education program for providing instruction to ELLs in English
language skills, reading, writing, mathematics concepts, science concepts, and social
studies. Regarding her preparation for serving ELLs, Ms. Conner reflected on an open-
ended survey questions that she was “Well prepared, I had a toolkit of strategies that I
had learned from practicum and student teaching.”

Mrs. Conner was in her first year of full-time teaching at School D, having
completed her teacher education program the previous spring. She is monolingual, and
described her knowledge of Spanish as, “A little bit, what I retained in high school. I can
remember just a few words.” During an informal conversation at the school, she related
that she can count in Spanish and used a Spanish-English dictionary to look up words in
her classroom. She had 21 students enrolled in her kindergarten class, including five
ELLs who are Hispanic and speak Spanish in their homes. Three of these ELL students
have parents who are non-English speaking.

A full-time instructional aide assisted Ms. Conner in the classroom throughout the
school day by preparing materials, working with individual and small groups of students,
and attending to student needs as appropriate. Ms. Conner had one of three kindergarten
classes in the building, and these three teachers met to jointly plan units, lessons, and
learning activities for their students. There was one ESL teacher for this small
independent school district, which consists of an elementary, middle, and high school.
The ESL teacher circulated among the three buildings and conducted language
assessments of ELL students, but did not provide ESL instruction for individual students.
The elementary school employed an ESL coordinator who is bilingual in Spanish and
often translated for parent-teacher meetings and conferences, contacted parents of ELL
students when asked by a teacher, and translated written notes and letters that were sent
home to families of ELLs. Three of the ELL students in Ms. Conner’s classroom
received pull-out instruction rarely, approximately three days every nine weeks for 15-20
minutes from the ESL coordinator, and two ELL students did not receive pull-out
services.

On the first classroom observation day in Ms. Conner’s class, students entered the
classroom quietly, sat on a large rug, and Ms. Conner reminded them that last week they
talked about a personal narrative. After reviewing the meaning of personal narrative with
students, she pointed to a picture of a train with cars while telling students that each personal narrative has a beginning, middle, and an end. She then told students good writers are good story tellers and that they were going to focus on telling stories today. As Ms. Conner related her own story about her weekend trips home and fishing, her students listened attentively, with no conversations. Ms. Conner then asked students to turn and talk with their neighbor about something they like to do with their families. After several minutes of student conversation, Ms. Conner asked students to tell their stories to the rest of the class. After each student’s story, Ms. Conner responded positively and asked follow-up questions as she conveyed her interest in students’ lives and their family experiences. At times, she responded, “Cool! I like that feeling word and how you said you were scared,” “That sounds like fun! Pretty cool!”, and “That was pretty awesome!” Ms. Conner consistently exhibited a quiet, pleasant demeanor while maintaining high expectations for student engagement, participation, and respect.

As part of the literacy block during Ms. Conner’s second classroom observation, students in the class participated in small-group literacy activities. Four students used clipboards with lined paper and laminated word lists to write their own words, while three other students listened to a book on CD in the listening corner, and six students used I-Pads to play learning games. Two ELL students conversed in Spanish as they wrote on clipboards, while another ELL colored coded sight words on a worksheet. After reading with six students at a back table, Ms. Conner asked one ELL with an I-Pad to sit by her, and Ms. Conner made hand gestures to demonstrate behind, above, and other position words. The game audio was in Spanish and English, and nouns used included horse, triangle, circle, and rectangle. The ELL student smiled as she touched the I-Pad.
screen to answer each question, and Ms. Conner affirmed the student’s answers, repeating the choices at times. Quiet student conversation continued around the classroom while students engaged in various learning activities. Ms. Conner had created a welcoming, safe classroom environment and recognized and consistently affirmed her ELL students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

On the date of Ms. Conner’s third classroom observation, she asked students to participate in a writing activity to make a school memory book. As she demonstrated completing a sentence frame, “My favorite thing to do at recess is . . .,” Ms. Conner asked students to think about their favorite thing about recess and to give her a thumbs up when they were ready with an answer. After students turned to a neighbor and whispered their favorite thing, Ms. Conner asked them to tell the rest of their class about their favorite activities. After giving directions for completing the writing activity, Ms. Conner asked students to say the directions in unison with her, to repeat the directions in unison and to whisper the directions to their neighbor. As students wrote in their books and colored their drawings, Ms. Conner knelt and talked with four ELL students seated close together and prompted students by asking questions. Ms. Conner consistently infused this writing lesson with connections to her students’ lives and experiences while ensuring that students understood directions for activities. She encouraged students to engage in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, while providing students with choices.

Ms. Conner had created a comfortable classroom environment that was conducive to learning for her ELL students, and they were active participants during whole-class lessons, peer and small-group activities, and independent learning activities. She
maintained high expectations for all of her students, while demonstrating respect for their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Ms. Conner implemented a number of strategies to enhance her ELL students’ understandings, as she frequently used gestures, re-stated directions and explanations, and modeled and demonstrated throughout the school day. Ms. Conner differentiated instruction for her ELL students through multiple forms of scaffolding, various forms of assessments, and abundant opportunities for student discourse and instructional conversations. Real-world connections were emphasized throughout content area instruction, and students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds were recognized and affirmed.

Mrs. Conner’s classroom reflected her affirmation and recognition of her students’ cultural and linguistic identities. The classroom library contained books with multicultural content, and classroom posters pictured children of diverse ethnicities. The daily class schedule displayed on one wall was printed in Spanish and English, and other classroom objects around the room were labeled in Spanish. The calendar included the days of week and months of year printed in Spanish, and the math center, alphabet chart, and geometric shape posters were labeled in English and Spanish. Students were seated in table groups of five to eight students, with two ELLs seated next to each other at one table, and three ELLs seated together at a nearby table.

During the three classroom observations, Ms. Conner used alternative formative assessments for her ELLs, differentiating as appropriate. Ms. Conner frequently checked for understanding as she asked at times for all students to repeat directions, circulated around the room while students completed tasks, and implemented various forms of assessments during whole-class and small-group lessons. She ensured that her
ELL students comprehended her instructions prior to assessing, and often gestured, pointed, and enunciated directions carefully as she worked with them. As she illustrated during one interview:

If I’m using a word problem . . . we had an assessment last week where I would say a word problem, and they would have to write the math sentence. Because I think that’s kind of hard for them [ELLs] to process. So I would pull them one on one and we would use some kind of unifix cubes or something like that. . . And they can kind of manipulate and use kind of objects instead of just words.”

During instruction, Ms. Conner connected her lessons with students’ backgrounds and prior experiences, used various forms of scaffolding, and provided students with opportunities for choosing learning activities during center time. Students in the class participated in a variety of hands-on learning activities with manipulatives during literacy and math instruction. She also demonstrated and modeled during lessons for her students often, and followed her directions by asking students to repeat directions to her to check for student understanding. As she expressed during an interview:

Usually, I like to do like an ‘I do, we do, you do”. So I do it and I model it, and then we do it together. And usually, if they can do it on their own, then they’re pretty much getting it. But if not, then we’ll do more together.

Students in Ms. Conner’s classroom frequently engaged in various forms of discourse and ELL students interacted verbally with their peers for social and academic purposes throughout lessons and independent activities. Ms. Conner encouraged student engagement through frequent speaking opportunities during whole-class instruction and small group lessons. She provided scaffolding in English language use for her ELLs, and
ELLs were often observed speaking in Spanish to one another as they participated in small-group and paired literacy and math activities. Ms. Conner expressed her support of bilingualism for her ELLs and use of their native language as she related:

I want them to feel comfortable with who they are to rely on, but also their native language is important. I wanted them to keep that and kind of keep using those skills. But also, I want them to be able to understand. So, if that means that I need another student to translate in Spanish, that's what I ask them to do. Three of them are really great translators for Claudia; she has really limited English proficiency. They're always the first one to say, "Oh, I'll help." And they'll . . . tell her in Spanish what I'm asking her to do.

During her interviews, Ms. Conner described the methods she used to build relationships with parents of all of her students and with parents of the ELLs. Although language barriers affected communication with three of her ELL students’ parents, Ms. Conner mediated those barriers through use of the school ESL coordinator to translate during face-to-face meetings and to translate notes and messages into Spanish. She described her collaboration with one of her ELLs’ parents:

Claudia’s parents, they came from Mexico in December. I like to meet with them every so often. They’re really involved, which I really appreciate, and they’re helping her learn English at home. I tell them what we work on each day and they work on it at home. And so each morning she comes in, she’ll open up the notebook and she shows me what she worked on at home last night. And her sister, Casey, I ask her sometimes, “When you go home, will you practice alphabet with Claudia?” And she’ll say, “Si, si.” And they’ll read to her. And
so, I try to take everything that we’re doing in the classroom and kind of relay it to them, and so it’s just more reinforcement for her.

As stated earlier, Ms. Conner reflected that she felt very well prepared by her teacher education program for teaching students learning English as a second language and specifically mentioned the value of observing in a culturally diverse pre-school classroom and of student teaching in a classroom with 11 English language learners who spoke six different languages. As a result of her student teaching experience, she reflected, “It was just really, really diverse, and that was really kind of eye-opening for me. And it helped me to see how not all English language learners are the same, and they all learn differently and need different things.” Ms. Conner further attributed her implementation of modeling as an instructional practice to her student teaching cooperating teacher who utilized modeling in her classroom. As illustrated below, she valued the welcoming classroom community that she experienced during her student teaching experience and created that environment in her own classroom:

There is a sense of . . . community and togetherness. And no one really felt out of place because they were from somewhere different or they spoke another language at home, because everybody was so different that no one even kind of really paid attention. They were just like "that's normal".

Across all three observations, Ms. Conner promoted a classroom environment that was safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning for her ELL students. ELLs fully participated in classroom discussions, whole and small-group lessons, and independent learning events to a great extent. Ms. Conner often provided options for alternative forms of assessment for her five ELLs and ensured that they comprehended directions for
completing learning tasks. She frequently provided multiple forms of scaffolding specific to ELLs through modeling and demonstrating, and re-stated and clarified instructions to provide comprehensible input. Her ELL students often interacted verbally with their peers throughout classroom activities, and Ms. Conner recognized and affirmed her ELLs’ language and cultural backgrounds. As she described factors associated with her preparation for teaching ELLs, Ms. Conner reflected, “I think student teaching, actually getting out in the field and working with those children, really helped prepare me, and so some of the things that [my cooperating teacher] did, I do in my classroom.”

As reflected in her survey responses, Ms. Conner perceived that she was extremely prepared for utilizing strategies to make instruction comprehensible for ELLs, for maintaining regular communication with parents of ELLs, and for using varied forms of assessments for her ELL students. Observations in Ms. Conner’s classroom revealed that she often incorporated gestures, examples, and modeling as she worked with her ELL students. She also provided opportunities for ELLs to use manipulatives or to respond in their native language during formative assessments. During interviews, Ms. Conner described her relationships with ELL students’ families and her efforts to mediate language barriers to facilitate communication with ELL parents. She described elements of her teacher preparatory experiences during interviews and how her preparation for teaching ELLs affected her instructional decision making.

“Somewhat Prepared for Teaching ELLs”

Teacher 02 – Ms. Williams. When Ms. Williams completed the Perceptions of Preparation to Teach ELLs Survey, she responded that she was somewhat prepared by her teacher preparatory program for teaching students learning English as a second
language. Ms. Williams rated her preparation for teaching in a mainstream classroom as “adequately prepared”, and her preparation for teaching ELLs as “2”, or “somewhat prepared”. Further, she indicated that she was “extremely prepared” to develop positive classroom relationships with her students in general and “adequately prepared” to develop positive classroom relationships with the ELLs in her classroom. However, she responded that she was not at all prepared by her teacher education program to teach English language skills, writing, reading, science, mathematics, or social studies to her ELL students. Although Ms. Williams indicated on her survey that she had taken a course in teaching culturally diverse students as part of her preparatory coursework, in response to how prepared she was to teach ELLs, she wrote, “Only slightly - my Spanish background helped, but not much more than that.” During an interview, Ms. Williams reflected, “Overall, there was not a whole lot to prepare me for dealing with ELL students.”

Ms. Williams was in her first full year of teaching at School B after completing her teacher education program two years before. After graduating from college and earning her initial teacher certification in 2013, Ms. Williams spent one semester as a substitute teacher and one semester as an intervention teacher before beginning the current school year as a third-grade teacher. As a first year teacher, she was in the process of completing the year-long teacher internship program required by her state for all beginning teachers when this study was conducted. Also, her professional development experiences were focused on meeting school district requirements for new teachers, and these professional development opportunities did not include strategies for teaching ELLs. Although Mrs. Williams was monolingual, she had taken four years of
Spanish in high school and one semester of Spanish in college, and she used Spanish words occasionally with her Hispanic students. She was one of four third-grade teachers in the school and had 23 students in her classroom, two of whom were Spanish-speaking ELLs.

Ms. Williams planned all of the instruction for students in her third-grade classroom. One of her ELL students received pull-out instruction in English every day from the school ESL teacher and both ELLs received Response to Intervention (RtI) pull-out instruction daily. Both ELL students were to receive accommodations for the state-mandated achievement test; the female ELL was to receive assistance with paraphrasing and additional time, and the male ELL was to receive the assistance of a reader, paraphrasing, and additional time. One of the office assistants at the school was bilingual and spoke Spanish, and she provided assistance to Ms. Williams throughout the school year by translating when parents of ELLs called the school and during parent-teacher conferences and meetings with these families. A previous office assistant at the school had translated written notes and letters to be sent home to parents into Spanish, but that person left the school mid-year, so Ms. Williams’ notes and letters to her ELL families were printed in English only. As Ms. Williams related during her first interview:

That [translations of written notes/letters] was one of the things that kind of got lost [during the school year]. And it wasn’t anybody’s fault . . . , that was one of the things that happened to fall on the way side. And it’ll probably get picked up again, but still, that mode of communication to our ELLs is kind of dropped. . . . They [ELLs] take the English version home, and so, children [ELLs] can translate for them.
As part of the reading block during the first observation in Ms. Williams’ classroom, all 22 third-graders read in groups of four or five scattered around the classroom; two groups were seated on the floor in one corner of classroom, two groups were seated at a long table, and one group was seated at one corner of long row of desks. Students took turns within their groups reading aloud from printed copies of “How Benny West Learned to be a Painter”. As students were engaged in reading, Ms. Williams circulated around the classroom, checking with each group and listening to students as they read, discussed the story, and answered questions from a reading packet that each student had been given. As Ms. Williams talked with one group, she prompted students by asking “How did you know that?” While speaking with another group, she affirmed one student when he went back and re-read a word, telling the student that that was awesome, and “I love it!” The two ELL students in the class, one male and one female, participated within two different groups. All students appeared to be actively engaged in reading or discussing with their groups, as Ms. Williams moved from group to group.

As part of a math lesson during the second observation, students role played an on-the-scene newscast conducted by Ms. Williams as a British television reporter. All students appeared to be engaged in conversations around the classroom as they met in groups in corners of the room, some seated in chairs and others sat on the floor. Loud conversations took place as students debated the difference between intersecting and perpendicular lines. Ms. Williams spoke with a British accent as she held a pretend microphone and pretended to be a television reporter interviewing people on the street for a feature during a newscast. Each group had a spokesperson who answered Ms. Williams’ geometry related questions for their group and drew a diagram on the
smartboard to illustrate. Ms. Williams prompted students by asking at times, “Interesting! Will you show me what you mean?” As one student responded, he went to the Smartboard, drew intersecting lines with points of intersection and marked right angles and points of intersection. When one student answered that perpendicular and intersecting lines were the same and different, Ms. Williams labeled the intersecting and perpendicular lines on the Smartboard, then asked the bystanders (other students) if intersecting lines don’t have a right angle, are they perpendicular. Students answered aloud in unison. After the last group had participated in the mock television news report, students returned to their seats to complete other math problems. Ms. Williams circulated around the room, checking students’ written answers and explaining as needed when she noticed an error.

By participating in this role-play scenario, students in the class engaged in collaborative forms of academic discourse to explain mathematics concepts. The nature of the activity prompted student engagement, real-world connections, and collaboration, which are elements of culturally responsive instruction. Ms. Williams also practiced formative assessment throughout the lesson, providing immediate feedback to students and adjusting her instruction as needed, thus promoting student learning. In this lesson, CRIOP elements related to assessment, instruction, and discourse were observed.

Students in the classroom practiced reading a play during one part of the third observation. Ms. Williams introduced the “King in the Kitchen”, and drew name sticks from a cup to assign parts of the play to students. As she assigned parts, she gave students a choice of reading that part or declining to read. She then reviewed components of a play with students, asking them to describe the setting of a play, and expanding a
students’ answer to include where and times when the story takes place. She explained that they don’t read aloud the stage directions printed in italics, and demonstrated how it would sound to read stage directions aloud. Students read their parts with feeling and expression, and all students appeared to be engaged in activity as they sometimes giggled or laughed out loud at humorous parts of the play. Ms. Williams moved around the room while students read, providing unknown words for students who had difficulty, and laughing along with students at humorous parts of the play. Students read their parts expressively, and everyone laughed at one point in text. Ms. Williams then gave students a choice of reading through the play again in groups of eight, or reading a book of their choice. Almost all students chose to read the play and began reading in groups as Ms. Williams circulated around the classroom while students read aloud. Almost all students engaged in the activity. One ELL remained unengaged with reading, fiddling with items in his school supplies in the bin on his desk, although Ms. Williams did not appear to notice this. He then was called out of the classroom to receive ESL instruction while others in the class continued reading.

Across all three days of classroom observations, Ms. Williams treated her students respectfully, demonstrated her interest in students’ lives, and maintained high expectations for student participation and engagement. She often provided opportunities for students to work in pairs or in small groups as they collaborated during reading and math activities. During the first classroom observation, students in Ms. Williams’ classroom worked in groups of four or five as they read selections from a reading packet within their groups and completed a reading task. Students also collaborated as they participated in math centers during the second observation, and read a play together in
small groups during the third observation. Ms. Williams had created a classroom environment that appeared comfortable and safe for her two ELL students, as they readily asked questions of Ms. Williams while working on independent tasks and smiled and nodded when she spoke with them individually while reviewing their journal writing or math papers. Ms. Williams described her empathy for her non-native English speaking students during her first interview as she reflected on her relationship with an ELL student:

So that was, that was a big help to me, that I understood to her what it would be like if I was somewhere where I didn’t understand the language. Because when you’re learning, when you go through the process of learning a new language, it’s incredibly overwhelming all the things that you don’t know. And then again, with being able to empathize with the students and make it very clear that they are not, that you don’t want to put them in a stereotype . . ., that they’re lazy or that they’re whatever, whatever stereotypes that are typical, that those are not true. . . . And I think it leaves you open to being positive about the relationship that you can build with that student and just having that mindset. Because how you treat a child has a huge, has a huge impact on how they perform for you and what they can do throughout the year. But I think because I had a positive outlook on who she was and that she has value in my room, and that she got to be incorporated with the classroom as best we could, that that made a big difference.

Ms. Williams’ reflection about the importance of empathizing with ELLs provides evidence that she recognized the value of building positive relationships with her students and her respect for cultural differences. Ms. Williams’ survey responses
reflected her acknowledgement of the importance of classroom relationships, as she indicated that she was adequately prepared to develop positive relationships with her ELL students.

Ms. Williams described how a course in diversity as part of her teacher education program influenced her thinking as she reiterated the empathy she had for non-native English speaking students as she reflected in her second interview:

And so it [diversity course] was great in a sense that it got me thinking about the perspective of what’s -- how frustrating it is to want to learn and to the perspective that you have in the community of how isolated you are, I think, because you can only speak with certain people within the community, if you don’t have, if you don’t have any English skills.

During all three of her classroom observations, Ms. Williams frequently circulated around the room as she checked students’ written work, answered questions, or listened to students’ discussions. Ms. Williams offered immediate feedback, asked prompting questions at times, made suggestions, or affirmed students’ responses. At times, she provided additional explanations for individual students, gave sentence frames for students’ written responses, and offered examples and non-examples. For example, during the first observation that I conducted, Ms. Williams provided intensive re-teaching and step-by-step scaffolding for two individual students seated at her table. During a math lesson in the second classroom observation, she pointed to sections of the text or illustrations on a math worksheet as she explained to one student how to solve a problem. Ms. Williams described in her third interview how formative assessment of one of her
ELL students’ work in math and communicating with the students’ parent helped to solve a discrepancy in assessment:

I had my male ELL; he was very, very bad at computation in school, but on homework he was doing fine. It was very weird to see why there was such a big difference between the two. . . . And then at the conference, we found out that the mom was letting him use a calculator at home. She didn't know that that wasn't something that he wasn't supposed to do.

Often during her instruction, Ms. Williams utilized several forms of scaffolding, including modeling, demonstrating, and using graphic organizers. For example, as part of a math lesson on estimation, she gave an example of 25 as an estimated answer for one problem and asked the entire class if that estimate was reasonable. After a student responded, “No,” Ms. Williams affirmed the answer, told students that they should write, “My answer was not reasonable because . . . ,” and then tell why. She provided scaffolding often as she informally assessed individual students’ written work and often checked with her two ELLs as they completed writing or math tasks. Ms. Williams described one of her ELLs and her instructional accommodations for the ELLs in her classroom in her second interview:

And he [ELL] was so timid at the beginning of the year that he wouldn’t ask me. I mean, the fire alarm could have been going off, and he wouldn’t ask me which way to leave the building. He was just so timid. And but if I have him back at this table and I have those kids back to the table and I’m readily available, they're more likely to ask questions because that is 100% what I’m here for and not working on other stuff. . . . So, he’s kind of grown out of that of being back at my
back table. And he took the test and he wants to turn in, and he asked me he could do next. And I said, “Well, were there any on the test that you weren’t sure about?” And he started to shake his head no, then he was like yeah. And he came over and showed me two of them. And one of them he had gotten right and then the other one, we checked and he had gotten it wrong and we kind of walked through it together. And he changed it and he got 100% on the whole thing and it was -- he was so proud of himself.

Ms. Williams’ attempts to build positive relationships with her ELLs had resulted in this student’s willingness to ask his teacher for help with understanding a math concept and supporting his learning.

Students in Ms. Williams’ classroom often engaged in conversations during small group or partner activities. At times, Ms. Williams stated a language objective for her students by providing a sentence frame for students to use in their written responses. However, language accommodations were not provided for ELLs in the class, consistent with her survey responses that she was somewhat prepared to set language objectives for her ELL students.

During her three interview sessions, Ms. Williams expressed her appreciation for the content of the course on diversity that she took as part of her teacher education program. While she valued the presentation of a theoretical approach and considerations of the effects of linguistic backgrounds and practices on English language acquisition, she also expressed that instructional strategies were not a focus of the course. Ms. Williams described her teacher preparation for teaching ELLs and how the course content supported her learning.
We did take one class and it was a diversity course. And the classes that I took were very theoretical of different learning methods and teaching methods and things like that. But it was so many different things that it was very not, I’m not saying, I don’t want to say that it’s not practical, but it’s something that you don’t walk into the classroom and you think “I’m going to be using this”. That was not skill based; it was more like how you should be thinking. . . . And so it was great in a sense that it got me thinking about the perspective of what’s, how frustrating it is to want to learn and to the perspective that you have in the community of how isolated you are, I think, because you can only speak with certain people within the community if you don’t have, if you don’t have any English skills.

Ms. Williams also described her lack of knowledge of instructional strategies for teaching ELLs as she reflected on the methods courses she took in her teacher education program:

I don’t feel like there was a whole lot of training as to what your accommodation [for ELLs] should be. So, it was kind of understood, and I’m sure that they said it at some point, that it should be simpler, that it should be something that they can maybe work in a small group for. So, small accommodations of if you’ve got several ELLs and maybe put them in a group together. And if you’ve got a really boisterous leader in the class that wants to kind of be the teacher of that group, then go ahead and clump them together, and have them do this little side activity. So you can include that into your lesson plan. But training as to, if you have these kinds of kids who are struggling with this, then these are some logical paths that
you can use. So that was not, not anything that was very clear in those methods courses.

Ms. Williams’ perceptions that she was “somewhat prepared” for teaching ELLs were revealed through her survey responses, as she indicated that she was somewhat prepared for encouraging ELLs to engage in collaborative conversations with their peers, for providing hands-on activities for ELLs, and for utilizing varied forms of assessment with ELLs. At times during classroom observations, the ELLs in her classroom did not engage in group activities, although Ms. Williams did not appear to notice their lack of participation. While ELL students engaged in classroom learning events, few opportunities for hands-on activities were offered to them. Alternative assessments were not provided for ELLs during any of the observations. During her interviews, Ms. Williams attributed her lack of preparation for implementing practices for her ELL students to her limited exposure to ESL strategies provided within her teacher education program.

Teacher 03 – Ms. Mason. When Ms. Mason completed the Perceptions of Preparation to Teach English Language Learners Survey, she wrote that she was “not very” prepared for teaching students learning English as a second language. While she rated her level of preparation for teaching in a mainstream classroom after completing her teacher preparatory program as “4”, or “extremely prepared”, she rated her preparation for teaching ELLs as “2”, or “somewhat prepared”. Further, Ms. Mason indicated that she felt extremely well prepared to develop positive classroom relationships with the students in her classroom in general, but was not at all prepared to develop positive classroom relationships with ELLs in her classroom. She also responded that she was not
at all prepared to teach English language skills, reading, writing, science, mathematics, and social studies to non-native English speaking students. When asked about her preparation for classroom teaching in general, Ms. Mason responded, “Nothing can really prepare you what we’re going to do in the classroom . . . I guess I feel as prepared as I could be. I feel like I had really good teachers who taught me what I needed to know, but it still doesn’t compare with what I’ve learned this year and what I know I need to improve upon for next year.” She described her preparation to teach ELLs, “Probably not very. . . . We didn’t really learn any ways to teach them [ELLs].”

At the time of the current study, Ms. Mason was in her first year of classroom teaching, having earned her teaching certification in 2014. As a first year teacher, Ms. Mason had participated in professional development, although those experiences focused on reading and math and did not include teaching non-native English speaking students. Although she did not consider herself to be fluent in Spanish, she had earned a Spanish minor in college, had spent one semester living in Europe, and had traveled in Spain while she was pursuing her bachelor’s degree. She empathized with the challenges facing students learning English as a second language, as she explained during one interview:

I did observe a teacher in the high school one time for a college class and there was a Hispanic student in his class and he didn’t speak Spanish. They were doing something in class, and he couldn’t communicate with them. And that right there was one of the reasons why I decided I wanted to get a minor in Spanish. Because I was like, that it’s sad that you can’t talk to that student. Or, at least, you
know, communicate with him on some level. Because he just kind of sat there and looked like he didn’t know what was going on.

Ms. Mason had 19 students enrolled in her self-contained kindergarten classroom, and three of her students were ELLs with Spanish-speaking backgrounds. She was one of three kindergarten classroom teachers at School C, and the three teachers met during joint planning periods to cooperatively plan instruction for students in their classrooms. A full-time instructional aide in Ms. Mason’s classroom assisted in the classroom and worked with individual students or small groups as needed throughout the day. An ESL teacher provided pull-out instruction during sessions held for 30 minutes, two days per week for two of the ELL students in Ms. Mason’s classroom. Although translators were not available to translate notes from classroom teachers or to translate during teachers’ meetings or conferences with non-English speaking parents, classroom teachers at the school with Spanish-speaking ELLs in their classrooms were given Spanish versions of school letters for parents/caregivers.

During the first classroom observation in Ms. Mason’s class, kindergarten students participated in whole-group reading, writing, and math lessons and engaged in independent activities following each whole-class lesson. For the whole-group reading lesson, 15 students sat on the floor on a large rug in the back of her classroom, as Ms. Mason sat in a chair in front. She began by telling students that they were going to learn some new words and introduced vocabulary words on picture cards from a commercially produced reading lesson. She pronounced the word *ragged*, displayed the word on the card, explained the meaning of the word, and related that sometimes their tennis shoes may get worn out and ragged. She then asked one student how she could tell that the
shoes in the picture are ragged. Several students raised their hands and offered comments. Ms. Mason followed a similar procedure with the word marvel, and used a quiet, gentle voice and demeanor as she spoke softly to her students. As she began reading a story from the back of a commercially produced picture card, students listened attentively and commented spontaneously at times during the story. At one point during the story, Ms. Mason asked one student about her grandmother and if she admired her grandmother. Ms. Mason’s respect for her students and her positive classroom environment were obvious during this lesson and throughout the rest of the observation.

On the day of Ms. Mason’s second observation, students participated in reading, writing, and math lessons and learning activities. During the calendar math lesson, Ms. Mason sat in a chair in front of her students, who were seated on a large rug. After telling students that this was the 158th day of school, she asked what number comes after 158. After a student answered, Ms. Mason pointed out excitedly that they had only 14 days of school left. She then asked a student to come to the front and give the month. When the student answered, “Wednesday,” Ms Mason responded, “No, honey, what’s the month?”, emphasizing the word month. She used name sticks from a cup to ask a student to place a card picturing the day’s weather and to count the days in May, as he used a pointer on the calendar while others counted aloud in unison. After individual students labeled the calendar dates for today, yesterday, and tomorrow, Ms. Mason sang the Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow song, and students sang along in unison. She then asked someone to give the complete day and date, and stated in unison with the student, “Today is Wednesday, May 13, 2015.” Ms. Mason then asked students to stand and sing the Days of the Week song. All students sang along, and she sang and made hand and
arm motions along with them as they sang the *Months of the Year* song. Ms. Mason frequently affirmed students, saying, “Very good!” and “Thank you,” as they followed her instructions. She had high expectations for student engagement and consistently provided feedback for students’ verbal and written responses throughout the observation.

On the day of Ms. Mason’s third observation, students in the class participated in reading, writing, and math lessons and learning activities. During the math lesson, Ms. Mason displayed a picture of an ice cream sundae and told students that they were going to use chocolate chips to work on knowing whether to add or subtract. Students quietly said, “Yes!” with enthusiasm in unison. After passing out papers and chocolate chips, and reminding students not to eat them, Ms. Mason asked students to count their 10 chocolate chips. She then used a document projector to model placing chips on the worksheet with pictures of sundaes, gave an example of buying ice cream in a store, and asked one student, “How many chocolate chips do you want on your sundae?” She then demonstrated writing an equation and asked students to write it on their bowl. Ms. Mason then gave several real-life examples, asked students to provide the numbers of chips they wanted on their sundaes, and demonstrated drawing chips and writing equations. She used call and response to ask whether students should add or subtract to solve a math problem, and students responded verbally in unison. As she checked students’ papers, Ms. Mason drew dots on one of her ELL student’s paper, and said, “See, that’s what we’re doing.” After completing several examples for the class, Ms. Mason used the document projector to show one students’ paper to the rest of the class, while students counted the chips on the paper aloud in unison. Ms. Mason asked students to do the last one on their own, and to write their own addition sentence. Students talked
quietly while Ms. Mason circulated, checked each student’s paper, gave feedback and
verbal prompts, and re-counted chips at times with individual students. She provided
scaffolding throughout the lesson, connected the problem-solving activity with students’
experiences, and had high expectations for student participation.

Across all three days of classroom observations, Ms. Mason promoted a warm,
positive classroom environment for all of her students. She maintained high expectations
for student engagement and learning, as she often encouraged active participation during
whole group lessons and frequently checked with individual students as they completed
learning tasks. Respectful interactions between Ms. Mason and her students, and among
students were the norm, and Ms. Mason expressed interest in her students’ lives and
experiences at times. The three ELLs in the classroom fully participated in classroom
lessons and learning activities and contributed to discussions at times. Ms. Mason had
created a classroom atmosphere that was safe and anxiety free for her ELL students.

During her interviews, Ms. Mason related that she primarily communicated to
parents of her students through hand-written notes and made phone calls or emailed
occasionally. Parents and caregivers of her students had been invited to participate in
whole-school events, including a fall festival, Open House, and two family nights for
math and literacy. Many of the students’ grandparents had attended school for
Grandparents’ Day, and four or five parents attended the class Halloween, holiday, and
Valentine’s Day parties. Ms. Mason had met the parents of her ELL students, but had not
had conferences or additional meetings with them during the school year. She explained
that two of her students’ families spoke Spanish in their homes, and that she spoke some
Spanish, but did not consider herself to be fluent. Language barriers with the parents of
her ELL students affected her efforts to communicate with them through phone calls or face-to-face meetings. Ms. Mason described her efforts to mediate the language barrier by using Spanish for notes that she sent home:

Claudia . . . just moved from another school in the county. And her parents, I’m pretty sure, are both Spanish-speakers, and . . . her older brother works on a farm I believe, and he can read English, so we’ve sent stuff home to her in Spanish and in English, because the school usually provides us a Spanish copy of things. And one night . . . I tried writing a note in Spanish because I kept trying to get something signed, and it just wasn’t getting signed. . . . I’ve sent two or three home like that for her.

Ms. Mason frequently used informal assessment strategies during whole-class instruction and students’ learning events. She collected information on individual student understanding as she circulated continually around the classroom. Ms. Mason frequently provided feedback to students, modifying her instruction or re-teaching to insure that all students learned. The three ELL students in the classroom were assessed in the same ways that native-English speaking students were assessed. Ms. Mason expressed her uncertainty with determining the source of one ELL student’s challenges with as she related an incident that occurred while the student read a book:

. . . it had a picture of some plants, and this girl was watering them, and she had spilled the water. But instead of saying, “The water spilled,” or “She spilled the water,” Claudia said, “The water dropped.” So, you know, like, there’s that language barrier there, just that she might not know what all the. . . . And sometimes, like, she’ll have trouble writing a sentence and she doesn’t necessarily
understand. I mean, they’re all still learning... I mean she’s pretty good at writing and things, but it’s just sometimes a struggle to get, sometimes, we don’t spell all the words out, like “me” instead of “my”, you know? So, and part of that may be that she just didn’t take the time to stretch it out...

During this account, Ms. Mason described her struggle with understanding if her ELL student’s difficulty with writing was due to a lack of word knowledge, limited knowledge of sound/symbol relationships, or language barriers. On her survey, Ms. Mason also indicated that she was not at all prepared for offering constructive feedback to ELLs, which may be due to her lack of knowledge of strategies to mediate language barriers.

During her classroom instruction, Ms. Mason often used real-world examples to encourage students to make connections. Students in her classroom frequently engaged in hands-on learning activities and used manipulatives during independent activities. When introducing a book or a lesson, Ms. Mason often discussed vocabulary words that may have been unfamiliar to students, as she asked them if they knew the word, to give an example of the meaning, and then gave several examples of the word. She also gave students sentence starters at times for writing and modeled learning tasks. The ELL students in the class actively participated in learning events, although specific language accommodations were not offered. As Ms. Mason reflected after the second classroom observation:

... we wrote Mother’s Day thank you notes the other day and I know a little bit of Spanish... and I said, “Claudia, do you want to write your mom’s in Spanish? So we tried our best to write it in Spanish so that her mom would be able to read it
and all that. Other than that, we just write in English, but since it was specifically for her mom. But other than that, I don’t know. I would like to know how to do it. I just don’t know what to do.

Students in Ms. Mason’s classroom actively engaged in teacher-led discussions during whole-group lessons and conversed at times during independent learning activities. The ELL students participated at times by volunteering to answer questions and talking with their native English-speaking peers seated near them. Ms. Mason spoke in English during all three classroom observations, and the ELLs also used English when speaking and in their writing. During one interview, Ms. Mason related that she owned several children’s picture books in Spanish, but hadn’t considered getting them out for her ELL students to read.

During her interviews, Ms. Mason reflected on her preparation for teaching non-native English speaking students, “But like I said, we’d never had a class on how to teach them per se, I guess. . . . So, I just don’t know. I probably just don’t know how to work with them or how to determine what I should do.” After her first classroom observation, she related, “I could probably do more to help them. You know, just in general. But, I don’t know what to do. So, but, I would say, you know, like, when you have a picture of a word, or something like that, that always helps. . . . It gives them something to put in their mind.” During her second interview, Ms. Mason elaborated, “I don’t know. I guess I just don’t know enough about what all is out there as far as methods to teach ELL students and communicate with their families. But. I would be interested in maybe learning about that so that I could do that.”
During her interviews, Ms. Mason described her lack of preparation for teaching ELLs, a lack of focus on the learning needs of ELLs and ESL strategies in her teacher education courses, and her lack of experience in working with ELLs during field placements. On her survey, Ms. Mason indicated that she was somewhat prepared to offer varied forms of assessment to her ELLs. During her classroom observations, ELL students engaged in the same forms of assessment as all students in the class, and alternative assessments were not offered. Ms. Mason’s survey responses also indicated that she was not at all prepared to encourage parents of her ELLs to participate in school and classroom events, consistent with her descriptions during her interviews of limited communication and few interactions with parents of her ELLs. Language objectives for ELL students were not observed during any of the classroom observations, consistent with this teacher’s survey response, which indicated that she was not at all prepared for setting language objectives for ELLs.

Low Levels of Perceived Preparation for Teaching ELLs

Teacher 04 – Ms. Todd. When Ms. Todd completed the survey for the current study, she indicated that she was not at all prepared by her teacher education program for teaching non-native English speaking students. While she rated her preparation for teaching in a mainstream classroom as “3”, or “adequately prepared”, Ms. Todd rated her preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language as “1”, or “not at all prepared.” Although Ms. Todd responded that she was “somewhat prepared” to develop positive classroom relationships with the ELLs in her classroom and to encourage ELLs to collaborated with their peers during learning activities, she indicated that she was “not at all prepared” for other elements specific to classroom practices for
linguistically diverse students. Moreover, she responded that she was not at all prepared for providing content area instruction in English language skills, reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies to her ELL students. As Ms. Todd reflected on her teacher education program and her preparation for teaching ELLs on her survey, “We did not prepare at all for ELLs. There was not a focus on this at the time.”

Ms. Todd was in her 13th year of teaching, and was in her second year as a third-grade teacher at School A. She had earned her teaching certification in 1999, had earned a master’s degree and Rank One certification in Educational Leadership, and had obtained National Teaching Board Certification. She was monolingual and had not participated in professional development that included techniques for teaching English language learners since she began teaching, although she indicated on her survey that she would be interested in participating in professional development for ELLs if it were offered. Her self-contained third-grade class comprised 26 students, four of whom were Hispanic students learning English as a second language.

Ms. Todd’s class was one of three third-grade classrooms in the school, and she planned and implemented instruction in all content areas. An instructional aide provided full-time assistance to one student diagnosed with autism, and the aide focused her attention and efforts on this particular student and another student with behavior disorders. One ESL teacher was assigned to the entire school half-time, although the four ELL students in Ms. Todd’s class did not receive pull-out services, and Ms. Todd related that each of her ELL student’s Personal School Plan required monitoring only. The ESL teacher at the school translated notes and letters into Spanish at times for Ms. Todd and also translated for parents of two of her ELLs during face-to-face meetings and parent-
teacher conferences. In addition, the school district employed a liaison for families of migrant workers, and this liaison contacted Spanish-speaking ELL parents by phone at times to convey messages from Ms. Todd and to arrange times for conferences.

As part of Ms. Todd’s first observation day, she taught a whole-class math lesson on geometric figures. After displaying the math page on a large screen, Ms. Todd reviewed characteristics of polygons by asking questions about the numbers of sides and right angles of various figures. At times, she asked students to turn and talk with their neighbor about characteristics of polygons. Ms. Todd gave immediate feedback, affirmed students’ responses, and corrected students’ errors. She used call and response to prompt student engagement as students answered questions about trapezoids and parallel lines in unison. When one ELL student appeared unengaged, Ms. Todd asked, “James, are you writing this down?” After answering several problems together and demonstrating, students completed the remaining questions. Ms. Todd then asked students to give the answers, as she gave immediate feedback and explained when inaccurate answers were given. Ms. Todd asked higher order thinking questions, implemented strategies to prompt student engagement, and frequently assessed student understanding during instruction and student independent work.

During her second classroom observation, Ms. Todd taught a whole-class lesson on using context clues. After reminding students that they had been working on using context clues several days, Ms. Todd asked students to turn and talk to their partner about what they do with context clues. After students engaged in conversations, Ms. Todd asked two of the ELL students to tell the class what they talked about, and students answered. Students were seated at desks arranged in tables as Ms. Todd played a
humorous animated video about context clues. Students all watched the video, and then Ms. Todd explained a context clue game that she found on-line. After Ms. Todd read a sentence, students compared their answers with a partner. The “frame on” game gave students four choices, then Ms. Todd called on a student to answer, and checked the answer by clicking an icon on the screen. Two ELL students talked with their partners, although two other ELLs did not participate. Students appeared to enjoy the game and were highly engaged. At one point, Ms. Todd connected a sentence about soccer with a student in the class who liked to play soccer. Ms. Todd then asked students to read a short story on a handout and to find the meanings of highlighted words by using context clue types. Students read the first worksheet sentence and answered Ms. Todd’s questions about the types of context clues. As students completed the rest of the handout, Ms. Todd circulated around the room, affirmed students who were reading, and talked quietly with individual students as she looked over their answers. Ms. Todd maintained high expectations for student engagement while offering immediate feedback as she assessed students’ understanding.

Students in Ms. Todd’s class read a play in small groups during her third classroom observation. As Ms. Todd distributed copies of the play, she asked her students if they liked plays, and they answered affirmatively while cheering loudly. Ms. Todd used a document projector as she pointed out the parts of a play and asked students questions to elicit responses of stage directions, scene, and dialogue. Ms. Todd used name sticks to assign parts of the play, and students begin enthusiastically reading the play. After reading the first short play, Ms. Todd again used name sticks to assign parts for another play, although students were given the choice to decline reading if they did
not want the part. Students laughed while reading the play, responding with enthusiasm and using overlapping conversation at times. At the end of the play, Ms. Todd asked recall questions about the characters, scene, and stage directions, and almost all students raised their hands to answer. Students were then given another short play to read in groups of four. Students moved noisily into groups in spots all around the room, and everyone found a group, other than one male ELL student. Although Ms. Todd found a group for this reluctant student and encouraged him to participated, he resisted and read by himself. Ms. Todd circulated around the classroom, checking with students and affirming their participation.

In her third-grade classroom, Ms. Todd made strong efforts to maintain a positive classroom environment and to demonstrate care and respect for all of her students. Classroom interactions between Ms. Todd and her ELL students and among all students were positive and respectful consistently. Students often collaborated in small group activities and for paired discussions throughout classroom instruction. Ms. Todd maintained high expectations for student engagement, and often checked with her ELL students during lessons to ensure that they were participating and comprehending. She demonstrated care and concern for her ELL students, and included her ELL students often in classroom discussions across three days of classroom observations. During one interview, Ms. Todd described her biggest successes with her ELLs in terms of relationships as she reflected:

I feel like I’ve made relationships with them. I could be wrong. I feel like they love me. . . . I have respected their culture and I am interested in their culture. I
ask them about things that they do, and I just think that thrills them to death to be able to share their culture.

Across all three days of classroom observations, Ms. Todd frequently checked for students’ understanding throughout her instruction and questioned her ELL students verbally to allow them to express their learning. She utilized formative assessments often during literacy and content area lessons and provided opportunities for student self-assessment. Ms. Todd consistently provided immediate feedback to her students and clarified and provided additional explanations when students struggled. Although Ms. Todd’s assessment practices provided information on her students’ learning, she struggled with using assessment data to modify instruction and mediate language barriers with her ELL students. During one interview, she illustrated:

Yeah, I struggle with it. I have this great grand lesson; now, what if this pocket of students does not understand it because they are English language learners? What do I do besides paraphrase? I mean paraphrasing can only get you so far.

As part of her classroom instruction, Ms. Todd often made references to her students’ lives, backgrounds, and previous experiences. Students in the class were engaged often in learning activities that allowed them to apply concepts that they were learning. Ms. Todd provided explanations for all of her students as she modeled and demonstrated new skills to prompt understanding. She described her challenges in providing instruction for her ELLs due to language barriers, as she related:

Two of them [ELLs] will get confused over certain questioning techniques, maybe paper or orally. One in particular. I’ll say something new to him and he’ll have them a blank look on his face and say, “I don’t understand what you’re
saying.” And so I’ll have to slow down. I’m a fast talker. I’ll have to slow down what I am saying, phrase it in a different way. And the other one [ELL] struggles a bit in reading and language arts, and I truly believe it’s the language. She’s not very strong in the English language. And so I think that’s where that comes from. Now, the other two are very strong in the English language and they’re very smart and those two in combination have helped them to be successful.

At times, students in Ms. Todd’s classroom engaged in academic conversations during whole and small-group activities. Ms. Todd provided opportunities at times for students to engage in shared discussions with a partner during classroom instruction. She frequently questioned students throughout her lessons, although these questions typically followed an Initiation-Response-Evaluation format, rather than extended responses. The four ELL students participated during classroom discussions and verbally interacted with their peers at times. Ms. Todd described her efforts to incorporate the language and cultural backgrounds of her ELLs into her classroom instruction during one interview:

We do this calendar math . . . and the other side is Spanish. And so they [ELLs] were like, “Can we have the Spanish?” “Can we have Spanish?” So I put it on the Spanish a couple of times and then back to English. So they were so excited in seeing Spanish words. And then we did a country project, and they, all four of them [ELLs], chose Mexico to connect with their culture. So I thought it was great. I was like, “You should. It’d be great.”

During her interviews, Ms. Todd described her lack of preparation to teach ELLs and her limited knowledge of strategies to support the literacy development and academic achievement of non-native English speaking students. She also referenced her lack of
professional development for teaching ELLs and prevailing attitudes toward non-native English speaking students in the school where she taught previously, as she reflected:

This sounds horrible. But this is just the way it was. Trying to make them [ELLs] be more English speakers and function in the English world than being culturally responsive to them. Like, “Let’s change them into an English-speaking student. Let’s make them successful.” Of course, the whole instruction is in English. It is. So they were trying to help them be successful in an English speaking world. Does that make sense? Like, “Put this away. We know you’re from Mexico, but we need you to put all that away, and here in our classroom, we’re in America now. And we’re going to do American things, and we’re going to speak English, and we’re going to become American like.”

As Ms. Todd described a school policy of an English immersion approach to ESL instruction in her former school and assimilationist views, she acknowledged her acceptance of that approach. Ms. Todd’s survey responses indicated that she was not at all prepared to give ELL students specific feedback on how they can meet learning expectations, to provide opportunities for ELLs to use hands-on activities to demonstrate their learning, or to provide real-world examples to make learning meaningful to ELL students. Observations in Ms. Todd’s classroom revealed that she rarely implemented instructional strategies for her ELL students, provided alternative assessments for ELLs, or set language objectives for her students. During her interviews, she described a lack of coursework that included strategies for ELL students and opportunities for working with ELLs in field assignments as contributing to her lack of preparation for teaching ELLs.
Perceptions of Preparedness and Teachers’ Practices

The four focal teachers not only held diverse views of their preparation for teaching ELLs, they also varied in their classroom practices with their ELL students. All four teachers demonstrated an ethic of care toward all students in their classroom, interacted respectfully with their students, and fostered respectful classroom conversations among students. These teachers had created comfortable classroom environments, and the ELL students participated fully as members of the classroom community during partner activities, small group tasks, and whole class learning events. Further, all four classrooms appeared to be anxiety-free and conducive to learning for ELLs. One noticeable contrast between Ms. Conner, the teacher with high levels of perceived preparation for teaching ELLs, and the three teachers who perceived that they were somewhat or not at all prepared for ELLs, was observed in students’ regular seat assignments in the classroom. Although each teacher had at least three ELL students in their classrooms, only Ms. Conner allowed her ELLs to sit next to each other, thus promoting bilingualism as she provided opportunities for ELLs to communicate for social and academic purposes with their Spanish speaking peers and with native English speaking students. The other three teachers had placed their ELLs scattered alone around their classes, thus limiting opportunities for students to converse in their native languages.

An additional area of contrast within learning environments was observed in the area of signs, posters, and pictures in the classrooms of the four focal teachers. For example, in Ms. Conner’s classroom, classroom fixtures (door, math center) were labeled in both English and Spanish. The class daily schedule, calendar, months of the year
posters, and laminated geometric shapes were labeled in both languages. In classrooms of the other three focal teachers, classroom objects, schedules, and calendars were printed only in English, although each teacher had Spanish-speaking ELLs in their classrooms.

Another area of observed contrasts occurred in the area of family collaboration. Ms. Conner, the teacher who indicated that she was well-prepared for teaching ELLs, made strong efforts to communicate with parents of her five ELLs by contacting the school translator and communicating with parents through older siblings of her ELLs, who served as translators. During her first interview, Ms. Conner related that she had met with all five of her ELLs’ parents and that she contacted the school ESL family coordinator to translate for conferences, phone calls and to provide written Spanish translations of classroom notes and letters. Evidence of family collaboration that occurred at times was provided during interviews with another focal teacher, Ms. Williams. Ms. Williams, who responded that she was somewhat prepared for teaching ELLs, described an evening meeting with one of her ELL students, the student’s non-English speaking mother, and a translator at the community library to collaborate on a plan for the student. Ms. Williams had also met with her other ELL student’s mother for a conference, at the parent’s request, where Ms. Williams gave the parent suggestions for working with her son at home. The other two focal teachers related during interviews that they had met parents of their ELLs at a school-wide family event at the beginning of the school year, but had not had conferences or additional conversations with non-English speaking families of their ELL students. While all four teachers mentioned language barriers as factors that affected their communication with parents of their ELLs, only Ms. Conner, the teacher who indicated that she was well-prepared for ELLs,
consistently sent written communications to parents of her ELLs in Spanish and communicated regularly with parents of her ELLs.

The four focal teachers also varied in their implementation of classroom assessment practices for their ELL students. Ms. Conner, the teacher with the highest level of preparation for teaching ELLs, often made efforts to ensure that her ELLs understood directions for learning tasks prior to assessing their performance. For example, on several occasions during her classroom observations, as she worked with ELLs in small groups, she gestured, pointed, and used simple Spanish words as she modeled or demonstrated. At times, ELLs also translated for each other within these small groups. Formative assessment occurred frequently during learning events, and ELLs demonstrated their conceptual learning through visual formats and use of manipulatives. Teachers who were somewhat or not at all prepared were not observed to offer options for alternative forms of assessment to their ELLs and efforts to ensure that ELLs understood directions before engaging in learning tasks occurred rarely.

While these teachers implemented a number of instructional practices to support the conceptual understanding and literacy development of their students in general, the teacher who indicated that she was extremely prepared, Ms. Conner, provided additional scaffolding for her ELL students to a great extent. She often demonstrated, modeled, and explained and made real-world connections with students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds and prior learning. While the other three focal teachers demonstrated, modeled, and implemented scaffolding strategies for all students in their classrooms, specific instructional accommodations for their ELL students occurred infrequently and during some observations, these practices did not occur at all.
One surprising finding was related to observed variances in the area of sociopolitical consciousness. Ms. Conner, with higher levels of perceived preparation for ELLs, often recognized and affirmed her ELL’s linguistic backgrounds, used Spanish words and phrases while giving directions and during small-group and individual instruction, and used the Spanish versions of intervention learning games on electronic devices with her ELL students. Although she did not have a background in Spanish, Ms. Conner made strong efforts to speak Spanish with her students, used a Spanish-English dictionary as a resource, and described how her ELLs helped her learn Spanish words. The other three focal teachers did not use oral or written Spanish in their classrooms for social or academic purposes with their ELLs and did not use Spanish versions of technology-related resources. Interestingly, the two focal teachers who indicated that they were somewhat prepared for serving non-native English-speaking students both had college-level coursework in Spanish, yet did not use Spanish in working with their Spanish-speaking ELLs. Although classroom print materials and books in the four classroom libraries included characters of diverse cultures, only Ms. Williams, who indicated that she was somewhat prepared for teaching ELLs, had books that were printed in Spanish in her classroom library. Texts and classroom library books in the other three classrooms were printed in English only.

**Summary**

In this research study, participants’ survey responses indicate that few teachers perceive that they were adequately or well prepared by their teacher preparation programs for teaching non-native English speaking students. This finding corresponds to the first research question that asked “What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach
ELLs?” Most of the participating teachers responded that their preparatory coursework did not include instructional strategies for ELL students, and most teachers had few opportunities for fieldwork experiences with linguistically diverse students.

In response to the subordinate question regarding the types of experiences that participating teachers perceive as supportive of preparing teachers for working with ELLs, teachers responded that coursework in ESL methods, observations and fieldwork placements in classrooms with ELLs, and hands-on experiences would benefit teachers’ knowledge and skill development for teaching ELLs. Many teachers suggested that these experiences should be offered by teacher preparation programs, while others responded that course work in ESL methods should be a requirement for teachers.

The second subordinate research question addressed how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs shaped teachers’ instructional practices. Among the four focal teachers, the teacher who indicated that she was well-prepared for teaching non-native English speaking students modified her instruction and assessments for her ELLs, while recognizing and affirming students’ linguistic resources. The other three focal teachers, two of whom perceived that they were somewhat prepared for teaching ELLs and one who perceived that she was not at all prepared, promoted classroom environments that were safe and welcoming for ELLs, but rarely modified their instruction for them. Alternative forms of assessment were not provided for ELLs in these three classrooms, and efforts to ensure that ELLs comprehended verbal or written directions occurred infrequently. While ELLs participated in most classroom activities, these three teachers treated their ELL students much the same as their native-English speaking peers. Across classroom observations and interviews with the four focal
teachers, teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs appeared to be strongly related to their classroom practices, as evidenced by the observation and interview data presented here.
Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss study results as I synthesize findings across the research. In the first section, I consider the purpose of the study and the research questions used to guide the study. I then discuss major findings and contributions to the field of study related to preparing teachers for working with ELLs. In the final section, I present implications of the study, followed by study limitations and recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this dissertation study was to investigate teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach students learning English as a second language. Through this research investigation, I aimed to explore dimensions of teachers’ perceptions of preparedness for implementing practices to support the language and literacy development of their ELL students. I also sought to increase my understandings of teachers’ recommendations of preparatory experiences that would enhance pre-service teacher’ acquisition of the knowledge and skills facilitative to teaching ELLs. An additional focus of this study was to examine how teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs shaped their classroom practices.

The first research question guiding this study was: What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach ELLs? Subordinate study questions were: (a) What types of preparatory experiences do teachers perceive as supportive of their preparation for teaching ELLs? (b) How do teachers’ perceptions of their preparation shape their practices with ELL students?
**Discussion**

Seventy-nine teachers from four schools in the southeastern United States participated in the study by completing the *Perceptions of Preparation for Teaching English Language Learners Survey*, which included 55 Likert-type scale items and six open-ended questions. Results from completed surveys provided data related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs, along with their perceptions of preparedness to implement specific practices for supporting the language development and academic achievement of linguistically diverse students. Survey data also provided insights of teachers’ perceptions of pre-service experiences beneficial to preparing teachers for serving ELLs. Survey findings were analyzed to identify four focal teachers, one from each participating school, representing perceptions of varied levels of preparation for teaching ELL students. Data collected from classroom observations and interviews with these four teachers were used to explore the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of preparation for serving ELLs and teachers’ classroom practices. Major findings from this research endeavor are synthesized to answer each of the questions framing the study.

**Study Findings**

First, *a majority of participating teachers indicated that they were either “not at all prepared” or “somewhat prepared” by their teacher education programs for teaching students learning English as a second language*. Few teachers responded that they were adequately prepared by their teacher education program for working with ELLs, and this result did not vary by year of degree completion, even among participants who had graduated within the last five years. Conversely, most teachers responded that they were
“adequately” or “extremely” prepared by their teacher education programs for classroom teaching in general. Over one half of the teachers completing the survey indicated that they were “not at all prepared” for teaching ELLs, which contrasts dramatically to findings that a small minority of participants responded that they were “not at all prepared” for teaching in a mainstream classroom.

While some studies have addressed perceptions of teachers with specific certifications for teaching ELLs (Gandara et al., 2005) or included perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs as one facet of larger inquiries of teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, Chung, et al., 2002), few researchers have focused particularly on in-service and mainstream classroom teachers’ perceptions of preparation for ELLs (O’Neal et al., 2008). Given that a paucity of research studies devoted to exploring the perceptions of mainstream classroom teachers for their preparation for teaching ELLs have been conducted, findings of the current study are important and noteworthy. Survey results from these in-service teacher participants with varied years of experience, representing a wide spectrum of teacher education programs, suggest critical considerations for teacher educators as they plan preparatory experiences for teacher candidates and for school administrators as they plan professional development opportunities for in-service teachers.

A number of scholars have argued that teacher candidates need specific training to develop the knowledge and skills for serving non-native English speaking students (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Harper & de Jong, 2004). Further, researchers contend that few teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary for meeting the learning needs of linguistically diverse students (Li & Potraccio, 2010; Mueller, Singer, & Carranza, 2006).
Given that teachers’ perceptions of preparation have been shown to be correlated with teacher self-efficacy (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Siwatu, 2011b), student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Gandara et al., 2005), and classroom practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Maloch et al., 2003), these findings are a concern for educators, school administrators, policy makers and stakeholders. The significant achievement gaps that persist between ELLs and their native English speaking peers in almost every subject area provide additional evidence of the need to address teacher preparation for ELLs (Goldenburg, 2010; NAEP, 2013; Short et al., 2012).

A number of factors were identified by teachers in the current study as contributing to their lack of preparedness for serving linguistically diverse students. These factors include a lack of opportunities for taking coursework that included ESL strategies, limited content of methods courses that related to the learning and literacy needs of ELL students, and few fieldwork experiences that included working with non-native English speaking students. Results of this dissertation research provide evidence that many practicing elementary teachers have not taken courses in teaching ELLs or in second language acquisition and did not receive information about teaching ELLs through methods courses or other required coursework. The lack of coursework in these areas appears to be a contributing factor in findings that teachers perceived that they were underprepared for teaching ELL students. This finding is particularly disturbing, given that almost half of the participating teachers completed their preparatory programs within the last 10 years, and 18 of the 79 participants had graduated within the previous five years, thus providing evidence that teacher preparation programs have not addressed the consistently expanding issues of linguistic diversity. Further, only half of teachers who
completed their teacher education programs within the past five years responded that their methods courses were helpful in preparing them for teaching ELL students. It appears that teacher education programs have been slow to respond to the increasing need for all teacher candidates to be prepared for working with non-native English speaking students.

Findings of the current study are consistent with research conducted by O’Neal, Ringler, and Rodriguez (2008) that revealed that the majority of participating teachers did not feel prepared for teaching ELLs, and most had not taken courses that included teaching ELLs as part of their teacher education programs. In research conducted by Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005), teachers who had completed coursework requirements for specific certifications for teaching ELLs indicated that they were more capable of teaching these students, which is not surprising when considering that these courses were in addition to the attainment of initial teaching certification. Teacher participants in Ullucci’s (2010) qualitative study of outstanding teachers described elements of their preparatory coursework as beneficial for their preparation to teach non-native English speaking students. Specifically, these teachers described specific course lectures related to linguistic diversity, videos of immigrant cultures, and concepts related to second language acquisition as facilitating their knowledge development for working with ELLs. Other researchers found that graduates of some teacher education programs were significantly more prepared for teaching linguistically diverse students than a national sample, suggesting that coursework may have profound effects on teachers’ sense of preparedness (Darling-Hammond, Eiler et al., 2002).
In addition to lacking preparatory coursework for teaching ELLs, findings in this study reveal that approximately half of the study participants did not have opportunities for classroom observations or other field experiences that included ELLs prior to student teaching. Further, more than half of the teachers did not work with ELLs during their student teaching assignments, and this result did not vary among mainstream classroom teachers who had earned certification in elementary education. Among teachers who completed their preparation programs within the past five years, the majority had opportunities for field experiences that included ELLs, although only half of these recent graduates worked with ELLs during student teaching and were expected to plan and implement instruction for their ELL students. Given that the majority of teachers did not work with ELLs during their college fieldwork experiences, the finding that most teachers did not perceive student teaching as helpful in preparing them to teach ELLs is not surprising.

A number of researchers recommend that teacher education programs offer fieldwork experiences as a component of preparation for pre-service teachers (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Conaway, et al., 2012; Wiggins & Folio, 1999), and accreditation standards mandate the inclusion of field experiences, as well. Field experiences for pre-service teachers have been found in previous research as beneficial for preparation for classroom teaching (National Research Council, 2010). Ullucci’s (2010) case study revealed that in-service teachers identified as successful by school administrators described their student teaching experiences in classrooms with ELLs as benefitting their preparation. Pappamihiel’s (2007) research findings indicate that teacher candidates’ field experiences with linguistically diverse students resulted in shifts in negative biases and views toward
these individuals. Findings from the current study suggest that many participating
teachers lacked fieldwork experiences with non-native English speaking students, thus
contributing to their perceptions of low levels of preparedness for teaching these students.

When considering the learning needs of ELLs and culturally diverse students and
preparing teachers to meet those needs, researchers advocate that teacher candidates have
opportunities for varied field experiences intermingled with coursework (Ballantyne et
al., 2008, Conaway et al., 2012; Wiggins & Folio, 1999). Findings from the current study
reveal that over half of survey respondents did not receive information about teaching
ELLs through their methods courses or other required coursework and did not work with
ELLs during college fieldwork assignments. Although the majority of respondents who
lacked both coursework and field experiences with ELLs had graduated more than 10
years prior to this study, an area of concern is that some teachers who lacked both
coursework and field experiences with ELLs had completed their certification programs
within the last five years. While few recent graduates in the current study lacked
opportunities for field experiences with ELLs as part of their teacher education programs,
a majority of teachers graduating within the last five years were not required to take
coursework in teaching ELLs or in second language acquisition. The absence of
coursework for teaching ELLs, in addition to a paucity of field experiences in settings
that involved non-native English speaking students, may have been contributing factors
in participants’ perceptions of low levels of preparation.

It should be noted here that requirements for teaching certification vary among
states, and teachers in this dissertation study had met certification requirements in the
state where this study was conducted. Certification requirements in this state do not
include specific coursework or field placements with ELL students, although other states now require courses in providing instruction for ELLs. Teacher education programs, which aim to prepare teacher candidates to obtain certification in their state, vary in their requirements and course offerings. Thus, these findings may not be generalizable across all states in the U.S. This issue is also addressed in limitations of the study.

Second, participating teachers indicated that coursework in teaching ELLs and field experiences with linguistically diverse students would benefit the preparation of teachers for serving ELL students. These findings are noteworthy, given that few studies have included a focus on the perceptions of classroom teachers in general regarding pre-service experiences that would benefit preparation for working with ELLs (Panaque & Barbetta, 2006). Scholars advocate that pre-service teachers need to acquire pedagogical content knowledge for teaching ELLs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2002; Ballantyne et al., 2008; National Research Council, 2010; Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States, n.d.) Researchers maintain that teachers need content knowledge specific to learning English as a second language (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Ballantyne et al., 2008). Harper and de Jong (2004) contend that ELL teachers should develop understandings of the processes of first and second language acquisition. Other scholars recommend that teachers of ELLs need to build knowledge of first and second language development, to value students’ cultural diversity, and to build skills for teaching academic language (Samson & Collins, 2012). In their report on preparing teachers of non-native English speaking students, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2009) identified areas of preparation for mainstream teachers:
Similarly, participating teachers in the current study recommended coursework experiences that would include language acquisition and courses specific to teaching ELLs. These recommendations extend findings from previous studies in that these recommended practices emanate from in-service teachers’ perspectives of coursework and components of coursework that would enhance teacher preparation for working with ELL students.

Teachers in the current study also advocated that coursework for teacher candidates include strategies for teaching ELLs. Specifically, more teachers recommended learning specific strategies for teaching ELLs and for communicating or collaborating with parents of ELLs than taking specific coursework in teaching English as a second language. These findings suggest that teachers recognized the need to implement specific practices to support the language development and academic achievement of their non-native English speaking students, as well as the necessity of improving collaborative relationships with families of their ELL students.

Teachers’ recommendations for pre-service coursework for ELLs and opportunities to learn strategies for these students are consistent with previous research recommendations that teachers plan their instruction based upon ELL students’ family backgrounds and cultural experiences, thus facilitating student engagement and
achievement (Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; McIntyre, 2010; Powell & Rightmyer, 2011; Waxman & Tellez, 2002). Research findings suggest that teachers provide abundant opportunities for student collaboration and discourse to help students learning English as a second language to develop language proficiency and to support conceptual learning (McIntyre, 2010; Powell & Rightmyer, 2011, Waxman & Tellez, 2002). Instructional strategies that scaffold instruction for ELLs include teacher demonstrating, modeling, providing graphic organizers, and adjusting rate of speech to facilitate comprehensible input (Goldenberg, 2010; Echevarria & Vogt, 2010; Powell & Rightmyer, 2011).

Researchers have found that college preparatory coursework enhances teachers’ ability to instruct culturally and linguistically diverse students (Mora & Grisham, 2001; Pappamihiel, 2007; Siwatu, 2011). Further, findings of previous research studies confirm that teachers’ use of scaffolding in language acquisition has been effective with ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Brown & Broemmel, 2011; Curtin, 2005; Reyes & Azuara, 2008). In Pappamihiel’s 2007 study of preservice teachers’ practices during fieldwork with ELLs, teacher candidates applied strategies learned from coursework that encompassed student selected projects, cooperative learning, and teacher think-alouds. During interviews, pre-service teachers in Mora and Grisham’s (2001) qualitative analysis related that they incorporated strategies presented within coursework as they worked with elementary grade ELL students during a fieldwork assignment. Specifically, pre-service teachers mentioned implementing word study, use of realia, and knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds. Thus, findings from the study confirm previous research that coursework that includes strategies for instruction of ELLs fosters teachers' abilities to meet the instructional needs of linguistically diverse students.
Among teachers’ recommendations for coursework in teaching ELLs were suggestions for incorporating strategies for building relationships and collaborating with parents/families of ELLs. These responses may be due to teachers’ recognition of the value of parent collaboration and an acknowledgement of the challenges in developing relationships with parents of linguistically diverse students. Research findings suggest that building relationships with families of ELL students leads to multiple positive outcomes, including improved classroom relationships, and increased academic achievement (Grantham, Frasier, Roberts, & Bridges, 2005; Matuszny, Banda, & Coleman, 2007; Robinson & Fine, 1994).

It should be noted that participants in the current study did not recommend coursework in foreign language for pre-service teachers. Almost all participating teachers were monolingual, and all were native speakers of English. Of the three teachers who were fluent in another language, one indicated that he was extremely prepared for teaching ELLs, although the other two teachers who were fluent in another language indicated that they were not at all prepared for teaching ELLs. The lack of recommendations for coursework in another language contrasts with findings from Panaque and Barbetta’s (2006) study of 202 special education teachers of ELL students. These researchers found that bilingual special education teachers recommended that pre-service teachers take coursework in the primary language of their ELL students, which may be problematic due to the inability to predict which languages will be spoken by potential students.

Teachers in the current study also indicated that field experiences with linguistically diverse students offered as components of teacher education programs
would facilitate teacher preparedness for teaching ELLs. Researchers have demonstrated that preparatory field experiences benefit classroom teachers (Maloch et al., 2003), although this research did not address ELLs. Opportunities for working with ELLs during teacher preparation programs are recommended as integral for preparing teacher candidates by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008) and the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Moreover, researchers advocate that teacher education programs promote experiences with culturally and linguistically diverse students for teacher candidates throughout their preparatory programs (Conaway et al., 2012; Wiggins & Folio, 1999.) Given that classroom teachers will likely teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, clinical practice and field experiences are essential components of preparatory programs (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Panaque & Barbetta, 2006; Siwatu, 2011).

In Pappamihiel’s (2007) study, pre-service teachers affirmed the value of their tutoring experiences with ELLs as part of a community-based service project. In addition, findings suggest that participants’ beliefs and attitudes toward non-native English speakers were altered as a result of participating in this clinical experience. Ullucci’s (2010) case study provides evidence that opportunities to engage with ELLs during field experiences facilitated the development of classroom teachers identified as successful by their school administrators. Fewer than half of the teachers in the current study indicated that they had opportunities for fieldwork experiences with ELLs while completing their teacher education programs, which may have affected low levels of perceived preparation for teaching linguistically diverse students.
Third, teachers’ classroom practices appeared to be consistent with their perceived preparation for serving students learning English as a second language. In the current study, Teacher 01 indicated that she was extremely prepared for teaching ELLs, and classroom observations and interviews revealed that she often implemented teaching strategies to support her ELL students. Teachers 02 and 03 indicated on their surveys that they were somewhat prepared for teaching ELLs. Similarly, their classroom observations and interviews confirmed that they occasionally incorporated classroom practices to support their ELL students’ specific learning needs. Teacher 04 responded that she was not at all prepared for teaching ELLs, and classroom observations of her practices with the ELL students in her classroom revealed that she implemented strategies specific to her ELLs at times, findings that were similar to Teachers 02 and 03.

Although few studies of the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of preparation for ELLs and their classroom practices have been conducted, findings of the current study reinforce previous research findings of perceptions of preparation for teaching in general and teachers’ practices (Darling-Hammond, Eiler et al., 2002). As part of their investigation of the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), Darling-Hammond, Eiler, and Marcus (2002) used teacher self-reporting and surveys to investigate relationships between perceptions of preparation for teaching and classroom practices. Researchers found correlations between teachers’ perceptions of preparedness, self-efficacy, and classroom practices of student-centered strategies, which included instructional accommodations for students’ learning preferences, student goal-setting and self-assessment, and employing research to inform instructional decisions. Particularly concerning are considerations presented by research studies that suggest that practices of
underprepared teachers may be detrimental to linguistically diverse students (Curtin, 2005; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010).

All four of the focal teachers in the current study had created safe, comfortable classroom environments for their non-native English speaking students. The ELLs in all four teachers’ classrooms appeared to participate fully in the classroom community. Three of the four focal teachers indicated on their surveys that they were adequately or extremely prepared for developing positive classroom relationships with the ELLs in their classrooms. Only the teacher who responded that she was not at all prepared for teaching ELLs responded that she was “somewhat” prepared for developing classroom relationships with ELLs.

The critical nature of positive relationships with non-native English speaking students has been emphasized by a number of researchers. Language theorist Stephen Krashen (n.d.) argues that affective filters, including anxiety and stress, affect language input for second language learners, thus resulting in delayed second language acquisition. Curtin (2005) observed enhanced language development of ELL students in classrooms that were oriented to reducing student anxiety and that encouraged student conversations. In addition, scholars emphasize that linguistically diverse students benefit when teachers affirm and understand their cultural backgrounds (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Powell, 2010). Findings from Li’s (2016) case-study of three low-SES ELLs suggest that students’ literacy engagement is facilitated when teachers acknowledge and understand students’ home literacy practices and use students’ funds of knowledge as the basis for planned instructional experiences. McIntyre (2010) confirms principles from CREDE (n.d.)
standards, which include maintaining high expectations for learners, an additional aspect of teacher/student classroom relationships applicable to linguistically diverse students.

Findings related to family collaboration from teacher interviews with the four focal teachers suggest that only Teacher 01, who indicated that she was extremely well prepared for teaching ELLs, made consistent efforts to communicate with parents of her ELL students and to mediate language barriers. Further, in her interviews, she described regular conversations with parents/families of her ELLs that evidenced her views of parents as partners in educating their child. In contrast, Teachers 02 and 03, who responded that they were “somewhat prepared” for teaching ELLs, communicated sporadically with parents of their ELL students. Teacher 04, who indicated that she was not at all prepared for teaching ELLs, reported few conversations with parents of her ELLs. In addition, these three teachers attributed their challenges in communicating with parents of their ELL students to language barriers and a lack of translating support.

Researchers contend that teachers’ abilities to collaborate with families of their ELLs contribute to students’ educational success (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Gandara et al., 2005; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994). McIntyre (2010) asserts that family collaboration with parents of ELLs fosters student engagement and achievement. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Content Standards Applied to ELLs recommends that “teachers should know how to involve their student’s families and communities in education” (Ballantyne et al., 2008, p. 24). Other researchers emphasize the importance of teachers’ abilities to build collaborative relationships with parents of their students learning English as a second language (Gandara et al., 2005). Findings from Pena’s (2000) case study in a school with a high population of Mexican-American families
demonstrates that creating a welcoming environment is crucial for building relationships with families of linguistically diverse students. Panferov (2010) describes implications of her study with ELL families and asserts that written school communications offered in families’ home languages, messages that addressed both positive and negative reports of student behaviors, and home visits help develop partnerships with parents.

Results of classroom observations showed that the four focal teachers’ assessment practices of their ELL students differed according to levels of perceived preparation for ELLs. For example, Teacher 01, who indicated that she was extremely prepared for teaching ELLs, often employed various forms of assessment for the five non-native English speaking students in her classroom. Throughout all three classroom observations, she provided alternative forms of assessment for her ELL students. These assessment accommodations included asking students to use manipulatives to demonstrate mathematical problem solving, using gestures to demonstrate meanings of focal English vocabulary, and using the language translation function on an I-Pad device to provide comprehensible input. Furthermore, she took steps to ensure that the ELLs in her class understood directions for assigned learning tasks prior to administering assessments as she repeated her directions, reduced her rate of speech, pointed to pictures and paper to demonstrate, and modeled learning tasks.

In contrast, Teachers 02 and 03, who rated themselves as “somewhat prepared” and Teacher 04, who indicated that she was “not at all prepared” for teaching ELLs, rarely modified their directions for ELLs prior to administering formative or summative assessments. Across all three classroom observations, these teachers did not offer modified written or verbal assessments for ELLs. Written learning tasks that teachers
assessed were written in English only, and options for demonstrating learning through other formats were not suggested or provided. Rather, students learning English as a second language in these classrooms completed the same types and formats of assessments as their native English-speaking peers.

The purpose of instructional assessment has been described as “to discover who students are and what they know, so that instruction can build on students’ strengths” (Powell, 2011, p. 112). The finding that Teacher 01 utilized multiple forms of assessments is consistent with recommendations of researchers who advocate that teachers modify assessments for their linguistically diverse students (Reyhner & Cockrum, 2016; Soltero-Gonzalez, Escamilla, & Hopewell, 2010). Students learning English as a second language require assessment strategies that are unconnected to language proficiency (Goldenberg, 2010; Powell et al., 2014; Rice, Pappamihiel, & Lake, 2006). For example, Ruiz, Vargas, and Beltrain (2002) discovered that utilizing interactive journaling with a second-grade ELL student provided opportunities for teachers to provide feedback and support for the student’s written language development as he engaged in written communications. Rice, Pappamihiel, and Lake (2004) recommend that assessments for ELLs closely follow classroom activities and that performance-based assessments are used whenever possible.

The instructional practices of the four focal teachers varied among participants. Teacher 01, the focal teacher who responded that she was well prepared for teaching ELLs, often implemented various forms of scaffolding specific to her ELLs. For example, she frequently demonstrated as she explained learning tasks, modeled as she gave verbal explanations, and offered examples and connections to real-world
applications. In addition, she made strong efforts to provide comprehensible input and often reduced her rate of speech, re-stated directions, and chose familiar vocabulary during instruction and conversations with her ELL students. Teacher 01 also used Spanish words and phrases at times during whole-class instruction and used Spanish terms often during small-group or individual instruction with her five Spanish-speaking ELLs.

In contrast, Teachers 02, 03, and 04, with lower levels of perceived preparation, rarely provided scaffolding for their ELLs. Few strategies to ensure that ELLs comprehended verbal or written directions were observed in these teachers’ classrooms. Teachers 02 and 03, who related that they were “somewhat” prepared for teaching ELLs, had expertise in Spanish; Teacher 02 had taken four years of Spanish in high school and one semester in college, and Teacher 03 had earned a minor in Spanish in college. Interestingly, Teacher 02 rarely used Spanish words or phrases with her two Spanish-speaking ELLs, and Teacher 03, who had three ELLs in her classroom, all Spanish-speaking, was not observed to use Spanish during any of her three classroom observations.

One possible explanation for the lack of scaffolding that Teachers 02, 03, and 04 provided for their non-native English speaking students is that these teachers lacked conceptual knowledge of principles of second language acquisition and limited pedagogical content knowledge of instructional strategies to support learning for linguistically diverse students. Findings from interview data provide evidence that these focal teachers lacked preparatory coursework and field experiences with linguistically diverse students and knowledge and skills for teaching ELLs. During their interviews,
teachers reflected that they didn’t know what to do to help their ELLs and expressed frustration with their lack of knowledge of strategies to mediate language barriers with their non-native English speaking students.

Findings that Teacher 01 utilized multiple forms of scaffolding are consistent with findings from previous investigations that implementing scaffolding strategies benefits students’ language acquisition (August & Shanahan, 2006; Brown & Broemmel, 2011; Curtin, 2005; Reyes & Azuara, 2008). Moreover, the frequent efforts and implementation of strategies to provide comprehensible input for her ELL students by Teacher 01 is evidence that she understood the importance of this linguistic concept.

Language theorists and researchers contend that comprehensible input is essential for meaning construction for students learning English as a second language (Curtin, 2005; Echevarria et al., 2006; Kim, 2008; Krashen, n.d). Recommendations for pedagogy from the Center for Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE, n.d.) include contextualization of classroom curriculum to students’ cultural backgrounds and making connections with students’ home and personal experiences. “Schema theorists, cognitive scientists, behaviorists, and psychological anthropologists agree that school learning is made meaningful by connecting it to students’ personal, family and community experiences” (CREDE, n.d.). Connections with students’ primary languages are implicit in these recommendations, as language is an integral component of students’ family backgrounds and cultural identities.

Opportunities for engaging in discourse varied among classrooms of the four focal teachers in this study. Students in Teacher 01’s classroom often had opportunities for collaborative conversations with their peers, and the ELLs fully participated in these
experiences. The five non-native English speaking students in the class often used their
home language, Spanish, in conversations with one another as they completed academic
tasks, engaged in learning games and activities, and assisted one another with
explanations and directions. In addition, these ELLs spoke English at times with their
native English speaking peers during classroom discussions, partner activities, and for
social purposes. Teacher 01 identified written and oral language objectives for her ELL
students and communicated these as part of her instruction in reading, writing, and
mathematics.

Teachers 02, 03, and 04, with lower levels of perceived preparation for ELLs,
provided opportunities occasionally for all students in their classrooms to participate in
academic conversations and verbal interactions, and the ELL students in their classrooms
engaged in these conversations at times. However, language barriers appeared to affect
these conversations, and students in these classrooms were not seated or grouped with
other ELLs, so English usage was required for informal conversations and for
collaborative tasks and paired activities. The ELLs in these classrooms were not
observed speaking in their home languages during the three observations in these
teachers’ classrooms, although ELLs did converse at times in English during partner and
group activities. Interview data with these teachers confirmed that students used English
almost exclusively at school. Language objectives for ELLs were observed only during
the first observation with Teacher 02 and were not observed during any classroom
observations with Teachers 03 and 04. One possible explanation for the lack of focus on
language development for ELLs is that teachers did not recognize the language needs of
ELLs. These teachers related during their interviews that they lacked knowledge of
strategies for ELLs due to a lack of coursework in ESL instruction and inclusion of strategies for working with ELLs in their methods courses. Further, their preparatory fieldwork experiences did not include opportunities for working with non-native English speakers.

Au and Raphael (2010) emphasize that the persistent difficulties of ELLs as a group are often due to an absence of specific instruction related to developing students’ knowledge of literate discourse. Opportunities for ELLs to participate in classroom discourse, verbal interactions, and academic conversations are espoused by scholars and researchers as supportive of language and literacy development (CREDE, n.d.; Echevarria & Vogt, 2010). Research indicates that the language development for ELLs is fostered through abundant opportunities for social and academic conversations in both dominant languages and in English (August & Shanahan, 2006). Moreover, ELL students benefit from classroom activities that promote developing academic literacy for authentic purposes (Allison & Harklau, 2010). For example, in a case study of one fifth-grade teacher who planned lessons designed to help her linguistically diverse fifth-grade students articulate their responses to a school administrator’s decision to eliminate recess, students practiced persuasive writing techniques and utilized academic vocabulary to request that their recess be restored (Gebhard, Harmann, & Seger, 2007). In addition, vocabulary development is crucial for ELLs at higher grade levels, and educators are encouraged to provide direct vocabulary instruction, activities to support content area knowledge, and opportunities for oral language practice (August & Hakuta, 1997; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Goldenberg, 2010).
Three of the four teachers related on their surveys and during their interviews that they were not adequately prepared for teaching ELLs, and limited implementation of instructional accommodations for their ELLs was confirmed through classroom observations. These teachers rarely utilized available linguistic, instructional, and technological resources in their classroom practices. At the same time, they readily acknowledged that they needed to learn more about instructional accommodations to facilitate learning for their ELLs and to mediate language barriers with students. Teachers also described their struggles with building relationships with parents and families of their ELLs due to language barriers.

Similarly, interviews with the focal teacher who perceived that she was extremely well prepared for teaching ELLs contextualized findings from observations in her classroom and highlighted elements of her instructional decision making for ELLs. This teacher often made use of multiple forms of instructional, linguistic, and technological resources as she worked with her ELLs. She used multiple modes of communication to mediate language barriers with her students and made strong efforts to develop collaborative relationships with parents of her ELLs. The reflections she offered during interviews provided insights into her preparation as she elaborated on her experiences working with ELLs during fieldwork placements as part of her teacher education program. It should be noted that as this focal teacher described her student teaching experiences with ELLs and opportunities to observe her cooperating teachers’ practices with ELLs, this extremely well prepared participant described the cooperating teacher as a positive role model for working with ELL students, which was consistent with this participant’s survey responses. The observed classroom practices of this focal teacher
confirmed these perceptions while highlighting elements of her instructional decision making for ELLs.

The three focal teachers in this study with lower levels of perceived preparation for ELLs tended to implement a “one size fits all” approach to their classroom practices, as the same modes of instruction were utilized for both ELLs and native English speaking students. While these teachers expressed during their interviews positive attitudes toward their ELL students and acknowledged the challenges that ELLs face with learning English and acquiring content-specific knowledge, classroom observations revealed that teachers provided the same types of curriculum, instruction, assessments, and discourse opportunities for all of their students, including ELLs. Instructional supports for language usage or vocabulary development specific to ELLs were not observed in these classrooms. Given that most of their students were native English speakers, it appeared that these teachers had not recognized a “one size fits all” approach as unsatisfactory for meeting needs of their ELL students (Guiterrez et al., 2000; Harper & de Jong, 2004). In this case, the lack of college coursework and field experiences with ELLs that teachers described in their interviews is problematic, as it appears to have resulted in limited implementation of specific strategies to meet the language and learning needs of the ELLs in their classrooms.

During their interviews, the three teachers who indicated that they were somewhat or not at all prepared for teaching ELLs related that a lack of preparatory coursework and fieldwork experiences that included culturally and linguistically diverse students inhibited their preparation for teaching ELLs. Further, teachers expressed their lack of knowledge of instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of these students.
Although these teachers implemented a number of “best practices” with their native English-speaking students, strategies to provide language accommodations or to modify their instruction for their ELL students were not observed. Thus, it appeared that their perceived lack of preparation also affected their instructional decision making for their non-native English speaking students.

Another finding that emerged from the data related to the instructional, linguistic, and technological resources utilized by the four focal teachers. While the teacher who perceived that she was well prepared for teaching ELLs implemented multiple forms of scaffolding during her instruction, linguistic supports for ELLs, and technology resources to mediate language barriers, the focal teachers with perceptions of inadequate preparation utilized resources for their ELL students rarely. As stated previously, all of the ELL students in focal teachers’ classrooms were Hispanic and came from Spanish-speaking backgrounds. Although two of the focal teachers had taken college coursework in Spanish and were familiar with their ELL students’ primary language, they expressed that they were “somewhat” or “not at all prepared” for teaching ELLs and did not use either verbal or written forms of Spanish during informal conversations with their ELLs or for instructional purposes. Although classroom computers and other technological devices were available to all four focal teachers, the three teachers with perceptions of low preparation for ELLs used these resources on rare occasions for translation purposes for their students or to communicate with non-English speaking parents. Efforts to promote bilingualism for ELLs were rarely mentioned or encouraged by these three teachers. Findings in this study suggest that teachers’ limited preparation resulted in linguistic blindness, or limited acknowledgement of the language resources of their ELLs.
or the instructional accommodations needed in an English immersion classroom environment. Teachers’ perceptions of inadequate preparation for teaching ELLs was evidenced by limited use of available resources to facilitate the English language development and academic achievement of their ELL students.

**Conclusions and Implications**

One of the biggest challenges confronting educators today is meeting the language and literacy needs of linguistically diverse students (Li & Edwards, 2010; Li & Potraccio, 2010). As changing demographics in the US have resulted in unprecedented growth in the numbers of students learning English as second language, teachers often struggle with implementing practices that foster the language development and academic achievement for these students. Contributing to this issue are policies that prescribe English as the language of instruction in public schools (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006; Goldenberg, 2010), a teaching force primarily consisting of middle class, White monolingual teachers (Ballantyne et al., 2008), and a lack of preparedness of teachers for serving non-native English speaking students (AACTE, 2002; Walker et al., 2004).

In this study, I investigated teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching students learning English as a second language. In addition, I explored teachers’ perceptions of preparatory experiences that would foster teacher preparedness for serving non-native English speaking students. I also investigated the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs and their classroom practices.

By conducting this research, I wanted to explore the perceived preparation of practicing classroom teachers for teaching linguistically diverse students and build my
understandings of the elements of teacher preparatory experiences that benefit teachers’ knowledge and skills for teaching ELLs. I also wanted to investigate how teachers’ perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs shaped teachers’ classroom practices. In the findings of this study, I showed that classroom teachers often feel underprepared by their teacher education programs for teaching non-native English-speaking students. Teachers in this study recommended that coursework related to teaching ELLs and fieldwork experiences that included students learning English as a second language would facilitate preparation for teaching these students. Further, teachers’ perceptions of their preparation for teaching ELLs and their classroom practices were observed.

Results of this study indicate that most teachers did not feel adequately prepared by their teacher education programs for teaching ELL students, although most did feel prepared for classroom teaching in general. The majority of teachers in this study did not take coursework in teaching linguistically diverse students or in second-language acquisition during their teacher education programs. Moreover, fewer than half of the teacher participants had fieldwork experiences that included non-native English speaking students. When considering preparation for literacy instruction, most teachers did not feel adequately prepared for teaching reading, writing, or English language skills to their ELL students. A majority also felt underprepared for teaching mathematics, social studies, and science concepts to ELLs.

Results from the current study expand findings from previous inquiries that have demonstrated that teachers do not feel adequately prepared for teaching ELLs (Darling-Hammond, Chung et al., 2002) by providing evidence of participants’ lack of preparatory coursework and field experiences that include ELLs. Further, this study includes
teachers’ perceptions of factors benefitting preparation for teaching non-native English speaking students. Other researchers have found that perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs are related to teacher self-efficacy (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Siwatu, 2011b), a critical consideration, given that teacher self-efficacy is correlated with classroom teaching practices and student achievement (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006; Shaw, Dvorak, & Bates, 2007; Siwatu, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). In addition, researchers have found that teachers’ perceptions of their preparation were the strongest predictor of self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond, Chung et al., 2002). Given that teachers’ self-efficacy influences their beliefs that they can influence student learning (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006; Siwatu, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and that self-efficacious teachers are more persistent with students who struggle, findings of perceptions of low preparation for teaching ELLs are particularly important.

Findings from this study suggest that a lack of coursework and field experiences with non-native English speaking students during teacher preparatory programs affected teachers’ sense of preparedness for teaching ELLs. Although few research studies have addressed this important construct with mainstream classroom teachers (Gandara et al., 2005), findings from the current study are consistent with previous research findings that suggest that teachers lacked coursework in second language acquisition in their teacher education programs, leading to perceptions of low preparation for ELLs (O’Neal et al., 2008).

The findings in the current study also indicate that teachers recommend preparatory coursework and field experiences as supportive of preparation for teaching ELLs. Preparatory coursework in teaching ELLs has been found to support teachers’
implementation of classroom practices for linguistically diverse students (Mora & Grisham, 2001; Panaque & Barbetta, 2006). Researchers who have examined fieldwork experiences with students learning English as a second language have found that these experiences benefitted teacher candidates’ preparation (Pappamihiel, 2007; Ullucci, 2010). Findings from this study provide further evidence that teachers recommend coursework that includes strategies for teaching ELLs and field experiences in settings with non-native speaking students as supportive of preparedness for working with ELL students.

Although researchers have called for additional investigations of the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of preparation and their classroom practices, few studies have examined this important construct (Brownell & Pajares, 1999), particularly in the area of instruction for ELLs. Thus, findings from the current study related to the relationships between perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs and classroom practices extend previous studies of teacher preparation and instructional practices (Maloch et al., 2003, Ullucci, 2010). This study suggests that teachers who indicated that they were “somewhat” or “not at all” prepared for teaching ELLs rarely implemented classroom practices for their students learning English as a second language. Conversely, findings suggest that the teacher who indicated that she was well prepared for teaching ELLs often utilized strategies and techniques for supporting the language development and academic achievement of her ELL students. These findings extend findings of other research that used teacher self-report data that revealed correlations between teachers’ perceived preparation and their classroom practices (Darling-Hammond, Eiler et al, 2002). Other research has demonstrated that teacher candidates who felt more prepared
for teaching ELLs had higher levels of knowledge of ESL strategies, while those with lower levels of ESL pedagogy tended to neglect their ELL students during field placements (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010).

**Recommendations for Teacher Preparation and Development**

Findings from this study present important implications for teacher preparation and professional development. First, *teacher educators are encouraged to evaluate program requirements, course offerings, and components of teacher preparatory coursework to ensure that teacher candidates are provided with opportunities for developing knowledge and skills to work with non-native English speaking students.* Teachers in the current study indicated that a specific course in teaching ELLs and opportunities for learning strategies for ELL students would support teacher preparedness for working with these students. Previous research findings support results from the current study and suggest that preparatory coursework supports teachers’ preparation for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Mora & Grisham, 2001; Pappamihiel, 2007). Embedding ESL strategies in methods coursework, incorporating accommodations for ELLs in lesson planning, and providing opportunities for observing examples or videos of lessons and techniques for ELLs were also recommended for teacher candidates by teachers in this study. Given the essential nature of parent collaboration in working with ELLs (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Gandara et al., 2005), teacher educators are further encouraged to embed strategies into teacher education coursework for developing relationships and communicating with families of ELLs.

Secondly, *teacher educators are urged to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to work with non-native English speaking students and to observe positive role*
models for teaching ELLs in classroom settings. Participants in this dissertation study indicated that preservice classroom experiences with ELLs and field placements in classrooms with ELLs would support teacher preparation for serving these students. Classroom observation and teacher interview data triangulate these findings, as the teacher in the current study who perceived that she was extremely prepared for teaching ELLs, attributed the development of her knowledge of ESL strategies to her student teaching placement in a classroom with several ELLs and a cooperating teacher who infused her teaching with strategies to support the language development and academic achievement of linguistically diverse students. A number of researchers contend that teacher candidates benefit from field experiences with linguistically diverse students (Ballantyne et al, 2008; Conaway et al., 2012; Ullucci, 2010). Teacher educators are encouraged to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to practice ESL strategies learned in preparatory coursework with ELLs in classroom settings.

Another implication from this dissertation research relates to school administrators and those charged with planning development experiences for in-service teachers. School administrators are encouraged to plan professional development devoted to principles of second language acquisition and strategies for teaching ELLS. Findings of this dissertation research suggest that the majority of participating teachers do not feel that they were adequately prepared for teaching ELL students by their teacher education program. Further, almost all of the teachers in the current study had participated in professional development in the previous 12 months, yet almost half of these teachers had no professional development experience that included strategies for teaching ELLs. When considering that teacher preparedness has been linked to student
achievement (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2005; Gandara, et al., 2005), teacher self-efficacy (Brownel & Pajares, 1999; Panaque & Barbetta, 2006), and teachers’ attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students (Conaway et al., 2012; Durgunolu & Hughes, 2010), it behooves school administrators to address this all-important need.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

In light of increasing numbers of linguistically diverse students in U. S. schools and persistent achievement gaps between non-native English speaking students and their native English speaking peers, preparing teacher candidates to meet the literacy and learning needs of these students is of critical importance. The findings from this study present a number of suggestions for future research investigations. Because few studies have investigated teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to teach non-native English speaking students, additional research inquiries in this area are recommended. Inquiries of the influence of purposeful field placements for teacher candidates in settings with culturally and linguistically diverse students may yield valuable insights. Research studies of methods courses that embed culturally and linguistically responsive theories and practices may inform teacher educators as they strive to enhance teachers’ preparatory experiences. In addition, further research studies exploring the knowledge and skills that teachers need to be effective with non-native English speakers are also suggested.

I began this dissertation research with a goal of identifying four focal teachers for classroom observations and interviews, two with perceptions of high levels of preparation for teaching ELLs and two with perceptions of low levels of preparation for ELLs. However, only one classroom teacher indicated on her survey that she was extremely
well-prepared for teaching ELLs, thus limiting opportunities for exploring the relationships between perceived preparation and classroom practices with other well-prepared teachers in varied contexts. (The two other teachers with high levels of preparation for teaching ELLs were speech therapists and worked with students on a pull-out basis.) More qualitative studies of possible correlations between perceived preparation and classroom practices are recommended.

Another area of suggested research applies to teachers’ perceptions of preparation and their effectiveness as classroom teachers. Few studies have been conducted to investigate teachers with perceptions of high levels of preparation and their actual classroom practices. Findings from these studies would provide valuable contributions to the field related to the quality and effectiveness of instruction provided by teachers with perceptions of high levels of preparation.

In addition, the ELL students in classrooms of the focal teachers in this study were not part of this research. Future research related to the perceptions of ELL students in mainstream English immersion classrooms may provide unique perspectives of classroom practices that support the language development and academic achievement of these students.

**Limitations of the Study**

While findings from this research investigation add to the field of knowledge related to teachers’ perceptions of their preparation to serve non-native English speaking students, there are limitations to this study that should be considered. First, participants from this study were in-service teachers at four public elementary schools located in two adjoining counties in the southeastern U.S. and had met the teaching certification
requirements of their particular states. However, since certification requirements vary
from state to state, survey findings related to teachers’ preparatory coursework and field
experiences may differ if participants had earned certification in other states. Larger
scale studies may provide additional data related to this vital field.

Secondly, the four schools in this study had participated in the CRIOP
professional development program, and some of the teachers responding to the survey
had participated in this year-long intensive project. Consequently, survey responses from
CRIOP participants may have reflected an increased awareness of culturally and
linguistically responsive practices. It is unknown whether their perceptions of initial
preparation for teaching ELLs were affected by participation in this professional
development. While the four focal teachers in the study had not participated in the
CRIOP project, they worked with teaching colleagues who had taken part in the program.
Three of the four focal teachers collaborated with CRIOP completers for joint grade-level
planning. It is unknown whether these collaborations influenced the focal teachers’
classroom practices, their interview responses, or their reflections. In addition, I
acknowledge that my previous work as a researcher with the CRIOP project may have
affected the lens through which I gathered, interpreted, and analyzed data for this study.

Another possible limitation of this study may relate to the fact that all of the ELL
students in classrooms of the four focal teachers were Spanish-speaking, and two of the
focal teachers had some level of previous coursework and knowledge in Spanish.
Findings related to teachers’ use of their students’ native languages within their
classroom practices may have differed if a wider range of language backgrounds was
represented among the ELL students enrolled in these teachers’ classrooms.
It should be noted that the survey used for this study was developed by the researcher, and it was not piloted, a possible limitation. While the surveys administered to participants included questions about components of their teacher preparatory programs and reflections about their learning, questions related to participants’ level of achievement, personal effort, or intrinsic motivation during their undergraduate coursework or field experiences were not asked. It is possible that these questions may have yielded additional findings related to teachers’ sense of preparedness.
Appendix A

Perceptions of Preparation to Teach English Language Learners (ELLs)
Teacher Survey

I am undertaking a research project in order to examine the perceptions that teachers have of their preparation to teach English language learners (ELLs). My focus for this project is to investigate how elementary teachers perceive the effectiveness of their teacher education programs in preparing them to teach ELLs. I am also researching teachers’ perceptions of the elements of teacher education programs that benefit teachers’ abilities for serving ELLs. My goal for this study is to analyze characteristics of preservice teacher programs that help prepare teachers for teaching students learning English as a second language. Your thoughtful responses to these questions will be beneficial as I conduct this study.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. To ensure your privacy, information from this survey will be released in summary form only.

1. What grade level(s) do you teach in school? ____________________________

2. What subjects do you currently teach? ____________________________________________

3. What is your teaching experience? What grade levels have you taught, and for how many years?
   ____________________________________________________________________________

4. What teaching certification(s) do you hold? ___________________________________________

5. In what year did you obtain your teaching certificate? _______________________

6. What is your gender? _____ female _____ male

7. What is your ethnicity? (optional) _____Caucasian _____African American
   _____Hispanic _____Asian American _____Native American _____Other

8. Are you a native speaker of English? _____Yes _____No

9. Are you a fluent speaker of another language? _____Yes _____No If yes, which language(s)?

10. Were you enrolled in a four or five year teacher education program of studies? ______
How long was your student teaching experience? __________________________________________

11. Did you work with ELL students or with students from other cultures during your student teaching experience? Please describe. __________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

12. Was student teaching helpful in preparing you for teaching English language learners, and if so, how? __________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

13. Did you receive a baccalaureate degree in elementary education, or a related field? ____  __________________________________________________________

14. What degree(s) have you earned? _________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

15. Please list any endorsements you have earned or post-certification coursework which you have taken. __________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

16. Since the end of last school year, have you participated in any professional development or in-service training? ____ Yes  ____ No

If yes, how many hours? ____ 1-8  ____ 8-16  ____ 17-32

What was the focus of the professional development or in-service that you attended? __________________________________________________________

Did this professional development or in-service provide information that you had not learned previously? ____ Yes  ____ No  ____ Not applicable

Did this professional development or in-service change your beliefs about teaching? ____ Yes  ____ No  ____ Not applicable

If yes, please describe. ________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

After the professional development or in-service, did you change your teaching practices? ____ Yes  ____ No  ____ Not applicable

If yes, please describe. __________________________________________________________
17. Prior to this school year, have you participated in professional development opportunities which included techniques for teaching English language learners? If yes, please describe. __________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

18. Would you be willing to participate in professional development for teaching ELLs if it is available? _____ Yes _____ No

Part II. Teacher Preparation Program Survey

Please answer the following questions.
(1) During your teacher education program, did you receive information about teaching ELLs through methods courses or other required coursework? _____ Yes _____ No

(2) During your teacher education program, were you required to take a course in teaching ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No

If you did not take any coursework for teaching ELLs during your teacher education program, would you have taken a course if it had been offered? _____ Yes _____ No

(3) Did your teacher education program require a course in teaching culturally diverse students? _____ Yes _____ No

If not, would you have taken this course if it had been offered? _____ Yes _____ No

(4) Did you take any courses in second language acquisition during your teacher education program? _____ Yes _____ No

(5) Did your teacher preparation program require you to take a course in second language acquisition? _____ Yes _____ No

(6) Was a course on second language acquisition offered at your college/university? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Don’t know

(7) Did your teacher education program include classroom observations or other field experiences that included ELLs prior to student teaching? _____ Yes _____ No

(8) Did you work with ELLs during your college fieldwork experiences? _____ Yes _____ No

(9) Did you work with ELLs during your student teaching assignment? _____ Yes _____ No

(10) During student teaching, were you expected to plan and implement instruction to meet the learning needs of your ELL students? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable

(11) During student teaching, did your cooperating teacher observe you teaching ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable

(12) During student teaching, did your university supervisor observe you teaching ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable

(13) During student teaching, did your cooperating teacher give you feedback after observing you teach ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable

(14) During student teaching, did your university supervisor give you feedback after observing you teach ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable
(15) During student teaching, did your cooperating teacher give you suggestions for teaching ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable
(16) During student teaching, did your university supervisor give you suggestions for teaching ELLs? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable
(17) Do you believe that mainstream teachers are responsible for teaching ELLs in their classroom? _____ Yes _____ No

Preparation for Teaching English Language Learners Survey

Please indicate your preparation for teaching ELLs after completing your teacher education program for each of the items below.

Rate your degree of preparation by writing a number from 1 to 4 using the scale below.

1 2 3 4
Not at all prepared Somewhat prepared Adequately prepared Extremely prepared

Preparation (1 - 4)

After completing your teacher education program, how well prepared were you to:

(1) Teach in a mainstream classroom
(2) Teach students learning English as a second language
(3) Develop positive classroom relationships with the students in your classroom in general
(4) Develop positive classroom relationships with the ELLs in your classroom
(5) Give ELL students specific feedback on how they can meet learning expectations
(6) Encourage ELLs to collaborate with their peers during learning activities
(7) Maintain regular communication with parents and caregivers of all students in your classroom
(8) Maintain regular communication with parents and caregivers of ELLs
(9) Encourage parents of ELLs to participate in classroom and school activities and events
(10) Ask ELL parents for their suggestions on how best to instruct their child
(11) Use varied forms of assessment to monitor student learning overall
(12) Use varied forms of assessment to monitor ELL students’ learning
(13) Offer constructive feedback to ELLs
(14) Evaluate curriculum materials for ELLs
(15) Develop curriculum that builds on interests, prior experiences, and abilities of ELLs
(16) Use strategies to make verbal instruction comprehensible for ELLs
(17) Incorporate hands-on activities that allow ELLs to apply concepts and learning
(18) Use real-world examples to make learning meaningful for ELLs
(19) Teach methods to ELLs for independently understanding new vocabulary
(20) Use technology to support ELLs’ learning
(21) Teach ELLs skills for engaging in academic conversations
(22) Set language objectives for ELLs along with content area objectives
(23) Encourage students in your classroom in general to examine real-world issues and engage in problem-solving
(24) Encourage ELLs to examine real-world issues and engage in problem-solving

Content Area Instruction

Please indicate your preparation after completing your teacher education program for teaching ELLs in each of the following subject areas.

Rate your degree of preparation by writing a number from 1 to 4 using the scale below.

1 2 3 4
Not at all prepared Somewhat prepared Adequately prepared Extremely prepared

Preparation (1 - 4)

How well did your teacher preparation program prepare you to:

Teach English language skills to ELLs
Teach reading to ELLs
Teach writing to ELLs
Teach mathematics concepts to ELLs
Teach science concepts to ELLs
Teach social studies concepts to ELLs

Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with each of the items below.

Rate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements by writing a number from 1 to 4 using the scale below.

1 2 3 4
Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Agreement (1-4)

(1) Many of my ideas for teaching ELLs come from my teacher education courses
(2) Many of my ideas for teaching ELLs come from my own experiences as a student in school
(3) Many of my ideas for teaching ELLs come from my student teaching or college fieldwork experiences
(4) My teacher education coursework included theories of learning and teaching ELLs, methods of ESL classroom instruction, and the links between them
(5) My student teaching experience occurred in a positive environment for practice teaching in general
(6) My student teaching experience occurred in a positive environment for learning to teach ELLs

(7) My student teaching experience allowed me to practice instructional strategies for ELLs that I learned in my methods courses

(8) The teachers I observed during my fieldwork experiences and student teaching were positive role models for classroom teaching in general

(9) The teachers I observed during my fieldwork experiences and student teaching were positive role models for teaching ELLs

Please answer the following:
Were the methods courses that you took as part of your teacher education program helpful in preparing you for teaching ELLs? Please explain.
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Were you able to utilize techniques for teaching English language learners that you learned from your pre-service courses after you began teaching in your own classroom? Please explain.
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In your opinion, how could the content of methods courses be adjusted to be more beneficial in preparing teachers for teaching English language learners? ____________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In your opinion, what kinds of preparatory experiences would be helpful in preparing classroom teachers to teach ELLs? ______________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In reflecting on your teaching experiences, how well prepared were you for teaching students learning English as a second language? ______________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Is there anything else you’d like to add? ______________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP):
Holistic Areas and Indicators

I. Classroom Relationships
   a. The teacher demonstrates an ethic of care
   b. The teacher communicates high expectations for all students
   c. The teacher creates a learning atmosphere that engenders respect for one another and toward diverse populations
   d. Students work together productively

II. Family Collaboration
   a. The teacher establishes genuine partnerships (equitable relationships) with parents/caregivers
   b. The teacher reaches out to meet parents in positive, non-traditional ways
   c. The teacher uses parent expertise to support student learning and/or classroom instruction

III. Assessment Practices
   a. Formative assessment practices are used that provide information throughout the lesson on individual student understanding; students are able to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, including authentic assessments
   b. Teacher uses formative assessment data throughout instruction to promote student learning
   c. Students have opportunities for self-assessment

IV. Instructional Practices
   a. Instruction is contextualized in students’ lives, experiences, and individual abilities
   b. Students engage in active, hands-on, meaningful learning tasks
   c. The teacher focuses on developing students’ academic vocabularies
   d. The teacher uses instructional techniques that scaffold student learning
   e. Students are engaged in inquiry and the teacher learns with students
   f. Students have choices based upon their experiences, interests and strengths

V. Discourse
   a. The teacher promotes active student engagement through discourse practices
   b. The teacher promotes equitable and culturally congruent discourse practices
   c. The teacher provides structures that promote academic conversation
   d. The teacher provides opportunities for students to develop linguistic competence

VI. Sociopolitical Consciousness
   a. The curriculum and planned learning experiences provide opportunities for the inclusion of issues important to the classroom, school and community
   b. The curriculum and planned learning experiences incorporate opportunities to confront negative stereotypes and biases
   c. The curriculum and planned learning experiences integrate and provide opportunities for the expression of diverse perspectives
Appendix C

Supplemental Classroom Observation Indicators for English Language Learners

I. Classroom Relationships
   a. ELL students participate fully as part of the classroom community during classroom discussions, whole and small-group instruction, and independent learning events
   b. Teacher promotes a comfortable classroom environment that is safe, anxiety-free, and conducive to learning for ELLs

II. Assessment
   a. Teacher provides options for alternative forms of written or verbal assessment for ELLs
   b. Teacher ensures that ELLs comprehend directions for completing learning tasks prior to administering formal or summative assessments

III. Instruction
   a. Teacher provides additional scaffolding of learning tasks specific to ELLs through explaining, demonstrating, graphic organizers, visual tools (illustrations, videos, maps) as appropriate
   b. Teacher gives clear, specific verbal instructions to ELLs and re-states, clarifies, or reduces rate of speech to make input comprehensible

IV. Discourse
   a. ELL students have abundant opportunities throughout classroom activities for verbal interactions with peers for social and academic purposes
   b. Teacher identifies language objectives for ELLs during content-area instruction and emphasizes key vocabulary and/or forms of language specific to content areas (science, social studies, mathematics) and to academic purpose (to compare and contrast, to persuade, to draw conclusions)

V. Sociopolitical Consciousness
   a. Curriculum emphasizes real-world connections and applications; learning builds upon ELL students’ backgrounds and prior experiences
   b. Teacher recognizes and affirms ELLs’ culture, knowledge, and language
   c. Bilingual texts or texts in ELLs’ native language(s) are available in classroom library
Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Teachers’ Perceptions of Preparation to Teach English Language Learners

1. Would you describe your experiences from previous years in working with ELL students in your classroom?
2. Would you describe any ELL students in your class this year?
3. How do you try to ensure that your ELL students understand your directions or instruction during lessons? (Ask follow-up questions based upon classroom observation, if applicable.)
4. How do you encourage your ELL students to participate in classroom lessons? Small group or partner activities? (Follow-up with questions based upon classroom observation, as applicable.)
5. Would you describe the techniques that you use for assessment with your ELL students? (Prompt responses with questions from classroom observation, as applicable.)
6. How do you work with families of your ELL students?
7. In your opinion, how does the classroom environment affect the development of reading and writing for ELL students?
8. In reflecting on your practices as a teacher, what teaching methods have been effective in helping ELL students with reading and writing? In other content areas?
9. Would you describe any particular experiences/assignments from your coursework or field experiences that were most meaningful to you in preparing you to work with ELL students? Would you describe coursework or field experiences that, in your opinion, would have helped prepare you to teach ELLs?
10. How did your experiences in your teacher education program affect your attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs?
11. Would you describe knowledge and/or strategies for ELLs from your teacher preparation program that you currently use in your classroom?
12. Would you describe knowledge and/or strategies for ELLs from any professional development that you currently use in your classroom? (If applicable.)
13. Is there any other information you’d like to add?
# Appendix E

## Teacher Codes from Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inductive Code</th>
<th>Description of Code</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive (P)</td>
<td>Response reflects positive stance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative (N)</td>
<td>Response reflects negative stance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral (NEU)</td>
<td>Response is neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating with ELLs (Cell)</td>
<td>Strategies for communicating with ELLs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coursework (CW)</td>
<td>References to coursework in teacher education program</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Coursework – ELLs (CWell)</td>
<td>Classes specifically aligned with teaching linguistically diverse students</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Coursework - Components – (CWcm)</td>
<td>Components of Coursework include activities/strategies/methods of teaching ELLs</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Coursework – CRI (CWcri)</td>
<td>Coursework in culturally responsive instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Coursework – Methods – (CWm)</td>
<td>Methods courses include methods for teaching ELLs</td>
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<td>-- Coursework - Opportunities with ELLs (CWo)</td>
<td>Coursework opportunities for teaching ELLs</td>
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<td>-- Coursework – Required (CWr)</td>
<td>Required course(s) for teaching ELLs during teacher preparatory program</td>
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<td>-- Coursework – Required in Cultural Diversity (CWcd)</td>
<td>Coursework required in cultural diversity during teacher preparation program</td>
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<td>-- Coursework in Foreign Language (CWfl)</td>
<td>Coursework in a foreign language while completing teacher preparation program</td>
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<td>-- Coursework in Second Language Acquisition (CWsla)</td>
<td>Coursework in Second Language Acquisition offered</td>
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<td>Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI)</td>
<td>Culturally responsive tools and procedures</td>
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<td>Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP)</td>
<td>Instructional model for culturally and linguistically diverse students</td>
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<td>Differentiated Instruction (DI)</td>
<td>Differentiated instruction for ELLs</td>
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<td>ESL Strategies (ESLs)</td>
<td>Teaching strategies specific for ELLs</td>
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<td>-- ESL Strategies Lacking in Teacher Education Program (ESLl)</td>
<td>Teacher noticed a lack of ESL strategies in teacher prep program</td>
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<td>-- ESL Training (ESLt)</td>
<td>ESL training needed</td>
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<th>Fieldwork (FW)</th>
<th>Fieldwork experiences during teacher education program</th>
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<tr>
<td>-- Fieldwork Experiences – ELLs (FWell)</td>
<td>Fieldwork experiences with ELLs during teacher preparation program</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Fieldwork – Required (FWr)</td>
<td>Fieldwork required in classrooms with ELLs</td>
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<td>-- Fieldwork Experiences – ESL Teachers (FWesl)</td>
<td>Fieldwork Experiences with ESL teachers</td>
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<td>Hands-on experiences (HO)</td>
<td>Opportunities for working with ELLs during teacher preparation program</td>
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<td>KTIP</td>
<td>Requirements for new teachers in the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program</td>
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<td>Language Barriers – Parents (LBp)</td>
<td>Language barriers with parents present challenges for teachers</td>
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<td>Language Barriers – Students (LBs)</td>
<td>Language barriers with students present challenges for students</td>
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<td>Parent Collaboration (PCL)</td>
<td>Techniques for working with parents of ELLs presented during teacher preparatory coursework</td>
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<td>Parent Communication (PC)</td>
<td>Techniques for communicating with parents of ELLs presented during teacher preparatory coursework</td>
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<td>Preparation for teaching ELLs could be improved</td>
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<td>Preparation for Classroom Teaching (PCT)</td>
<td>Perceptions of preparation for classroom teaching in general</td>
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<td>Preparation for Teaching ELLs (Pell)</td>
<td>Perceptions of preparation for teaching ELLs</td>
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<td>Professional Development (PD)</td>
<td>Learning opportunities for ESL strategies designed for practitioners</td>
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<td>Resources for ELLs (Rell)</td>
<td>Resources and materials for ELLs</td>
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<td>Resources – Locating (RI)</td>
<td>How to find resources for ELLs</td>
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<td>Student Teaching (ST)</td>
<td>Teacher’s student teaching placement</td>
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<td>-- Student Teaching – ELL (STell)</td>
<td>Placement in school with ELLs for student teaching</td>
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<td>-- Student Teaching - Lack of Diversity (STld)</td>
<td>Lack of diversity in classroom during student teaching</td>
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<td>-- Student Teaching – Elapsed Time (STet)</td>
<td>Elapsed time period since student teaching occurred</td>
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<td>Teacher Observations – ELLs (TOell)</td>
<td>Opportunities to observe in classrooms with ELLs during teacher preparation program</td>
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<td>-- Teacher Observations with ELLs lacking (TOI)</td>
<td>Teacher had no opportunities for observing teachers working with</td>
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<td><strong>Teacher Prep – Elapsed Time (ET)</strong></td>
<td>ELL students during teacher preparation program</td>
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<td><strong>Translating Support (TS)</strong></td>
<td>Extended time period since teacher preparation program</td>
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<td><strong>Understanding Cultural Differences – UCD</strong></td>
<td>Support from bilinguals to bridge language barriers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How to understand cultural differences</td>
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Appendix F

Sample Coding of Observation Field Notes

*Note.* CRIOP codes are as follows: Classroom Relationships = *CR*; Family Collaboration = *FC*; Assessment Practices = *AP*; Instructional Practices = *IP*; Discourse = *D*; Sociopolitical Consciousness = *SC*

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Objective Field Notes</th>
<th>Interpretations/ CRIOP Pillar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:50</td>
<td>21 kindergarten students in classroom, five of whom are Spanish-speaking ELLs. Students (Ss) work with a buddy and have choice of math games from tubs on shelves. Students choose games from tubs on classroom shelves and sit at various places around the room to play games. Teacher (T) has called six students to sit at her table at the back of the classroom. T: Friends at my back table, would you please keep your pencils still and sit quietly with your hands in your lap? Thank you for waiting patiently. T sits across from these students while others in the class are engaged in math games. Quiet student conversation around room. T affirms Ss at table for following directions. T asks Ss to put their name and date on their papers. “Nice job.” T asks Ss to raise their hands</td>
<td>Student choice; teacher uses gestures, Spanish vocabulary at times; learning activities prompt high levels of student engagement; respectful language with students; student collaboration; formative assessment; use</td>
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</table>
if they can read those numbers. S responds, and T lays out M & M candies on two papers. T asks Ss what larger means. S: smaller. T: No, it’s larger, bigger, grande.

| 8:55 | T asks Ss which group of M & Ms is larger. All Ss raise hands. T stretches arms wide to show larger, grande. Two Ss at table are ELLs. T asks Ss to show her larger, grande. T writes 0 through 9 on table with eraseable marker, and asks if they would rather have one Skittle or nine. Ss all say nine, and T circles nine. T asks Ss to look at the box on their papers and to circle the larger number, nine on their paper. T shows 1 and 2 M & Ms on two papers and asks which is bigger. S answers and T asks how did she know. S answers. |
| Formative assessment; modeling; demonstrating; gestures to facilitate comprehensible input for ELLs; higher-level questioning; student discourse |

| 9:00 | T tells Ss that if they’re counting 1 comes before 2, so 2 is bigger; also T compares 8 and 0 with M and Ms on papers. T asks which is bigger; asks how they know 8 is bigger. S answers. Another S says that they pass 0 on their way on the way to 8. T asks how often. T tells Ss that of course 8 is bigger. T asks Ss to put |
| Formative assessment throughout; student use of manipulatives; respectful |
their finger on the next box. T: Thank you sir. T asks Ss to count with her as she places 7 and 5 M and Ms on two papers. T asks Ss to circle the bigger number on their paper on their own. Five Ss raise hands and T asks how they know. T asks Ss to put thumbs up or down if they agree. T asks one S to put his finger on the box, follow my directions. T asks Ss to count with her aloud as she places 3 and 10 M and Ms on papers. T asks Ss to circle which is bigger, 3 or 10. T reminds one S to circle which one is bigger. T asks which one they’d rather have, 3 or 10 M and Ms. T shows M and Ms for each problem, then asks Ss to circle which one is bigger.

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:05</td>
<td>T asks Ss what small means. T asks Ss if it means big. No, it means tiny. T asks Ss to raise hands and tell her the numbers in the first box. ELL S begins to call the 7 “9”, and T points to numbers written on table and counts aloud with S to seven. T pronounces seven, then eight. Ss with I-Pads sit at another table and play math counting and simple word games. Quiet student conversation as they work with partners to play math games. One game appears to be Go Fish type number game. One game has dominoes for Ss to count dots</td>
</tr>
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</table>

interactions with students; higher-level questions; AP/CR/IP

Formative assessment; immediate feedback; student engagement; IP/AP
and write addition problems on laminated paper, then to find the sum. Students actively engaged in learning activities.

| 9:10 | T plays music and Ss put games away, return to seats. Students transition to another lesson. |
## Appendix G

### Teacher Codes from Interviews

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<th>Interview Code</th>
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<td>Challenges with ELLs (CH)</td>
<td>Teacher’s challenges working with ELLs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Instruction (CI)</td>
<td>Elements of classroom instruction in general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Instruction/ELLs (CIell)</td>
<td>Elements of classroom instructional practices for ELLs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Vocabulary (AV)</td>
<td>Instruction to support development of ELLs’ academic vocabulary</td>
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<td>Assessment Accommodations (AA)</td>
<td>ELL student receives accommodations for assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Accommodations/Lacking (AAl)</td>
<td>Assessment accommodations for ELLs lacking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background Knowledge (BK)</td>
<td>ELL students’ background knowledge, prior learning</td>
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<td>Classroom Environment (CE)</td>
<td>Effects of classroom environment as experienced by ELLs</td>
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<td>Coursework (CW)</td>
<td>Coursework offered in teacher education program</td>
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<td>Fieldwork (FW)</td>
<td>Field experiences in teacher education program</td>
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<td>Instructional Accommodations for ELLs (IA)</td>
<td>ELL student receives accommodations in instruction</td>
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<td>Language Barriers (LB)</td>
<td>ELLs experience effects of language barriers</td>
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<td>Language Barriers/Parents (LBp)</td>
<td>Teacher’s difficulties in communicating with parents due to language barriers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Barriers/Students (LBs)</td>
<td>Teacher’s difficulties in communicating with students due to language barriers</td>
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<td>Language Development for ELLs (LD)</td>
<td>ELL students’ English language development</td>
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<td>Learning Progress (LP)</td>
<td>ELL students’ progress in learning or academic achievement</td>
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<td>Literacy Practices (LTP)</td>
<td>ELLs’ literacy practices</td>
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<td>Native Language (NL)</td>
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<td>Category</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Native Language Materials (NLm)</td>
<td>Materials in ELL students’ native language</td>
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<td>Parent Collaboration (PCL)</td>
<td>Parent collaboration with families of ELL students</td>
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<td>Parent Collaboration/Lack of Knowledge (PCLI)</td>
<td>Teacher expresses lack of knowledge of how to collaborate with families of ELLs</td>
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<td>Teacher communication with parents/families of students in general</td>
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<td>Parent Communication/ELLs (PCell)</td>
<td>Communication with parents of ELL students</td>
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<td>Parent Communication/Lacking due to Limited Technology (PClt)</td>
<td>Communication with parents of ELL students affected by limited access to technology (email, other)</td>
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<td>Peer Relationships (PR)</td>
<td>ELLs’ relationships with peers</td>
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<td>Prior Experiences with ELLs (PE)</td>
<td>Prior interactions with non-native English speaking individuals</td>
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<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Teacher has participated in professional development</td>
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<td>Professional Development/Culturally Responsive Instruction (PDcri)</td>
<td>Professional development opportunities in culturally responsive instruction</td>
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<td>Professional Development/ELLs (PDell)</td>
<td>Professional development opportunities for teaching ELLs</td>
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<td>Recommendations for Teacher Preparation (RTP)</td>
<td>Teacher offers recommendations for pre-service teacher preparation</td>
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<td>School Events (SE)</td>
<td>School events planned for ELL students and families</td>
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<td>Student Characteristics (SCH)</td>
<td>Characteristics of ELLs in teachers’ classrooms</td>
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<td>Student Collaboration (SC)</td>
<td>ELLs collaborate with peers</td>
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<td>Successes with ELLs (SCell)</td>
<td>Teacher’s successes with ELLs</td>
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<td>Teacher Collaboration (TCL)</td>
<td>Teacher collaboration with colleagues</td>
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<td>Teacher’s Use of ELL’s Native Language (TNL)</td>
<td>Teacher uses ELL’s native language</td>
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<td>Teachers’ Perceptions of ELLs (TPell)</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of non-native English speaking students</td>
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Teachers’ Relationships/ELLs (TRell)
Teachers’ personal relationships with ELLs

Teachers’ Relationships/ELLs/Empathy (TRell-e)
Teacher expresses empathy for non-native English speaking students

Translating Support (TS)
Help with translating or providing print translations for parents/families of ELLs

Appendix H
Sample Transcriptions with Inductive and A Priori Codes

Note. A Priori Codes of CRIOP Elements are as follows: Classroom Relationships = CR; Family Collaboration = FC; Assessment Practices = AP; Instructional Practices = IP; Discourse = D; Sociopolitical Consciousness = SP.

Inductive Codes are as follows: Challenges with ELLs = CH; Classroom Instruction (CI); Academic Vocabulary (AV); Assessment Accommodations (AA); Background Knowledge (BK); Classroom Environment (CE); Coursework (CW); Fieldwork (FW); Instructional Accommodations (IA); Language Barriers -Parents (LBp); Language Barriers - Students (LBs); Language Development (LD); Learning Progress (LP); Literacy Practices (LTP); Native Language (NL); Parent Collaboration (PCL); Parent Collaboration Lack of Knowledge (PCLl); Parent Communication (PC); Peer Relationships (PR); Prior Experience (PE); Professional Development (PD); Recommendations for Teacher Preparation (RPT); School Events (SE); Student Characteristics (SCH); Student Collaboration (SC); Successes with ELLs (SCell); Teacher Collaboration (TCL); Teacher’s Use of Native Language (TNL); Teacher’s Perceptions of ELLs (TPell); Teacher Preparation (TPR); Teacher Preparation for ELLs (TPRell); Teachers’ Relationships with ELLs (TRell); Teacher’s Relationships with ELLs – Empathy (TRell-e); Translating Support (TS).

Interview question: How prepared were you after finishing your teacher preparation program for teaching English language learners in your classroom?

Teacher Response: I’m going to stay with somewhat. Because I felt I have, having some Spanish skills was amazingly helpful to me because I didn’t know that she [ELL student] was coming into my classroom. . . . Was there more that I felt like I wanted to know immediately? Yes. When I found out that she was there, there were thousands of things that I wish I knew and still think now that I wish I knew, of how to best teach
somebody who doesn’t understand you or understand what school is like, or what they’re supposed to do. So I think that there was a lot of practical stuff that I missed out on . . . and having the language skills was very helpful to me. \textit{IP/ TNL/ TPRell/ TPRell-e/ IA}

Interview Question: Can you recall any particular experience or assignments within your coursework that were meaningful to you in preparing you to work with English language learners?

**Teacher Response One:** We did take one class, and it was a diversity course. And the classes that I took were very theoretical of different learning methods and teaching methods and things like that. . . . I don’t want to say that it’s not practical, but it’s something that you don’t walk into the classroom and you think I’m going to be using this. That was not skill based; it was more like how you should be thinking. \textit{IP/ CW/ TPRell}

**Teacher Response Two:** It was just an eye-opening class as far as trying to empathize with those people and to think about how you have a student who speaks English well enough, but they have a lot that is going on; that they’re probably the translator for the family if they’re one of the older ones. Or if they’re one of the more proficient ones that they probably are the one that when they go to the bank to set up an account that the kid has to try and piece together something. And that there’s all these responsibilities on the child outside of what we called important from the school. \textit{CR/ CW/ TRel-e}

Interview question: Did you have fieldwork as part of your methods courses?
**Teacher Response:** I know I had a reading class, teaching reading class, and we had to do lots of practicum time for that. Now when we wrote lesson plans in college, . . . we had to include differentiation in the lesson plans and tell how we would do that. And we always were supposed to include like, you know, your low, your high, and your ELLs, and we had to include that. But it wasn’t really relevant because we just didn’t have any English language learners [in fieldwork placement] . . . so it’s kind of like, how do I do that? *IP/ CW/ FW/ TPRell/ IA*

Interview question: How did you know when you were filling in those plans [in teacher education coursework] what to write?

**Teacher Response:** All the education majors were required to take two semesters of Spanish, Spanish One and Two. That was a requirement. From that angle, we didn’t learn to teach ELL students. That didn’t prepare us. It was just to give us the basics of the language and basic vocabulary. From that perspective, I guess if I was teaching an elementary lesson, I might know some Spanish words to throw in there. That might be what I would put on the lesson plan, but that’s as far as it goes. *IP/ TPRell/ CW*

Interview question: How do you determine how to work with these students [ELLs]?

**Teacher Response:** I don’t even know if I really know. . . . I probably just don’t know how to work with them or how to determine what I should do. *IP/ TPRell/ IA*
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M.Ed.
University of Missouri, College of Education, Columbia, MO,
Curriculum and Instruction (Literacy), 2005

B.A.
Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, MO,
Elementary Education (Remedial Reading Minor)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Aug., 2016-Present
Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri

2015-2016
Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky

2012-2015
University of Kentucky, Collaborative Center for Literacy
Development,

2010-2012
University of Kentucky, College of Education, Department of
Curriculum and Instruction

2004 – 2005
Program Assistant, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension
Service, Frankfort, KY

1997-1998
University of Missouri, College of Education, Department of
Curriculum and Instruction

-1996
Franklin County Schools, Frankfort, KY
Fayette County Schools, Peachtree City, GA
Arkansas City Public Schools, Arkansas City, KS
Nevada Public Schools, Nevada, MO
Halfway Public School, Halfway, MO
UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Missouri State University 2016-present

Georgetown College 2015-2016

University of Kentucky 2011-present

University of Missouri 1997-1998

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES


BOOK CHAPTER


TECHNICAL REPORTS/MANUALS


**NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/PAPERS**


Cantrell, S. C., Bridges, S., Clouse, J., Creech, K., Correll, P., & Owens, D. (April,
College students’ self-efficacy in developmental reading courses. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, B. C.

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE: PRESENTATIONS


Cantrell, S. C. & Correll, P. K. (February, 2015). Operationalizing culturally responsive instruction: Preliminary findings of CRIOP research, interviewing, coding, and reliability. Presentation to Qualitative Research Class, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, NC.


PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Educational Research Association 2012-present
Literacy Research Association 2012-present
Alpha Gamma Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi 2014-present

HONORS AND AWARDS
Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership and Honor Society, University of Kentucky, 2016

*Journal of College Reading and Learning* Outstanding Article Award, 2014

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, University of Kentucky, 2014

Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education, High GPA Award, 2014

Golden Key Honor Society, University of Kentucky, 2013

Dean’s List, University of Kentucky, 2011-2013

Dean’s List, University of Missouri, 1998

High Flyer Club, Award for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Missouri, 1998

Eugie E. Dean Research in Reading Fellowship, University of Missouri, 1998

**SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

IELT – Ozarks Project Coordinator Search Committee, Missouri State University, 2016

Graduate Literacy Program Advisory Council, Missouri State University, 2016

Conference Proposal Reviewer, Annual Meeting of the Literacy Research Association, 2016

Conference Proposal Reviewer, Annual Meeting of the Literacy Research Association, 2015

Session Chair, Annual Meeting of the Literacy Research Association, 2014

Teacher Education Program Committee, University of Kentucky, 2012-2014

Presenter, Southeast Region Volunteer Leader Association, 1998

Presenter, Southeast Region Volunteer Leader Association, 1997

President, West Point Parents Club of Kentucky, 2003-2005

Regional/Local

Primary Grade Tutor, Thornhill Learning Center, Frankfort, KY, 2005

Franklin County 4-H Council, Frankfort, KY, 1998-2006, President, 2002-2004

Franklin County 4-H Volunteer Leader, Frankfort, KY, 1999-2002

Community Outreach, Greenville, MS, 2001

Classroom Volunteer, Franklin County Schools, Frankfort, KY, 1999-2005