PREPARING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:

THE IMPACT OF A CROSS-CULTURAL FIELD EXPERIENCE

By

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Teaching and Learning

May, 2010

Nashville, Tennessee

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recent estimates place the total number of foreign-born individuals in the U.S. at somewhere between 28-35 million, or 11-12 % of the total population (Larsen, 2004). The children of immigrants constitute around 20% of the K-12 student population, and this number is projected to more than double within the next 20 years (AACTE, 2002). At the same time, approximately 10 million 5- to 17-year olds in the U.S., or 20% of the total school-age population, speak a non-English language at home (NCES, 2005). Many of these children arrive with limited proficiency in English and require special assistance to learn the second language while simultaneously accessing grade-level content.

Negative school outcomes are often characteristic of students whose first language is not English (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). We know, for example, that English language learners (ELLs) have much higher dropout rates than White students who are native speakers of English (García, 2005; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). García (2005) points out that 30% of immigrants in the U.S. do not hold a high-school diploma, as compared to around only 10% of the native-born population. Tienda and Mitchell (2006), whose work focuses on Hispanics, report that 34% of foreign-born Hispanic youth eventually drop out of high school. They also discuss the low number of Hispanics who attend college, especially four-year institutions. According to a recent report (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007), more than 70% of the nation's ELLs were performing below grade level. Finally, we know that the poverty rate for

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immigrants is significantly higher than that of non-immigrants (Camarota, 2001). These circumstances illustrate the urgent need to identify well-informed solutions that lead to the provision of equal access to education for all students, regardless of their backgrounds.

Despite the increasing diversity of the student population in terms of linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds (NCES, 2005), the majority of teachers continue to be White, female, middle class, and monolingual (NCES, 2002). This demographic divide is significant in that educators who are unfamiliar with their students' backgrounds may not be willing or able to provide instruction that builds upon students' "funds of knowledge" (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), that is, the resources and practices they bring to the classroom. In particular, the forms of knowledge and skills that students already possess may be invisible to teachers whose upbringings and experiences have been distinct from those of their students (Cochran-Smith, Davies, & Fries, 2004).

Furthermore, these same educators, as members of the dominant culture, may hold misconceptions about minority students and their families that result in lower expectations as well as the assumption that students from certain backgrounds are not interested in school or even able to learn (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2004; Sleeter, 2008). Terrill and Mark (2000), using questionnaire data, found that many undergraduates who had been accepted into one teacher education program reported lower expectations for ELLs and African-American children, as compared to White native English speakers. A number of these candidates also responded that they felt uncomfortable working with diverse learners, suggesting that some teachers may be resistant to working with students

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who are unlike them in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and/or language background (see also Marx, 2008).

Given that many new teachers admit not feeling adequately prepared to work with ELLs (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002), perhaps the most pressing issue is to focus our efforts on teacher education. Three recent survey studies (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Menken & Antunez, 2001; NCES, 2002) show that very few teachers are currently being trained to work with these students, even though demographic shifts in the U.S. suggest that many, if not most, of these teachers will eventually have ELLs in their classrooms. According to a report released by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2002), 42% of teachers surveyed claimed to have worked with ELLs at some point in their career, although less than 13% of them had undergone more than eight hours of ELL-related professional development. Similarly, a survey of 417 colleges and universities found that only around one in six required its pre-service teachers to participate in any form of preparation whatsoever to teach ELLs (Menken & Antunez, 2001). Finally, in California, a survey completed by 5,300 teachers revealed that less than 50% of those who worked with significant numbers of ELLs had attended more than one in-service training session focused on ESL/bilingual education methods during the previous five years (Gándara *et al.*, 2005). Thus, part of the problem concerning the underachievement of ELLs lies in the fact that many teachers, especially those who come from backgrounds distinct from those of the students, are poorly prepared to work with them.

de Jong and Harper (2005) explain these findings by noting that it is too often assumed that "good teaching practices" will be effective for *all* students in spite of their

cultural and linguistic diversity. They, like other researchers in the field (*e.g.*, Jiménez &

Teague, 2009; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Valdés, Bunch,

Snow, & Lee, 2005), argue that teachers who work with ELLs (and other diverse

learners) must develop specialized forms of knowledge and practice in order to be

successful. Specifically, de Jong and Harper (2005) claim that teachers of ELLs need an

understanding of "the process of learning a second language, the role of language and

culture as a medium in teaching and learning, and the need to set explicit linguistic and

cultural goals" (p. 118). In short, instructional practices that are effective for native

English speakers are necessary but not sufficient for ELLs (Duff, 2001). Teachers who do

not develop this specialized knowledge as part of their teacher education programs will

likely teach ELLs in ways that are unsuccessful. As the statistics suggest, this lack of

preparation may result in low levels of student achievement and, in some cases, increased

dropout rates. Banks *et al.* (2005) warn that students who drop out of school have

increasingly slimmer chances of engaging in productive employment; instead, they are

likely to be relegated to low-skilled, low-wage jobs.

Objectives of the Study

During the past few decades, researchers have begun to focus their attention on

the preparation of teachers to work with diverse students, including (but not limited to)

English language learners (see Banks *et al.,* 2005; Cochran-Smith *et al*., 2004; Hollins &

Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). This work has begun to shed light on the types of

instructional activities and experiences in teacher education programs that seem most

effective in preparing teachers who are willing and well equipped to educate ELLs.

For example, it is often necessary to directly engage with and challenge future ELL teachers' knowledge, beliefs, values, and prejudices, particularly when the ideas they hold might negatively affect the learning of their students (Marx, 2000). Likewise, mediating teachers' thinking and practice through activities such as diaries, autobiographies, narratives, course readings, and reflections can facilitate positive learning (Bailey, Bergthold, Braunstein, Jagodzinski Fleischman, Holbrook, Tuman, Waissbluth, & Zambo, 1996; Clark & Medina, 2000, Numrich, 1996; Pavlenko, 2003). Finally, studies have shown that involving prospective teachers in cross-cultural experiences such as time abroad and temporary work in immigrant communities may encourage them to become more aware of their own beliefs, assumptions, and cultural values (Clark & Flores, 1997; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Willard-Holt, 2001). This awareness often translates into more reflective practice. Such experiences may likewise have a positive impact on teachers' use of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), given that time spent interacting with ELLs and their families exposes teachers to culturally specific resources and practices on which they can capitalize for school learning.

Moreover, this literature highlights desired outcomes in terms of the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and practices that prospective teachers develop during their teacher education experience. One important goal is for teachers to develop accurate understandings of multiculturalism and, in particular, its implications for education (Katz, 2000; Nel, 1992; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003; Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Xu, 2000a; 2000b). Successful teaching practices include the integration of multicultural and multilingual literature as well as other aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-

Billings, 1995). Research also suggests that teachers need to become critically aware of their own beliefs and ideologies as well as to develop understandings of different cultural and linguistic practices (Clark & Medina, 2000; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003; Xu, 2000a; 2000b).

What is largely missing from this discussion is a consideration of the actual learning *process* (*e.g.*, during field experiences) as well as the ways in which the backgrounds and prior experiences of candidates *mediate* this process. First, we know very little, theoretically speaking, about how and at what point teachers appropriate new understandings with regards to the education of ELLs. Indeed, several researchers (*e.g.*, Artiles, Trent, Hoffman-Kipp, & López-Torres, 2000) have indicated the need to develop instruments that allow us to trace teacher learning as it occurs moment-by-moment through social interaction. Therefore, the field needs a better understanding of the specific *features* of instructional interventions and experiences that are effective in preparing teachers for diversity as well as the specific *learning outcomes* associated with participation in these activities. By examining the interactions between these factors, we would come to know not only how and when learning actually occurs but also the specific supports that facilitate this process.

Second, as is obvious to many teacher educators, not all teachers readily embrace the ideas presented in their programs, specifically those relating to diversity and work with English language learners, and some even resist these ideas. For example, prospective teachers may not agree that children of undocumented immigrants should be given the same rights and privileges as those of U.S. citizens. Others may not hold such extreme views but still be against bilingual education or even making instructional

modifications for ELLs (see, for example, Reeves, 2004 and Valdés, 1998). Unless

teachers are led to change such negative attitudes and beliefs within their programs, these

perspectives may have a potentially harmful impact on their teaching of ELLs and other

diverse learners. That said, the field of teacher education would benefit from a closer

examination of the ways in which teacher background factors (*e.g.*, race/ethnicity, prior

experience with diversity/ELLs, knowledge of a foreign language) *mediate* their learning

and practice.

A number of empirical studies (*e.g.*, Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997; Hyatt &

Beigy, 1999; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) provide some evidence to support the claim that

experiences such as foreign language study and direct contact with ELLs serve as means

through which teachers typically develop positive attitudes toward and deeper

connections with ELLs (although it must also be recognized that direct contact can

reinforce stereotypes). Therefore, it may be the case that teachers who enter programs

having already had these and similar types of experiences are more disposed to gain the

knowledge and practice required to work successfully with ELLs. Knowing what teachers

bring and how these characteristics affect their learning and practice may ultimately help

teacher educators design and implement successful educational interventions.

The present study aims to fill these gaps in the literature by focusing on the

impact of a cross-cultural field experience, which itself is embedded in a semester-long

course focused on the foundations of teaching linguistically diverse students. In

particular, this study examines whether and how the field experience serves to equip

candidates with empowering beliefs about English language learners as well as increased

understandings of important issues related to the education of this population. A critical

aspect of this project is to document the precise process of change as it takes place during

the field experience, including the specific features that are responsible for such change.

The study also seeks to account for the ways in which specific facets of prospective

teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences mediate, either positively or negatively,

their development during the semester. These features include, for example, 1) previous

work with diverse students, 2) minority/majority status, 3) time spent abroad (*e.g.*,

academic exchanges, extended travel), and/or 4) previous education/coursework related

to diversity. It is worth considering which, if any, of these factors play a role in shaping

prospective teachers' learning and practice.

Research Questions

1. What prior understandings and beliefs regarding diversity and work with

English language learners do the teacher candidates bring to the course?

2. What new understandings and beliefs do the candidates develop during the

course?

3. What features of the cross-cultural field experience are most significant in

bringing about development in the prospective teachers?

4. How do the candidates' background characteristics and prior experiences

mediate their learning?

The understandings and beliefs assessed at the beginning and end of the semester relate

directly to the topics covered in the foundations course. In particular, in the case of

'understandings,' I evaluate the candidates' knowledge of the factors that are typically

responsible for the learning and achievement of English language learners (*e.g.*, prior

schooling and literacy, English language proficiency). I also examine their understandings of program types (including associated goals and degree of effectiveness) as well as useful instructional techniques. As for 'beliefs,' I focus my attention on the prospective teachers' acceptance/rejection of deficit views toward ELLs, more specifically, whether or not the teachers believe that *all* students (and their families), regardless of their backgrounds, bring cultural and linguistic assets to the task of learning. Part of this assessment determines to what extent the teachers can identify and discuss the funds of knowledge (González *et al.*, 2005) ELLs bring with them to school.

I track the development of these understandings and ideas throughout the course, paying close attention to the impact of the cross-cultural field experience. As stated in the third research question, my goal is to identify and describe the most significant features of the field experience that lead to development and to account for the precise mechanisms at play. Given that, for the purposes of this study, I am interested in the *process* of change, data collection is restricted to the single semester in which participants fulfill the requirements for this particular course. Last, I connect the teacher candidates' learning in the course to their backgrounds and prior experiences, examining whether and how certain types of experiences (*e.g.*, previous work with diverse students) shape the development of their understandings and beliefs concerning work with English language learners.

Overview of the Dissertation

The rest of the dissertation is divided into five chapters. In chapter II I provide a synthesis of the literature focused on the preparation of teachers for diversity and for

English language learners more specifically. This review highlights the instructional interventions and types of experiences that seem effective in promoting the learning and practice of prospective teachers. I focus on studies that look at teacher learning within pre-service university coursework and field experiences. Chapter II also includes an explanation of the major tenets of sociocultural theory [SCT] (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978), my guiding theoretical framework. I draw on three concepts in particular: *mediation*, *internalization*, and the *zone of proximal development*.

In Chapter III I focus on methodological concerns. I begin by describing the site and participants for my work, including an overview of the university's new ELL program and the first course in the sequence, Foundations for Teaching Linguistically Diverse Students. In the remainder of the chapter, I explain the phases of the study as well as the specific methods I followed for data collection and analysis.

Chapter IV contains brief portraits of the six focal participants, including relevant aspects of their backgrounds as well as a discussion of their prior experiences with diversity and ELLs. These portraits likewise include an overview of each of their field projects. In Chapter V I focus on the results of the study, which are organized around the major findings that emerged from my analysis. I provide relevant data from my study to support each of my claims.

In the final chapter (Chapter VI), I begin by providing a summary of the study, including the purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology. I then address each of my four guiding research questions in turn, highlighting the main findings and discussing how my study contributes to prior research in the field. In particular, I relate my findings to those of previous researchers and point out both

similarities and differences. Moreover, I use sociocultural theory to illustrate how my

participants' learning can be understood as a socially mediated process that requires

careful assistance based on close attention to the past experiences and developmental

levels of each individual learner. This discussion leads to a proposed categorization of

pre-service teachers deriving from their backgrounds and prior experiences. The rest of

the chapter centers on pedagogical implications—particularly what the study means as far

as the design and implementation of courses and field experiences that maximize

opportunities for teacher learning—as well as an overview of the limitations of the work

and directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past two decades, researchers have begun focusing their attention on the

preparation of teachers to work with diverse learners, including ELLs. Specifically, they

have identified the types of experiences in teacher education programs that demonstrate

potential in facilitating positive, empowering attitudes toward diverse students, their

families, and their communities as well as the experiences that lead teachers to develop

solid knowledge bases and repertoires of practice. They have also begun to document the

desired understandings, beliefs, and instructional techniques that characterize effective

teachers of English language learners. In the first part of this chapter I review the

empirical and conceptual literature focused on these issues, noting not only what we

currently know but also the gaps and limitations of this knowledge. In the second part of

the chapter I discuss the theoretical framework that guides my own research study.

Preparing Teachers for Work with Diverse Students

In this section I synthesize the major findings and issues presented in recent

reviews focused on teacher education for diversity (Banks *et al*., 2005; Cochran-Smith *et

al*., 2004; Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Montecinos, 2004;

Sleeter, 2008; Wideen *et al*., 1998). This discussion provides a context for the next

section, which focuses specifically on teacher preparation for English language learners.

The review conducted by Wideen *et al.* (1998) offers a critical analysis of the research on learning to teach, including issues around diversity. The authors conclude that "many aspects of the learning-to-teach picture remain unclear and that findings across some of the studies appear contradictory" (p. 130). Their review centered on the following categories: beginning teachers and their beliefs, program interventions, student teaching experiences, and the first year of teaching. Some of the most important findings and recommendations they report include:

- …the fixed nature of prospective teachers' beliefs should remain an open question rather than an accepted assumption until the impact of more robust programs of teacher education has been fully analyzed (p. 144)

- The notion that coursework should provide teaching skills and information about teaching—and that beginning teachers can integrate and effectively implement that information—receives very little support from this research. The limits of viewing learning to teach through knowledge provision was particularly apparent in the studies of multicultural teacher education. (p. 151)

- In the short-term interventions, which in all but one or two cases involved a single course, we saw little reported impact. In the studies of year-long programs, however, it was much more common for the researchers to report positive effects (p. 151)

- …studies point to a dilemma facing teacher educators and pre-service teachers in bridging the cultures of the school and the university. The practical pressure of the student teaching experience appears to limit the ability and inclination of pre-service teachers to do anything other than just survive. In the student teachers' minds, inadequate preparation in their university coursework causes much of their frustration. Meanwhile, the change agenda of the teacher educators remains and exacerbates the differences between the perceptions of the faculty members and those of the teaching candidates (p. 156)

- The recommendations from many studies point to a need for prospective teachers to examine their beliefs early in teacher education programs and to negotiate an effective teaching role based on classroom experience and a sensitive rendering of propositional knowledge and new expectations of teaching gained on campus (p. 156)

- In those studies where the candidates were supported by program, peers, and classroom situations, and where deliberative exploration and reflection were encouraged, we saw the flowering of empowered teachers (p. 159)

The authors emphasize that learning to teach is a complex and personal activity and argue that efforts to educate pre-service teachers must take into account "what beginning teachers already know and believe about teaching" (p. 167). In other words, top-down approaches are not generally effective and may end up frustrating both teacher educators and teacher candidates. Indeed, researchers like Johnson and Golombek (2003) argue that teacher learning "emerges from a process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers" (p. 730). Wideen *et al.* (1998) recommend examining teacher education from an ecological standpoint in which all aspects of teachers' environments (*e.g.*, courses, programs, participants, and contexts) are seen to influence what they learn and do.

While Wideen and colleagues (1998) speak to issues of teacher preparation more generally, other recent reviews of research (Banks *et al*., 2005; Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2004; Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Montecinos, 2004; Sleeter, 2008) provide syntheses of the literature focused specifically on preparing teachers for diversity. Diversity in this sense assumes many forms and includes culture, language, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), and disability. These researchers highlight the fact that while the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, the teaching force remains largely White, female, monolingual, and middle class. They also warn that unless teacher education programs start to devote more attention to issues of diversity, equity, and social justice, teachers will continue to be unprepared to work successfully with diverse students.

Banks *et al.*'s (2005) chapter centers on "what new teachers must understand and be able to do to enhance the academic achievement of *all* students" (p. 233, emphasis added). They cite studies that illustrate the effects of the "demographic divide" between teachers and students, in particular the ways in which the experiences of diverse students typically differ from those of their White, middle-class, native-English-speaking counterparts. These experiences often consist of differences in educational opportunities, the availability of resources, placements (tracking), access to quality teachers, achievement, as well as significant home/school divides. The authors claim that "teachers must know how to be alert for these kinds of disparities and aware of how to provide classroom environments that are both physically and psychologically safe for all students (p. 242).

Banks and his colleagues (2005) also discuss what teachers need to know in order to work effectively with diverse students, emphasizing in particular culturally responsive teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive instruction includes teaching methods, curricula, assessment practices, and a general classroom climate that foster learning. Moreover, it entails finding out about students' prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences so that instruction builds on what students bring with them to the classroom. González *et al.* (2005) refer to home and community practices as students' "funds of knowledge", and their research describes specific examples of how teachers can become involved in children's home and community lives with the purpose of identifying and ultimately capitalizing on what students know and do.

Banks *et al.* argue that teachers who work with diverse learners need to develop certain types of attitudes and dispositions. In particular, teachers should possess a

"sociocultural consciousness" that includes respect for students, knowledge of themselves as cultural beings, and a critical awareness of the ways in which educational opportunities are structured. The researchers also claim that programs should stress the development of three principal types of knowledge: knowledge of learners, knowledge of self, and knowledge of how to continue to learn in teaching (p. 264). Finally, they emphasize the importance of infusing issues of diversity, equity, and social justice throughout all aspects of a teacher education program (see Costa *et al*., 2005 and Meskill, 2005 for attempts to accomplish this goal with respect to ELL issues), as opposed to limiting this focus to single courses or field experiences, which is too often the case (see Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Sleeter, 2008).

Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2004) reviewed literature focused on multicultural teacher education, paying particular attention to its influences on and by educational policy and practice. According to them, "…key concepts and theories contribute to the development of multicultural teacher education practice and policy and, reciprocally, … emergent practices and policies contribute to the development of new theories (p. 933). They highlight the role that a politically conservative climate, an emphasis on high-stakes testing, and preferred types of research (and hence funding) play in the field of teacher education. Specifically, these factors place noteworthy constraints on research, policy, and practice alike. For instance, in response to these constraints, basic changes in the ways teacher education is conceptualized and implemented have not occurred, despite multiple calls for reform over the past few decades.

Cochran-Smith and her colleagues (2004) go on to note that scholars are beginning to call for a "new multicultural teacher education," in particular a design that

"reinvents" as opposed to merely "supplementing" current efforts. As Ladson-Billings (1999) points out, most teacher education programs are willing to include issues of diversity but only if their traditional structure is maintained intact. These researchers agree that a completely new restructuring is critical if issues of diversity are to be taken seriously.

Cochran-Smith *et al.* likewise point out the disconnect between multicultural education theory and practice, arguing that scholarly work tells us what we should be doing but without examining what is really going on in classrooms. In this vein, the authors claim that researchers interested in diversity should conduct research that not only maps forward from teacher preparation to practice but also that which looks backwards from successful classroom practices to particular facets of teacher education experiences. They also call attention to a number of promising practices in programs of teacher education, such as the participation of prospective teachers in community-based experiences (Sleeter, 2008; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998) and opportunities for engagement in reflective inquiry concerning their own practice and that of others.

The chapter by Hollins and Torres-Guzmán (2005) offers a comprehensive review of empirical studies dealing with the preparation of candidates for teaching diverse students. The underlying assumption is that "teachers' knowledge frames and belief structures are the filters through which their practices, strategies, actions, interpretations, and decisions are made" (p. 482). The authors' literature search yielded 101 empirical, peer-reviewed research articles (both qualitative and quantitative) published in the United States between 1980 and 2002. The chapter is organized around four major topics: (a) candidates' predispositions, (b) the preparation of candidates, (c) the experience of

teacher candidates of color, and (d) evaluation studies of programs that prepare teachers for diversity.

Hollins and Torres-Guzmán (2005) found that the typical White, female, middle-class teacher reported on had limited experience with diverse learners. These teachers also tended to hold negative attitudes and beliefs toward diverse students and admitted that they were unprepared to work with them. Studies that looked at field experiences revealed a short-term positive impact on teachers' beliefs and attitudes, particularly when teaching candidates worked in urban settings. These findings contrast somewhat with those of Wideen *et al*. (1998), who found that pre-service teachers' beliefs were quite resistant to change, especially as a result of short-term interventions. Sleeter (2008) claims that field experiences can function to change teachers' attitudes and dispositions only when they are well-planned and implemented. A limitation of the studies reported in Hollins and Torres-Guzmán (2005) was that the authors did not typically report long-term effects, including possible impacts on the candidates' future teaching practice and student achievement (see also Zeichner, 2005 for a description of the major shortcomings of research on teacher education).

Candidates of color were found to face numerous challenges as they attempted to become teachers, and many of these individuals reported alienation in traditional teacher education programs, especially those that ignored their unique experiences and forms of knowledge. The evaluation studies indicated that most teacher education programs had yet to systematically integrate issues of diversity, which, as mentioned above, Banks *et al*. (2005) deem necessary for success (see also Sleeter, 2008). Moreover, even when these programs addressed matters of diversity, there was little evidence that candidates

actually used what they had learned in their own classrooms, suggesting that many pre-service teachers do not share a reform agenda, as pointed out above by Wideen and colleagues (1998).

Ladson-Billings' (1999) review is somewhat unique in that she takes a Critical Race Theory [CRT] perspective (Delgado, 1995) on the studies included. According to Ladson-Billings, critical race theorists are interested in "understanding how a regime of White supremacy and its subordination of people of color have been created and maintained in America" (1999: 214). Along these lines, she criticizes the term "diversity" given that it serves to differentiate White, English-speaking norms from those of other ethnic, cultural, racial, and linguistic groups, the latter being viewed as somehow inferior simply because they are "different". Moreover, she stresses the importance of analyzing teacher education practices through a critical race framework, one that highlights the structures preventing real reform, similar to Cochran-Smith *et al.*'s (2004) emphasis on the impact of larger contexts such as the conservative political climate and traditional notions of teacher education. Ladson-Billings reminds us that most teacher education faculty as well as the students in these programs come from White, monolingual backgrounds, meaning that the perspectives of individuals of color are notably absent (Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Montecinos, 2004).

She makes four important points with regards to the preparation of teachers for diverse learners. First, teacher educators interested in issues of diversity are likely to work with "resistant, often hostile prospective teachers." Second, many programs view diversity as an added-on requirement that they have an obligation to fulfill as opposed to a key feature of the program. Third, CRT can be a great starting place for preparing

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teachers for diversity since this perspective "moves beyond both superficial, essentialized treatments of various cultural groups and liberal guilt and angst". Fourth, the CRT perspective allows for a comparison between the principles underlying traditional versus reform-minded teacher education programs (pp. 240-241). In her article, Ladson-Billings (1999) offers an overview of example CRT practices, including a discussion of the work of researchers who adopt this framework as well as of teacher education programs that adhere to its central tenets.

Montecinos (2004) argues that "by excluding, silencing and ignoring the presence of pre-service teachers of color, multicultural teacher education is, paradoxically, securing the norm of Whiteness in teacher preparation and undermining the principles of multicultural education (p. 168). In her review she looked at 35 empirical research studies and examined the extent to which the researchers treated 'teacher ethnicity' as a meaningful variable. Her findings revealed that only 23% (n=8) of the studies reviewed included the voices of teachers of color. As mentioned above, Hollins and Torres-Guzmán (2005) reported that prospective teachers from minority backgrounds often feel alienated and excluded in their teacher education programs, particularly when their unique forms of knowledge and experience are not taken into account. Montecinos' (2004) work highlights the fact that, not only are teachers of color likely to experience frustrations in these programs, their perspectives are rarely even documented in the literature.

These findings led Montecinos (2004) to call into question the tendency to 'de-ethnitize' teacher education, especially considering that teachers' backgrounds are typically thought to play an important role in the way they teach. For example, Cochran-

Smith and her colleagues (2004) note that teachers who share their students' backgrounds may function as role models and cultural brokers in schools (see also Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers from minority backgrounds may also provide more culturally relevant instruction that has the potential to bring about higher achievement for students who are also from these backgrounds. Like Ladson-Billings (1999), Montecinos (2004) takes a critical view on issues of race, arguing that when Whiteness is seen as the norm in teacher education, "what works or does not work with White teacher trainees is universal and can be categorized as 'good or bad' teacher education practices" (p. 176). For these reasons, she calls for more attention to the perspectives of teachers of color, both in teacher education programs and in the research concerned with these programs.

Sleeter's (2008) chapter focuses on the preparation of White teachers for diverse students. She claims that "most Whites enter teacher education with little cross-cultural background, knowledge and experience, although they often bring naïve optimism that coexists with unexamined stereotypes taken for granted as truth" (p. 559). She posits that most White pre-service candidates are unaware of how racism really works, that they often hold lower expectations for students of color, that they commonly fear diverse communities because they know little about them, and that they often fail to recognize themselves as cultural beings.

Sleeter points out that programs must be well planned and coherently organized in order to be effective in preparing teachers for diverse students. As stated above, single courses or field experiences may not be enough to produce significant change in teachers' thinking, beliefs, and practice (Banks *et al*., 2005; Wideen *et al*., 1998). She recommends combining traditional university-based coursework and school-based field experiences

with opportunities for (White) pre-service teachers to participate in cross-cultural activities in different communities. Importantly, these experiences should include a reflective component, be linked to coursework and teaching practica, and be required on an ongoing basis. Sleeter claims that the benefit of these experiences is that "pre-service teachers see functioning communities and everyday cultural patterns first-hand, form relationships with people, confront stereotypes, and hear stories of lives that reflect abstractions they may have read about in textbooks" (p. 564). In other words, sustained cross-cultural work in communities encourages teachers to reframe long-held notions of minority groups, which may result in more positive attitudes toward learners as well as more culturally responsive teaching.

Taken together, the reviews focused on teaching for diversity converge on several important issues. First, it is quite clear that many prospective teachers enter teacher education programs with negative attitudes and assumptions about diverse learners and that they do not typically hold a reform agenda regarding their future practice. Whether or not these dispositions are changed will depend in large part on the nature of their participation in teacher education programs. Second, the experiences and perspectives of teachers of color are noticeably absent from the research in this area. Thus, we are still not certain if and how their backgrounds might play a positive and/or influential role in the way they teach diverse students. Third, researchers stress the importance of infusing issues of diversity, social justice, and equity throughout teacher education programs. Obviously, this will require a complete restructuring of traditional programs, which still seem to be the norm. Fourth, promising practices for prospective teachers include

sustained community-based experiences that facilitate first-hand interaction with diverse individuals as well as opportunities for reflection and personal inquiry.

Preparing Teachers for Work with English Language Learners

Lucas and Grinberg (2008) point out that working with ELLs is a unique endeavor and thus should be distinguished from work with "diverse" students more generally. In this section I discuss studies related specifically to linguistic diversity (see Teague, 2007 for a more exhaustive review). After providing a brief description of the studies, I synthesize the findings as they address the following questions: (1) What experiences contribute positively to teacher preparation for work with ELLs? (2) How can ELL-focused teacher education programs impact teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practice? I limit this discussion to empirical literature focused on university-based coursework and cross-cultural field experiences. I also include a few studies that have attempted to backwards map (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2004) from effective classroom practice to specific aspects of teacher education programs.

University coursework

Clark and Medina (2000) looked at the "the role of reading and writing literacy narratives in shaping pre-service teachers' understandings about literacy pedagogy and multiculturalism" (p. 63). Prospective teachers in a multicultural education class were required to write an autobiographical literacy narrative as well as read several published literacy narratives written by other individuals, including some who had learned English as a second language. The researchers found that "students were in the process of

rethinking how they knew or came to know about issues of literacy, multiculturalism, and teaching through their writing and reading of literacy narratives" (p. 67). Specifically, the teacher candidates critically examined their own literacy development and especially the role played by their linguistic, class, culture, ethnicity, and economic backgrounds. The process of reading other people's narratives illustrated to the pre-service teachers how literacy is tied to social situations and interactions, allowing them to see and understand how their future students' literacies may be quite different from their own. For example, the teachers commented on the impact of family literacy practices (*e.g.*, reading Bible stories), parental expectations and support, and access to library texts. A further advantage of reading and reflecting on the literacy narratives was that the teachers connected theory (covered in the course) with practice (the analysis of other people's experiences through these lens). Sleeter (2008) argues for the importance of this theory-practice connection in teacher education for diversity.

Katz (2000) used a somewhat similar approach to study the ways in which prospective teachers "grapple with the complex relationship of research, policy, and practice within the field of bilingual education" (p. 2). The teacher candidates from several of her multicultural education courses (*n*=200) at the University of San Francisco wrote written reflections on their readings and class sessions, conducted a series of observations in bilingual and ESL classrooms, completed a family linguistic history chart, participated in an oral debate focused on Proposition 227, and submitted a final course project. Katz calls these five sources of data "literacy events" and, like Clark and Medina (2000), suggests that they mediate teachers' thinking and awareness. In other words, participation in these literacy-based activities encouraged teachers to articulate

and reevaluate their ideas and assumptions regarding work with ELLs. The researcher

found that the pre-service teachers who held positive attitudes toward bilingual education

upon entering the course "became stronger in their conviction and were more able to

clearly articulate their beliefs" (p. 4). Those who had no previous exposure to

bilingualism and bilingual education also adopted positive stances. However, those

teachers who were initially skeptical or adverse to bilingual education showed little

change as a result of the course and the required assignments. Katz (2000) concluded that

multicultural education courses may lead to positive change only for teachers who either

already support bilingualism or who have had no prior experiences with it. A related

implication of this study is that prospective teachers who are initially adverse to bilingual

education or the use of other languages in the classroom may require further intervention

in terms of coursework and field experiences if these attitudes are to be expected to

change.

Nel's (1992) research focused on the implications of Cummins' (1986) theoretical

framework on teacher education. Cummins' framework emphasizes the construction of

empowering relationships between teachers and students, parents, and communities. Nel

used these ideas to restructure the content of her own course on multicultural education.

She administered a cultural diversity inventory to her participants both before and after

the course to measure their "individual attitudes, beliefs, and behavior towards children

of culturally diverse backgrounds" (p. 40). She likewise asked them to identify a goal for

multicultural education. According to her:

> Results on the questionnaire, the goal selection instrument, and student
> testimonies indicated an increase in cultural sensitivity, and a realization of the
> necessity to incorporate minority students' culture and home language into the
> school program, to foster parent and community involvement in the educational

process, and to help their students to become active generators of knowledge instead of passive receivers. Pre-service teachers also showed an awareness of the inherent danger of legitimizing the location of the academic problem within the minority student (p. 43).

Nel's (1992) study, like those of Clark and Medina (2000) and Katz (2000), suggests that pre-service teachers' thinking and beliefs may change as a result of well-planned and structured coursework, particularly when teachers are encouraged to consider and reflect on alternative discourses concerning the education of ELLs. That said, Nel's study is somewhat weak methodologically given that most of her data consisted of teachers' responses to questionnaires (self report).

Torok and Aguilar (2000) investigated "undergraduate students' knowledge base and belief systems about diversity in general, with a focus on language issues more specifically, including bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) education programs" (p. 24). 33 individuals participated in the study. The researchers collected data in several ways. First, they administered a series of surveys designed to measure teachers' knowledge, personal beliefs, and professional beliefs about diversity, both at the beginning and the end of the course. They also analyzed participants' journal entries, reflective papers based on a "language cultural event," research projects, and final course evaluations. They found a significant increase in scores on the belief and knowledge surveys, indicating "a clearer understanding of language issues and programs" (p. 27), such as the benefits of bilingual education. As was the case with the three studies described above, the authors attribute the findings to the nature of class discussions, the course readings, and the required written assignments. Furthermore, they highlight the apparent positive impact of the non-English cross-cultural experience, in which the teacher candidates participated in a local community event conducted primarily in

another language (and also a language unfamiliar to them). As will be described shortly, other research studies (Clark & Flores, 1997; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Willard-Holt, 2001) offer further empirical support for the benefits of these types of experiences.

Bailey *et al.* (1996) examined the potential impact of the writing and discussion of a language learning autobiography on prospective teachers' philosophies and practice. Specifically, the candidates "identified trends, critical incidents, and salient factors influencing [their] development as teachers" (p. 13). The data consisted of student-produced autobiographies as well as journals. The participants became more aware of their implicit teaching philosophies, which were largely determined by their prior experiences in language classrooms. This finding supports Lortie's (1975) notion of the "apprenticeship of observation," namely that teachers' personal backgrounds as students (*e.g.*, in foreign-language classrooms) leave indelible marks on their future beliefs and practice. In other words, the teachers' conceptions of "best practices" with regards to L2 pedagogy derived from their own past experiences and preferences as L2 learners, suggesting that reflection is a critical step toward self-awareness and possibly change in thinking and practice. The assignment also served as a means for the participants to examine their own personal experiences in light of theories about language and learning. The importance theory-practice connections in teacher education was also emphasized in the Clark and Medina (2000) study.

Taken together, these studies, which looked at teacher development using various course assignments, final course evaluations, and surveys/questionnaires, indicate that well-structured university courses, particularly those that include certain types of

experiences, can lead to positive changes in pre-service teachers' understandings, awareness, and beliefs. More specifically, through their participation in a combination of carefully-planned literacy-based activities (*e.g.*, written narratives, reflections, projects and course readings) and oral discussions, teacher candidates can develop more positive attitudes toward bilingual education and linguistically diverse students as well as increased understandings of their own teaching philosophies, their beliefs, literacy and multiculturalism, and program models. That said, in the case of teachers who enter programs with negative attitudes toward bilingual education or ELLs, it appears that one course may be inadequate for change to occur (Katz, 2000). For this reason, we need more data on teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences as well as the influences these may have on their learning and perhaps even resistance in teacher education programs. Also, given a lack of empirical research, it is not clear whether and to what extent teachers are able to draw on the knowledge gained in coursework when actually working with ELLs.

Field-based courses

The following studies (Arias & Poyner, 2001; Mora & Grisham, 2001; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003; Xu, 2000a; 2000b) provide insight concerning the potential effects of field-based courses. These studies look at courses that are directly linked to practicum experiences in which teacher candidates gain theoretical and practical knowledge simultaneously.

Arias and Poyner (2001) documented the learning of three pre-service ESL teachers in a reading and language arts methods course offered at an urban professional

development school. Similar to the Clark and Medina (2000) study, the main goal of the methods course was to raise the candidates' awareness of their own cultural backgrounds as well as the backgrounds of the culturally and linguistically diverse students with whom they were working. The primary sources of data included document analysis (*e.g.*, the objectives stated on course syllabi, teacher reflections), class observations, and interviews with both the pre-service teachers and their on-site mentors. Arias and Poyner (2001) found that the field-based course helped the three prospective teachers to recognize the value of incorporating diversity into the curriculum. The candidates also came to acknowledge diversity as a resource. Nevertheless, they were unable to translate these ideas into actual classroom activities for ELLs, suggesting a disconnect between knowing and doing (Wideen *et al*., 1998). These findings suggest that individual courses may lead to change in teachers' thinking and beliefs but not necessarily in their practice. That said, it should also be recognized that understandings developed during initial coursework represent an important first step in the preparation of effective teachers of ELLs.

In their research, Mora and Grisham (2001) described the restructuring of a field-based reading/language arts methods course to include a greater and more explicit emphasis on teaching ELLs. They also looked at teacher learning in the revised course, including teacher attitudes and instructional competencies, L2 assessment and planning practices, as well as how prepared the teachers felt to work with ELLs and how they perceived these students. The 27 participating teachers were asked to complete a case study of an ELL by administering a language assessment consisting of both oral and written components and by reviewing the student's school records. The researchers examined these data sources in addition to teachers' final case study reports, course

evaluations, and post-course focus-group interviews (*n*=4). They found that the revised

course, which included "explicit content and field-based learning activities with second

language learners" (p. 63), served to increase teachers' knowledge and problem-solving

abilities. Moreover, the participants expressed greater confidence in their ability to teach

ELLs. This study is significant in that it suggests the value of equipping teachers to

interpret pupil data using a variety of informal and formal assessments. Importantly, this

process prepares teachers to make informed instructional decisions when working with

ELLs.

Nathenson-Mejía and Escamilla (2003) looked at the role of using "ethnic"

literature, or culturally relevant children's texts, to forge connections between teachers

and ELLs. Through reading this literature, the researchers wanted the prospective

teachers (*n*=70) to gain deeper understandings of the cultures of their students in a way

somewhat similar to the Clark and Medina (2000) study. Moreover, Nathenson-Mejía and

Escamilla hoped that their participants would "go beyond reading aloud, to encourage the

use of more in-depth reading, writing, and discussion with children" (p. 105). The

teachers discussed these books with their peers and instructors and were required to

respond to them in writing. Initially, many of the teachers held negative attitudes toward

some of the issues presented in the texts, such as illegal immigration. However, as a

result of discussing and critically analyzing these issues with their instructors and peers,

they began to show signs of cross-cultural understanding and started incorporating this

literature into their own teaching with ELLs. Their lessons went beyond simple read-

alouds, which had previously been the preferred form of instruction. In turn, the children

seemed much more engaged and enthusiastic about learning. Furthermore, similar to

Nel's (1992) work, as the prospective teachers learned more about their students' lives and cultures, they exhibited increasingly positive attitudes toward them, suggesting that shifts in knowledge and dispositions may go hand-in-hand (see also Torok & Aguilar, 2000).

Xu (2000a; 2000b) published two studies dealing with the impact of a field-based literacy methods course. In the first study (2000a), she reported on the ways in which teacher candidates "explored issues of diversity while working with students from diverse backgrounds" (p. 506). Specifically, she required the participants to complete an autobiography, a student biography, lesson plans, case-study reports, and a series of reflections. Further data included field notes from class observations as well as individual and group discussions with the three focal teachers. Xu found that "through interactions with diverse students in field experiences and class discussions" the three teachers "became more aware of their own cultural backgrounds and privileges within the context of teaching diverse students" (p. 524). They also gained an increased awareness of effective strategies of literacy instruction. Nonetheless, only one of the candidates articulated the role of teachers and schools in the academic success of ELLs. The other two continued to place blame for failure on the learners themselves. Xu concluded that teacher educators must make an active and sustained effort to help prospective teachers adopt more positive beliefs and engage in more effective practice. Her research, like that of Katz (2000), suggests that different teachers may require different types of support depending on their prior beliefs and attitudes.

In a related study, Xu (2000b) investigated similar issues with more participants, specifically 20 pre-service teachers in a major Southwest university. The data sources

were the same as those mentioned above with the addition of cross-cultural analysis charts and "strategy and literature sheets." Findings indicated that the autobiographies served to increase teachers' awareness of their own cultural backgrounds as well as the ways in which their backgrounds contrasted with those of their students. As was the case in the Clark and Medina (2000) study, the teachers also reflected on the role their own parents and teachers had played in their literacy development, thus beginning to view literacy learning and achievement within a sociocultural context. Additionally, the candidates adopted new and more effective approaches to literacy instruction, such as the inclusion of multicultural literature (see Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003). This work provides evidence that well-planned course activities, coupled with appropriate scaffolding, have the potential to mediate and thus push teachers' thinking and practice in productive ways. In this particular study, the teachers were guided in developing and sustaining effective instruction.

The studies reviewed in this section examined teacher development using a variety of data sources, including class discussions, written reflections, course syllabi, autobiographies, lesson plans, case-study reports, class observations, interviews, cross-cultural analysis charts, and strategy checklists. This work indicates that field-based courses often have a notable impact on prospective teachers. Importantly, such courses can provide a direct link between theory and practice, they inform teachers about the cultures and language abilities of their students, and they include scaffolded opportunities for teachers to experiment with culturally responsive pedagogies. The activities included in these courses can serve to heighten teachers' understandings and awareness of their own cultural backgrounds, the backgrounds of their students, the role of diversity in the

curriculum, and features of effective literacy instruction (*e.g.*, using multicultural literature). They can also positively influence teachers' beliefs about ELLs and their potential success, even though some candidates may continue to embrace deficit-like views unless further support is offered.

In many cases it appears that semester-long courses are not enough for teachers when it comes to translating knowledge into culturally responsive practice. Xu (2000b) warns that ELL issues need to be infused throughout teacher education programs as opposed to being the focus of individual courses. The field would benefit from more long-term studies that document the process of development, including the role played by candidates' backgrounds upon entering programs. For example, researchers could identify the backgrounds and prior experiences of teachers (*e.g.*, SES, majority/minority status, previous exposure to diversity, foreign study or travel) and then look for correlations between these features and their learning trajectories during coursework, field experiences, and/or teaching practica.

Cross-cultural experiences

Other studies (Clark & Flores, 1997; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Willard-Holt, 2001) have examined the impact of fieldwork in cross-cultural school/community settings. By participating in these experiences, it is hoped that future teachers will develop cross-cultural perspectives on teaching and learning, positive attitudes toward ELLs and diversity, and knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Some of these studies have focused on the impact of cross-cultural experiences taking place in foreign countries. Clark and Flores (1997) took a group of pre-service teachers (*n*=10) to Monterrey, Mexico. While there they asked them to conduct structured observations of language and literacy instruction in local elementary and middle schools. The teachers were required to take "instructional snapshots," or pictures, of what they observed and then meet with the rest of the class for discussion. The observations and discussions focused on issues such as classroom management, social interactions among the students, types of questions asked, and instructional techniques. According to the researchers, the observations, snapshots, and subsequent discussions allowed the teacher candidates to compare their own teaching of bilingual children with the ways in which Mexican students are instructed in their native country. Clark and Flores note that the participating teachers learned that:

> (a) recent immigrant children may need a period of transition to adjust to the teaching/learning environment in a U.S. classroom; (b) bilingual teachers should be cognizant of this adjustment period and should accommodate the recent immigrant by planning appropriate lessons and evaluation activities; (c) as bilingual teachers, it is simply not enough to have linguistic and sociocultural understanding of one's own ethnic group; (d) as bilingual teachers, it is important to have an understanding of immigrant children's schooling experience in their native country (p. 111)

The prospective teachers who participated in this research gained a critical awareness of cross-cultural educational practices as a result of this experience.

Two other studies that looked at the impact of time spent in foreign countries (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001) also reported positive outcomes. Willard-Holt (2001) described a number of changes teachers underwent as they worked for one week with children in a private bilingual school in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. Of note, most of the 22 participating teachers were White and female. The researcher

administered questionnaires before, immediately following, and four months after the experience to trace teachers' preconceptions, evolving ideas, and the effects of the trip on their student teaching. She also interviewed a subset of participants by phone one year later to investigate whether the cross-cultural experience had had a lasting influence on their practice. Willard-Holt found that while the participants entered the experience with ethnocentric preconceptions (*e.g.*, the perceived superiority of schooling in the U.S.), many of these ideas were later challenged by their time spent abroad. Moreover, most of the teachers integrated content they had learned into their own teaching, they expressed a desire to learn more about other cultures, they formed more global mindsets, they were more committed to providing extra support to marginalized learners in their own classrooms, and they became more reflective, patient, tolerant, and self-confident.

Drawing on Willard-Holt's (2001) study, Pence and Macgillivray (2008) followed a group of pre-service teachers to Rome, Italy, where they worked for one month in a private, Catholic, Italian/English dual-immersion program. All 15 participants were White, most (*n*=14) were female, and none of them spoke Italian. The data sources included reflective journals, supervisor observation notes, final reflection papers, course evaluations, two focus-group discussions, and follow-up questionnaires one year later. Like Willard-Holt (2001), Pence and Macgillivray found that the teachers initially held stereotypical preconceptions of the school and site in which they were going to work. For example, they predicted the students to have "privileged attitudes," the teachers to be "strict and authoritarian," and they underestimated their own potential learning from participating in this exchange (p. 20). Throughout the experience the teachers developed more accurate understandings of education in this particular school (*e.g.*, high

expectations yet considerable freedom), and their comments reflected "appreciation for diversity, increased confidence in themselves and their teaching, a desire for continued professional growth, and a new respect for English language learners in schools in the U.S." (p. 22). Of significance, they emphasized the importance of the support and ongoing feedback they received from their supervising teachers during this process. This finding is consistent with the argument made by others (*e.g.*, Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996) that teachers need close guidance during such experiences if they are to be expected to overcome negative stereotypes and possible misconceptions.

Other studies have focused on the impact of cross-cultural experiences conducted within the U.S. López-Estrada (1999) explored the "ways that cross-cultural teaching experiences affect teaching philosophies, understandings of bilingual education, knowledge and expectations regarding targeted populations, and aspirations to teach diverse populations of children and adolescents" (p. 114). Her participants included six teacher candidates from Indiana University-Bloomington, who completed their teaching internship in the Rio Grande Valley of southern Texas. Half of these individuals were Anglo-American and the other half minorities (Mexican-American, African-American, and Puerto Rican-American). During their internship they worked closely with cooperating teachers and ELLs from this area. Findings indicated that all the teacher candidates developed some degree of cross-cultural awareness. Nonetheless, the Anglo teachers seemed to be "a little less accepting and more likely to be irritated by cultural traits that differed from their own. They often identified aspects of the Mexican-American culture that bothered them" (p. 121). For instance, one candidate expressed

irritation with the fact that residents from the Valley seemed to be more "laid back" and that they often arrived late to their engagements. More specifically, the Anglo teachers tended to judge what they saw and experienced from a White cultural frame of reference. They found living and working in this area of the country difficult and frustrating. Additionally, the minority participants, unlike the Anglos, showed an increased understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy (Banks *et al.*, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This finding suggests that some Anglo teachers may require more extended amounts of time in cross-cultural settings. Likewise, their instructors and supervisors may need to provide more intensive support and scaffolding throughout this process.

Rymes (2002) offers another example of the potential effects of work in cross-cultural contexts. She taught a field-based methods course in a Mexican immigrant community near the University of Georgia. Her student teachers were required to teach English in pairs to families that agreed to participate in the project. She was especially interested in documenting the candidates' "changing beliefs and pedagogical values" (p. 435) as they worked in this new context. Every week the teachers met with their peers and Rymes to discuss their progress as well as any issues or concerns they had. The candidates were also required to submit a final portfolio on which they had already received feedback from the instructor several times during the semester. In this portfolio they were required to provide evidence of their learning as language teachers, students, researchers, and socially aware community members (p. 439). Findings indicated that the teachers underwent significant changes as a result of their participation in the course activities. For instance, while initially intimidated and uncomfortable being in a culturally distinct community, most of the teachers eventually adapted to the new circumstances

and expressed positive opinions regarding this experience. Interestingly, this transition process was much easier for the international students, who were already undergoing a cross-cultural exchange as students in the U.S. (see also López-Estrada, 1999). Furthermore, Rymes' participants realized the value of using students' native language during instruction. The teachers also learned to negotiate the curriculum with their students after discovering early on that a focus on de-contextualized grammar and vocabulary was not meaningful for the adult learners.

In a related study, Ference and Bell (2004) examined the effect of a short immersion experience in which 25 pre-service teachers (all White and mostly female) lived with Latino host families in Dalton, Georgia for two weeks while working at a local school serving new immigrants. Of note, the teachers were prepared for the experience by attending six 90-minute seminars focused on cultural differences and ethnographic research and by reading two books on multicultural education and immigration. The teachers participated in a variety of family, school, and community activities and kept a journal of their observations and reflections. They likewise attended seminars held on three evenings per week designed to share their learning and make connections with topics discussed in the course. Ference and Bell found that the immersion experience provided teachers with a better understanding of the immigration process, an awareness of the need to build on students' prior knowledge, a greater understanding of the Latino culture, the breaking of stereotypes and misconceptions, an awareness of how it feels to be an outsider, and the development of different methods for teaching ELLs. The researchers claimed that, albeit short, this experience had served to positively affect the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward Latino ELLs.

The study conducted by Torok and Aguilar (2000), described above, also included a cross-cultural component. Specifically, the teacher candidates were required to participate in a local community event conducted primarily in another language (and also a language unfamiliar to them). The researchers highlighted this experience as having a positive impact on teachers' knowledge and beliefs about diversity, particularly concerning ESL and bilingual education programs.

The literature reviewed in this section suggests that placing prospective teachers, particularly White teachers, into cross-cultural settings can lead to changes in their knowledge, awareness, beliefs, and practice. In particular, these types of experiences encourage teachers to reflect critically on their own cultural backgrounds and practices and the ways in which they compare/contrast with those of other individuals. Also, these experiences can help teacher candidates understand and develop more culturally relevant pedagogies, such as using students' native language as a resource and finding ways to make learning meaningful and connected to prior experience. Two of the studies (López-Estrada, 1999; Rymes, 2002) provided evidence to suggest that Anglo teachers in particular may have a difficult time adapting to diverse cultural and linguistic environments and that it may take time for them to relinquish their "White cultural frame of reference" when working with diverse students. This finding suggests that certain teachers may require extended amounts of time working in cross-cultural contexts before they are able to accept and adopt new perspectives. Moreover, it implies that these teachers will likely need appropriate forms of support and guidance during this process. Additionally, it means that teacher educators should be ready and willing to challenge

negative stereotypes and deficit-like thinking, perhaps by offering alternative discourses and interpretations for consideration.

Backwards mapping to teacher education programs

To date, most research focused on the preparation of teachers of ELLs has been limited to the impact of a single university course or field experience. Researchers have not typically followed their participants after this course or experience has ended (Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Zeichner, 2005). There are a few exceptions worth noting (*e.g.*, Athanases & Martin, 2005; de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007; Fradd & Lee, 1997).

Athanases and Martin (2006) set out to investigate teachers' reports of the strengths and problems of a particular program *after* they had graduated and been working for a number of years. The researchers administered over 300 surveys and then conducted focus-group interviews with a sub-sample. The teachers expressed "the infusion of culture, language, and equity content in coursework" (p. 632) as one of the major strengths of the program. In other words, ideas of social justice and equity were emphasized across multiple classes so that teachers had repeated opportunities to become familiar with this discourse. The teachers likewise emphasized the importance of a program-wide focus on ELLs. They mentioned the value of "sustained and scaffolded apprenticeships in teaching for equity" (p. 637), the role of supervisors who shared equity-related agendas, "sustained placements with diverse student populations" (p. 638), and the importance of openly discussing relevant issues as part of their university coursework, especially within diverse cohorts. All of these comments reflect a program-wide emphasis on the education of ELLs.

In a subsequent study (de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007), the researchers found that this same group of respondents typically engaged in effective practices with the ELLs they taught, such as promoting social interaction among students from different backgrounds, modifying instruction to accommodate the specific linguistic needs of ELLs, and using multiple modalities (*e.g.*, tactile, verbal, visual) during instruction. While the teachers generally felt well prepared due to their participation in the program, they admitted facing barriers such as having large numbers of students and working in contexts that were not always supportive of their efforts.

Fradd and Lee (1997) held individual interviews with TESOL program graduates to gauge their thoughts and opinions concerning the program. The participants also filled out surveys. Findings indicated that program graduates considered the program either "rigorous and rewarding" or "demanding and difficult" (p. 570). Importantly, some of the participants admitted a lack of commitment on their own part. In response, program faculty developed stricter guidelines for admission, such as a formal interview protocol, in order to ensure that those admitted were genuinely dedicated to becoming effective teachers of ELLs. One implication of this finding is that teacher education programs focused on preparing teachers for diversity/ELLs may want to consider identifying additional ways to pre-screen potential candidates, for instance, through background and/or career objective interviews.

Other modifications made to the program described by Fradd and Lee (1997) included: more integrated coursework, chances to apply theory to practice, a larger variety of courses, and increased access to technology. The graduates applauded the programs' practical applications (hands-on activities), field experiences, highly trained

faculty, networks with other teachers and K-12 personnel, and coursework that prepared them to work successfully in real classrooms. At the time the study was conducted, most of the teachers reported serving as leaders in the field, such as through continued professional development, professionalism, advocacy for ELLs, and participation in conferences and on committees. These activities reflect a strong preparation in the program.

The studies reviewed in this section suggest several important implications for programs that wish to be successful in preparing teachers to work with English language learners. First, teachers are more likely to acquire useful understandings of issues of diversity and ELLs when these topics are integrated across courses and field experiences. Second, candidates benefit from ongoing contact with diverse learners, in particular experiences that are scaffolded by course instructors, reflected on, and discussed with classmates. Finally, teachers need opportunities to develop strategies allowing them to deal with potential challenges, such as what to do when working in contexts in which they encounter discourses and practices that are distinct from what they have been exposed to in their teacher education programs.

In the next section, I outline the theoretical framework guiding my own research study and also describe two studies that have used this framework to understand and interpret teacher learning within the context of teacher preparation for diversity.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural theory

Researchers who focus their work on L2 teacher learning (*e.g.*, Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Golombek, 2003) have recently called for more studies grounded in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Werstch, 1985). They point out that a complete understanding of teacher learning and practice must necessarily consider the social activities in which teachers engage, the contexts in which they learn and work (classrooms, schools, teacher education programs), and the previous experiences from which they draw. Sociocultural theory [SCT] is based on the premise that "higher-order mental functions, including voluntary memory, logical thought, learning, and attention, are organized and amplified through participation in culturally organized activity" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007: 220), where social interactions play a central role in development. In particular, cultural artifacts or tools (*e.g.*, language, literacy, graphs, charts, numeracy) allow human beings to voluntarily regulate their cognition, such as planning and thinking. Within SCT, teacher learners are seen as complex, agentive individuals who constantly interact with the material and symbolic artifacts that constitute their environments.

For the purposes of this study, I draw on the notions of the *zone of proximal development*, *mediation*, and *internalization*. These constructs allow me to "trace the internal cognitive processes of teacher learning" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003: 730) as this development occurs during a semester-long course focused on the foundations of teaching linguistically diverse students. As mentioned previously, I pay particular

attention to the *process* involved in teachers' shifts in thinking and to the external

conditions (*i.e.*, specific aspects of the course and field experience) that play a role in

such change. In particular, I am interested in documenting how teachers develop new

understandings and dispositions and whether and how they reconceptualize their notions

of teaching students for whom English is a second language.

Vygotsky (1978) viewed development at two levels: actual development, or what

one can do independently, and potential development, or what one is able to do with

more "expert" assistance. The difference between these two developmental levels

constitutes the zone of proximal development [ZPD]. Vygotsky also stated that "human

learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into

the intellectual life of those around them" (1978: 88). This notion of "growing" or

developing can also be applied to adult learners, including prospective teachers, within

their specific social and institutional surroundings, such as in teacher education programs.

For example, guidance within a teacher's ZPD can come in the form of "more

knowledgeable perspectives" provided by teacher educators, theoretical readings,

discussions with peers, and reflective writing (Ball, 2000). Upon engaging with new

ideas and perspectives of this nature, teachers can move beyond their current

understandings and stances with regards to the education of ELLs as well as challenge

preexisting assumptions.

Lantolf (1993) notes that the ZPD is negotiated. In particular, by working with a

teacher, peer, or unspecified other, learners enter the ZPD not as passive receivers of

information but as active partners in the determination of what information is provided.

The ZPD is therefore constructed and negotiated through interaction (*e.g.*, between

teachers and learners), that is, a socially constructed dialogue that has the potential to push development for everyone involved. Importantly, through dialogic activity, teachers can come into contact with new ways of thinking and believing (*e.g.*, those proposed by others taking part in the interaction) and, as a result, may reconsider and alter their own thoughts and beliefs. To give an example, as participants in the foundations course and cross-cultural field experience, the prospective teachers in my study came into contact with discourses concerning ELLs that may have contrasted with their own views (*e.g.*, the role of the native language in English and content-area learning). As such, they were given pre-planned opportunities to reconsider their preexisting ideas and to adopt alternative perspectives on the education of this population. Lantolf and Thorne (2007) point out that "when used proactively, teachers using the ZPD as a diagnostic have the potential to create conditions for learning that may give rise to specific forms of development in the future" (p. 211). For the purposes of this study, it can be postulated that prospective teachers enrolled in the foundations course may undergo development as a result of their participation in the socially constructed environment that the course and associated field experience create.

Humans employ a number of culturally constructed tools in developing higher mental functions (Wertsch, 1998). These tools are the product of an individual's participation in activities in which cultural artifacts *mediate*, or act indirectly upon, the psychological functioning, and hence learning, of the individual (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). For instance, a teacher's thinking about a particular problem or issue (*e.g.*, the incorporation of community resources into instruction) can be mediated through readings relevant to the topic and/or discussions about it, leading to new understandings and

possibly new practices. In this way, there is a direct link between the individual and his/her social milieu. Language, a cultural tool, is considered one of the most important forms of psychological mediation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007) in that it can be utilized as a means of development and as a lens through which human functions can be viewed in relation to specific social contexts. Importantly, our thinking is largely a product of the ideas to which we have been exposed during the course of our lives, such as through our conversations with others and through the texts we have read and written. In this vein, understanding teacher learning will necessarily involve a consideration of the mediational means (*e.g.*, readings, discussions, field experiences) available as part of teacher education programs, given that what teachers learn will depend in large part on the ideas to which they are exposed and, in particular, those which they internalize.

Within such programs, teachers have the opportunity to externalize their current understandings with regards to work with English language learners. Teacher candidates may also be pushed to "reconceptualize and recontextualize" these understandings in light of research-based discourses (Johnson & Golombek, 2003). More specifically, by first becoming more aware of their own ideas and subsequently engaging with and considering alternative ideas, such as those presented in readings, class discussions, and through interactions with ELLs, they can construct new understandings that build on preexisting ways of thinking. Finally, while the process of mediation occurs at the level of an individual, it should always be analyzed and understood within larger sociocultural contexts, for example, the definition of "success" in a particular educational system (Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Werstch, 1985, 1998).

Vygotsky (1978) claims that each psychological function appears twice: first, externally, or between two or more people, and second, within the individual. Initially, a learner's activity may require outside regulation, such as by a teacher or teacher educator, but gradually the learner may acquire the ability to self-regulate without such assistance. An example would be a prospective teacher's implementation of a new teaching strategy. At first, s/he is likely to rely substantially on the guidance of a teacher educator (or a guide book); over time, the teacher might appropriate the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out these functions on his or her own. Generally speaking, learners move from "external social activity to internal control over their cognitive and emotional states" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003: 734). This process, in which cultural artifacts such as new terms and discourses become part of one's mental activity or thinking (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007), is referred to as internalization.

Current research adopts the perspective that "Vygotsky…saw people as active agents with the capacity to transform knowledge as they actively participate in social practices" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 162). Thus, internalization is transformative (Wertsch, 1998) in the sense that individuals choose which tools (*e.g.*, ways of thinking) are appropriated or disregarded. It is likely the case that teachers who come into contact with alternative discourses in teacher education programs actively embrace or resist these discourses based largely on their backgrounds and prior experiences. SCT frameworks encourage consideration of such influences. Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) assert that learners "actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning" (p. 145). Stated otherwise, prospective teachers enter programs with particular histories that shape their involvement and development in personally meaningful ways. As they

participate in the program, they make likewise take on (or resist) new identities, such as that of "social justice educator" (Artiles *et al.*, 2000).

Studies examining teacher learning from an SCT perspective

In this section I provide a brief overview of two empirical studies (Artiles *et al.*, 2000; Ball, 2000) that have looked at teacher learning for diversity through the lens of Vygotskian-based sociocultural theory. This discussion is intended to illustrate the particular affordances of SCT as a guiding theoretical framework for research in this area. In particular, this work calls attention to the mediational means offered by specific courses and experiences, given that these are the external (social) mechanisms that may push internal development in prospective teachers.

Artiles and colleagues (2000) discuss the main tenets of cultural-historical theory (a derivative of SCT) and outline its implications for studying the learning of teachers in teacher education programs focused on diversity. They point out, as I have above, that little is known concerning both the nature of teacher learning in these contexts as well as the conditions that facilitate this learning (p. 80). They argue that cultural-historical theory provides a productive framework through which to examine teacher learning as it occurs in culturally mediated social interactions. Although most of their discussion is conceptual in nature, they include a preliminary analysis of empirical data taken from a pre-service course centered on the education of Latinos. According to the researchers, the main goal of their study was to document the "interplay between scientific and everyday concepts in pre-service teachers' appropriation processes," the participants in this case being prospective bilingual education teachers. During the course the teacher candidates

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read and discussed texts on sociocultural theory, indigenous groups in Latin America, and Latinos in the U.S.; they wrote several reflective essays; and, they completed individual case studies focused on a particular aspect of Latino students' learning. The course also included guest presenters and the analysis of short films. Preliminary findings indicated that the culture of the class encouraged many of the students to change their views toward Latino students and to "take ownership" of the material covered. In particular, the instructor and students created a "culture of collaborative learning" in which dialogue centered on the course topics and activities provided the teacher candidates with new ways of thinking and talking. Within the course, they were exposed to and were encouraged to consider new ways of thinking about the education of Latinos, and this process allowed them to build on and reshape their previous understandings. Additionally, there appeared to be more scientific (theory-based) concepts present in some of the students' writing as a result of their reading and discussions. Artiles *et al.* (2000) offer this analysis as an illustration of the ways in which cultural-historical theory can illuminate the process of teacher learning as it is mediated by the components of a particular teacher education course.

Similarly, Ball (2000) used SCT to look at pre-service "teachers' developing perspectives on the strategic use of literacies to enhance the teaching and learning of students in urban schools" (p. 226). She drew on Vygotsky's (1978) notion of *internalization* (the process in which new cultural artifacts become part of one's mental activity) to account for teachers' developing conceptions of literacy as measured through changes in their discourse. Ball was also interested in the transformative potential of the course, particularly the possibility that the participating teachers would internalize, or

appropriate (Wertsch, 1998), the information presented in personally meaningful ways that could in turn positively impact their instruction of diverse students. Her findings suggested that the teachers were in the process of critically re-examining their prior knowledge and beliefs. She states: "Exposure to Vygotskian theory; other carefully selected readings [texts by scholars such as Cummins, Gee, Nieto], practical strategies, and reflective writing; and interactive discussions that allowed them to question and challenge their perspectives served as the catalysts for transformative internal activity" (p. 244). Of significance, by the end of course the teacher candidates were externalizing new conceptions of literacy and had outlined specific, reform-based agendas for their work with diverse learners. In Ball's view, these documented outcomes were evidence of the teachers' internalization (or appropriation) of specific ideas from the material covered in the course.

Ball's work, like that of Artiles and colleagues (2000), emphasizes the benefits of using sociocultural theory as a lens through which to examine the precise mechanisms that mediate prospective teachers' development. These mechanisms can include, for example, course readings, discussions, written reflections, and video analysis. According to SCT, these "culturally based artifacts" mediate, or act indirectly upon, teachers' thinking in that, through engaging with them, teachers become more aware of their preexisting ideas and likewise are exposed to new ideas and alternative discourses, which can either be internalized or disregarded. Ideally, this process takes place with appropriate support from "more knowledgeable others" such as faculty, peers, and/or cooperating teachers, within the realm of each teacher's ZPD. Close consideration of these factors reveals the specific external conditions that facilitate learning and

development. As stated above, an adequate understanding of such conditions is largely

missing from the research focused on the preparation of teachers for diversity and ELLs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the data sources as well as the data collection and analysis procedures pertaining to my study. I begin by discussing the research site and the participants. This part includes a brief overview of the ELL program at Peabody and, more specifically, a discussion of the objectives and activities related to the initial Foundations of Teaching Linguistically Diverse Students course. I also clarify my role and perspective as the researcher. Next, I explain the specific ways in which I collected and analyzed the data, including a description of the cross-cultural field experience. The chapter ends with a discussion of the study's trustworthiness.

Site and Participants

In this section, I describe the structure of the recently established ELL program at Peabody College and also the basic objectives and features of the foundations course. Moreover, I discuss my rationale for choosing this particular site and program. Subsequently, I describe the participants and my own role as the researcher.

ELL program

The ELL program at Peabody was created in response to the drastic growth in the number of English language learners enrolled in Tennessee public schools. Indeed, since 1993-1994 the state of Tennessee has witnessed an almost 450% rate of growth in its

ELL population, while the general student population has increased only slightly. At the time of the study, the local district served around 7,000 ELLs requiring special services (*i.e.*, students who were limited English proficient). These children, who made up about 10% of the total student population, spoke more than 80 different languages. Other nearby states, such as North Carolina and Georgia, are facing similar circumstances. Of note is that many graduates of Peabody College end up teaching in one of these three states, hence the need for more preparation at the pre-service level for work with these learners. Accordingly, the goals of the ELL program are to provide teacher candidates with theoretical understandings, effective instructional methods, and assessment techniques that will allow them to work successfully with ELL populations in K-12 settings.

The program, which began in the fall of 2005, is available as an add-on endorsement to undergraduates and to students pursuing M.Ed. degrees at Peabody College who are seeking licensure, or are already licensed, to teach in other subject areas (*e.g.*, elementary or secondary education, early childhood education, special education). In the past, other groups of students have taken one or more of the classes (usually the foundations course) as an elective or to fulfill a cultural diversity requirement. The program also offers a degree in English Language Learners at the master's level. There are currently five required courses: Foundations of Teaching Linguistically Diverse Students; Methods and Materials for ESL/Bilingual Education; Multicultural Education; Second Language Acquisition and Assessment; and, ESL/Bilingual Education Practicum. Typically, students take the foundations course first (sometimes in combination with the multicultural education class). They take additional courses in the college of education

and in other schools at Vanderbilt to satisfy their remaining degree requirements. Given the significant number of students taking the foundations course (both endorsement seekers and non-endorsement seekers), I chose to collect data in this course.

Foundations of Teaching Linguistically Diverse Students course

The foundations course introduces students to the historical, political, theoretical, legal, and educational influences that have shaped schooling for English language learners in the United States. It emphasizes the role that ELLs' native languages and cultures play in their second language learning and academic achievement and provides an overview of program models and effective instructional strategies. As a foundational course, the main focus is on the development of theoretical knowledge and understandings related to schooling for ELLs. Many of those who enroll in the course have had little or no prior formal coursework on these topics. Another goal of the course is to promote stances of advocacy toward ELLs, which often involves encouraging students to question deficit models that they may draw on to blame students for their own failure. Thus, the course also serves to engage students' attitudes and beliefs and, in some cases, to explicitly challenge them.

The course meets for three hours per week for a total of 15 weeks. Students read and discuss articles, chapters, and whole books dealing with the topics mentioned above. They likewise complete two take-home exams to demonstrate their learning. Up until the present, students were also required to complete three interviews with former English language learners who were university students. The principal objective of these interviews was for the teacher candidates to compare what they were learning from the

course readings and class discussions to individuals' real-life experiences. Thus, interview questions centered on former ELLs' backgrounds, the features of the programs in which they had participated, and the instructional strategies to which they had been exposed. Possible limitations of this project were that some of the teachers interviewed people they already knew, and the total amount of time they spent with individuals from diverse backgrounds was relatively brief. Also, because they were unaccustomed to interacting with diverse individuals and/or uncomfortable looking for possible interviewees, many of the teachers resisted the interview assignment, and some even became openly hostile about it. Moreover, most of these interviews took place on a college campus, meaning that teachers were not immersing themselves in culturally and linguistically distinct communities. Finally, there were relatively few individuals on campus who had received ESL services as part of their K-12 education, thus pushing us to consider other options.

As a result of recent discussions among course instructors, it was decided that students enrolled in future sections of the foundations course would engage in a sustained cross-cultural experience, during which they would be expected to interact firsthand with members of linguistic minority groups while immersing themselves in local community settings, instead of doing only the interviews. Other faculty members and instructors at Peabody College have found this approach to be successful in broadening prospective teachers' perspectives regarding diverse learners and their education, and, as described in Chapter II, researchers agree that cross-cultural experiences typically lead to multiple positive outcomes with regards to teacher learning (see Clark & Flores, 1997; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Sleeter,

2008; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Willard-Holt, 2001). Given its demonstrated success in other programs, this experience was chosen as the focus of my research (described below).

Rationale for site and course

My decision to work in the ELL program at Peabody, specifically in the initial foundations course, was made for several reasons. First, since the program's founding in 2005, faculty members and instructors have encountered resistance to ideas promoted in the course, such as an unwillingness on the part of some candidates to challenge deficit-model thinking and other simplistic views of the second language learning and academic achievement of ELLs. In other words, a number of students finished the course continuing to hold negative and potentially dangerous attitudes with regards to the education of ELLs (*e.g.*, the superiority of English-only program models). Consequently, faculty members and instructors have expressed the desire to modify the course to try to reach those students who are most resistant to assuming a more positive and empowering stance toward ELLs and their learning in U.S. schools. This is especially true since these prospective teachers are likely to work with this population in the near future. Thus, there were clear challenges to be confronted, but it was also possible that the proposed field experience would produce more favorable outcomes than what was happening at the time.

Second, everyone who teaches in the ELL program (*i.e.*, professors, doctoral students) is committed to maximizing its effectiveness with regards to the preparation of pre-service teachers. It is important to mention that all of these individuals, including

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myself, are part of a research group that was formed to study and revise the program in order to achieve this goal. My study, which focuses on the foundations course, is a part of this work. Third, the research does not radically disrupt the course's normal activities given that it centers on the cross-cultural field experience, which recently replaced the interview assignment due to its limitations (*e.g.*, short duration of interactions with ELLs). This experience was already slated to be a new requirement in future sections of the course and was thus ripe for empirical investigation. Last, other modifications to the class, such as the specific directions that the project would take, were jointly decided by the researcher and the instructor.

Participants

The participants in the research study included the students enrolled in one of the three sections of the foundations course offered during the fall 2008 semester. All of these students were pre-service teachers who were pursuing undergraduate degrees at Peabody College, and most of them were double majoring in either elementary or secondary education and a particular content area (*e.g.*, English, math, history). There were 26 students in the class, and, while all of them were invited to participate in the study, only 24 consented. Demographic information about consented students is shown in Table 1. In line with the typical characteristics of teacher candidates at Peabody (see Conkin, 2002) and of the nation in general (see Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Sleeter, 2008; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998), the composition of the class was largely White and female. As revealed on the background and demographic questionnaires given on the first day of class (see below), the students came to the

Table 1. Student Demographics

Race	Males	Females	Total
Caucasian	6	13	19
African-American	0	2	2
Asian-American	0	2	2
Hispanic	0	1	1
Total	6	18	24

course with a range of backgrounds and prior experiences, including foreign language study, travel and study abroad, contact with diverse learners and ELLs, teaching experience, and related coursework. This variety allowed me to examine these variables as a part of my research.

This particular section of the foundations course was chosen for several reasons. First, there were significantly more students enrolled in this section than in the others, giving me access to more participants. Second, since there were so many students and this was the first time the instructor would be teaching the course by himself, I was asked to assist him with planning and grading. Thus, I knew I would be closely involved with the structure and activities of the class, providing me with an optimal environment in which to carry out a research project of this nature. It is worth mentioning that all three sections of the foundations course overlapped in their meeting times, which would have made it difficult for me to collect data in more than one classroom.

The study also included the instructor of the course, Bill, who was an advanced doctoral student in the language and literacy program who had taken the foundations course as a graduate student two years prior and had also served as a teaching assistant (TA) for the course the year before. In the fall of 2008, he taught the course as the instructor of record for the first time. Bill entered the doctoral program with a primary interest in the learning and teaching of students for whom English is a second language. Before enrolling in the program at Peabody, he spent a number of years teaching ESL in California, Tennessee, and in South Korea. Although this was his first semester teaching the foundations course, he had previously been responsible for the ELL Practicum class for two consecutive years. As a member of the research group formed to evaluate and revise the ELL program at Peabody College, he was fully aware of the goals of the project and had already consented to participate in the research by the time the study began. Importantly, he recognized the need for a better educational intervention within the foundations course and agreed that asking the students to participate in a cross-cultural field experience seemed like a good idea.

Approximately two weeks into the study, I chose six prospective teachers who served as focal participants throughout the semester. As my goal was to learn as much as possible about particular teachers and their learning trajectories, a significant portion of my data collection focused on these six individuals. The decision of which teachers to include – out of the 24 total –was made based on specific criteria such as experience working and living abroad, prior work with diverse learners, majority versus minority status (race/ethnicity), and prior foreign language study. As described in previous chapters, researchers have reported evidence suggesting that these types of teacher

Table 2. Focal Participants

Student	Sex	Race/Ethnicity	Major	Prior Teaching	Foreign Language	Time Abroad	Experience with ELLs
Brandon	Male	White	Secondary Education and English	Practicum	French (6 years); Spanish (2 semesters)	England (2 months); tour of Europe (2 weeks)	Attended diverse high school (mostly Hispanic)
Jennifer	Female	White	Secondary Education and English	Practicum; tutoring	Spanish (8 years)	Lived in Berlin, Germany (4 months); extensive travel	Tutored some students whose first language was not English
Jackie	Female	African-American	Secondary Education and Math	Practicum; tutoring	Spanish (1 year)	None	Tutored a girl whose first language was Haitian Creole
Chris	Male	White	Education Studies and Math	Practicum; Assistant teacher at pre-school	French (6 years); Spanish (learned informally); Greek (self-taught)	None	None
Jessie	Female	White	Secondary Education and English	Practicum; tutoring	Spanish (5 years)	Spain (2 weeks)	None
Elena	Female	Hispanic	Education Studies and Women & Gender Studies	Practicum; Assistant teacher at pre-school; Taught religion at home church	Spanish (heritage language and studied in middle and high school)	Tour of Italy (9 days)	Hometown is predominantly Hispanic; Attended diverse high school

characteristics may play an important mediating function in the thinking and behavior of teachers who work with diverse learners, including ELLs (see Byrnes *et al.*, 1997; Hyatt & Beigy, 1999; López-Estrada, 1999; Rymes, 2002; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Based on responses to the initial background and demographic questionnaire as well as informal conversations with students before and after class, I selected participants who represented "high," "middle," and "low" ranges on these variables in order to compare and contrast the potential impact of these characteristics on the learning of the candidates during the foundations course. More detailed information on the six focal participants is provided in Table 2.

The researcher

My personal and professional background qualifies me to pursue this line of research for a number of reasons. First, I am very familiar with the objectives and activities pertaining to the foundations course and the ELL program in general. I completed the foundations class as a student, and I subsequently taught an undergraduate section of it. I also taught a graduate section of the course in the summer of 2008, during which time I piloted various aspects of the proposed research study with my own students (see below). I am likewise familiar with the required ELL methods and materials course, which typically follows the foundations class. As mentioned previously, I am part of a research group that has convened to revise the ELL program based on the findings of empirical inquiry. My dissertation forms a piece of this larger research project.

Second, I am familiar with several of the immigrant communities within the greater Nashville area. This knowledge allowed me to make sense of the experiences and

developing understandings reported by the pre-service teachers enrolled in the foundations course as they completed their respective cultural immersion projects during the fall of 2008. I have volunteered and conducted research with adult ESL classes in the area, and I have established contacts with individuals responsible for the social, economic, legal, and academic concerns of Hispanic immigrants in particular. Moreover, I am sensitive to the issues surrounding cross-cultural and cross-linguistic interactions given 1) extended periods of time living, working, and studying in Mexico and 2) considerable experience teaching English to adult immigrant students from many different backgrounds in a variety of academic settings. Finally, during my total of six years as a graduate student, I have conducted a number of qualitative-based studies focused broadly on the education and experiences of second language learners.

Data Collection

In this section, I begin by describing the cross-cultural field experience. I then provide an overview of the main phases of the research as well as the specific sources of data and the instruments used to collect them. In the following section, I discuss how I analyzed the data and how I chose to present this information in subsequent chapters.

Cross-cultural field experience

One of the main goals of the foundations course is to help prospective teachers gain theoretical and research-based understandings of the factors involved in the education of ELLs. Through readings and class discussions, teachers are encouraged to reflect on issues such as the role played by students' backgrounds (*e.g.*, L1 proficiencies,

cultural practices, prior learning) and effective instructional frameworks and strategies. A related goal of the course is to push teachers to recognize the funds of knowledge (González *et al*., 2005) that ELLs (and their families and communities) bring with them to the task of learning in the U.S. Once teachers have learned to recognize students' funds of knowledge, it follows that they may be able to draw on them to make their instruction more culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and hence more meaningful for their students.

While both students and instructors of the foundations courses at Peabody tend to agree that the readings and discussions are useful, most also feel that actual contact with ELLs in the local community is a necessary complement to university coursework. Spending time with ELLs allows pre-service teachers to view first-hand the ways in which other peoples' lives may be different from their own, it offers a means for them to hear real-life stories of ELLs' struggles and triumphs, and it provides some concreteness to the abstractions and generalizations often found in course textbooks (Ference & Bell, 2004; Sleeter, 2008). In terms of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985), such experiences can serve to mediate teachers' thinking about ELLs. More specifically, by observing and interacting with individuals from the local immigrant and refugee community, teachers are likely come into contact with alternative discourses and realities that 1) help them become more aware of their own views toward ELLs and 2) encourage them to reconsider these views and perhaps internalize new ways of thinking and believing, especially if these ideas are reinforced within the foundations course. Until the summer of 2008, instructors of the foundations course had required enrolled teachers to conduct a series of interviews with university-aged students who had, at one point in their

education, received ESL services. For the reasons described above, this assignment was recently replaced with the cross-cultural field experience.

Stachowski and Mahan (1998) argue that one means of "immersing" future teachers in diverse communities is by getting them actively involved with local minority advocacy groups. Specifically, they note that "[b]y becoming familiar with the groups' missions and by assisting in their advocacy work, student teachers will better understand the backgrounds and cultures of the minority youth who are in their classrooms" (p. 161). As explained in Chapter II, researchers (*e.g.*, Clark & Flores, 1997; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Willard-Holt, 2001) have presented empirical evidence to support the claim that cross-cultural field experiences can have significant and long-lasting benefits on prospective teachers. Such experiences, when coupled with more formal university coursework, may positively impact teachers' understandings of students from diverse backgrounds and may lead to more commitment and confidence to work with ELLs. These experiences may also encourage teachers to reflect on their practice, to question their assumptions, and to expand their perspectives on immigrant communities and language learning (*ibid*; see also Sleeter, 2008; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). This approach seems especially useful for pre-service teachers who have had little prior experience with diversity.

The major project for the fall 2008 section of the foundations course consisted of a semester-long, cross-cultural field experience. All of the pre-service teachers enrolled in the class were required to spend at least 15 hours in a setting where they would be in direct contact with ELLs, and the assignments associated with this experience (described

below) constituted 45% of their final grade. While teachers were allowed to make decisions concerning the specific directions that their projects would take (*e.g.*, which community, particular sites and activities), they had to show that their experience included both *interaction* and *immersion* components. The immersion aspect involved participating in home, community, and/or school events in which the teachers were the minority, and the purpose of this experience was for them to understand better how it feels for many ELLs who have to deal with a strange environment once they first arrive in this country. It was also hoped that the teachers would gain cultural understandings about each particular group through their immersion experiences (*e.g.*, interactional styles, language use, gender roles). The interaction aspect was instituted to encourage dialogue among the teachers and ELLs, the purpose being for the teachers to learn first-hand about the lives, interests, and education of the individuals with whom they interacted. In line with sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985), it was hoped that these interactions would serve to expose teachers to new ideas and discourses, thus allowing them to co-construct new understandings that would, on the one hand, become part of their thinking and, on the other, inform their future practice. Following Torok and Aguilar (2000), teachers were encouraged to choose linguistic communities with which they were not already familiar.

Teachers were told that they were expected to 1) come to better understand the backgrounds and cultures of the individuals with whom their interacted and 2) be able to describe possible implications that this learning had for their future teaching. In other words, the ultimate aim of the project was for teachers to articulate culturally relevant practices that they could implement in their own future classrooms. Of course, these

proposed practices needed to link explicitly to some of the funds of knowledge they identified through their field experiences. Each teacher selected at least one organization or site in the greater Nashville area that served non-English-speaking populations. Examples included community centers, churches, high-ELL-concentration schools, immigrant outreach groups, and refugee support centers. The instructors of the foundations course, including myself, provided the teachers with an exhaustive list of possible sites, as we had pre-contacted the directors of these organizations to explain the goals of the project and invite participation. Teachers were allowed to choose from this list or identify alternative sites, as long as they could justify the nature of their participation. The sites chosen by the six focal participants are shown in Table 3. Finally, while teachers were permitted to travel to their sites with a partner or two, the instructor emphasized that each person had to submit his or her own assignments and demonstrate that projects were completed individually.

The cross-cultural experience was guided and assessed in the following ways. First, teacher candidates were required to write three reflection papers. Each of these papers had a particular focus and encouraged them to make connections between what they were learning and topics discussed in class. Reflection 1 asked teachers to provide an objective description of the community they had chosen, including any cultural and/or linguistic practices that were observed. Reflection 2 pushed for a deeper, critical analysis of cultural and/or linguistic practices observed and also encouraged teachers to discuss some of the assumptions and stereotypes that they had begun to challenge. Reflection 3 came toward the end of the semester, and it asked teachers to 1) name specific cultural/linguistic practices and resources that they had identified through their

Table 3. Focal Participants' Field Sites

Participant	Field Site
Brandon	Somali Community Center
Jennifer	*Iglesia de Dios* (church)
Jackie	MNPS Newcomer Academy
Chris	*Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (church)
Jessie	Tusculum Elementary School; *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (church)
Elena	Somali Community Center

experiences and 2) describe direct implications for their own future teaching. Importantly, each reflection paper moved the teachers one step closer to the final product, that is, the articulation of culturally relevant pedagogical practices. Moreover, each paper was connected to the following one in that teachers were asked each time to specify directions and questions for future fieldwork. Each reflection received detailed, timely feedback from the course instructor.

In addition to the three reflection papers, teachers were also required to conduct a semi-structured interview with at least one member of the community that they had selected. Of course, this person had to have learned English as a second language, preferably within a U.S. educational setting. The purpose of the interview was for teachers to gain in-depth information with regards to the experiences of the interviewee,

including his/her background characteristics (*e.g.*, L1 proficiencies, prior schooling, age on arrival), details about his/her ESL program, attitudes toward the native language and culture, and feelings about bilingualism. Teachers were asked to create an interview protocol containing 8-10 questions grounded in the course readings and discussions, thus facilitating connections between the class and their interviewee's responses. The instructor highly encouraged teachers to tape-record their interview sessions so as to not lose important information. Likewise, he dedicated a portion of one class to reviewing the characteristics of "good" interviews (*e.g.*, questions that elicit drawn-out responses, ways to ask probing questions). After conducting the interviews, teachers were required to submit a discussion and interpretation of the information they had collected.

Furthermore, teachers had several opportunities to debrief and share what they were learning from their field experiences with their peers. Every time either a reflection paper or the interview was due, the teachers were organized into groups of between 4-6 students to talk about what they had been doing as well as the cultural and linguistic understandings that they were developing. While initially the instructor had planned for these sessions to last about 30 minutes, they would often go on for most of the 75-minute class, as teachers became very engaged in both sharing what they had learned and listening to the experiences of others. The members of the class were encouraged to identify similarities and/or differences among communities and to push one another to consider alternative explanations and interpretations for behaviors observed.

Finally, at the very end of the semester, each teacher created a poster illustrating what he or she had learned. The poster needed to include information from all three reflection papers as well as data from the interview assignment. In short, this assignment

was designed as a culminating portrayal of the learning that had occurred during the field experience. Teachers displayed their posters around the classroom, and they had to present them to the course instructor and to their classmates in a science-fair format. They also had to answer any questions that were posed to them.

Overview of phases

The data collection for my study was divided into four phases. Phase 1 consisted of the pilot portion of the project and took place during the summer of 2008. During this phase, I was the instructor of a graduate-level section of the foundations course and implemented the cross-cultural field experience for the very first time. Data collected and analyzed during the summer informed several modifications made to the field experience for the fall 2008 semester, when the official study began. Phase II occurred during the first few weeks of the fall term. During this time, I collected baseline data on all the pre-service teachers enrolled in the course who agreed to participate in the research. Phase III began once the semester had gotten underway (a few weeks into the term), and during this phase I focused my attention on the six focal participants I had selected. I collected multiple sources of data to assess their ongoing development, such as any changes in their understandings and beliefs regarding English language learners. While I considered the impact of all the aspects of the foundations course (*e.g.*, readings, discussions, in-class activities), I was most interested in the mediating influence of the cross-cultural field experience and associated assignments. Phase III occurred during the last week of class as well as exam week, when all course-related activities came to an end.

I now turn to a more detailed discussion of each phase, including the sources of data and the instruments used to collect them. (For an overview of all data collection procedures and their relation to the guiding research questions, see the chart in Appendix A.)

Phase I (summer 2008)

Given rising enrollment in the foundations courses at Peabody, I was asked to teach a graduate-level section of the class during the summer 2008 term. By this time, the instructors of the course had already decided to substitute the interview assignment with the cross-cultural field experience. Thus, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to pilot the project and make any necessary changes prior to the fall 2008 semester, when the official phases of research activity would occur.

The fact that I was both the instructor of record and the researcher placed limitations on the data I was able to collect and analyze, and it also affected the trustworthiness of the data. For instance, I was not able to conduct classroom observations as a non-participant, and it is likely that most of the data I collected from my own students was inevitably filtered through their positioning of me as their instructor. I recognized that it would be difficult to assess their actual understandings and beliefs as opposed to what they probably thought I wanted to hear. For this reason, most of the data I present in later chapters come from the fall 2008 semester, when these issues were not nearly as problematic.

That said, I decided to go ahead and collect several sources of data during the summer session that might shed light on the utility of the cross-cultural field experience

as well as any changes that might make it better during the fall semester. With my students' permission, I collected various sources of data that were already built into the course. These included the demographic and background questionnaire, the knowledge of ELL issues and beliefs surveys (both given at the beginning and end of the term), three reflection papers, the "interview with an ELL" paper, a mid-term and final exam, and final presentations. I made and retained photocopies of all of these assignments throughout the course. (Copies of these instruments, including guidelines for each of the assignments, can be found in the Appendix).

The major problem with the implementation of the cross-cultural field experience during the summer term was the quick nature of the course. In fact, the course met for only four weeks, and most students spent the first week negotiating access to a field site (some spent even more). Thus, only three weeks were left for the actual experience itself (which, at this point, involved only 9 "contact" hours). In final course evaluations, students pointed out that the relatively short amount of time allotted for the course and project was insufficient to "get to know the students and their families" well. Moreover, it was clear from student comments and my own observations as an instructor that the experience needed further structure and organization. In particular, students asked for more guidance as to the expectations for each assignment associated with the field experience as well as more time to carry out the project. I discussed these issues with Bill, and he decided to increase the number of required hours to 15 (one per week, on average, during a normal semester term) and to provide students with explicit guidelines to follow for each reflection paper and the interview assignment. Also, he gave students

detailed guidelines for the final poster presentation. In these ways, we hoped we would be enhancing the effectiveness of the field experience for our students.

Phase II (August 2008)

On the first day of class during the fall 2008 semester, I asked all pre-service teachers enrolled in the foundations course to complete a demographic and background questionnaire (see Appendix B). This questionnaire includes items dealing with prior cross-cultural experience (*e.g.*, study abroad, foreign travel), work with diverse learners including ELLs, related formal coursework, motivation for taking the course, and other standard demographic data (*e.g.*, age, race/ethnicity). It is worth mentioning that similar questionnaires are typically given to candidates enrolled in courses in the ELL program anyway, as this is important information for instructors to have and work from. I used the information collected on this questionnaire (from consented participants only) as well as informal conversations with students before and after class to select my six focal participants. Specifically, I chose individuals who represented a range of variables (*e.g.*, high, middle, low prior experience with diversity/ELLs) so I could examine throughout the study the possible mediational roles of their different backgrounds. This decision was based on the experiences of everyone in the class relative to each other. I also included participants who differed in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and major area of study. These data were especially useful in addressing my final research question, which pertains to the influence of teachers' backgrounds.

On the first day of class, I likewise asked all of the teachers to assess – on a 5-point Likert Scale – their knowledge of the main topics to be covered in the course (see

Appendix C). Example items include knowledge of: ESL/bilingual education models, instructional strategies for working with ELLs, the second language acquisition process, and the potential effects of background factors such as SES, age, prior schooling, first-language literacy, and English proficiency. This instrument provided information about how much the teachers already knew (or at least thought they knew) about each topic before taking the course and thus served as baseline data.

In addition to the knowledge assessment, I also asked the teachers to complete an adapted version of the Personal and Professional Beliefs about Diversity Scales (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001; Torok & Aguilar, 2000) (see Appendix D). The full version of this measure includes items pertaining to beliefs about race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, SES, language, and immigration. This assessment uses a 5-point Likert scale, and its total scale alpha is acceptably reliable. Following Torok and Aguilar (2000), I used only the four items on language and immigration given their close relevancy to the foundations course. The other six items were added by me after I reviewed the list of topics to be covered in the course and determined a related set of beliefs. For instance, I was interested in knowing what the teachers thought about the role of parents in education and whether they felt that it was important to recognize and build on students' prior linguistic and cultural experiences. This measure, like the knowledge assessment, allowed me to collect baseline data on the teachers before they started the course. In this way, I was able to document change in their knowledge and beliefs over time.

During the first two weeks of class, I conducted individual interviews with each of the six focal participants I had selected. The questions I asked them derived mostly

from their responses on the knowledge and beliefs surveys and their background and demographic questionnaires. Given that the previously mentioned measures capture data that is more quantitative in nature, I wanted to collect more detailed information about the teachers' prior experiences with diversity and ELLs as well as the related understandings and dispositions they were bringing to the course (see Appendix E for a list of interview questions). Therefore, I asked them to elaborate on the answers they had already provided. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and an hour and were tape-recorded. They were transcribed shortly afterward.

Phase III (September-December 2008)

The data collection in Phase II focused on the six focal participants. I was interested in documenting their learning during the course, particularly as it related to the cross-cultural field experience. Focusing in on only six members of the class and collecting multiple forms of data on them allowed me to follow their specific learning trajectories, including their developing understandings and beliefs. I was also able to relate their learning to specific aspects of the cross-cultural field experience and its associated assignments. For example, I noticed that engaging in the field experience had pushed one of the participants, Chris, to explicitly examine and challenge some of his stereotypes about the Hispanic community. Together, these data addressed my second, third, and fourth research questions. In particular, I learned simultaneously about the teachers' development, the impact of the field experience, and the mediational role played by specific aspects of their backgrounds and prior experiences.

First, I collected from the six focal participants copies of all graded course assignments, including the three reflection papers they completed based on the field experience as well as their interview data. I likewise made photocopies of their mid-term and final exams. I waited until the instructor had provided feedback and a grade before making copies of these materials as I knew that his comments would likely influence the teachers' learning as well as future directions they would take with their projects. To give an example of how this occurred, I discovered that the instructor often challenged teachers to consider alternative explanations for things they had either observed or heard, especially if their own interpretations seemed to be grounded in a deficit model. On some occasions, it appeared that teachers had considered and taken up this feedback given the comments they made on subsequent assignments. As I read the teachers' work, I paid particular attention to their evolving understandings and dispositions pertaining to ELLs as compared with their baseline data. Of course, I understood that what the teachers wrote in their papers would need to be checked against other data sources before I could make convincing arguments that real change was taking place.

Second, I observed the focal participants during three class sessions that were devoted almost entirely to the field experience. These sessions occurred on days when teachers submitted their reflection papers (except the last one) and the interview assignment. My goal was to listen to the comments they made about their outside-of-class experiences and compare them to what they had written in their papers and what they shared with me during the interviews. Significantly, such discussions were conducted in groups of 4-6 (see above) with the expectation that teachers would be more open and honest with their thoughts and feelings in this arrangement as opposed to in a whole-class

format. Also, since the instructor moved around the classroom to sit in on all groups, the teachers were not being directly monitored by him for most of the time. Indeed, my sense was that the teachers were quite forthcoming during these sessions, and they later mentioned how much they enjoyed sharing their experiences with their peers. I videotaped all groups that included any of my focal participants since I was interested in these six individuals in particular. Soon after taping, I viewed each video and took detailed notes. Certain portions were later transcribed.

Third, during the month of October, I conducted two focus-group interviews with the focal participants (see Appendix F for a list of questions). Three teachers participated in one and two in the other. One participant (Elena) had a last-minute dilemma and was not able to make it to either of the focus-group sessions. Thus, I interviewed her separately a few days later. During these sessions, I asked the teachers to talk about their field experiences as well as any problems or frustrations they were dealing with. I also asked how, in their opinion, the project could be modified to improve its effectiveness. I assured the participants that I wanted them to be open and honest given that one of the main purposes of my dissertation was to identify specific ways in which to improve the field experience for future cohorts. Moreover, I had already learned from mid-semester course evaluations elicited from the whole class that people had certain issues with the field experience. I began the session by acknowledging these issues. Given these conditions and the fact that they had other classmates present to support them, the teachers seemed comfortable and forthcoming. Also, they quickly learned that others had been facing some of the same problems and frustrations that they had been dealing with.

Importantly, before this interview took place, I had already conducted preliminary analyses of the data I had collected up until this point in the study. Therefore, I understood well the context of the teachers' comments, and many of the questions I posed built on experiences they had reported on in their papers and in class. For example, I asked the teachers to elaborate on certain experiences they had had at their respective sites and to talk about what they had learned from them. In this way, the focus-group interviews encouraged the participants to expand on previously reported experiences and to start to consider possible implications for their own teaching. The interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and 20 minutes and were tape-recorded. Shortly after, they were transcribed.

Phase IV (December 2008)

During the last week of class and exam week, I collected various forms of outcome data focusing on the six focal participants. Since this was the end of the course, I wanted to assess the overall learning of the teachers as mediated in particular by the cross-cultural field experience and associated assignments. Unless they decide to take additional courses in the ELL sequence (and most undergraduates currently do not), the foundations course is the only class that teachers at Peabody take focusing specifically on English language learners and their education. Thus, it can be argued that what teachers learn in this course constitutes a significant part of the knowledge that informs their future work with ELLs. Accordingly, I wanted to know what these teachers were taking away from the course.

Phase IV included individual interviews with the six focal participants, collection of their final posters, and knowledge and beliefs surveys given to all the consented teachers enrolled in the course. The surveys were identical to those administered during Phase II of the study (see Appendices C & D), and these measures gave teachers the opportunity to re-assess their knowledge and beliefs regarding ELLs at the end of the semester. I was interested in discovering, on the one hand, how much the teachers felt they had learned during the course and about which particular topics (*e.g.*, program models, instructional strategies). I also wanted to know how and in what ways their beliefs regarding ELLs had changed throughout the semester, for example, whether and how strongly they felt teachers should recognize and draw on students' funds of knowledge when they teach. Of course, I realized that both of these assessments relied on self-report data and that, consequently, I would need to include additional data from other sources (*e.g.*, interviews, course assignments, class discussions) to make convincing claims.

I was likewise present when the teachers presented their final posters to their peers and the instructor on the last two days of class. As described above, the goal of these sessions was for the teachers to consolidate their overall learning from the field experience into a visual display that they could share with others. The poster consisted of information taken from the three reflection papers as well as from the interview assignment. When relevant, the teachers were also expected to cite course readings and lectures (*e.g.*, when a particular point from the readings had been observed or reported on at their sites). In this way, they demonstrated understanding of the readings as well as the ability to identify real-world connections. While some of the teachers' classmates had

already heard about their field experiences in previous group discussions, most had not

had this opportunity. As such, the members of the class seemed genuinely interested in

learning about what others had done, and all presenters were asked several questions

during the twenty minutes allotted. I circulated around the classroom to learn about every

teacher's project and spent extra time listening to the presentations given by my focal

participants. These six individuals gave me permission to keep their posters, and they

also provided me with a copy of a handout they had created.

Finally, during exam week, I conducted another set of individual interviews with

each of the focal participants. The purpose of these interviews was to triangulate the other

data sources (*e.g.*, surveys, final presentations) in assessing the understandings and

beliefs that these teachers had developed throughout the semester. In particular, I asked

them to talk about what they had learned, how useful they had considered the field

experience, how it could be improved for future cohorts, and specific ways in which they

could apply some of the understandings they had developed to their future teaching (see

Appendix G for a list of questions). By the time the interviews took place, I had already

completed preliminary analyses of all the reflection papers, the interview assignment, and

the pre-and post-term surveys. Therefore, I was able to ask each participant specific

questions about his/her experiences and responses. These interviews lasted approximately

45 minutes and were tape-recorded and promptly transcribed.

Data Analysis

The data analyzed for this study included: 1) demographic and background

questionnaires, 2) surveys (knowledge of ELL issues; beliefs about the education of

ELLs), 3) interview transcripts, 4) class observation notes and video transcripts, and 5) course assignments (reflection papers, exams, and final presentations). I analyzed the data both quantitatively and qualitatively, depending on the particular form they took.

Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics of the prospective teachers' responses on the two survey measures, both of which used 5-point Likert scales. Importantly, I was interested in documenting any changes in the teachers' self-reported knowledge and beliefs about diversity and the education of ELLs from the beginning to the end of the semester. For the knowledge surveys, I calculated averages (means) by item and by participant, revealing, on the one hand, the topics the participants as a group knew the most and least about at each data collection point, and, on the other, the ways in which the six participants compared with one another. The latter was done to identify any deviant cases that might be skewing the group averages. I likewise calculated an average total score for both the beginning and the end of the semester to assess overall change in knowledge across participants during the course. As for the beliefs surveys, I determined how many participants chose each of the five responses (strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, strongly agree) and noted the level of agreement. For instance, I found that, at the outset of the semester, for approximately half of the items, the participants tended to agree one way or the other, whereas for the other half there was obvious disagreement. Also, I documented trends for particular teachers, such as whether they selected a variety of responses that would seem to categorize them as in favor of L1 use or against it.

I analyzed the remaining data sources (transcripts, field notes, and course assignments) qualitatively. As described in more detail below, I analyzed these data

systematically and inductively in accordance with the constant-comparative method (Bodgan & Biklen, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Importantly, data analysis was simultaneous with data collection and began on the first day of class. From there on out, I reviewed the data on a bi-weekly basis. Specifically, I read and reread the data throughout the duration of the study and coded for salient themes and patterns that helped me to address the four guiding research questions. Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985) served as the explanatory lens through which I interpreted the data, encouraging me to pay particular attention to the mediational role played by the course and the cross-cultural field experience as well as the specific ways in which the pre-service teachers internalized new knowledge and dispositions as a result of their participation in these activities. Moreover, I paid close attention to the particular types of support being offered to the teachers as well as the ways in which they were drawing on their backgrounds and prior experiences to make sense of what they were learning. Looking at the data from this perspective allowed me to focus my efforts and answer my research questions.

As described in the previous section, all of the pre-service teachers in the foundations course completed a background and demographic questionnaire on the first day of class. They also answered the knowledge and beliefs surveys. Based on the results of these measures, I chose six focal participants who brought to the course a range of backgrounds (*e.g.*, gender, race/ethnicity) and prior experiences (*e.g.*, exposure to diversity, L2 study, international work/travel). Once these individuals had been selected, I created a separate folder for each participant. As I collected further data on each of the focal participants throughout the semester (*e.g.*, interview and video transcripts, course

assignments), I included this information in his or her folder. By the end of the course, each of the six folders contained around 100 pages of text.

The qualitative analysis was ongoing in the sense that I was constantly collecting data on the focal participants. During most weeks of the semester, the participants either had an interview with me, submitted reflection papers or exams, or held small-group discussions regarding their field experiences. Thus, I was continually receiving new data that needed to be incorporated into the folders and then analyzed. Once I had the transcripts and/or photocopies of their written work, I read through them multiple times in order to open code (in the margins) for salient themes and patterns that, in turn, became preliminary categories. For instance, I noticed early on that most of the participants were making assumptions about the people and communities with which they were coming into contact through the project, leading to a preliminary category called "Assumptions." I also noticed that they were describing themselves in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, attributes, and backgrounds, which I called "Identity."

I accomplished all of the sorting of the data by creating and updating information in different Word documents. Specifically, I named and saved each Word file with the title of a different category and included all relevant data. As I received and analyzed further data, I revised my preliminary categories, specifically by expanding, condensing, adding, or deleting those that had emerged previously. Additionally, I begin to break the larger categories down into sub-categories. For example, the general category "Knowledge" was eventually broken down into "connections to course material," "knowledge of community resources," "instructional practices," and so on. In this fashion, the Word documents I had initially created were constantly being updated and

changed around as new information was incorporated. At the same time, I constantly re-familiarized myself with "older" data by going back and rereading my notes and transcripts from earlier in the semester.

Once the categories and sub-categories became relatively stable (*i.e.*, the new data I collected did not lead to any revision or re-shifting), I began to focus additional data collection in ways that allowed me to fill in any gaps I noticed as well as to identify negative cases or counterexamples. To give an example, at one point I looked for instances in which participants who self-identified as minorities were unsympathetic to the struggles faced by diverse learners. Doing this led me to discover that Jackie, an African-American female who was generally supportive of minority students, did not necessarily sympathize so much with the *linguistic* struggles of ELLs. The categories and sub-categories that emerged and became stable by the end of the semester form the structure of the Results chapter, which is organized based on claims relating directly to the guiding research questions. Each major category is divided up into sub-categories, and I provide representative observation notes and quotes to support my findings and arguments within each one.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a research study is deemed "trustworthy" to the extent that it can demonstrate four traits: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I addressed each of these issues in several ways. First, in order to ensure *credibility* (known in the positivist tradition as internal validity), I did the following: 1) triangulated across both data sources and methodologies, 2) engaged in the research on a prolonged basis (one full semester), 3) integrated member checking, 4)

debriefed with peers and colleagues, and 5) included discussion of negative cases and counterexamples.

Data sources included questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, and written artifacts, and my analysis contained both quantitative and qualitative components. Collecting different kinds of data allowed me to check my findings across multiple sources, for example, comparing the types of things participants wrote in their papers with what they said in small groups (which often differed). Conducting the study over the course of an entire semester meant that I was able to establish trust and rapport with the participants, especially since I attended all of the class sessions and met with them outside of class as well (*e.g.*, for interviews). Our frequent conversations, both formal and informal, allowed us to learn more about each other and made my presence for the purposes of research less threatening. Similarly, although I videotaped certain group discussions that included the focal participants, the presence of the camera typically became unnoticed after the first few minutes or so.

While I did not engage in formal member checking with each participant at the conclusion of the study, I did integrate this technique more informally into the actual data collection process. For example, I often took the opportunity during interviews to ask participants about my developing hunches and impressions of their understandings and beliefs. Moreover, I frequently debriefed with the course instructor as well as with members of my committee and fellow doctoral students. The course instructor and I knew each other well and constantly talked about the foundations class and in particular the information I was collecting on my six focal participants. I discovered that he tended to agree with many of the themes and patterns I was finding, but he likewise encouraged me

to think about various new ideas. I also shared my data and working hypotheses on several occasions with the members of the Teacher Education Research Group (who were familiar with the focus of my study as well as my theoretical framework), and these colleagues provided their own interpretations of the data as well as suggestions of issues that I could explore further, including ways to do so. For instance, they recommended that I pay closer attention to participants' comments about the field experience. Last, I incorporated a number of negative cases and counterexamples in my discussion of the findings in order to provide a check for the common themes and patterns and also to acknowledge the fact that these findings were not always so clean and straightforward.

While I cannot guarantee complete *transferability* (often referred to in the positivist literature as generalizability) given that this was a mostly naturalistic study, I made sure to include direct quotes from the participants as well as a think description of the context and study procedures so that readers of my work can determine the applicability to their own settings. For example, in an earlier section of this chapter, I provided a detailed description of the research context (the ELL program and the foundations course) in addition to information about the course instructor and focal participants. In the next chapter I include detailed portraits of each of the focal participants as well as a brief description of their chosen field projects. It is also worth mentioning that I purposely selected participants with a range of backgrounds and prior experiences in order to ensure as much heterogeneity as possible, and it is likely that programs around the country prepare teachers who have backgrounds that are similar to those of at least some of my participants.

In order to increase the *dependability*, or the consistency/reliability of the study (in positivist terms), I triangulated across data sources and methodologies, as outlined above, as well as maintained an audit trail of all the data collection procedures and instruments. In particular, I kept copies of all the documents, notes, transcripts, and graphic organizers I used to inform my collection and analysis of the data. In this manner, an external auditor could easily follow and replicate the steps of my research from beginning to end.

Finally, with the aim of ensuring *confirmability*, known in the positivist world as the objectivity or neutrality of the study, I triangulated across methods to look for evidence that might confirm and/or disconfirm my findings, included multiple perspectives, and integrated a considerable amount of raw data. As described above, my analysis was the product of many people's thoughts, opinions, and interpretations. In addition to sharing my data and hypotheses on an ongoing basis with the course instructor and my faculty advisor, I also discussed this information with members of the Teacher Education Research Group, fellow doctoral students, and an external consultant. These conversations often challenged my thinking and gave me a chance to consider alternative explanations and different ways of analyzing. I recorded detailed notes during these sessions, and these notes served to further develop and define the categories that were emerging in my research. Additionally, in Chapter V I include a large amount of the raw data I collected in the form of observation notes and participant quotes so that the reader can clearly see and verify how my interpretations were supported by the data.

CHAPTER IV

PORTRAITS

In this chapter I provide brief portraits of the six focal participants. These portraits provide relevant background information on these individuals' lives and experiences as well as an overview of the nature of the fieldwork in which they engaged during the fall semester (see Table 2 in Chapter III for a summary). Moreover, I discuss the importance of their backgrounds and prior experiences in terms of their learning in the foundations course.

Portraits: Focal Participants

Brandon

Background. Brandon is a White male who is majoring in Secondary Education and English. When I asked him why he chose this major in particular, he emphasized the importance of writing: "Writing is probably the most useful skill you can have because you can use it in any context. If I can help kids learn how to write well, this will help them all over the place." He himself was inspired by a former high-school English teacher, one who was "structured," "covered a lot of topics," and taught him how to interpret and analyze literature. Brandon would like to teach freshman- or sophomore-level English and states that he wants to be able to "challenge the kids" he has in his classroom.

He was born and raised in Waukegan, Illinois. He points out that this city used to be blue-collar and traditional but has experienced a relatively recent demographic shift. Specifically, during the past 20 years the city has become home to substantial numbers of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Lithuanians, and Armenians, a situation which Brandon says has led to a certain degree of racism, xenophobia, and suspicion among the different groups. His public school in Waukegan was 70% Hispanic, 20% Black, and 9% White, reflecting the recent immigration to the area. Thus, as a White male, he was the minority. Brandon completed a semester-long internship at a radio station in Springfield, Illinois, a place that he considers to be a "typical White town," unlike present-day Waukegan. He commented that living in Springfield was a culture shock for him given the large number of White residents. Describing his feelings during a concert he attended while there, he says:

> I remember I was just standing in the crowd, and I felt incredibly uncomfortable about the number of White people there…I was…like, there were just way too many White people. I felt very closed in. I just felt really out of my element. I was aware of it the whole time. I was so unused to it. It was just freaking me out.

When I asked him to describe his school, he talked mostly about the demographic divide between teachers and students as well as issues of tracking. He mentioned that most teachers were White and middle-class, while their students were predominantly of color and lower class. According to him, this situation resulted in a noticeable schism that negatively affected teachers' expectations and instructional practices. In particular, he perceived that teachers tended not to care about their students, that they rarely taught, that classroom management was a significant problem, and that the school's primary concern was seeing students graduate regardless of what they had learned. For obvious reasons, dropout was a major concern. Importantly, Brandon intends to go back to teach at this

school once he finishes his degree. He claims that he wishes to "help out the kids who—you know, it took—just to get them to school. Give them one reason to come to school every day." He noted that his own program (track) within the school was quite competitive and challenging but that it was unbalanced in terms of Whites versus minorities, taking into account the overall population of the school.

As is obvious, Brandon had experienced considerable interaction with diverse learners and ELLs before coming to Vanderbilt. In his public-school classes he found himself surrounded by students who were different from him. Likewise, he made many Hispanic friends with whom he interacted outside of class during extracurricular activities. At Vanderbilt, he lives in a dorm that promotes diversity among its residents. He commented that everyone there is committed to diversity and is comfortable with each other as well as open-minded. Also, he noted that Vanderbilt (and the Nashville area) contains a wider span of diversity than his hometown, including "race and religion." He says that he is "glad to be able to learn more about that." Interestingly, he considers himself a Buddhist. Despite his interest in diversity, he informed me that he had not yet formed close relationships with any ELLs here in Nashville and knew very little about the local immigrant community.

Brandon's only teaching experience was a practicum he completed at a nearby private school. His time there included class observations, interviews with teachers, and some tutoring. This experience did not put him in contact with diverse learners or ELLs.

Brandon studied French for a total of six years in middle and high school. However, he admitted not being impressed with what he learned, stating that "it was just repeating the same stuff all the time, and we never got anything new. Pedagogically, we

had such a narrow range of experience with French." That said, he feels like he would have a relatively easy time becoming fluent in French if he really wanted to. He considers Spanish to be more useful to him, which is why he decided to enroll in two semesters of beginning Spanish at Vanderbilt. While he does not yet feel confident in his ability to use the language, he believes that he was challenged to learn and provided with a solid foundation. In addition to formal classes, he said he would sometimes read Spanish-languages newspapers and magazines as well as online articles. He argues that he would learn much more if he "forced himself" and "took it more seriously."

Brandon's experience abroad includes a two-month trip to English and a "whirlwind tour" of Europe. After high school, he decided to travel to a small town in Yorkshire, England to visit his sister and brother-in-law, who were living there at the time. He commented that, although he tried to meet people, he always felt positioned as an outsider and was never really taken in. On further reflection, he says he blames himself and his lack of "social initiative". His other experience abroad consisted of a two-week school trip to four European countries (Germany, France, Switzerland, and England). He admits that there was very little interaction with locals while he was there.

Cross-cultural field experience. As for the fieldwork assignment connected to the foundations course, Brandon chose to spend time at the Somali Community Center. As described below, Elena chose the same site, and the two often traveled together and debriefed. Brandon's experience at the center included various interactions with staff, including an initial interview with the director (an American woman), an observation of an adult ESL class (and subsequent dialogue with the teacher, who is from Somalia), and an interview with a Somali administrative assistant. In addition to these activities,

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Brandon (and Elena) also attended a Celebration of Cultures Fair where they engaged in conversation with Somalis at a booth representing this nation and viewed the performance of a Somali dance group. Finally, Brandon took it upon himself to do extensive online research about Somalia as well as Somali refugees living in the United States.

Jennifer

Background. Like Brandon, Jennifer (a White female) decided to major in Secondary Education and English. She stated that she has always wanted to teach, ever since she was five years old, one of the reasons being because her mother was a teacher who constantly involved her in educational activities in the home as well as in after-school tutoring. She told me that, after finishing her degree, she hopes to teach for a while and then become an educational consultant for school districts. She chose English as a major area of study because, according to her, being a teacher of English will allow her to accomplish her goal of effecting social change in the classroom.

Jennifer was born and raised in Newton, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston that she considers to be "fairly White" albeit "liberal" and "interested in diversity." Jennifer calculated that Newton is approximately 30% Jewish and perceives a recent increase in its Asian immigrant population. She noted that the suburb includes both affluent and low-SES neighborhoods. Jennifer attended a public school that she described using the following terms: "non-traditional," "progressive," "left-wing," "multicultural," "hands-on," and "service-oriented". She believes she received a "fabulous" education. Her school was quite diverse in its student composition and drew from the local area as well as from

neighboring towns and inner-city Boston. That said, Jennifer commented that, as far as she could recall, students within the school tended to self-segregate: "We had this big, long hallway, and you would walk down it, and it was like 'Oh, there are the deaf kids, and like the black kids sat over here.'" Of course, while Jennifer did not acknowledge this possibility, such segregation could also have been due to structures of the school.

Several circumstances have put Jennifer in close contact with diverse individuals. For example, she played sports with "a whole bunch of different kids." Moreover, she had friends who were Jewish, African-American, Indian, and Asian. At Vanderbilt, Jennifer continues to interact with students from diverse backgrounds, although she points out that this diversity is more cultural in nature than linguistic. Her best friends are Indian and African-American. Nevertheless, she told me that she was not very familiar with the local immigrant communities.

When asked whether she had ever been in a situation in which she felt like the minority, Jennifer recounted a recent experience of working at a summer camp in Long Island, New York, where most of the youth were Jewish. Importantly, Jennifer considers herself "almost anti-religious" despite a history of Judaism in her own family. At this camp she interacted with 13-year-olds who were studying for their Bar Mitzvahs. She described this experience as follows:

> I felt very weird, way more than I ever expected myself to feel. Really uncomfortable. They were a very different kind of people than I had grown up with. I definitely couldn't participate in…jokes because I had no idea. They were learning Hebrew for their bar mitzvahs, and I had, obviously, no concept of what that was. It was just very weird because, I mean, I have no connection to religion. I'm almost an anti-religious person, so to just even be around that much of it was very jarring. And I usually don't feel uncomfortable, easily. They wanted to know exactly what I believed, and I didn't really know how to explain it. I just felt…very different from them.

Jennifer's teaching experience has so far been limited to informal tutoring. She began tutoring while in high school and worked in an after-school program with struggling students, including ELLs (mostly from Armenia and China). She likewise participated in a Reading Buddies program, which involved traveling to inner-city Boston. Here in Nashville, she has volunteered some of her time with the Pencil Projects reading program in addition to an after-school program at a local church focused on providing educational models to students from underserved backgrounds.

What most impressed me initially about Jennifer was her extensive travel experience. In fact, she has had so much experience abroad that she joked that she had an "extended family all over the world." She has visited numerous countries (mostly in Central and South America and Europe) and has lived in various cities all around the United States (*e.g.*, Chicago, New York, Seattle, Detroit, San Francisco, Atlanta). She informed me that her mother's teaching placements allowed the family to move around during the summers while she was growing up. Her longest experience abroad was in Berlin, Germany, where she lived for four months. However, it is worth noting that she was only seven years old at the time, and she and her mom lived in a hotel suite. Thus, she admits that she did not have sustained contact with many Germans, and she picked up only a few phrases of the language while there. Despite all this travel experience, Jennifer was only in each place for a relatively short period of time and, in most cases, did not establish close relationships with non-native English speakers.

Jennifer has taken quite a bit of Spanish and considers herself "fairly conversational." She started studying the language in the sixth grade and continued all the way through high school as well as two semesters at Vanderbilt. She claims that she is

"not very good at languages" even though she feels she can learn them quickly, especially grammar and writing (academic aspects). In fact, she told me that she loved to read in Spanish and that she used to check out books in Spanish on her own. The problem, according to her, is speaking (which typically requires contact with native speakers). She says she has a "bad accent" and that she is afraid to talk, above all when she knows someone (*e.g.*, a teacher) might evaluate her abilities. Like Brandon, Jennifer perceived the quality of her high-school foreign language program as "poor." Nevertheless, she has had several opportunities to use the language in authentic settings on her trips to Central and South America.

Cross-cultural field experience. For her fieldwork assignment, Jennifer chose to focus on Nashville's Hispanic community, specifically by spending time at a local Catholic church with a predominantly Hispanic population. Her experience included interacting with adults and youth at several BBQ dinners held prior to mass, attending a number of Spanish-language services (both in the morning and the evening), and visiting the church nursery school (including an informal interview with the teacher). For her formal interview, Jennifer spoke with two high-school-aged students, both from Mexico. These students' experiences were considerably different, thus allowing Jennifer to compare and contrast distinct perspectives on the education of ELLs.

Jackie

Background. Jackie is an African-American female from Little Rock, Arkansas who decided to major in Secondary Education and Mathematics. During our initial interview, she told me that she had always loved math, ever since she was in elementary

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school: "Math was just like my thing." She pointed out that lots of students dislike and/or are afraid of math and that she hopes to share her interest in the subject with them. Once she graduates, she plans to teach high-school math classes for a few years and then open her own charter school in Little Rock. She is particularly keen on helping students who are not performing at grade level. In her words, "I want it to be geared towards students who are, maybe, behind a grade or two, in, say, reading or math, just to bring them up to par, so that when they are ready to go to college, then they don't have to take remedial courses."

Jackie described her elementary and middle schools as "half White, half black," noting that they were both located in the "White part of town." As far as she could remember, there had not been any ELLs at the time she was enrolled. In contrast, Jackie's high school was a prestigious, public magnet school that drew students from across the entire city. Unlike her previous schools, it was quite diverse, with "every language spoken that I can think of". Specifically, she recalls students from India, France, Africa, as well as from various Spanish-speaking countries. Jackie said she interacted quite a bit with many of these students, especially in her "high-level classes," which included a diverse make-up. Likewise, she interacted with individuals different from herself through community-service work, cheerleading, theater, and the honor society. Currently, she keeps in touch with hometown friends from Nigeria in addition to others who are Hispanic. At Vanderbilt, Jackie is a head resident advisor at one of the campus dorms, a role that puts her in constant contact with people from many different cultures and backgrounds. However, upon enrolling in the foundations course, she had not yet interacted with members of local immigrant communities and knew little about them.

Also, unlike Brandon and Jennifer, she had never traveled outside of the country, even though she never indicated a lack of resources that would allow her to do so if she desired.

Jackie told me that being an African-American woman gave her a unique perspective on life. When I asked her to explain, here is what she said:

> Not only am I a woman, as a minority, but I'm African-American, too, as a minority, so I have it coming from both ways. So in just about anything that you can think of, from education to religion to politics, I have a different spin on it than you could say a White woman would.

She positioned herself as a "smart African-American" and commented on how, in her math courses, she was often the only African-American as well as one of the only females. In this way, she felt like she had to go "above and beyond" in her work in order to successfully represent both minority groups. During our first interview, she recounted a negative experience she had recently had when a White male from the math department asked her why she was there, as if she shouldn't be. When I asked Jackie whether all people at some point might benefit from the experience of being the minority, she responded as follows: "Not until you…put your feet in their shoes, until you're the minority, do you see how the small things that you do can affect the minority so easily."

Similar to Brandon and Jennifer, Jackie had participated in a student practicum in addition to some tutoring activities. Her practicum experience involved observations of math and science classes as well as one-on-one work with an African-American boy in the seventh grade. Her tutoring consisted of volunteer time with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization. In this role, she worked individually with a 10-year-old girl whose first language was Haitian Creole. Jackie mentioned that the girl spoke English fairly

well, although her mother did not. She interacted with both family members as part of her assignment.

Jackie's foreign language study was limited to one year of Spanish in high school and another year at Vanderbilt. She stated that it seemed "easy to learn" but that she did not consider herself to be fluent. She commented on Vanderbilt's immersion method of teaching foreign languages and said that, even though it can be difficult at first, "eventually your ear gets tuned to it, and you pick up on it." She told me that she frequently practices her Spanish with an English-speaking friend who is really interested in the language. Nevertheless, she does not interact with native speakers of Spanish and, at this point in time, does not plan to continue learning it.

Cross-cultural field experience. Jackie spent most of her time for the fieldwork project at the local school district's International Newcomer Academy. Her initial visit involved a tour of the building, including the welcome area, the classrooms, the rooms designated for student assessment, and the cafeteria. During this first visit, she learned about the purposes of the center and interacted with some of its staff members. As the semester continued, Jackie was able to observe teachers and students at a variety of levels and in different contexts. For example, she observed elementary and high-school levels, literacy and mathematics lessons, and even some music classes. While she observed students of various ethnicities, including African, Burmese, and Hispanic learners, she worked most closely with a few of the Hispanic children. For instance, during at least one session she worked one-on-one with an adolescent Hispanic girl who was having trouble with math. For her interview, she chose to speak with one of the registrars at the

Newcomer Academy, a lady from Colombia. This individual told Jackie about her own experiences as a second language learner in the U.S. as well as those of her daughter.

Chris

Background. Chris is a White male who is majoring in Education Studies (without licensure) and Mathematics. He commented that he considers himself to be good at math and science and that he enjoys working with people. His mom is a teacher, as were his grandparents, and this, in his opinion, has made his choice to teach "seem right." Upon graduation he hopes to become a high-school math teacher in a city setting, perhaps Nashville. Like Jackie, Chris noted his desire to help students who were not very interested in the subject of math: "I kind of want to be the math teacher who helps the students who hate math or don't understand math [to] not hate it anymore, and like see it from another perspective."

Born in Auburn, Alabama, Chris spent most of his pre-college life in the city of Huntsville and the town of Scottsboro. He attended a diverse magnet elementary school in Huntsville that served students who were White, African-American, and Iranian-American. Chris told me that one of his best friends in elementary school had been a boy whose family was from Iran. His neighborhood was also home to a number of Chinese families, and he often played with the children and occasionally spoke with their parents (which he noted as being somewhat difficult given their "minimal grasp of English"). When Chris was in the sixth grade, he moved to Scottsboro, a small town that he considers "not diverse." In fact, he recalled the ethnic composition as follows: 95% White, 4% African-American, and 1% Hispanic or other. He pointed out that racism was

quite prevalent in Scottsboro and even admitted that he himself had participated in racially motivated jokes. Reflecting on this experience, he said that he did not like the fact that the town lacked diversity and that racism was still present. He thinks of Vanderbilt as a somewhat diverse school, noting that since being here he has met and interacted with people from several different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Chris mentioned that he did not consider himself to be diverse, at least not within the U.S. context. When I asked him whether he had ever been put in a position in which he was the minority, he talked about his recent conversion to Catholicism and the way he feels when visiting his family:

> Nine months ago, I joined the Catholic Church, so I don't really fit that WASP profile anymore. In some places, especially when I go home, I'm hanging out with the rest of my family. It makes things a little awkward, especially like Thanksgiving and Christmas and stuff. So, [it's] not a really big [deal], but a little bit.

His teaching experience included a work-study assignment at the university preschool as well as participation in two practica. At the preschool, where he had worked for one year at the beginning of my study, he was an assistant teacher whose role involved "playing with the children." He noted that some of the children came from non-English-speaking families (*e.g.*, Chinese, Armenian, Spanish, Indian), although the dominant language of all the children was English as far as he could tell. His first practicum was similar to that of the other focal participants: mostly observation of (science and math) classes at a local private school. His second practicum was focused on diverse learners and took place in conjunction with a local international teen outreach program targeting secondary-aged students. Essentially, he was one of several people who pulled international students out of their regular classes for an hour each day during one semester to discuss issues such as

social and cultural adjustment. Chris admitted that he was not able to interact very much with these students—who included Hispanics, Africans, and Kurds—even though he did get to "hear some of their stories." When asked what knowledge he had of the local immigrant population, the only thing Chris told me was that he knew that Nashville had relatively large numbers of Hispanics and Kurds.

One of the main reasons I decided to include Chris in my study was because, from the very first day of class, he expressed a great interest in languages. Indeed, he has studied four different languages. He took four years of French in elementary school followed by two additional years in high school. He judged his high school classes as "not very effective." Nowadays, all he can remember are a few words and phrases, leading him to doubt that he could carry on a meaningful conversation. When he was very young he was exposed to Spanish, first in pre-school and then in another place where Spanish was taught (he could not recall the details). Importantly, he attributes his "okay Spanish accent" to this early exposure. Since then, he has not taken any further Spanish classes, although he mentions he would like to. That said, he has had the opportunity to practice using some basic words and phrases with a number of past co-workers who spoke Spanish. Likewise, he occasionally asks his friends how to say things. Besides learning French and Spanish, Chris has taught himself some Latin and Greek. Despite his interest in languages, however, he has never traveled abroad.

Cross-cultural field experience. Like Jennifer and Jackie, Chris chose to focus on Nashville's Hispanic community for his fieldwork project. He spent most of his time attending services at a local Catholic church for Hispanics as well as interacting with several of its members. While Chris does not speak very much Spanish, he decided to

attend mass in Spanish both to see what it was like and to have the experience of being the linguistic minority. He also attended a bilingual mass for children and another for adults. Additionally, he spoke informally with a lady who helps serve Holy Communion, the administrator of the parish, a bilingual priest, a woman from South America, and with a few others, including some of the children who frequent the church. He conducted his required interview with a pre-Seminarian, originally from Colombia, who received a formal education in his home country followed by several years of higher education in the United States.

Jessie

Background. Jessie is a White female who chose to major in Secondary Education and English. Similar to some of the other participants, she stated that she knew she wanted to be a teacher from an early age. Part of her inspiration came from some younger teachers she had in high school, such as an AP English teacher, who "used different teaching methods" and made learning "fun." Jessie told me that she identified with younger teachers and wanted to provide the same type of learning environment for her future students. That said, she hopes to return to her hometown and teach high-school-level U.S. literature.

Jessie is originally from Buffalo, New York, although her family moved to Tennessee when she was in the fifth grade (age 10). In Buffalo, she attended a public school in the suburbs that she remembers as serving "mostly White students who spoke English." Once in Tennessee, she attended a public middle school in the town of Maryville. This school was likewise not very diverse, with only "a handful of black

students." Jessie decided to transfer to another school due to the low level of academics she perceived at the local high school, saying that she knew people who "never had homework, never studied, and never did anything." She ended up at a private Catholic school in the nearby city of Knoxville. According to her, the teachers and students were great, there was more of an emphasis on education, and they even attended Mass (which she enjoyed). This is the school she hopes to teach at once she graduates. As far as its diversity, Jessie remembers interacting with a few Hispanic ELLs in her Spanish class, although she noted that there were probably only 10 or so ELLs in the entire school. There were also a small number of African-American students.

While in high school, Jessie participated in a program called Bridge Builders designed to "bridge the gap between stereotypes that high-school students had of each other and other cultures, and to learn about other cultures and races". This experience included summer camps and retreats as well as monthly meetings. Jessie commented that she was exposed to a lot of diversity through this program. In fact, this was the experience she described when I asked her if she had ever been placed in a situation in which she felt like the minority, as she and a few others had been the only White participants:

> At first, I felt a little uncomfortable because I hadn't experienced that before, like feeling like the minority, but after time, and after I…learned more about them and became more comfortable, I didn't really notice it anymore, and I really enjoyed being a part of that.

Indeed, she pointed out that one of the advantages of being put in a situation like this is that you might come to understand how some of your students are feeling. She considers Nashville as the most diverse place she has ever lived. Since living here she has made some very close African-American friends in addition to some friends whose families are

from India. However, she admitted to not knowing very much about the local immigrant population.

Jessie's teaching experience includes various tutoring assignments as well as a student practicum. For example, she tutored African-American, Hispanic, and White students in a diverse church-based after-school program. Specifically, she helped them for one semester (two hours per week) with their homework and especially math and reading. As far as she could remember, none of these students were ELLs. Jessie also tutored through the Pencil Projects organization in Nashville. In particular, during a whole semester she worked one-on-one with an African-American girl in kindergarten who was having trouble reading. Finally, she participated in the same practicum described above for her peers, in which she primarily observed English classes at the secondary level.

Jessie took four years of Spanish in high school as well as two additional semesters at Vanderbilt. She commented that her high-school program "wasn't that great" and that what she learned at Vanderbilt seemed like a review of what she already knew. Thus, she considers her level of proficiency to be "very, very basic," adding that she would probably not be able to carry on a conversation in Spanish. However, she feels better about her reading and writing abilities, given that these were the areas most focused on in her classes. Also, she told me that learning Spanish had been easy for her and that she really enjoyed it. Interestingly, her step-grandfather is of Spanish descent, and she sometimes practices her Spanish with him. When Jessie was in high school, she took a two-week school trip to various cities in Spain. Nevertheless, her interactions using Spanish were limited to ordering in restaurants and speaking to tour guides. She

noted that she became quite frustrated during this trip when she was not able to read signs and when restaurant staff misunderstood her order.

Cross-cultural field experience. For her fieldwork assignment, Jessie chose to focus on the Hispanic community. She spent most of her time observing and working with individual students in a third-grade ESL classroom at a local elementary school. The students in this classroom were predominantly (75-80%) Hispanic, some from Mexico and others who were born here in the U.S. Jessie was invited to help the children learn to read and worked one-on-one with many of them during her weekly visits. This experience allowed her to be in close contact with the students, and she often took advantage of this situation to talk with them about their home and community lives. In addition to her time at the school, Jessie also attended a few Spanish-language services at a local Hispanic Catholic church. Last, she conducted her formal interview with a Cuban lady who, at the time of the study, worked as the Spanish/English translator at the elementary school Jessie had been visiting.

Elena

Background. Elena, the sixth participant in my project, is a Hispanic female majoring in Education Studies (without licensure) and Women and Gender Studies. She said she chose Education Studies because she wanted to major in education but without a specific concentration. She chose Women and Gender Studies because she has always been interested in women's issues. In fact, at the time of the study, she was the president of the Vanderbilt Feminists organization. She has considerable personal experience working with teenage females involved in gang-related activity, and she hopes to return

to her hometown to engage local girls in community groups and theater as a form of therapy and empowerment. Elena commented that she would like to teach in public schools, specifically in her former high school; however, she is not willing to put in the extra requirements (*e.g.*, licensure) necessary to become certified. She emphasized throughout our interview that she had trouble in school and that she did not enjoy reading.

Among all my participants, Elena's situation is unique for several reasons. For instance, she is at Vanderbilt on a scholarship awarded for community service and leadership skills. She even underwent training connected to this scholarship prior to moving to Nashville. This training consisted of "how to handle difficult situations, how to try to open people's minds and not be closed minded, [and] how not to judge others, based on…their own lack of knowing things." Elena repeatedly told me that she often felt uncomfortable at Vanderbilt and that people tended to make immediate assumptions about her, such as that she had been given a scholarship only because she was Hispanic and that she was Mexican and spoke Spanish (neither of which is true). In her words, "when I first got to campus, I didn't know where I was. I was just like gone. I didn't know who I was. I didn't know why I was here."

Elena was born and raised on Staten Island, New York. Her mother is Colombian, and her father has Puerto Rican heritage (but was born in the U.S.). All of her family speaks Spanish. Nevertheless, the same is not true of Elena. She recounted the following story about one of her former teachers who had advised her mother against speaking Spanish to her as a child:

> My mom…put me in preschool, and the…teacher told my mom, "Elena's not talking to anyone in class, or if she does talk, she's saying these sounds, and she's

just pointing and not forming words at all. You have to teach her only one language because she's obviously confused, and she doesn't know what she's doing." And my mom, of course,…this is a teacher telling her something, so she's like "Okay, I will. I don't want my daughter to look dumb." She only spoke English to me after that. I forgot all my Spanish.

That said, Elena continued to be surrounded by Spanish, notably at her bilingual Catholic church. She attended Mass in Spanish and even worked as the church secretary for a number of years. Also, she took formal Spanish classes throughout middle and high school, although she was quick to point out that she did quite terribly in these classes due to its academic focus on correct conjugation, complex sentences, accent marks, and written essays. She claims to know a lot of vocabulary and can understand the language; yet, she hesitates to speak it for fear of sounding "wrong."

Clearly, Elena has interacted with many ELLs (mostly Hispanics from her home community). At Vanderbilt, she lives in a dorm that promotes diversity, and she has made friends with students in the foreign-language residence hall (*e.g.*, a few students from France). Actually, she noted that White students rarely spoke to her, the exception being when they were placed face-to-face with her in classes, clubs, or in her dorm. To give an example, none of the White students (or others, for that matter) invited her to participate in the sorority rush process, and she was clueless what was going on until she finally asked someone: "No one tried to talk to me about it, so it's like their own little in-club kind of thing." Elena told me that she knew very little about Nashville, including its immigrant population, because she was almost always on campus.

Her teaching experience includes the student practicum, a semester-long assignment at the university pre-school, and religion classes at her hometown church. For her practicum she observed drama classes, and she did not elaborate on the pre-school

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experience. When I asked her about her teaching, she spent most of the time talking about her religion classes, which she taught for five years. This experience is significant because it inspired her to create a youth anti-violence task force comprised of secondary-aged students who were either doing poorly in school or who had decided to drop out. According to her, this group consisted mostly of African-Americans and Mexican-Americans, and they met on a regular basis to discuss issues that they were dealing with (*e.g.*, school dropout, drugs, gang membership). Elena mentioned that during her confirmation ceremony at church she felt that "a higher power was telling me to do…to lead, to…do amazing things," an impetus for the creation of this group.

Her travel experience is limited to a 9-day trip to Italy, which she took with a group from her high school. She pointed out that while abroad she only interacted with Italians when purchasing things, and her knowledge of Spanish allowed her to "meet them halfway." She quickly noted that this trip had not been "eye-opening" or "changing" in any significant way.

Cross-cultural field experience. Elena's fieldwork experience was very similar to that of Brandon, given that they both chose to spend time at the Somali Community Center. Also, since Elena did not have a car, the two of them traveled together for each visit. Thus, she participated in the initial interview with the director of the center (an American woman), she observed an ESL class and interacted with the Somali teacher as well as with a few of the Somali students, and she attended the Celebration of Cultures Festival where she interacted (albeit briefly) with some of the Somalians at the booth representing that culture. She conducted her formal interview with a 23-year-old program assistant (also from Somalia) at the Somali Community Center.

Prospective Teacher Backgrounds and Participation in the Course and Field Experience

According to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985), an accurate understanding of teacher learning necessarily takes into account the culturally organized activities in which teachers have partaken, the contexts in which they have learned, and their previous experiences (Johnson & Golombek, 2003). Importantly, all these activities and experiences have served as mediational means that have indirectly impacted what teachers know and believe, including the ideas, perspectives, and discourses that they have come into contact with and perhaps internalized. The portraits presented above highlight several of the background factors and previous experiences that were likely instrumental in shaping the six focal participants' understandings and beliefs regarding diversity and ELLs *before they began the foundations course*. These backgrounds and experiences, which are somewhat unique for each individual, fall under the following categories: race/ethnicity (minority versus majority status); interaction with diverse learners—including ELLs—in particular locales (*e.g.*, schools, places of work, cities/towns, Vanderbilt); educational experiences; teaching activities; L2 learning; time spent abroad (*e.g.*, for study, work, or travel); and, religion-based activities and affiliations. While there are certainly many other experiences that could be taken into account, those listed here were found to be the most relevant for the purposes of this study.

As will become evident in the following chapter, a number of the background factors and experiences highlighted in the portraits played a mediating role in the participants' learning, understandings, and beliefs. Specifically, the prospective teachers drew on certain aspects of their backgrounds and/or previous experiences to make sense

of what they were learning in the foundations course and the field experience. For example, participants often mentioned these experiences during in-class discussions and interviews or in their written work because they considered them relevant to the points they were trying to make. Jennifer, for instance, frequently referred to religion when stating her opinions with regards to the usefulness of culturally relevant pedagogy. Furthermore, it became obvious that different experiences had shaped participants' ways of thinking about the lives and education of ELLs. To give an example, Brandon and Elena, both of whom entered the course with considerable prior exposure to diversity, brought more non-mainstream, critical perspectives and rarely expressed deficit views toward ELLs. Finally, the participants' backgrounds and prior experiences had equipped them with specific tools or artifacts, such as knowledge of a second language or particular religious practices (*e.g.*, Catholicism), which served to either facilitate or hinder their participation in the cultural immersion project.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

In this chapter I present the results of the study. The chapter is organized around the major findings, which I have aligned with the four guiding research questions.

My major findings can be summarized as follows:

1. The participants entered the course with a wide range of understandings and beliefs regarding diversity and ELLs.

2. Throughout the course, the participants developed important new understandings and beliefs regarding diversity and ELLs. However, their learning also presented some limitations.

3. The cross-cultural field experience included some successful features as well as a number of shortcomings and issues to consider for future implementation.

4. Certain facets of the participants' backgrounds and prior experiences served to influence, or mediate, what they thought, believed, and learned about ELLs and their education during the semester.

Importantly, I provide relevant data from my study to support each of the claims I have made. The chapter ends with several concluding comments that tie these results together and highlight their significance.

Finding 1: The Participants Entered the Course with a Wide Range of
Understandings and Beliefs regarding Diversity and ELLs

Based on their responses on the demographic and background questionnaire, the

two pre-term surveys (knowledge and beliefs), and the information they provided during

the initial interview, it was clear that the focal participants began the course with a wide

range of understandings and beliefs regarding diversity and ELLs. Significantly, these

understandings and beliefs had been mediated or indirectly influenced by their

backgrounds and prior experiences.

Prior understandings

Overall, the participants entered the course with relatively little understanding of

the 15 topics included on the knowledge survey, suggesting that much of the information

to be covered in the course was new for them. On a scale from 1-5 (5 representing the

most knowledge), the total average across all responses for all six participants was 2.31.

This number corresponds most closely to the category designated as "little knowledge"

on the survey. That said, the averages varied somewhat by topic and by participant. As

shown below in Table 4, across all six participants the highest average knowledge

corresponded to the following topics: immigrant issues (2.83), rationales for

bilingual/ESL instruction (3.00), and opposition to and support for bilingual/ESL

instruction (3.00). The lowest average knowledge corresponded to: English-only

movements (1.67), ELL teacher preparation (1.67), history of bilingualism/bilingual

education in the U.S. (1.83), and bilingual/ESL program evaluations (1.83). Overall

knowledge of all the other topics fell somewhere in between (2.00-2.50).

Table 4. Average (Mean) Responses on the Knowledge of ELL Issues Survey by Topic

Topic	Average Across Participants
Immigrant issues and practices	2.83
ELL communities in the U.S.	2.33
English-only movements	1.67
Rationales for bilingual/ESL instruction	3.00
Opposition to and support for bilingual/ESL instruction	3.00
Bilingual/ESL program models	2.50
History of bilingualism/bilingual education in the U.S.	1.83
Legislative & judicial milestones in bilingual/ESL instruction	2.00
Bilingual/ESL theories	2.17
Bilingual/ESL program evaluations	1.83
Second language acquisition	2.33
Effective instructional strategies for ELLs	2.33
Learner backgrounds and their role in education	2.33
ELL teacher preparation	1.67
Home, community, and school connections	2.33

There was also notable variation by participant. As shown below in Table 5, the participants' average self-rated knowledge across the 15 topics ranged from a low of 1.47 (Chris) to a high of 3.67 (Elena). Overall, Chris and Jackie rated themselves to have between "no" and "little knowledge" (1.47-1.67), while Jennifer, Jessie, and Brandon (2.07-2.60) rated themselves to have between "little" and "some knowledge." Elena was the exception, rating herself closest to having "quite a bit of knowledge" (3.67). The reason Elena was so different from the other participants was because she had grown up in an immigrant household and community and had had considerable personal experience that was relevant to some of the topics to be covered in the course (*e.g.*, immigrant issues and policies, ELL communities in the U.S.). Brandon likewise grew up in a diverse

Table 5. Average (Mean) Responses on the Knowledge of ELL Issues Survey by
Participant

Participant	Average Across Responses
Chris	1.47
Jackie	1.67
Jennifer	2.07
Jessie	2.20
Brandon	2.60
Elena	3.67

community and attended a racially and ethnically mixed high school. This likely explains

why his average was second highest (2.60). Thus, there were clear and important

differences not only by topic but also by participant.

Goals for the course. When asked what they hoped to learn in the course, the

participants mentioned several different topics but mostly emphasized a desire for

"practical strategies." Brandon, for example, stated that he wanted a "set of tools to use in

the classroom" as well as "a knowledge base of what works, what doesn't work." Chris

said he hoped to learn more about official English-only movements, the arguments for

and against English-only in the classroom, as well as theories of second language

learning and practical teaching applications. Jackie told me that she had not given a lot of

previous thought to working with ELLs and mentioned that she wanted to learn "the most

effective way to be able to communicate with an ELL" and, more specifically, strategies

for math educators. Jessie noted that she was interested in learning how to teach ELLs

successfully as well as in acquiring a better understanding of the process of second

language acquisition. Finally, Elena said that she hoped to learn how to better help ELLs. This emphasis on "practical strategies" suggests that some prospective teachers may dismiss the role of conceptual/theoretical knowledge, perhaps because they believe that working with ELLs is essentially the same as working with mainstream students or because they feel that they should not have to radically alter the practices they have already developed to accommodate ELLs.

Prior coursework. It is worth mentioning that most of the participants had already taken at least one course at Vanderbilt that they perceived to be somewhat related to the foundations course. This class focused on issues of diversity in general, including the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy. However, as the participants pointed out, the course did not delve very deeply into issues concerning linguistic diversity or ELLs. In fact, on the syllabus for this course there is only one reading that deals explicitly with the education of ELLs. Nevertheless, one of the participants (Jennifer) was worried at the beginning of the semester that it seemed like the foundations course might be a repeat of what she had taken previously: "I feel like this is the same". Also, Jennifer initially felt like she had a lot of prior knowledge about some of the topics on the syllabus simply because her mother had worked with ELLs and had talked with her about her experience. This finding is significant because it suggests that students may over-estimate their own knowledge of certain topics based only on a limited number of discussions or readings.

Prior beliefs

There was mostly agreement but also some variation as far as the beliefs the participants expressed concerning the education of diverse students and ELLs. For

example, all six participants "strongly disagreed" with the statement that parents and community members should play only a *minimal* role in the school. They either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that all students should be encouraged to become fluent in a second language; they "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that parents from low-income families do not generally care about education; and, they either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that teachers who work with ELLs do not need special forms of knowledge and practice. Five out of six participants "disagreed" that teachers should focus *all* their attention on teaching ELLs correct English. The exception was Jackie, who marked "agree" for this item. Jackie initially tended to place a lot of emphasis on English learning, perhaps at the expense of content-area instruction.

When asked to express an opinion on whether students should *not* be allowed to speak a language other than English while in school, five out of six participants either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed." Chris indicated that he had "no preference." Similarly, Chris indicated "no preference" when asked whether teachers should place great value on students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, while the other participants either "agreed" or "disagreed." Importantly, Chris entered the course with little prior knowledge related to the education of ELLs, and he admitted during our first interview that he wanted to learn more about these issues before forming any definite opinions. His comment implies a close link between knowledge and beliefs. It might also indicate that he is not comfortable sharing his true feelings about this topic, particularly if he believes there may be an answer that the interviewee is hoping to hear.

The responses to the remaining items on the beliefs survey presented more variation. For instance, when asked whether ELLs should receive instruction in their

native language until they are proficient enough to learn via English instruction, the participants were divided. Two of them (Brandon and Jennifer) "disagreed"; two of them (Elena and Chris) expressed "no preference", and, the other two (Jessie and Jackie) "agreed." Elena later told me that she initially chose "no preference" for this item because she had no prior knowledge of this topic and was never an ELL herself. Similarly, Jennifer later told me that she entered the course with no understanding of the idea of L1-L2 transfer and why that might be important.

The variation in responses was somewhat similar for the item regarding the keys to second language learning. Both Brandon and Chris "disagreed" that motivation and hard work were the keys (*i.e.*, the most important variables), while Jackie and Jessie either "agreed" or "strongly agreed." Elena and Jennifer indicated "no preference" for this particular item, suggesting that they needed to learn more before forming their opinions. Finally, when asked to respond to the statement "it is more important for immigrants to learn English than to maintain their first language," four participants (Elena, Jackie, Jessie, and Jennifer) either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed," whereas Brandon claimed that he "agreed." As on previous items, Chris indicated "no preference." Notably, these findings indicate that the six focal participants were initially somewhat divided in their opinions on native-language instruction and L1 maintenance. Their views had likely been mediated by a combination of personal experiences, exposure to the media, and prior coursework.

Views on diversity. The participants elaborated on some of their beliefs regarding diversity and ELLs during our pre-semester interview. For instance, most of them expressed their personal views of diversity as well as ways in which to better promote

diversity. Brandon, Chris, and Jessie all made comments suggesting that diversity was a good thing, and two of them claimed that they were often bothered by people's misconceptions, preconceived notions, and self-segregation (Brandon) as well as by their intolerance, feelings of superiority, and racism (Chris). Brandon, Jackie, and Elena all stated that one of the greatest challenges with regards to diversity is the fact that many people are unwilling to openly talk about it. According to Brandon, "the overwhelming belief is to avoid any issues that are uncomfortable, which I don't think is very healthy." Similarly, in Elena's opinion, "no one wants to have that conversation…No one wants to. I think they're intimidated." Jessie admitted that she had not really paid attention to diversity before being encouraged to discuss it in some of her education courses: "I'm being challenged more and more to think about diversity, and I guess, before, I never really noticed it." Two of the participants (Brandon and Jennifer) mentioned that they constantly reevaluated their notions of other people and cultures so as not to form strict judgments or stereotypes. Overall, the six participants seemed to value diversity, possibly because they had internalized more program-wide discourses (in the teacher education program at Vanderbilt) concerning this topic.

Goals as future teachers. Four of the participants likewise expressed opinions relating to their goals as future teachers. Importantly, three of them (Brandon, Jackie, Elena) appeared oriented toward social justice in that they all claimed to want to work with students who are typically underserved in the nation's public schools. This finding is not very surprising considering that Jackie and Elena both come from minority backgrounds. Brandon, who also had considerable prior experience with diversity, pointed out that minority students "have a lot of potential" and that education "can be

done right" given qualified teachers and leadership. In contrast, Jennifer stated that her

goal had always been to teach in a private school, "where I'm just teaching really smart

kids." She did not discount the possibility of working with ELLs, although her comments

implied that these students would likely be from high-SES backgrounds.

The role of parents in education. Finally, two participants (Jennifer and Jackie)

emphasized the role of parents in a child's education. Both of them agreed that parents

played an integral part in this process but admitted that they were unsure how non-

English-speaking parents could successfully help their children in school. In Jennifer's

words, "I can't imagine having a child in school that's trying to learn English, and they

come home to parents that can't participate in that learning at all, simply because of the

language barrier." Jackie even went as far as to suggest that "maybe having English

spoken in the home would greatly help them with not only learning English overall, but

applying that to other subjects, too." In both of these statements there is an implicit

message that immigrant parents should use English with their children, reflecting a larger,

mainstream discourse on immigrants and education.

Finding 2: Throughout the Course, the Participants Developed Important New
Understandings and Beliefs regarding Diversity and ELLs. However, their Learning also
Presented some Limitations

Participation in the course and cultural immersion project led to important

changes in the prospective teachers' understandings about ELLs and their education. In

particular, the close linkage between the course and field experience productively

mediated the knowledge they developed throughout the semester and often led to deep

processing of the material. That said, in certain cases there was evidence of either partial

or inaccurate knowledge of theories and concepts, and one participant made few explicit connections between the course and her field experience. Moreover, some of the participants had difficulty translating what they had learned into practical applications for the classrooms, and one teacher actively resisted the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy.

The participants' beliefs toward ELLs and their education became more positive and affirming throughout the semester. Therefore, for the most part, their engagement in the course and field experience had mediated their dispositions in a productive fashion. Nevertheless, similar to before, some teachers had difficulty providing examples of specific ways to draw on students' cultural and linguistic resources, even though they had come to see this practice as beneficial. Likewise, a few participants continued to hold on to negative views and judgments concerning "correct" English usage and student backgrounds. At the same time, other participants stated unsubstantiated assumptions, though some of these assumptions were challenged through the course/field experience and thus re-examined. Additionally, the data revealed a number of *affective* responses and changes experienced by the participants, such as feelings of discomfort, nervousness, frustration, and hesitancy to interact with certain kinds of people. While the field experience helped some of the participants overcome these negative reactions, this was not always the case. Finally, a few of the teachers came out feeling better prepared and more sympathetic toward ELLs.

Understandings developed through participation in the course and field experience

The post-term survey data suggest that participation in the foundations course and the field experience led to important positive changes in the focal participants' understandings of diversity and ELL issues. As shown below in Table 6, the participants self-assessed their knowledge—on average across all 15 topics—close to two whole points (+1.86) higher compared to the beginning of the semester. While the pre-term average was only 2.31 (little knowledge), the post-term average grew to 4.13 (quite a bit of knowledge).

As before, there was significant variation both by topic and by participant. The growth for each topic, across all six participants, ranged from a low of +1.17 (immigrant issues and practices) to a high of +2.67 (bilingual/ESL program evaluations). The highest average growth corresponded to the following topics: bilingual/ESL program models (+2.33), bilingual/ESL theories (+2.33), second language acquisition (+2.34), and bilingual/ESL program evaluations (+2.67). The lowest average growth corresponded to: immigrant issues and practices (+1.17), ELL communities in the U.S. (+1.34), legislative & judicial milestones in bilingual/ESL instruction (+1.50), and home, community, and school connections (+1.50). It is worth reiterating that, even though these last four topics represent the lowest average growth across all six participants, they still indicate a positive change of at least one whole point.

Elena showed the least amount of overall growth during the semester (+1.20), which makes sense considering that her peers entered with significantly less knowledge about these specific issues and thus had more to learn (see Table 7). Three participants' (Jennifer, Jessie, and Jackie) average responses across all 15 knowledge items indicated

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Table 6. Average (Mean) Change on the Knowledge of ELL Issues Survey by Topic

Topic	Average Across Participants		
	Pre	Post	Change
Immigrant issues and practices	2.83	4.00	+ 1.17
ELL communities in the U.S.	2.33	3.67	+ 1.34
English-only movements	1.67	3.50	+ 1.83
Rationales for bilingual/ESL instruction	3.00	4.67	+ 1.67
Opposition to and support for bilingual/ESL instruction	3.00	4.67	+ 1.67
Bilingual/ESL program models	2.50	4.83	+ 2.33
History of bilingualism/bilingual education in the U.S.	1.83	3.5	+ 1.67
Legislative & judicial milestones in bilingual/ESL instruction	2.00	3.5	+ 1.50
Bilingual/ESL theories	2.17	4.5	+ 2.33
Bilingual/ESL program evaluations	1.83	4.5	+ 2.67
Second language acquisition	2.33	4.67	+ 2.34
Effective instructional strategies for ELLs	2.33	4.33	+ 2.00
Learner backgrounds and their role in education	2.33	4.33	+ 2.00
ELL teacher preparation	1.67	3.50	+ 1.83
Home, community, and school connections	2.33	3.83	+ 1.50
	2.31	4.13	+ 1.86

an increase of at least two whole points, a noteworthy change from the beginning of the semester. The average change for Chris and Brandon was similar, approaching two points (+1.80). All in all, the responses on the post-term knowledge surveys show that the participants felt like they had learned quite a bit as a result of participation in the course and field experience.

Connections to course. All six focal participants made explicit connections between the content presented in the course and their field experiences (see Table 8 for a summary). In this sub-section I report on some of the theoretical connections teachers made as well as references to specific course topics and concepts. These links are important because they suggest that the participants were able to develop and apply

Table 7. Average (Mean) Change on the Knowledge of ELL Issues Survey by Participant

Participant	Average Across Responses		
	Pre	Post	Change
Elena	3.67	4.87	+ 1.20
Brandon	2.60	4.40	+ 1.80
Jessie	2.20	4.27	+ 2.07
Jennifer	2.07	4.07	+ 2.00
Jackie	1.67	3.87	+ 2.20
Chris	1.47	3.27	+ 1.80

fundamental understandings taught as part of the course, thus reinforcing their learning.

First, all six participants demonstrated knowledge of Cummins' (1981) theories of bilingualism and bilingual education and applied them to their field experiences. The most frequently cited idea was the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis, which states that "second language acquisition is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language. The more developed the first language, the easier it will be to develop the second language" (Baker, 2001: 169). The teachers drew on the notion of L1-L2 transfer in explaining the progress of particular ELLs they had observed or interviewed. For instance, Jessie provided the following reasoning to explain her interviewee's learning of English:

> Another reason I believe she was able to learn the basics of the English language in three months was because of her prior education and L1 literacy. Because she is so literate in her L1, she was able to transfer some of her literacy skills over to learning English. Her knowledge of learning strategies, cognates, and simply knowing the letters of the alphabet all helped her to learn English.

Table 8. Specific New Understandings Developed by Participants Throughout the Semester

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Connections to course material
Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis
Common Underlying Proficiency
Threshold Theory
Behaviorism
Monitor Model
Critical Period Hypothesis
Sociocultural Theory
Factors involved in SLA (learner variables, instructional/contextual variables)
ESL/bilingual program models and their effectiveness
Content-based ESL
L1 maintenance and development

Knowledge of local community resources
Immigrant and refugee community centers
Schools serving ELLs (Newcomer Academy, sheltered ESL classroom)
Translators
Websites for the Hispanic community
Spanish-language radio stations
Spanish-language churches

Knowledge of cultural practices, histories, and values
Religion
Gender-based practices
Interactional styles
Value placed on family and community networks
Music and dance
Code-switching
History of particular cultural groups

Knowledge of student and community characteristics
Demographic information
Immigration status
Language proficiencies (L1/L2)

Jennifer, who interviewed two different high-school-aged students, likewise interpreted her data with reference to the notion of cross-linguistic transfer:

> Unlike Tony, Ana had a base of knowledge to transfer when she started learning English formally. For example, she did not have to re-learn how to read and write. She already knew how to perform these tasks in her L1, and therefore these skills were part of her "central operating system"

That said, it is worth mentioning that one of the participants, Jackie, at times over-emphasized the role of L1 competence in accounting for second language learning. When reporting on the progress of her interviewee, for example, she argued that "being that she is both fluent and literate in Spanish, her lack of progression in this ESL course counters the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis." Importantly, she failed to consider other possible reasons for why her interviewee had not been successful in this particular class (*e.g.*, poor instruction, lack of comprehensible input). On another occasion, Jackie made a somewhat superficial reference to the role of L1 literacy, specifically when recounting how a girl at the Newcomer Academy whose first language was Burmese seemed to "catch on really fast" simply because (she assumed) she had a high level of L1 literacy. While this assumption may be true, there are other possible explanations for this student's apparent rapid progress.

Another theoretical notion referenced by several participants was the "Threshold Theory," which postulates that there are certain cognitive effects associated with balanced bilingualism. Jackie, in talking about her interviewee's daughter, who was in elementary school at the time of their conversation, argued that "she should have been doing better than her grades reflected" because she was bilingual and "her family still spoke Spanish at home." She referred to the Threshold Theory to make her point. What she failed to question, however, was whether this girl had developed a strong level of

academic proficiency in her native language. Since her Spanish learning was not being

supported at school, Jackie's argument seems somewhat problematic and implies that she

had developed only a partial understanding of this particular theoretical concept.

Second, all of the participants except Elena cited various theories of second

language acquisition when discussing their field experiences. In fact, most of the course

connections fell into this category. For instance, a few people who had the opportunity to

observe ESL instruction referenced the idea of behaviorism. Brandon noted that the adult

ESL instructor in the Somali Community Center "incorporated many elements of

Behavorism into the lesson." He then went on to give specific examples of imitation,

repetition, and feedback, such as the following:

> A lot of it was like Behaviorism, where it was like, just repeats, you know,
> "homemaker," "homemaker," "homemaker,"…'cause a lot of them are
> housewives, so it was like "you are a homemaker." "You are unemployed."
> "Unemployed."…So, it was like, very parrot-like, a lot of it.

Another commonly cited theory of second language acquisition was Stephen Krashen's

(1981) Monitor Model. For example, Chris, in referencing the notion of an *affective filter*,

argued that the anxiety experienced by his interviewee upon moving to the U.S. (New

York City) was in part responsible for his not being able to process input. Jennifer

referred to the distinction between *acquisition* and *learning* and the important notion of

comprehensible input. For instance, she argued that one of her interviewees began

"acquiring" English during the early months of his life (through simple exposure) and

later started "learning" it (more consciously) in school.

At some point, most of the participants also mentioned the Critical Period

Hypothesis, which, stated concisely, refers to the idea that older students may not be able

to use innate biological structures in learning a second language; rather, they may have to

rely on more general learning abilities (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Brandon commented that his interviewee, a Somali man, had learned three African languages before hitting puberty and pointed out that he had learned these languages within the Critical Period, which accounted in part for his success: "He learned all of his stuff by age 11 or 12. He was in [the] Critical Period." Similarly, Jennifer's two interviewees, both high-school-aged students from Mexico, had started learning English before reaching puberty. In her words, "because these children began learning English before and during the Critical Period, they were able to learn to speak English without an accent."

In contrast, Chris talked about how his interviewee, a man from Colombia, started learning English toward the end of the Critical Period and thus spoke with an accent and imperfect grammar.

The SLA theory cited most frequently by participants was Vygotskian-based Sociocultural Theory (SCT). One of the possible reasons this theory was referenced so often was that it was emphasized quite a bit by the instructor. Most of the participants drew on this theory to discuss and justify the fundamental role of interaction in second language acquisition. Jackie, for instance, after observing a class at the local Newcomer Academy, noted that "by fostering conversation between the students, they are given another avenue to practice and/or learn the English language." She explicitly cited the tenets of SCT to support her claim. In some cases, she referred to the mediating role of the L1 in this process, such as in the example that follows, in which she talks about one of her observations at the Academy:

> The Hispanic student, he's a boy, and he's a little further behind the other students. He's not enthusiastic about it. He doesn't really know what to say, when to say it…and I was wondering if that's because he didn't have another Hispanic student in the class as to where they could maybe speak in Spanish to themselves

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to catch each other up maybe to other students…The Burmese students have that…They'll speak, like when the teacher's not speaking and someone doesn't understand, another student'll speak Burmese to them and basically catch them up. And I was wondering if that was the reason maybe why he was like a little behind.

Another participant, Jessie, referenced SCT to interpret the learning of her interviewee:

Sociocultural theory can also explain her learning because she learned by talking and interacting with individuals who spoke English…Because she interacted with her English-speaking neighbor and other English-speaking interlocutors at the school, she was able to learn how to speak and comprehend the language. I believe that she was able to interact with individuals in her ZPD at the elementary school. Because she had so much support from those around her, she was able to learn quickly and at a higher level.

Third, the participants connected their field experiences to particular ideas and concepts from in-class lectures and PowerPoint presentations as well as required course readings. These links clustered around three major topics: factors involved in second language acquisition, program models and their effectiveness, and specific findings from empirical studies.

Regarding factors involved in SLA, most of the focal participants demonstrated their understanding of specific learner variables (*e.g.*, age, learning styles, motivation, prior education, L1 literacy, personality), and some of them also mentioned instructional and contextual variables (*e.g.*, quality of program, social climate, access to native speakers). Brandon, for example, described his interviewee's success in terms of his age on arrival (11 years old, pre-Critical Period) and his solid foundation of other languages and some previous education. Jackie wrote that her interviewee's success was likely due to her flexibility with learning styles (aural, visual, and kinesthetic). Jessie also mentioned learning styles as important to L2 learning, although, when explaining her

interviewee's success learning English, she tended to foreground her high level of motivation:

> She was extremely motivated to learn English. Her motivation was mostly instrumental motivation. She needed to learn the language for immediate and practical goals, such as functioning in an English-speaking community and helping her children in school. Her strong motivation truly helped her learn English and definitely played a role in the speed with which she learned English.

Chris likewise emphasized his interviewee's high level of motivation: "His motivation to learn English certainly helps him to learn and to persevere through tough times of culture shock. His motivations are both instrumental and integrative." However, Chris also recognized the possibility that other learner variables were at play, such as personality or access to native English speakers. In her final presentation to the class, Jennifer noted that, from talking with several students, their level of success seemed to be based largely on whether or not they liked their teachers and classes. This statement hints at the role of quality teachers and instruction.

The participants likewise commented frequently on the different types of ESL/bilingual education program models and their effectiveness, and a few of them related this information explicitly to their field experiences. For instance, Jackie commented that her interviewee's ESL experience seemed to be " a mixture of submersion and transitional bilingual education. While students were allowed to speak to one another in their first language, the teacher spoke in English." Of course, Jackie's statement reflects an incomplete understanding of transitional bilingual education, since the student was not actually *taught* in her L1. As part of her project, Jessie observed a sheltered English classroom and commented on the modifications and strategies being

employed by the teacher (*e.g.*, repetition, modeling, mimicry, reinforcement, integration of language and content).

Chris made some interesting connections between dual-language programs and his observations of bilingual services at a Hispanic church. For example, he argued that members "could have a difficult time learning English at church because they can wait for the priest to speak [translate] in their stronger language." He related this finding to the literature on dual-language programs, which suggests that there should be strict boundaries between the two languages so that "falling back" on one's dominant language is not always an option (see Baker, 2001). Moreover, he claimed that the church service was like a dual-language program in that "both languages are present, although no one is expected to speak a language they do not know." In other words, no one is forced to speak the L2 without being ready to do so. Based on class conversations and her interviews, Jennifer criticized sheltered English programs on the basis that "the students are all at different levels of learning English. It would be impossible for the teacher to give individual attention to each student, so sometimes the kids who know the most are not challenged." She also talked about how one of her interviewees (Anna) began school in this city with an advantage given that she had previously been in a dual-language program that had provided her with some foundation in her native language, Spanish.

In one of the in-class group discussions, Brandon referred to English immersion and noted how his interviewee's experiences seemed to run counter to the arguments made against this model in the literature: "He said the immersion thing is very helpful, even though our literature says that's gonna be much more harmful. He thought it was useful, especially when he was younger." Of course, since this individual was not initially

exposed to English in the U.S. but rather in Kenya, there are likely several contextual factors (*e.g.*, status given to the L1) that Brandon is not taking into consideration when making this comparison. Indeed, English *im*mersion in a non-English-dominant country (*e.g.*, French-speaking Canada) is very different from English *sub*mersion in the U.S. (Baker, 2001), and thus a direct comparison of this type cannot be made.

Knowledge of local community resources. Another type of knowledge evidenced by all six focal participants was a growing familiarity with local community resources. For their field experiences, the prospective teachers were required to leave campus and familiarize themselves with the lives, experiences, and/or education of a community of non-native English speakers. Through this project, they learned about immigrant and refugee community centers, schools serving ELLs, Spanish-speaking churches, and several other resources. As described below in a separate section entitled "Instructional Implications," the participants articulated explicit ways in which they could draw on some of these resources when working with ELLs from specific communities.

Brandon and Elena spent most of their time for the project at the Somali Community Center. At this site they were able to learn about the services offered by the Center (*e.g.*, free ESL classes, medical referrals, information about schools, legal aid, computer classes), and they were also able to interact directly with several of the staff members (*e.g.*, the ESL instructor, the director, several administrative personnel). Additionally, they learned that most of the individuals who use the Center are refugees from Africa, although it also serves refugees and immigrants from other parts of the world. They also found out that the Center offers translation services for several

languages (*e.g.*, Arabic, Somali). Furthermore, Brandon and Elena familiarized themselves with a local Somali restaurant as well as a Somali dance team.

Jackie and Jessie spent most of their time in school settings. Jackie conducted observations and interviews at the local Newcomer Academy and learned that this program serves recent immigrants and refugees who speak little to no English, who are illiterate in their native languages, and who have had little to no prior education. Jessie observed in a third-grade, sheltered English classroom that served students from several different language backgrounds. Being in school settings, both prospective teachers learned about sheltered techniques for working with ELLs and became aware of the challenges of working in multilingual, multi-level classrooms. They also discovered that both schools had full-time translators who could be called upon to communicate with parents. Moreover, Jackie learned about a website containing information for the local Hispanic community as well as about several Hispanic radio stations. According to her, "[these resources] allow students and their families a way to keep in touch with their Hispanic background while still feeling as if they are a part of the American culture." Jessie chose to attend a Spanish-language church in addition to her primary site and thus familiarized herself with yet another community resource.

The other two participants, Chris and Jennifer, spent most of their time for the project at Hispanic churches. As such, they learned about aspects like the "history of the parish" (Chris) and the church populations and activities (*e.g.*, bilingual and children's Masses, youth group, BBQ dinners). Chris interacted directly with the priest of the church he attended and noted that he could draw on this bilingual community leader as an instructional resource. Jennifer spent time observing in her church's nursery school and

identified specific ways in which she as a future teacher could collaborate with the teacher to improve the early learning of Latino students. Through their field experiences, the teachers learned a great deal about ELLs in the local community, and they would likely not have developed this type of knowledge had they not been required to participate in this experience *in addition to* the course.

Knowledge of cultural practices, histories, and values. Most of the participants also came away from their field experiences with new knowledge of practices, histories, and values that were specific to the cultural communities they had chosen. Both Brandon and Elena chose the Somali community because they began the course with substantial prior knowledge of Hispanic immigrant communities and thus wanted something different. Brandon said that the Somali culture was the "one I was least informed about." Elena likewise commented that she "wanted a full new experience and perspective." The other four focal participants (Chris, Jackie, Jessie, Jennifer) chose to focus on the local Hispanic community. While Jessie and Jennifer had studied Spanish as a foreign language for a number of years and had done some traveling in Spanish-speaking countries, they still felt that they lacked knowledge of Hispanic cultures. Jessie, for example, told me that she had "never interacted with a Spanish-speaking community." She also said that she had never been around ELLs in U.S. schools.

Brandon and Elena frequently emphasized the central role of the Islamic religion in the lives and daily practices of the Somalis they met and observed. They learned that many Somalis avoid physical contact with members of the opposite sex, that they often segregate by sex, and that many women and girls continue to wear *hijabs* (head coverings) in the U.S. From her interactions with several Somali nationals, Elena came to

the conclusion that "a lot of them speak, not without emotion, but it's different than American hand motion and talking." She noticed that, depending on who their interlocutors are, Somali women "don't show too much into the conversation." Of course, she also recognized that these women may interact differently with people with whom they are more familiar and comfortable. Brandon and Elena's new understandings of interactional practices within this community have clear implications for working with Somali children in a classroom setting.

Jessie, Chris, and Jennifer all came to the conclusion that the Latino families they observed and interacted with (particularly at the Hispanic churches) seemed to place a high value on families and community networks. According to Jessie, "family seems to be a large and important part of their lives." Similarly, Chris stated that he "learned that this parish community places high value on families and children" and that "youth group members and adult churchgoers seem to be very close to each other." Along the same lines, Jennifer said that she "learned that community is very important to this group of Hispanic people. These people are very interconnected and know a lot about the other people in their community." She likewise commented on how many Hispanic homes in the area seemed to be multigenerational. Both Jessie and Jennifer commented on the important role of music and dance in the lives of the Latinos they had observed at their church sites. Chris talked a lot in his reflections about the code-switching practices he observed within his church context.

Brandon, in addition to participating in the outside-of-class portion of the field experience, also took it upon himself to read about Somalia and the Somalian culture on the Internet (*e.g.*, *Wikipedia*). Doing so gave him background knowledge that helped him

make better sense of his observations and interactions. During one of our interviews, he

elaborated a bit on what he had learned about Somalia's history:

> Somalis themselves as an ethnic group are basically Northeast Africa. Horn of
> Africa. And their lands were completely cut apart based on very arbitrary colonial
> land agreements between European powers, and…they don't really have that self-
> determination even now. You still have all these countries just fighting each other.
> They're tribes or whatever.

In his final presentation, Brandon provided even more information likely taken from the
Internet:

> Somali people live in Somalia and parts of Ethiopia and Kenya. Most are Sunni
> Muslim. Many are familiar with Arabic because of the requirement to read the
> Koran. There are 5,000 Somalis living in [this city]. There are 35,000 in the U.S.
> The Somali Civil War of 1988 led to the Somali Diaspora.

Jackie was the only participant in my study who did not engage in a non-academic

activity or event within her community of choice. Instead, all of her time was spent at the

Newcomer Academy. For this reason, she was not able to articulate specific cultural

practices, values, or histories as did the other participants.

Knowledge of student and community characteristics. Additionally, the

prospective teachers gained knowledge of some of the demographic characteristics of

specific ELL communities, such as their immigration status and language proficiencies.

For instance, Brandon learned during an interview with someone at the Somali

Community Center that the Somali population in this city is categorized as follows: "71%

refugee, 11% asylee, 10% citizen, 7% other, 1% TPS [Temporary Protected Status]."

Elena pointed out that the local Somali community is quite different from the Hispanic

immigrant communities with which she is already very familiar:

> Many of them are refugees, a whole different situation than like coming to this
> country and looking for opportunities. You're told to come to this country, and
> you have to make opportunity once you're here. It's like a whole different kind of

drive and what the students are looking for. It's a different story than what I'm used to knowing.

On a similar note, Jackie commented that "many of the families of the students who attend the International Newcomer Academy are participants in the [city] Refugee Program." She went on to claim that "it is common for ELLs to not have had any formal schooling," although this thinking is probably a result of where she chose to complete her project and should not be generalized to ELLs outside of the Newcomer Academy.

The participants made many remarks about the language proficiencies of the individuals they were observing and interacting with, including both children and their parents. Brandon and Elena concluded that many Somalis in the area had notably low levels of proficiency in English, although, again, this finding may be an over-generalization based on the limited number of people with whom they interacted at the Somali Community Center. Brandon noted that their "functional skills at speaking were very limited" and that everything the adult students said in the ESL class he observed was "very scripted." Elena agreed, noting that the language being used and practiced in the classroom seemed greatly restricted:

> Beyond that, they did not understand English. Those were scripted questions, so they knew what they were getting into, but if you tried to ask anything else outside of that, they would be like, okay, the teacher, "What are they trying to say now?" And neither did they even look like they wanted to pursue a conversation. It was just like, "I wanna practice this 'cause I wanna hear myself say it, but I'm not looking for…" It didn't matter what I said back to them.

That said, on at least one occasion Elena acknowledged a few good reasons for why English learning might not be a priority in many refugees' lives:

> It is easy and understandable why and how people may not focus on English when they first come here to America. They are coming from war-torn nations that they barely have escaped. This is reason to focus [on] the aspects of one's life that a person is already doing good in instead of forcing one's self to really learn

something new, like English. They have their whole life to take care of; sometimes English is not at the top of the list.

In contrast to Brandon's and Elena's remarks about the Somali community, the participants who focused on the Hispanic community discovered that this group's English proficiency was often quite high. Jessie, for instance, noticed how all the Hispanic children in the third-grade classroom she observed *spoke* English fairly well, as they were able to answer her and the teacher's questions. Nevertheless, many of the same students struggled with reading comprehension. This is what she had to say about the students' reading using the example of a boy from Lithuania:

> It's really interesting to see the different reading levels of the students, because even if some of them can speak pretty good English, they can't read it…The little Lithuanian boy, he can read English perfectly, but he has no idea what he's saying. He has no idea what he's reading. And, he was just kinda like "yes," "no" all the time. He doesn't really know, like, what's going on…He can pronounce the words perfectly…But he does not know what he's reading. Cannot answer the questions.

Jessie went on to mention her perceived correlation between parents who spoke only Spanish in the home and struggling readers of English:

> I think it also depends on whether the parents speak fluent English or not. Because sometimes the parents really can't help them with their reading, and that just makes them fall behind. Like I've noticed that in my classes, 'cause some of the kids who really struggle with reading. I've asked like casually, "What languages do your parents speak?" And they'll say "Only Spanish only."

For his part, Chris talked about how surprised he was to find out that church members spoke English as well as they did:

> I've actually been surprised, and maybe that's just an assumption I make that like Hispanic adults in the United States, they're probably just fresh over the border or something. They don't know much English. But, some of them know English well.

Jennifer also commented positively on the English proficiency of the Hispanic individuals she met: "Most of the children spoke very good English. Although they made a few grammatical errors, they all spoke with hardly any accent." It is worth noting that Jennifer, in contrast to the other participants in the study, placed more emphasis on the mistakes they were making (*e.g.*, grammar, fluency, use of non-standard forms).

Several of the prospective teachers stressed the point that members of the communities they had been observing and interacting with seemed very motivated to learn English. Elena, for example, stated that "English seemed to play a very big role in what [her interviewee] believed was necessary when it came to getting a job here in America." Similarly, Chris noted that "there are members of the community who want to learn English, and their motivation is real. It is evident that they want their children to learn English." These comments are important because they go against common public perception that immigrants are unmotivated or unwilling to learn English (Tse, 2001). That said, several of the participants also pointed out that Hispanic adults/parents often do not speak or understand much English, which precludes them in many ways from helping their children with homework. From conversations with the third-grade teacher, Jessie concluded that many of the Hispanic parents at the school were uninvolved in their children's education, as they rarely showed up for parent-teacher conferences or responded to the teacher's written messages. Of course, there are other ways for monolingual parents to become involved in a child's L2 education that Jessie may not have considered.

Both Jessie and Jennifer mentioned Hispanic community members' native language proficiency in addition to their levels of English. Jessie noted that "the students

that speak more Spanish in the classroom are those whose family members speak only

Spanish at home," suggesting that this input in the home may be helping them maintain

their first language. Jennifer spoke with several Spanish-speaking students about their

Spanish literacy and learned that "although they could speak Spanish and read some

Spanish, they could not write in Spanish and did not have a full knowledge of Spanish

grammar." For this reason, they were struggling in their high-school Spanish classes even

though Spanish was their first language. Jennifer described her initial reaction to this

news as follows:

> A lot of them, at least at the church that I go to, are bilingual, but they're actually not biliterate. They just speak Spanish. And they actually, what I found really interesting. 'cause they speak fluent Spanish, and then they were like, "Oh yeah, we take Spanish." And I was like, "Wait, what?" Because they don't, because they were actually born here, they are kind of first, I guess, second generation, all of their formal education is…and, so, while they grew up learning Spanish in their home, that was just kind of conversational. And, then, as soon as they went to pre-school, they were learning English.

By engaging in the field experience, the participants had a concrete means of reinforcing

much of the learning that was being promoted in the foundations course. The

understandings they developed were thus richer and more personalized. In the next

section, I describe some of the ideas they had for translating this learning into practical

applications for the classroom.

Instructional implications

There were two primary goals associated with the cross-cultural field experience.

The first was for prospective teachers to develop accurate understandings about a specific

ELL community, including its culture, language use, daily experiences, and education.

The second built off of the first and was for teachers to articulate culturally relevant

instructional strategies and implications based on what they had learned about this community. In this section I present the classroom strategies and implications that the six focal participants discussed as a result of their learning in the field experience (see Table 9 for a summary).

Learning about students. By the end of the project, all six teachers emphasized the importance of learning about their students. More specifically, they stated that they would benefit from knowing about their students' personal interests, their cultures, their outside-of-class interactions and experiences, and their home situations. For example, Brandon said that he would try to "find out what influences students," such as styles, people, music, and movies. Elena mentioned that she would learn about the "rules of physical interaction" of specific cultures so that she could better understand students who might be reluctant to speak up in class. Jessie said that she would want to "know and understand aspects of students' cultures" so that she could determine "whether something in the culture or the family is influencing performance" in the classroom. She likewise noted that she would "be sensitive to students' home situations and make accommodations for students who do not have access to computers, the Internet, or parents." Chris mentioned that he would want to be informed about students' lives and experiences outside of the classroom so that these practices could be capitalized on for instruction. Jennifer also stated that, as a teacher, she would want to know about "people's actual cultures and experiences."

The participants identified a few specific ways in which they would go about obtaining this information about their students. First, half of the participants (Brandon, Elena, and Jessie) stated that they would read books or articles about their students'

Table 9. Instructional Implications Identified by the Participants

Learning about students
    Personal interests
    Cultural affiliations
    Outside-of-class interactions and experiences
    Home situations

Drawing on students' cultural and linguistic practices
    Discussion of cultural practices and knowledge (*e.g.*, religion)
    Holidays
    Globes, maps, pictures (representations of the world)
    Song and dance
    Non-school literacy practices
    Familiar cultural references
    Announcement of local community events
    Multicultural, multilingual literature
    Family and culturally based projects
    Parent involvement
    L1 use
    Incorporation of pop culture

Drawing on community resources
    Immigrant and refugee community centers
    Guest lecturers
    Translators
    Church staff
    Tutors/mentors
    Cultural groups and events (*e.g.,* dance teams, festivals)
    Parents
    Websites, radio stations, television

Providing comprehensible input
    Repetition
    Multiple modalities (oral/visual)
    Simplified language
    Gestures
    Modeling
    Hands-on materials
    L1 use

Fostering interaction
  Pair- and small-group work
  Connect ELLs with native English speakers

Creating a comfortable classroom
  Accepting, welcoming environment
  Safe space that encourages dialogue and questions

Offering extra help for ELLs
  Extra materials
  One-on-one time
  Tutoring

Understanding the SLA process
  Limits on processing
  Patience, sympathy, sensitive to the challenges
  Nature of errors
  Reasonable expectations

Empowering students
  Emphasis on higher education
  Encouragement, positive beliefs, high expectations
  Awareness of the role of good teaching
  Challenging stereotypes
  Advocacy
  Positive inter-group relationships

Involving parents
  Parent-teacher conferences (with translators)
  Communication via emails, letters, and notes
  Guest lecturers in classroom
  Open house
  Picnic days, BBQs, carnivals
  Family-based homework assignments

cultures. Second, two of them (Brandon and Jennifer) said that they would engage

students in personalized writing assignments (*e.g.*, journals, blogs) that encouraged them

to share their interests and experiences. Third, all six teachers claimed that they would talk directly with students to learn more about their lives and cultures. Fourth, two teachers (Jessie and Chris) said that they would talk to other teachers who had worked with particular students and/or observe these students in other teachers' classrooms. Fifth, both Chris and Jennifer told me that they would find out what events were going on in their students' communities (*e.g.*, festivals, plays, sporting events, holiday celebrations) and then attend these functions. Jennifer added that she could also visit community and religious centers in the community. Sixth, Elena stated that she would get to know her students on a personal level by observing them interact with other students, especially students from their own background. Last, Jessie claimed that she would work to "build a strong relationship with parents to learn about children and culture." All of these are great strategies to learn more about particular students and their cultures, and participating in the field experience helped the teachers reflect on specific ways to accomplish this in their future practice.

    Drawing on students' cultural and linguistic practices. Of all the instructional strategies and implications teachers articulated, a large portion fell into the category of drawing on students' cultural and linguistic practices. Importantly, many of the practices mentioned had their roots in participants' respective field experiences. In this manner, the teachers talked about ways to use students' funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) to make instruction more enriching and engaging not only for ELLs but also for native English speakers.

    Brandon, for example, mentioned on several occasions that he intended to "showcase the diversity-within-the-diversity" by allowing African students to talk about

their culture-specific practices and knowledge (*e.g.*, Somali students might talk about what it means to be Sunni Muslim). Jackie said that she would bring in discussions of particular holidays celebrated by her students, and she emphasized that she wanted all of her students to feel as if their cultures were just as important as American culture. In addition to the idea of holidays, Jackie said that she would create a welcoming classroom by displaying globes, world maps, and pictures representing different cultures and languages. Importantly, this was a practice she observed at the Newcomer Academy. Both Jessie and Jennifer had the idea of incorporating song and dance into their instruction. For example, Jessie felt that students might enjoy learning spelling and grammar rules more if they could use songs as mnemonic tools. In one of our interviews, Jennifer elaborated on a specific cultural (gendered) practice she learned about at her church site as well as a particular instructional activity that could derive from this practice:

> A bunch of the high-school-aged Hispanic girls have a sewing circle, and they make a lot of their own clothes, because their mothers all sew. That's something they're all really into. They'll buy fabrics, and they were one time flipping through *In Style* magazines. If you were in a History class, what a cool idea to have someone explore fashion of a certain historical period and actually create a costume. That would be such an amazing way for them to use a skill that they had and to really learn something about a historical period.

A few of the students (*e.g.*, Jackie, Jessie, Chris) suggested using students' names and familiar cultural references as part of word problems and other texts. Chris also provided a nice example of a way to integrate a particular cultural reference with which his future students might be familiar: "If I were to teach geography and we went into shapes, instead of using the Gaza Pyramids, for this group I could use the pyramids that are in Central America." While Chris was eventually able to articulate a number of specific

strategies, it is worth mentioning that, of all the participants in the study, he was the one who struggled the most with translating what he had learned from the field experience into practical applications. His responses often included tentative expressions such as "somehow I will try to build upon [her prior experiences]," "it'd be cool if I could come up with ways to incorporate these cool cultural things," "I wasn't sure. Math is kind of hard to…," "I was having a hard time coming up with good things," and "I don't know." This finding is important because it suggests that prospective teachers like Chris may need more guidance in moving from knowing to applying.

Some of the other culturally-responsive strategies and implications mentioned by the participants included the following: assigning stories, novels, and poems dealing with Latino families and cultures (Chris and Jessie); asking students to do projects requiring them to investigate their family histories and cultures and encouraging them to talk about their families (Jessie and Jennifer); involving parents in the classroom (Jennifer); making multilingual, multicultural texts available in the classroom (Jessie), [teachers] learning and using students' native languages as much as possible (Chris); and, finally, incorporating discussions of pop culture with which students might be familiar and, in general, drawing on students' personal experiences and interests (Chris).

While all the teachers spoke of specific ways in which to draw on students' funds of knowledge, one of them (Jennifer) argued that ELLs might not want to identify with their home cultures. She referred to her own experience with religion as an analogy:

> We, as people, in, I guess, intellectual world, and, who have pretty much lived in America our whole lives, think "Oh my God, it's so important for them to maintain their cultures," but, I mean, I think one of the things that's interesting to me is the kids were wearing a Bulls jersey underneath their shirt, so, to them, do they even consider, I mean, okay, I guess, the most thing I can compare it to, is like, my mom's Jewish, and she was raised very religiously, but, to me, no one

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> where I lived was Jewish, and, I think, had they been, it would have been a little bit more exciting to be Jewish, but I just don't understand that…And, it would have made me really different in high school, and I didn't ever wanna be different. I wanted to be normal. And I think that the average Hispanic immigrant at high school has to be normal, too. So, how do you, either A, is it, is it kind of like rude, "rude's" not the right word, but is it presumptuous of us to assume that maintaining their heritage is the most important thing? 'Cause, you know, most of the kids I've talked to kind of feel the same way I do. They don't really wanna be so Spanish. They don't wanna be Mexican. They wanna be American.

Although it is certainly true that teachers should not make assumptions about their students' backgrounds and desired affiliations, Jennifer seems unaware of the underlying reason why many Hispanic ELLs might not want to identify with their home culture in the first place: the low status this non-mainstream culture is often given in U.S. society. Importantly, Jennifer should be guided toward a deeper, more critical examination of this perspective, which could be considered assimilationist in nature. In particular, she implies that "being normal" means blending in to the mainstream, majority culture and, in the process, giving up other identities that might include different languages, cultures, and/or religious beliefs. Thus, it can be argued that, in her opinion, there are good, justifiable reasons for Hispanics (and members of other minority groups) to assimilate into U.S. culture and learn English while disassociating with their home cultures and languages. Stated differently, she seems to consider it an unwanted stigma to deviate from mainstream norms.

Fortunately, Elena was a part of this same conversation, which took place during one of the in-class group discussions. She challenged Jennifer's thinking from a more critical (and even personal) viewpoint, as seen here in her response:

> The thing that's different, within that, is that Mexican culture is looked down like dirt compared to other cultures. Like the fact that we are studying Egyptian pyramids…I remember my whole fifth grade was Egyptian pyramids, and then I told my mom, "I wanna go to Egypt." And I was like, "I don't think I'll get to go

to Egypt." So I went to Mexico with my family, and we saw the pyramids in Mexico. I never even knew there were pyramids in Mexico until my parents took me to Mexico. Why don't I know that? Why is that not highlighted. Why is that not a big issue?...It just seems like the students who are in a lot of ESL classes, or ELL programs, like are ELLs, are from all these different countries that are not completely given credit. Like, they're not from European countries. So, it's like, you're not represented in history. That's the problem.

Of all the participants in the study, Elena was typically the one who offered a counter to more mainstream ways of thinking, such as that expressed by Jennifer above, and her unique perspectives highlight the need for more diversity in the university's teacher education program.

Drawing on community resources. Just as the teachers said they would tap students' cultural and linguistic practices, they also talked about ways in which they could draw on the various community resources they had learned about. All of the participants mentioned the sites they had spent time at as potential resources for instruction. For instance, both Brandon and Elena commented that they would make sure Somali parents and children were familiar with the services offered by the Somali Community Center (*e.g.*, translation, legal aid, after-school help, computer classes, ESL classes). Brandon likewise stated that he would invite guest lecturers from the Center to talk about Somali culture, history, and immigration.

Jackie, who spent her time at the Newcomer Academy, said that she would access individuals and materials available from this program to help her teach ELLs. For example, she could find a translator to help "aid [kids] in understanding what's going on in the classroom." Jessie mentioned using the translator at the elementary school in which she observed (or at her own future school) to "write letters home to parents, read letters from parents in Spanish, and communicate verbally with parents during conferences."

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Brandon, who learned that the Somali Community Center offered translation services in Somali, Swahili, Amharic, Arabic, and Farsi (for a fee), also talked about drawing on this resource for the purpose of parent-teacher conferences.

Jessie, Chris, and Jennifer identified several possible ways in which to use local Hispanic churches as resources for their teaching. For instance, Jessie said that she could talk with bilingual church staff to "educate her about the Latino community, about how to interact with them, and how to support students." Chris listed various resources at his church site (*e.g.*, the bilingual priest, bilingual mass, youth group) but did not elaborate on how he could utilize any of them to improve his instruction besides claiming that the bilingual priest "is an excellent resource for those who would like to practice their English." Jennifer gave a somewhat more insightful response, saying that she would "reach out to religious leaders in the neighborhood of the school" as a way of "connecting with the larger Hispanic community" and possibly identifying "tutors or mentors within the community." Jennifer also stated that she would try to work with the nursery school she learned about to "help them form a curriculum that would help prepare the Hispanic students to enter kindergarten." Noticing that this program had a number of resources of its own (*e.g.*, books in Spanish, computer games in English), she saw an opportunity for real collaboration in which both sides could benefit.

Other community resources mentioned by participants included: "work[ing] with the Somali dance team to demonstrate or talk about Somali dancing" (Brandon); "work[ing] with Somali students, their families, and local restaurants to bring in food" (Brandon); and, finding ways to make use of Hispanic websites, Hispanic radio stations, and local cultural festivals (Jackie). Importantly, neither Brandon nor Jackie elaborated

on specific educational activities that might incorporate these resources, suggesting that they would likely require more guidance in translating the knowledge they gained into useful instructional practice.

Providing comprehensible input. One of the main points stressed throughout the semester was that ELLs needed language input that was comprehensible to them. Accordingly, the prospective teachers articulated a number of different ways in which they could take into account their students' levels of proficiency and more effectively communicate with them. Many of the teachers mentioned that they had become aware of these strategies through their field experience. The modifications most commonly cited were: repetition, multiple modalities (oral and visual input), simplified language, gestures, modeling, hands-on materials, and students' L1.

Brandon and Jessie commented that they would repeat instructions to make sure all of their students understood what they were expected to do. Most of the participants also talked about ways to provide input in multiple forms, such as through "writing directions on the wall and/or handouts" (Brandon), providing visual aids to supplement use of the English language (Elena), and using closed captioning with videos (Jackie). When I asked Jackie to explain what she had in mind with closed captioning, this is what she said:

> Give the kids something to relate to. And so with that I'll consider more close captioning on videos, understanding that the Hispanic students or anyone who was in the ESL program might not be able to understand everything that's being said. So maybe to have English where they could read it on the screen also, just give them two different ways to interpret the information that's being given.

It is important to point out that Jackie took this idea from her interviewee, who said that using closed captioning when watching television had helped her improve her English.

Other teachers talked about modifying their speech to be more comprehensible for non-native English speakers. Both Brandon and Jackie said they would use "basic" or "simplified" English, thus making conscious choices about the vocabulary they chose. Jessie added that she would modify her speech by limiting the usage of metaphors and puns and by pausing to explain potentially confusing expressions. Jackie commented that she would use more hand gestures to communicate her points. Both Jessie and Chris stated that they would model their actions and use models to help explain important concepts. Chris, who plans to teach math, said that he could adopt a more didactic approach (which involves modeling procedures) with ELLs. He likewise talked about using hands-on materials such as algebra blocks, which would allow students to participate in activities without relying so much on use of the L2.

Four of the participants discussed ways in which to use their students' native languages. Jackie, for instance, mentioned the incorporation of subtitles on videos or transcripts of lessons provided in students' L1s. Jessie and Jennifer said that they would provide texts in both languages, and Jennifer added that she would have her students read literary texts by authors from their own culture. Importantly, these books would include phrases or sentences in their native languages. Elena said that she would use the first language of the students only "when it's not clear that this is what this [means in English]." One possible explanation for Elena's decision to limit her use of another language in the classroom is that she felt that the Somali teacher she observed in the ESL class at the Community Center had over-relied on the use of Somali during the lesson. In other words, she believed that the students were not speaking and hearing enough English.

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Fostering interaction. Another common strategy mentioned by most of the teachers involved fostering interaction, both among ELLs and with native English speakers. Almost everyone alluded to the benefits of having students work in pairs or small groups, which would allow time and opportunities for meaningful discussion. For example, Brandon stated that he could have students exchange papers and critique each others' work, study vocabulary together, and talk about texts they had read. For her part, Jackie mentioned that she would "break the students up into groups to cater to different students that are on different levels" and avoid an overly teacher-centered classroom.

Moreover, the teachers pointed out ways in which they would connect ELLs with native English speakers. Brandon said that he would "pair immigrant and non-immigrant students" together for assignments. Jennifer wrote that she could "pair ELLs with native-speaking student tutors trained to serve as mentors to ELLs" and, assuming that ELLs were in self-contained classrooms, that they would still "interact with native speakers at lunch and in electives." Jackie commented that she would pair ELLs with a "big brother in the classroom" who could serve as an interlocutor and helper. Finally, both Jackie and Chris said that they would encourage students to become involved in extra-curricular activities such as clubs and sports teams, since these were perhaps more "comfortable" settings in which students could practice the language with native speakers.

Creating a comfortable classroom. A somewhat related idea expressed by most of the participants included creating a comfortable, non-threatening classroom environment in which ELLs would feel safe. Jackie said that she wanted students to "feel invited" so that they would "open up to the teacher and let her know what their problems are," such as when they do not understand the information being presented. Elena, who plans to

teach theater, claimed that she would create a safe space that encouraged students to

"play with language" and to feel "comfortable enough to have a conversation when

necessary." She noted that her interviewee, a woman from Somalia, had been allowed to

wear her headdress in U.S. public schools and not be judged and that this level of comfort

had made a big difference in her education. Interestingly, Elena even went as far as to

argue that adapting her teaching for ELLs might not be so necessary as long as students

felt comfortable and respected:

> I do not think that adapting the way I teach is really an issue compared to always
> having inclusive and well-rounded situations, such as providing a space for
> sharing life experience and allowing each story to be heard and respected within
> the classroom.

While her ideas are important, she may be ignoring or downplaying some of the other

strategies often necessary for the full inclusion of ELLs (*e.g.*, providing comprehensible

input, adapting difficult texts).

Offering extra help for ELLs. Half of the focal participants recognized that ELLs

may require extra help and said that they would offer this help when necessary. Jackie

stated that she would provide "supplemental worksheets focused on particular areas of

difficulty," such as certain grammatical issues that her students were struggling with.

Jessie added that she would make time for "one-on-one help within the classroom" and

also that she would "supply extra materials for students from low-SES backgrounds."

Both Jessie and Chris commented that they could help ELLs identify tutoring

opportunities either before or after school. Chris noted that these opportunities could be

available in the students' native languages.

Understanding the SLA process. Additionally, half of the teachers pointed out the

importance of being familiar with the SLA process, suggesting that teachers need to

know how second languages are actually acquired over time. Brandon, for instance, mentioned that he would keep in mind that "there are limits on processing." In other words, students' brains can only take in so much new information at any given point in time. Jessie told me that she would "be patient" with and "sympathetic" to ELLs and "realize that they are probably trying hard." Furthermore, she said that she would be more sensitive to the "nature of errors" that second language learners make when acquiring an L2. She also stated that she would "hold reasonable expectations" for ELLs. For her part, Jennifer commented that she would be more "sensitive to the challenges of learning an L2" and "promote confidence in [her students'] communicative abilities."

Empowering students. All six teachers mentioned that they would identify and implement ways to empower the ELLs they taught. Significantly, many of their ideas correspond to those described by Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990) in their seminal study focused on the effective features of successful programs for ELLs. This was one of the assigned readings for the course. That said, the participants were encouraged to go beyond the reading and articulate specific ways in which they could draw on these ideas in their own future teaching.

Brandon, recognizing that ELLs are typically under-represented in colleges and universities, noted that he would "emphasize higher education" and "inform [his students] of the benefits and the process." Similarly, Elena discussed how she would encourage her students to achieve to their full potential:

> I ideally would encourage my students to believe that they can do and become anything they truly want to be and that a great foundation with education and determination will be the driving force for them no matter what gender, race, or ethnicity my students will be. They will always be able to believe that anything is possible if they are willing to do the work to get there.

While assuming an empowering stance, it is noteworthy that Elena chooses to focus on "determination" and "hard work" as the most important factors responsible for a student's success. In this manner, she downplays other key factors such as access to quality teaching and strong academic programs. In somewhat of a contrast, Jessie pointed out that she would be careful "not to judge students if they [were] performing poorly in class, not assume they don't care or that they don't want to work." Instead, she would "look back at what [she herself was] doing as a teacher [and] not place blame on the students." Jessie's ideas suggest that she has learned to challenge deficit views toward students for whom English is a second language. Elena stated that she would encourage students to "challenge stereotypes" concerning representations of their cultural backgrounds in the media and that she would "treat everyone like they have the potential of doing amazing things." Thus, she too takes a fairly critical, empowering stance toward ELLs and their education.

Almost all the teachers claimed that they would hold high expectations for the ELLs in their classrooms. Brandon commented that he would "state [his] faith in their abilities" and hold a "tough/fair attitude in regards to attendance, tardiness, and assignments." Elena likewise stated that she would "have faith in her students" as well as "understand [their] limitations while gradually raising the bar." Similarly, Jackie said that she would "push students to do well" and "believe in them." Chris mentioned that he would "seek ways to help [ELLs]" and "not assume they have problems and can't succeed just because they can't speak English."

Chris also pointed out that he would work to "counteract negative stigmas" toward ELLs on a more school-wide level. For example, he said he could "become an

advocate for the acceptance of linguistic and cultural diversity in the whole school."

Along the same lines, Jennifer noted that she would "work to create an equal power relationship between majority and minority languages and cultures" so that "ELLs will feel more adequate and have positive attitudes toward learning English." She likely took this idea from one of the required course readings (Cummins, 1986), as Cummins discusses this same issue. As far as actually putting this idea into practice, Jennifer said that she could "include ELLs in group work with native [English] speakers so ELLs will feel more capable."

Involving parents in the education of ELLs. The last instructional strategy/implication that participants articulated was finding ways to involve students' parents. One of the main ideas emphasized throughout the course was that parents and families play a vital role in the learning and ultimate educational success of English language learners. Accordingly, the teachers in the study mentioned a number of conventional and non-conventional means through which to actively involve parents.

Several of the participants stated that they would reach out to parents through traditional parent-teacher conferences. Most of them likewise added that they would locate translators to facilitate effective communication during these meetings. For instance, Jackie acknowledged the need for translators when dealing with the parents of many ELLs:

> Realizing that their parents are learning also and they're still getting into this whole English thing and speaking English in a foreign country. Maybe I do need to get a translator for the parent-teacher conference or something like that. Just knowing where the parent is on their English learning journey will help me in trying to communicate with them about their student.

Brandon even went as far as to say that he would make parent-teacher conferences mandatory, perhaps by awarding students extra points if their parents came to visit him. Moreover, both Brandon and Jessie said that they would send parents (translated) emails, letters, and notes in order to keep the flow of communication open.

Several of the teachers commented that they would invite parents into their classrooms. Jackie, for example, said that she would like for parents to "come in and talk about something they experienced or…with a special dish or something that they do special that's particular to their family and their culture." Chris mentioned that he would invite parents to an open house to "let them see the classroom and see what's going on." Importantly, he also stated that he would want to "somehow capitalize on their cultural capital…and kind of bring that in and kind of make connections with them somehow." While a laudable goal, he admitted that he had yet to think about exactly how he could accomplish it, suggesting, again, that some teachers may require more guidance in translating useful ideas into actual practice.

Both Jessie and Jennifer talked about planning picnic days, carnivals, and BBQs for the parents to attend. In this way, they were drawing on specific cultural practices they had observed within the community (especially Jennifer's participation in the church BBQ dinners). Last, Jennifer commented that she could include family members in students' education by giving them "homework assignments that require students to speak to their families about their family history, etc." All of the ideas mentioned in this section are potentially productive ways in which the participants could actively involve their future ELLs' parents, and many of these suggested practices stem from their experiences in the field.

Beliefs developed through participation in the course and field experience

Beliefs about effective teaching practices. All six focal participants expressed

their opinions regarding effective teaching practices for ELLs. For the most part, these

ideas aligned with those promoted in the foundations course, suggesting that the

prospective teachers were internalizing at least some of the information being taught. For

instance, both Brandon and Jackie stressed the importance of combining language and

content instruction to ensure that ELLs did not fall far behind their native-English-

speaking counterparts. According to Brandon,

> A lot of these [programs] emphasize English so much it seems more detrimental.
> Teaching English through the content seems to be the best way of doing it. You
> cause so much more harm that it just doesn't balance in their other content, and
> their academic life and everything else.

Similarly, Jackie stated that

> It's more important, or equally important, to teach them content [as opposed to
> only correct English], realizing that it takes quite a while for someone to be fluent
> in a language. And for you to spend all your time focusing on that, which in your
> one year of teaching that student, you're probably not gonna be able to get them
> fluent in English. I think it's more important to teach them content that goes along
> with your class. Make sure they have the vocabulary and the different
> terminology they need for your class and understand it in English, but also
> incorporate that content so that they're learning two different things rather than
> just English.

These comments reflect substantial shifts in thinking when compared to some of the

participants' responses at the beginning of the semester, when "correct English" learning

was thought to be the main goal of instruction for ELLs. Several of the participants

likewise commented on the importance of knowing about students and their communities,

caring about them, and believing in them. In one of the in-class group discussions, Elena

elaborated on the example of a friend of hers from New York City who became a

language broker (McQuillan & Tse, 1995) for her family. This, in her opinion, is an

Table 10. Beliefs Expressed by the Participants Throughout the Semester

Beliefs about effective teaching practices
    Importance of combining language and content instruction
    Knowing about students and families, caring about them, and believing in them
    Holding high expectations and providing extra support to ELLs
    Communicating effectively with students and parents

Beliefs about other factors responsible for the success of ELLs
    Student motivation
    Willpower
    Determination
    Aptitude

Beliefs about the role of the L1 and C1
    Connection between L1 culture and high self-esteem
    Cultural diversity as a resource for all students
    Cross-linguistic transfer, L1 cognitive framework
    Relationship between L1 and positive identity
    Importance of learning English

Judgments
    Cultural practices
    ESL instruction
    Standard/non-standard varieties of English

Assumptions
    Cultural practices and values
    Occupations and SES
    English learning and literacy skills
    Interactional styles
    Importance of not making assumptions

Assumptions that were challenged
    Cultural practices
    Intra-group diversity
    ESL learning and teaching
    Use of other languages

example of something that teachers should know about given its potential effects on school success:

> At the same time, like, a part that we always forget, is like a lot of kids that do speak English, even though they might not read it or write it, they are the adult in that house. Like, when there's financial problems, they have to translate to someone what's going on in the house. I have a friend that…grew up fast because her brother had autism, and her parents only spoke Spanish. And she had to translate everything. So she knew if they didn't have money to pay for the bills. She knew if her brother was really close to passing away sometimes and stuff like that, a lot of things that, as a kid…that's like…class and it's culture and it's everything, it's like so many different levels to it. You don't even know how to explain it…These kids are not just kids in the classroom. They're not like me and you…They are such a critical liaison for everything that they don't value education maybe as much as other things…That's not their job right now. They have a lot of other jobs.

Furthermore, the teachers talked about the necessity of holding high expectations and providing extra support to ELLs. For example, Elena mentioned that "there is no need to dumb things down or not provide the same if not more resources to a student who is not a native speaker." She also noted that "we should do everything in our power to provide the means necessary for each and every child in our education system to succeed." Along similar lines, Chris commented that

> if the students are not succeeding, it is because we are not providing them with the proper environments in which they can succeed. If students are not achieving their goals, then we either do not recognize their goals or we are not giving [them] the tools they need to reach them.

Jessie added that we should not forget about more advanced ELLs, stating that they too "must be challenged and not held back by students who know no English." This comment likely stems from her field experience, during which she observed students of all levels of English proficiency learning together in the same sheltered classroom. To some extent, it represents a mainstream way of thinking, particularly the idea that including certain types

of learners (*e.g.,* low-level ELLs, special-education students) in regular classrooms holds back other, supposedly more academically "capable" students.

A few of the participants stressed the role of effective communication, both with students and with their families. Jackie, for example, stated that "many times an ELL's low academic achievement is not due to academic ability. It is more so because the information is not being effectively communicated." She went on to say that, "if a teacher cannot effectively relay the information to the students, then he or she is not fulfilling his or her job requirements."

Beliefs about the role of the L1 and C1. By the end of the semester, most of the participants stated beliefs in favor of allowing students to use and maintain their native languages and cultures. Significantly, toward the beginning of the semester, some of the teachers were either not sure about the role of the L1 and C1 or did not consider them to be relevant to an ELL's success learning English and grade-level content.

At the end of the term, Brandon articulated that "it really enhances their ability to learn English and learn…subject matter if they have [a] solid footing in their own culture." He added that valuing students' cultures leads to higher self-esteem and that "all students learn more when different cultures are incorporated into the classroom." Indeed, Brandon often highlighted the benefits around diversity and particularly diversity as a resource for all learners in the classroom. Other participants in the study also mentioned the importance of valuing the home culture. For example, Chris told me that Hispanics should "at least know that [their culture] exists and, if they choose to embrace it, then that opportunity's available." Elena commented that teachers should "respect the cultures and backgrounds of all the students," and Jackie added that "obstacles can be overcome by

the teacher's use of culturally relevant pedagogy." However, in none of these cases did the teachers elaborate on what they meant or provide specific examples, which, again, speaks to the importance of helping prospective teachers move beyond general ideas to concrete strategies, even in an initial foundations course.

Most of the participants also spoke positively of students' use and maintenance of their L1s, although they were quick to point out that learning English was equally important. For instance, Brandon stated that "it does make a lot more sense to teach them in their native language since it transfers…it's an issue of balance." Elsewhere, he pointed out that students should be allowed to draw on their "L1 cognitive framework." On a similar note, Jessie commented that "L1 use in the classroom does not hinder [a student's] ability to learn English" and that "a person's L1 is part of who they are." She added that we "should try to help students embrace their culture and first language while at the same time learning English." Chris argued that students "will do better in school…if they can have at least some initial education…in their native language" and that allowing them to use their L1 will likely help them "make connections." Is it worth mentioning that many of the participants in the study did not enter the course with these same sentiments, suggesting that the course and field experience had productively influenced their opinions.

Perhaps the most poignant words on the topic come from Elena, who herself, as described in her portrait, had faced L1 language loss at a young age. This is what she had to say regarding the role of a student's native language:

> Give value to both languages. The whole thing is about giving value to the original language. As long as teachers really realize that it's a skill to have both and not…something that's gonna limit me. And allow it and work with it compared to smashing it down and getting rid of it…When you start devaluing it

and stopping…smashing like the Spanish away, then the parents feel almost like who's this child?...They don't feel at home anywhere. You don't feel safe anywhere. You don't feel you get to own anything anywhere, so the fact of just tearing down a language…is frustrating.

Judgments. Participants' beliefs were also revealed in the various judgments they made throughout the field experience. These judgments, most of which were negative, centered on the nature of instruction in ESL and pre-school programs and "correct" or standard English language use. These data illustrate ways in which the course and field experience may have failed to counter participants' problematic views toward ELLs and their education.

Elena made somewhat negative comments about the ESL class she observed at the Somali Community Center, stating in both a reflection paper and her final presentation that "the class was not exactly taught in a fashion that I would be proud to have people go to and learn from." Being slightly more specific in her criticism, she noted that having students memorize and repeat short phrases about their occupations was limiting them in "more fully understanding what was going on in the conversation." While her point could be supported by current research in the field of SLA, which promotes a more contextualized and communicative approach to teaching second languages (see Lightbown & Spada, 2006), Elena did not explicitly reference any of the course readings or lectures to back up her claim. On a somewhat similar note, Jennifer spoke negatively of the church pre-school program she had visited on a few occasions. In particular, she expressed her opinion that "the children are not being well prepared" because they are not learning English. Moreover, Jennifer even went as far as to argue that the pre-school should be teaching Hispanic children English since, according to her, they are probably not accessing the language elsewhere:

It seems to me that if they were getting the right education prior to kindergarten…we would have a lot fewer ELLs. Because…obviously, if they're hearing Spanish at home, it's going to take them longer than somebody that's hearing English at home, but both people come into the world not being able to speak at all. If they're living in a Hispanic community, they grow up in the Hispanic community and really don't have a need to speak much English .If they're just living in their home and if they're attending a pre-school like this one, then they're certainly not learning English and then they get to kindergarten, and all of a sudden it's like, "Oh my God. I actually am in America, and people speak English here."

Clearly, Jennifer is making a number of potentially faulty assumptions, such as 1) that Hispanic children have limited access to English in their homes and communities and 2) that they do not see a need to learn English before starting kindergarten. During one of the in-class group discussions, Jennifer even went as far as to suggest, albeit somewhat indirectly, that English should be the language spoken in the home:

I was interested to know how many of these families that could all speak English spoke mostly Spanish at home, just because I know, even in front of me, when they weren't addressing me directly, they spoke Spanish to each other. I'd be interested to see if I could get a family to do an experiment with me, where they would only speak English to each other for a little bit, to see how that affected all of them.

The fact that she would like to do an "experiment" requiring them to speak only English implies that, if they can speak and understand one another in English, they should do so as opposed to using Spanish. Again, we see a mainstream discourse at work. The underlying assumption is that immigrants should assimilate as quickly as possible and learn English.

Three of the prospective teachers (Elena, Chris, and Jennifer) made remarks that reflected their views on correct and incorrect forms of the English language. For example, Jennifer explicitly compared the English of the Hispanic students at the church she attended to that of African Americans, labeling it as "ghetto English":

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It's not like they just don't speak it, I mean, they don't speak it well…I'm teaching at [name of school], and I have both African-American and White students…It's like they're completely fluent in English. They don't speak any other language, but they don't speak English to the standard that I—or I guess I shouldn't say it like that, but they don't speak English at all the same way that I do…It's like, for lack of a better word, it's like ghetto English, and sometimes I really don't know what they're saying, the way they say things, and the Hispanic high-school students that I've spoken to at the church that I go to speak it much more like they do. It's not that it's any less fluent in English; it's just their grammar isn't correct.

Her comment is a clear reflection of her ideas about standard and non-standard English. Chris, speaking more generally, made an analogy between correct English grammar and musical performances, as follows:

I kind of like some kind of formalized grammar because I think it kind of makes it pretty. The difference between a cat walking on the piano keys and a concert pianist using the same keys to play like *Moonlight Sonata* or something like that, and not to say…that your poor grammar's worthless…or just noise. I think there's something about like Shakespeare that's just, there's something about it, like poems and that kind of stuff.

It is worth emphasizing that all of the judgments reported in this section are fairly negative in nature, although in a few cases the participants attempted to mitigate their comments by using expressions such as "I guess I shouldn't say it like that" (Jennifer) or "not to say…that your poor grammar's worthless" (Chris). Importantly, these statements reveal some of the teachers' underlying conceptions of culture, education, and especially language. In particular, their comments reflect mainstream, White, middle-class discourses regarding "proper" speech and education in terms of what is "right" and "wrong." Jennifer, more so than the other participants, seems to blame minority children's upbringing (which she perceives as quite different from her own) for their later struggles in school, thus assuming a clear deficit-like stance. In these cases, it is likely that the course and field experience were insufficient to problematize these views.

Assumptions that were challenged. By the end of the semester, the teachers were beginning to articulate a number of their own assumptions that had been challenged in some way through participation in the field experience. This finding is significant because it shows how the field experience productively mediated some of the teachers' incoming assumptions regarding the lives and education of ELLs.

Brandon and Jennifer discussed and critically examined assumptions dealing with culture. Brandon, who had made negative judgments about the Bantu dance team he observed at the cultural fair, came to articulate the following statement in his final interview:

> Watching it [the dance team], I was just like, man, this is just a waste of my time, but now, looking back, I was just like even the little things, because it didn't fulfill your expectations just because, or even if it did fulfill your expectations or whatever. You still have these couple minutes you can be like 'oh' it adds to your repertoire.

Here, he demonstrates his awareness of the judgment he made and admits that it was perhaps unfair, as one can still learn something about the Somali culture even if certain practices do not align with his or her expectations about how they should look. Jennifer likewise questioned a few of her own assumptions regarding culture, specifically the idea that all Hispanics are the same as opposed to looking at the diversity within this larger group, as reflected in the comments below:

> Before involving myself in this community, it would have been easy for me to label my Hispanic students and place them in a category solely based on this title. There is not a way to know everything about a culture or about the individuals that are a part of that culture.

> We shouldn't put all Hispanic people in the U.S. in one category. I have learned that there are a multitude of differences that exist in people's lives, and culture comes out in conversations about people's lives.

Along similar lines, Jennifer noted that she had learned through her participation in the project that not all Hispanics were immigrants. In fact, many of the children with whom she interacted had been born in the United States.

Many of the participants also questioned their own assumptions centering on English learning and teaching. Jessie, for instance, talked about how the field experience had broken down her assumption of what an ESL classroom looks like:

> It's really made it a reality for me because I came into this experience thinking that when I would go to the classroom, it was gonna be like all the students were just sitting there having no idea what's going on. They'd be talking to each other in Spanish to figure out what the teacher was saying.

> Those kids are so smart, and they really are. It's not like they sit there and they have no idea what's going on. They know what's going on, and when they don't know what's going on, they will raise a hand and ask a question. And they're so willing to answer questions and participate in the class, and I guess that's just really surprised me, and that's something that I've learned from this, is that they really are motivated to learn. At least at the 3rd grade level, they're really motivated to learn, and it's not just like they're sitting there having no idea what's going on. So that's really made that a reality for me - what it's actually like, at least in the classroom.

To give another example, Jennifer recounted her prior assumption that extroverted individuals were more motivated to learn English than introverts and talked about how her observation of a Hispanic girl mouthing words to herself in English during Mass had challenged this assumption:

> Prior to this experience, I had thought of motivation and personality as going hand-in-hand when it came to learning a language. I assumed that students with high "self-esteem, empathy, dominance, talkativeness and responsiveness" would also be highly motivated to learn English and that students with "learner anxiety—feelings of worry nervousness, and stress" would be less motivated (Lightbown & Spada, 2006: 61-62). Watching this girl proved my assumption to be incorrect. She was very motivated to learn English and was making use of an opportunity.

The most dramatic example of questioning prior assumptions about the teaching and

learning of ELLs came from Jackie, who articulated very clearly how she felt both before

and after the field experience:

> When they didn't speak English just like I did, or when they weren't able to produce vocabulary or things like that, I would kinda look at them like, what's wrong with you? Kind of like, why isn't your English up to par? You're in America, you're supposed to, like that whole mentality. But, being in the Newcomer Academy, I see just how much they have to learn in the short amount of time they're given, so I'm more, like, knowing that they can't learn everything that I've learned in my 18 years, in one year in relation to English. And so, I guess, being a teacher, I would hold high expectations, I understand that, but I wouldn't expect for their paper to be Shakespeare. Like I just wouldn't expect that for them, knowing the amount of time they had to learn English.

Clearly, her participation in the fieldwork component of the course helped her to form a

more accurate and realistic view of the learning of a second language.

Another telling example of questioning prior assumptions came from Chris, who,

after attending Spanish-language Mass for the first time, realized that he had

unconsciously been giving a higher status to English than to other languages. The

following quote illustrates the way in which he recognized and challenged this

assumption:

> I think that because Mass was in a language I do not know well, in Spanish, I did not take Mass as seriously. This made me wonder what else I take less seriously simply because it is in Spanish or at least not in English. Sometimes, I encounter, either in myself or in others, the idea that because something is not in English that thing is of less value than something in English. The same mentality sometimes is applied to people—that people who don't speak English are somehow stupid or worth less than people who do speak English…I must not take things less seriously just because they are not in English. That line of thinking is dangerously arrogant, and I cannot view my future students who will not be proficient in English as less smart or without value.

All of the examples presented in this section are important because they demonstrate how

the participants in the study became aware of, articulated, and challenged some of their

(mostly negative) prior assumptions about culture, English learning and teaching, and language use. The course and field experience served as critical mediators in this process of self-examination.

Affective changes

My analysis of the data also revealed that the participants were expressing reactions and undergoing shifts that could be considered "affective" in nature. In particular, they all mentioned moments of comfort and discomfort, and they had both positive and negative reactions to certain aspects of their field experiences. At the same time, some of them conveyed an increased sense of confidence in knowing about and working with ELL populations, and one teacher expressed sympathy toward these learners and their struggle to learn a second language (see Table 11 for a summary). As in the previous section, these reactions and changes are reflective of the participants' underlying feelings and beliefs, some of which remained constant and others that changed quite substantially throughout the semester.

Feelings of comfort and discomfort. Many of the participants felt discomfort when attempting to engage in interactions with non-native speakers of English, particularly within community settings. For example, Jessie said that she "didn't feel comfortable asking people at church what they were doing that afternoon or whether the church had any events coming up." She even felt nervous about doing the required interview, noting that she "had never interviewed someone about their cultural background and language learning experiences before." Chris added that he had "reservations about meeting people, especially when we might not be able to communicate very well." The participant

Table 11. Affective Changes Expressed by the Participants Throughout the Semester

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Feelings of comfort and discomfort
    Interaction with ELLs in non-academic settings (discomfort)
    Interaction with people with similar backgrounds (comfort)
    Knowledge of Spanish (comfort)
    Presence at Hispanic churches (discomfort)

Negative reactions
    Language barriers
    Location of certain ESL programs
    ESL lessons and materials
    Grouping practices within schools
    Constant reception of new ELLs throughout the semester

Positive reactions
    Usefulness of field experience
    Language abilities and progress of ELLs

Feeling more informed and prepared to work with ELLs
    Cultural knowledge
    Language learning process
    Self-confidence

Sympathy toward ELLs
    Recognition of difficulty involved in learning a second language
    Appreciation of ELLs and their efforts

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who talked the most about her feelings of discomfort was Jennifer, who, throughout the

whole project, mentioned that she felt awkward trying to interact with people at her

church site. Here are some of her comments:

> No one immediately came over to welcome me, and I felt like an outsider in a
> way that I had not experienced before. I just felt silly. I didn't know if I should sit
> down somewhere by myself or if I should introduce myself to a new group of
> people. The thought of walking over to a group of people I didn't know was
> horrifying.

It's actually getting like more awkward. I think they're like "Why is this girl coming here?" especially with the kind of racial difference between, I guess racial, but also ethnic, like they just think I'm weird that I'm there, I think. Once I start talking to people, it's normal, but there's always this 20 minutes of awkwardness, where I'm just kind of wandering around and waiting for some children to come talk to me.

It would be kind of awkward to go up to a particular group, unless it was like high-school girls.

Jennifer's remarks revealed her reluctance to take the initiative in engaging people at her site in conversation. Instead, she expected for them to approach her, which could be interpreted as an elitist stance. More specifically, as someone from the majority culture visiting the church, she seemed to expect the church members to feel obligated to introduce themselves to her. Also, her frequent references to her feelings of discomfort and awkwardness are reflective of her lack of prior experiences with diverse individuals, in terms not only of race and ethnicity but also of socioeconomic status.

However, Jennifer mentioned that knowing some Spanish had helped her to feel a little more comfortable given that she "could understand some of what they were saying." At the same time, she made at least one comment suggesting that she was irritated by the church members' use of Spanish, namely in her presence:

Almost all of them spoke English, at least to me, but…when they talked to each other, they would talk in Spanish, so, at least at first, I was like, that's kind of rude, 'cause they could clearly speak English 'cause every single one of them spoke English to me.

This comment is especially striking since, in other instances, Jennifer claimed to understand most of what they were saying. As such, it is potentially reflective of an implicit power-laden rule that the presence of even one English speaker should dictate the use of English.

The three participants who went to Hispanic churches (Jessie, Chris, and Jennifer) mentioned how out-of-place they felt in general. For instance, Jessie noted that she felt "nervous," "out-of-place," "looked at," "intimidated," "uncomfortable," and like she was "the only White English-speaking person, the only minority." Chris stated that being at another church made him feel "more like the person who was out-of-place…but also…kind of comfortable because everyone was so nice and welcoming." Additionally, Chris noted that he felt fairly comfortable being at a Catholic church since he himself was Catholic. Jennifer commented that she felt uncomfortable being at her church simply because she did not know anyone. Toward the middle of the semester she even went as far as to say that she "almost dread[ed] going, like the feeling of awkwardness that I just don't like being places where I don't know anyone." Similar to Jessie, Jennifer also talked about how she felt that people were looking at her and judging her, claiming that church members seemed "weirded out" by her presence. In most of these cases, the field experience was insufficient to radically change the teachers' negative feelings toward being around non-native speakers of English who were different from them in terms of race, ethnicity, and/or SES.

Feeling more informed and prepared to work with ELLs. Three of the prospective teachers (Brandon, Elena, and Jessie) stated toward the end of the semester that they felt more informed and thus prepared to work with English language learners. According to Elena:

> I feel like I'm much more informed about the Somali community as a whole, even African countries in general. It's given me a new knowledge that I know how to approach different tasks, different people, different cultures, in a different way compared to just seeing it through like Hispanic only.

Likewise, Brandon discussed his feelings of being more informed about the process of

language learning as a result of participating in the course and field experience:

> Just having the much more nuanced view of language development and language
> learning and time frames has been very helpful because living in a town
> that…discusses this sort of thing at length, based on myths…It's a thing that I feel
> much better…informed about. Something I can really talk to people and really try
> to make something that's like empirically proven to help kids and not a bunch of
> like "learn English."

For her part, Jessie talked about feeling more motivated and confident. The project had

even encouraged her to consider becoming an ESL teacher. In her words, "Being in this

classroom has really inspired me and has made me think about becoming an ESL teacher.

I really enjoy the atmosphere, and I am very motivated to help these students learn

English." She also noted that she "would be more confident working with them" and

"using Spanish with them" after having had the experience of observing and helping out

in an actual ESL classroom.

These statements suggest that, at least for some participants, the field experience

served as an introduction to an unfamiliar student population that they may very well

have found intriguing and rewarding to work with as future teachers. Significantly, being

more informed and prepared is likely to lead to an increased desire to work with diverse

students.

Sympathy toward ELLs. Finally, one participant (Jessie) came to express

sympathy toward ELLs. She stated that she could not:

> imagine how hard it must be for them to adapt to an American classroom like this.
> When I put myself in their shoes, I see what it must be like to be truly immersed
> in a new culture with a different language. It must be so scary and frustrating, so I
> try to help these kids as much as possible.

Moreover, Jessie said that, as a result of participating in the field experience, she

recognized how difficult it was to learn a second language and that this realization made

her "appreciate ELLs and their efforts more."

Finding 3: The Cross-Cultural Field Experience Included some Successful Features as
well as a Number of Shortcomings and Issues to Consider for Future Implementation

In this section I present data revealing both the successes and the shortcomings of

the field experience in its current form. Importantly, while the experience provided

participants with a concrete means of processing, discussing, and reflecting on some of

the information from the course as well as a chance to interact with ELLs and partially

immerse themselves in another culture, some of them had difficulty navigating the

experience, did not feel adequately prepared, and had trouble identifying explicit

connections to the course material.

Successful features

By the end of the semester, all of the focal participants were speaking positively

about their own field experiences and more generally about the idea of requiring

prospective teachers to engage in this type of experience as part of their professional

preparation (see Table 12 below for a summary). According to Brandon:

> I do think that this as an experience outside of what we do in the course is highly
> valuable. Unfortunately, a lot of people here, I believe,…this just hasn't been part
> of their experience, and they need that. The synergy I think is excellent. I think
> tying it into everything and things like that, makes it even better. But I think just
> exposure is a large portion of it, and that can't be reproduced in the classroom.

Jackie made a somewhat similar comment, highlighting the fact that the field component

of the course served as yet another means of learning and processing the material

Table 12. Successes and Issues with the Field Experience

Successful Features	Issues to Consider
Satisfaction with sites	Difficulty navigating experience (especially at the beginning)
Interaction with ELLs (some contexts)	Lack of cultural activities and opportunities for interaction (some contexts)
Partial immersion in another culture (some contexts)	Focus on only one linguistic and cultural group
Debriefing sessions	"Studying the culture" versus true immersion
Readings about culture	Difficulty making connections to course readings and lectures (some contexts)
Meeting and speaking with key members of the community	Time
Connections between field experience and future teaching	Transportation

presented in the class:

> I think that the project is essential to the course, especially because we're all teachers. I feel like if the project wasn't there, it'd be, you learn theories, you learn history, you learn stuff like that. With the project, I feel as if you get a lot of that. You get to think about the different ways in which you can incorporate some of the things you learned into your own personal classroom. So it's helping us mold what we want our classroom to be. And I think, without that, it'd be really- not really hard, but we'd have to learn that through a different way in the classroom.

The participants agreed that having an outside-the-classroom assignment taught them

first-hand about specific cultures and classroom practices. Both Jessie and Jennifer noted

that the course "would really not be that effective" without the field experience and that

they "would not have gotten as much out of the class." Furthermore, Chris talked about

the value of being placed, albeit temporarily, in the position of a minority: "We need to see what it's like for other people who have to learn English. I think it's good to have the experience to see what it's like not to be the majority."

It is important to point out that being placed "in the position of a minority," a statement previously made by Jessie as well, is perhaps a bit misleading. Although Jessie, Chris, and other pre-service teachers in the course attended non-English-language events such as Spanish church services, they were not really minorities in the literal sense, especially considering their social positioning within the larger city and national context. While taking part in a foreign-language event may have made them a little uncomfortable and self-conscious, it was a very temporary experience that represents only a small piece of being positioned as a minority. The latter would arguably only have been achieved had the participants been in another country, and even then the fact that they were White, English speakers from the U.S. would likely have given them a certain degree of cultural capital.

Most of the participants also made comments that suggested that they were happy with the specific sites they had chosen. This finding was especially true for those who had decided to spend most of their time in instructional settings. Elena, who spent time at the Somali Community Center, noted that:

> the Center has been a great resource for everything that Brandon and I needed for immersing ourselves in a new and interesting experience. I am happy to have stepped outside of what I was familiar with and truly challenge myself with not having any idea about the Somali language.

It is noteworthy that both Brandon and Elena approached the field experience as a new "challenge" and learning opportunity as opposed to a burden or extra assignment. Indeed, of all six focal participants, they were the only ones who took an immediate initiative to

start the project once it was explained, probably as a result of their prior exposure to diversity. Likewise, they were the only ones who chose to work with a refugee population.

Jackie also spoke positively of her field site, which was the local Newcomer Academy. About halfway through the semester, she said the following:

> I feel like I'm learning…I feel like the field experience is about becoming aware, essentially of the different cultures that are in America that we might encounter while we're teaching. I feel like I'm learning more at the Newcomer Academy being around so many different cultures because I'm so conscious of the things I do, automatically, just being American.

She went on to say that being at this site had allowed her not only to observe the children and the strategies the teachers used to work with them but also to interact one-on-one with students who spoke limited English, an experience she had not had before. Jessie, in reflecting on her visits to both the third-grade ESL classroom and the Hispanic church, told me that "the classroom setting seemed more beneficial and more learning occurred. It was easier to apply it to teaching."

All of the participants talked about the various opportunities they had to interact first-hand with ELLs and stressed the benefits of this particular aspect of the field experience. For example, Brandon commented that "just looking [things] up and just looking at the facts wouldn't have done [the same as] talking to people and seeing people and interacting with them." This statement implies that one important function of the field experience is to put teachers in direct contact with ELLs so that they get to know real people on a personal level as opposed to simply reading about this population in textbooks. Several of the teachers highlighted the value of the interview assignment, which clearly served this purpose. For instance, Elena said that "everyone has their own

story, and the only way we really find them out is through these interviews." As explained below, all the participants in the study found the interviews with ELLs to be rewarding, as these conversations allowed them to learn about the experiences of specific people and easily connect what they had learned to the course material. Importantly, the interviews served to illuminate and reinforce issues discussed in class and thus made the material more "real" and meaningful.

In the same vein, Jackie claimed that the "interview has truly opened my eyes. [My interviewee] pulled me into a world that I barely knew existed, and I feel that it will definitely help me in relation to my teaching career." Jessie made a similar comment, noting that connecting her interviewee's experience to the course readings had been very easy to do: "Interviewing [name] was such a neat and enlightening experience for me. I learned so much, and I realized how many aspects of her life related to the topics we discuss and read about in class." Jennifer likewise stated that the interview portion of the project had been valuable for her, adding, like Jessie, that "even within 20 minutes I had plenty to write my reflection on."   Besides the formal interviews, several of the teachers found other ways to interact with ELLs, primarily in academic settings but also in religious ones. According to Jackie, "it's not until I started working with the students [at the Newcomer Academy] per se that I became more interested. I took my focus off the teacher and more on the student." Both Chris and Jennifer, who spent most of their time at local churches, found opportunities for interaction to be quite scarce. However, Chris was able to interact to some extent during a youth-group session he attended, and Jennifer met a family at one of the pre-church-service BBQ dinners she attended and likewise

spoke on occasion with high-school-aged students who approached her and asked her why she was there.

The two participants who came closest to full immersion were Chris and Jennifer, both of whom chose different Spanish-speaking church sites and attended (at least on some occasions) by themselves. Jessie likewise attended a Hispanic church, but only once or twice. Most of her time was spent in the third-grade ESL classroom. Jackie spent all of her time at the Newcomer Academy, which did not allow her to immerse herself in another culture at all, and she had trouble completing particular assignments that called on her to discuss her attempts at immersion and to explain what she had learned. Interestingly, Brandon and Elena considered their visit to the cultural fair as "partial immersion," given that they found themselves surrounded, at least for a few minutes, by individuals from Somalia.

Half of the participants (Brandon, Jessie, and Chris) commented on the value of feeling "shock and awe" or "being the minority" as part of their experience. For instance, Jessie told me that "feeling like the minority and feeling uncomfortable" during her visits to the Hispanic church had made her "more sympathetic toward ELLs and different cultures." As described above, Chris made a similar remark, saying that it was "cool" to experience things from the perspective of a minority, even if only temporarily.

The participants found it very useful to talk about the experiences they were having throughout the semester, particularly with their classmates. These conversations gave them the opportunity to share what they had observed or learned, to have their questions and concerns addressed, and to work out productive directions for future fieldwork. Brandon and Elena, who worked closely together throughout the whole

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project, commented on how useful it had been to have constant opportunities to debrief with each other. According to Brandon:

> Working with Elena has been very helpful in terms of breaking things down and discussing what we saw and even if something went wrong, like commiserating, just having that sort of peer mentality involved with it as well, I think was helpful.

Along the same lines, Elena made statements such as the following:

> Once we got in the car, we would talk about it. And I would notice something different than the way he noticed, or he would point something out to me. If I just went by myself, I would have been missing a whole half of what he saw compared to what I saw. It was a good balance of working off each other.

Clearly, their collaboration gave them access to each other's thinking, which in turn helped them make better and more complete sense of what they were learning.

Additionally, most of the prospective teachers pointed out the usefulness of the in-class group discussions that took place each time they turned in a reflection paper. In particular, these discussions opened the door for the incorporation of multiple perspectives on the information being presented. Also, the participants were better able to make explicit connections to the literature when they put their heads together. Finally, it was a great opportunity for them to express their questions and concerns and get suggestions from their group members. To give an example, on one occasion Jessie asked the members of her group for advice on ways to contact parents, and several of those present offered helpful ideas, such as having the teacher introduce her to parents and/or waiting before or after school when the parents would be there to drop off or pick up their children.

Moreover, the teachers found these discussions useful because they exposed them to what their peers were learning about different cultural and linguistic groups within the city. For example, Jackie stated that, as a result of these discussions, she "was able to

learn about a lot of different communities and still focus on the Hispanic community" for her own project. Along the same line, Jennifer commented that these experiences made her "aware of so many more resources in [the city]."

Taken together, these findings illustrate the various successes of the field experience in its current form. In particular, the field experience afforded the teachers a concrete means of processing, reflecting on, and discussing the material presented in the course. As such, it productively mediated their thinking about ELLs and their education, leading them to become more aware of what they did and did not know, to reconsider their current understandings, and to internalize new forms of knowledge.

Issues to consider

While many of the components of the field experience were effective in increasing participants' knowledge and positively influencing their beliefs, there were also some features that caused them a certain degree of tension, frustration, and difficulty. These are features that perhaps reduced the level of effectiveness of the experience and thus ones that need to be carefully considered for future implementation.

Most of the teachers pointed out the difficulty involved in navigating their own field experiences, particularly toward the beginning of the semester. On the first day of class, teachers were given a comprehensive list of possible sites that included contact information (names, emails, addresses, phone numbers). Although a letter had been sent to each site requesting cooperation before the fall semester, in most cases the instructors of the foundations courses had not spoken directly with individuals at each site. Thus, in some instances, teachers found it difficult to get in touch with people and to set up their

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initial visit. Furthermore, a few of them struggled with the decision of which site to choose and, subsequently, how to get started.

Several of the focal participants talked about the time it took to decide where and when their field visits would take place. Brandon, for example, said that he felt "like I have to create my own curriculum…for this in terms of designing how my field experience is gonna be." Jessie added that, in the beginning of the semester, she was "worried about participating in the field experience because I had no clue what to expect or how I would feel in the site I chose." On another occasion, she mentioned that "we're not used to being like, 'Okay, you need to immerse yourself in a community. Go find your community,'" noting that this part of the project had been "overwhelming" and "daunting" for her. Certain participants found this lack of structure to be problematic, and it caused them a great deal of frustration.

Brandon also noted that he felt ill-equipped to go out into a community with which he was unfamiliar. He told me in one of our interviews that he would have appreciated more explicit guidance toward the beginning:

> We also have to invent these strategies. I don't think we're getting much in the way of explicit instruction and how to do this, and I think that's part of the frustration…We're not gonna have all these tools in our tool belt.

At some point in the project, a few of the teachers also expressed frustration with not being able to participate in enough cultural activities at their chosen communities. Both Brandon and Jennifer told me that, at their respective sites, opportunities to actually become involved were limited. A few of the participants also highlighted the fact that opportunities for interaction were somewhat restricted. For instance, both Brandon and

Elena made similar remarks regarding the language barrier between them and members

of the local Somali community:

> Brandon: And we did do some interaction, but, like I said, it's the language barrier's there. And even with some of the Somalis…who can communicate, like when we went to the culture fair and people who were conversing just fine, as soon as we tried asking them any questions, they clammed up like crazy.

> Elena: We really haven't been able to talk to too many people one-on-one, and that would help us in learning like the history and the stories and the struggles, but the problem is the language barrier. A lot of people that use that Center do not speak English. And that's the only really big fallback to it. And, so, unless they are staff, that's the only way you know they speak some English. And, if they're not, then like it's almost like a crapshoot. You have, you have no idea.

Of course, this finding suggests that the two of them would have benefited from a

discussion of strategies that they could use to engage more effectively in intercultural

communication.

On a related note, all of the participants who attended Hispanic churches noted

that these sites were not ideal locations for one-on-one interaction. According to Jessie,

"it's really hard to interact with people because it is a church service where people are

there to go to church and not to socialize with you during it." While this is probably true,

she does not acknowledge the possibility of using the church as a social networking

resource that could put her in contact with ELLs in other settings (*e.g.*, youth group,

community fellowship events).

The two participants who worked primarily in school settings (Jackie and Jessie)

noted that they had plentiful interactions with children but next to nothing with adults.

Jessie felt like she would have gotten much more out of the project had she been able to

learn more about Hispanic adults and their community in addition to learning about the

education of ELLs in an academic context. Of note, both she and Jackie hesitated

speaking with Spanish-speaking parents due to a perceived language barrier, even though at least Jessie could speak and understand some Spanish.

Some of the participating teachers felt limited in the requirement to focus on only one group, especially when reality dictates that they are likely to work with ELLs from many different backgrounds. Brandon noted that "while learning about Somalis is helpful in adding to my repertoire, I also feel like I'm missing out on like the Kurdish population and this and that." Along the same lines, Jessie told me that "it is hard to focus on just them [Hispanics in the classroom], when there's some other kids who really need your help. You really would like to focus on them for longer than with the Hispanic students." Jackie made an almost identical comment, having the following to say about this topic:

> I feel as if the project or the field experience is more centered toward immersing yourself in one particular culture, but, going to the Newcomer Academy, I'm with Burmese students, with African students, with any kind of student probably you can think of, and so it's really hard for me to focus on one culture because I might see something that's going on with another student that's more interesting to me, and I'm like "Hey, but I wanna look at this girl, but she's Burmese, not Hispanic," and so it's like a struggle between that because it's not one culture that's there.

Likewise, according to Brandon:

> [The] goal of being able to teach a pluralistic approach is at odds with our singular cultural approach. So, the fact that we're looking at just one culture and learning specifics about that seems like it's going to not be applicable if we have a classroom where we have to deal with three and four different blocks of kids simultaneously.

While they certainly have a point, the downside to focusing on multiple groups simultaneously is that it is much more difficult to gain in-depth perspectives. Moreover, it is possible to focus on only one cultural and linguistic group and still learn about others (*e.g.*, by sharing what has been learned with peers who chose other groups).

Two of the participants in the study (Chris and Jennifer), both of whom spent most of their time in church settings, argued that their participation in the Hispanic community felt somewhat "forced" and awkward. Most of these comments came from Jennifer, who stated that she felt like she was "studying a culture" as opposed to truly immersing herself as a potential member. In her words:

> If I were to go there, I'd just immerse myself the way I would if I didn't have to write a reflection about it. It would be a very, very different experience, because I wouldn't ask them half the questions that I do, but in my head, I'm thinking I need to get something I can write down.

She went on to say that the main purpose of the project, which she understood as true immersion, seemed to run counter to the ways in which it was evaluated, noting "it feels like each time has to essentially be a little mini-interview, in order to get something to put in the reflection." Chris, who was also present during the focus-group interview in which Jennifer made this remark, expressed his agreement: "I feel like when I go to talk to someone, it's not like I want to talk to them because I want to know who they are; it's because I'm here for a class." Their comments imply that many prospective teachers will need to be better equipped with ethnographic research techniques that allow them to participate, observe, and interact all at once.

Several of the participants also talked about the difficulty of making explicit connections between their projects and the course readings and lectures, which was one of the instructor's expectations. This finding was especially true for the teachers who worked primarily in non-academic settings. Both Jessie and Brandon pointed out the tension between learning about a particular culture in general terms and learning about specific classroom strategies. According to Brandon, "we're trying to learn more about culture as it applies to the classroom and ESL. Some of these things, like going to church,

that's cool, but we're learning about culture in general." Likewise, Jessie commented that

"the readings relate to the classroom whereas being at a church service doesn't really

relate to the classroom…It relates to the culture." In both cases, they fail to realize that

what is learned about culture *can* and *will* be useful for instructional practice.

Elena and Brandon, who spent time at the Somali Community Center, stated that

the only aspect of their visit that was directly relevant to the readings and lectures was

their observation of the ESL class, which, as Brandon mentioned, was "tailor-made for

these papers." Moreover, Jackie noted that, from the very beginning of the semester, she

felt a conflict between her own goals for the project and those of the instructor:

> I know something that I've struggled with at the very beginning, when I was
> trying to figure out what the whole goal of the field experience was, was that
> being that I'm gonna be a teacher, I was more interested in the teaching methods.
> Like how the teachers would teach to so many different types of students with
> these different languages on different levels. That's what I was interested in, so
> that's what I was excited about. That's what I wanted to look for, but that wasn't
> the goal of the project.

The reason Jackie made this statement was that the course instructor encouraged students

not to select classroom sites for their projects—at least not as their only option—given

that one of the major aims of the assignment was for them to gain culturally based

understandings that could then be translated into practice. On a class-wide basis, there

was clear resistance to this restriction, as some students felt that the only useful learning

for them as future teachers would occur by observing in actual classrooms.

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Finding 4: Certain Facets of the Participants' Backgrounds and Prior Experiences Served to Influence, or Mediate, what they Thought, Believed, and Learned about ELLs and their Education during the Semester

As suggested above under Finding 1, the participants' backgrounds and prior experiences had mediated and thus shaped what they thought and believed about ELLs and their education *upon entering the course*. In this section, I show how some of these same factors mediated their learning as they participated in the course and field experience. In particular, my analysis revealed five aspects of their backgrounds and prior experiences that played this role: 1) prior exposure to diversity, 2) L2 study and use, 3) previous educational experiences, 4) minority versus majority culture, and 5) religious affiliation.

Prior experience with diversity

As described previously, Elena and Brandon were the only two participants in the study who came to the foundations course having had considerable prior experience with diversity. Elena grew up in an immigrant household and neighborhood in New York City and had interacted with both Hispanics and African-Americans through her church, school, and community-service projects. Brandon attended a diverse high school in northeastern Illinois in which Whites like himself were the minority. The other four participants (Chris, Jackie, Jennifer, Jessie) all had *some* experience with diversity, but not nearly to the same degree as Elena and Brandon. Jackie, herself an African-American, told me during one of our interviews that she and her closest friends had always identified more with Whites than with other African-Americans, perhaps as a result of

their class status and the fact that they were surrounded by a large number of Whites at a prestigious, academically oriented high school in Arkansas.

Both Elena and Brandon placed a high value on diversity as a resource for students from all backgrounds. It was noticeable from the data that they rarely expressed deficit views toward ELLs and instead often spoke of empowerment and high expectations. Likewise, they were critical of practices that seemed to limit the potential of ELLs and other minorities, such as Elena's frustration with the way in which the ESL lesson at the Somali Community Center was taught and Brandon's criticism of the teaching practices he was familiar with from his own high school. Moreover, in contrast to the other teachers, Brandon and Elena rarely made comments to suggest that they felt "uncomfortable," "awkward," or "out-of-place." Along similar lines, they were not hesitant to begin the project and instead contacted and set up a visit at the Somali Community Center at the first chance they had.

In Elena's case in particular, it was clear that she brought a vast amount of past experience with ELLs and diversity that she could draw on to make connections to what she was learning in the project. For instance, having volunteered at a community center for Hispanics, she was quite familiar with the services offered by these kinds of centers, and she knew quite well how they worked. Elena also understood what it was like to struggle with learning and using a second language, based on the experiences of her family members as well as people with whom she had interacted in her hometown.

At the same time, it is worth noting that Elena rarely made references to course readings and lectures when reporting on her learning in the field experience. She admitted to me at the beginning of the semester that she did not enjoy reading for her classes and

that she lacked academic writing skills, so it is likely that she struggled with the process of reading and understanding the required texts, selecting ideas that related to her field experience, and discussing these connections in her papers. Her submitted assignments were usually graded down because they did not include enough explicit references to course material.

What all this suggests is that teachers who come in with higher levels of prior exposure to diversity are likely to 1) have more experiences to connect with the course content and field-experience and 2) be less reluctant (and resistant) to engage in both the immersion and interaction facets of the project. The experiences of Elena and Brandon present a stark contrast to those of others, especially Jennifer and Jessie. That is not to say that Jennifer and Jessie did not ultimately learn as much as Elena and Brandon, but rather that the process was perhaps more uncomfortable and difficult given the different *nature* of their prior experience with diversity. While both Jennifer and Jessie had interacted previously with diverse individuals (*e.g.*, classmates in high school, residents of foreign countries), in most cases these people had been quite similar to them in terms of social class, culture, and language. For this reason, the two of them were more hesitant to move out of their comfort zone and participate in all the required elements of the cross-cultural field experience. This finding is nicely illustrated below in one of Jennifer's comments to me in an interview:

> I speak Spanish pretty well, and understand it much better than that, but I even wonder, I don't know. For me, the language part of it seems to be less of an issue than the cultural thing, and I really think that even if I spoke Spanish completely fluently, or really any language, for that matter, I think especially with the kind of racial difference, I guess racial, but also ethnic, they just think I'm weird that I'm there, I think.

Here, Jennifer made it quite clear that the underlying issue involved race, ethnicity, and culture more so than language, as she spoke and understood enough Spanish to follow conversations. In other words, she felt uncomfortable interacting with people who were *racially* and *culturally* different from her, and she typically did not do so for the purposes of the project until someone from the Hispanic church community approached her first. Importantly, Jennifer's remark also reflects a societal discourse of segregation in that she considered it "weird" for *her*—a White English speaker—to be in a setting along with members of a different cultural and linguistic group.

L2 study and use

The participants also alluded to possible relationships between their own L2 learning and use and their understandings and beliefs regarding learning English as a second language. For instance, both Brandon and Jessie, who had studied French and Spanish, respectively, admitted that their initial conception of an ESL class included a group of students passively "staring at the teacher," not knowing what was going on. According to Jessie, "that's just what our classes have made it seem like it would be." Jessie in particular was surprised to learn that the ELLs in the third-grade classroom she observed spoke English quite well and that they were engaged, motivated, and participative.

Jennifer and Jessie, who had both studied Spanish and chose to work with the local Hispanic community, were the only two participants in the study who could draw on knowledge of their L2 to facilitate interactions within their field projects. Jennifer, for example, noted that "being able to understand some of the language made me feel more

comfortable" (although see quote above). Similarly, Jessie said that she eventually began using some Spanish with the Hispanic children in the third-grade classroom, even though at first she felt a little embarrassed. That said, it is important to point out that both Jennifer and Jessie had developed more academic-focused skills in Spanish (*e.g.*, prescriptive grammar, reading and writing abilities) and that their speaking and listening abilities were much weaker. These ideas suggest that mainstream teachers who bring knowledge of a foreign language are likely to possess academic forms of the language. They might find it difficult (like Jennifer and Jessie) to communicate orally with ELLs and their parents. Also, in most cases, their L2 learning will have been facilitated by highly developed abilities in their L1. This learning situation may be very different from that of many ELLs.

Prior educational experiences

My analysis of the data also revealed a potential relationship between prospective teachers' prior educational experiences and their developing knowledge and beliefs concerning ELLs. This connection was most notable for Jennifer, who often referred to her own past education and upbringing when talking about the experiences of certain people she had met in the community.

Jennifer was raised in an affluent suburb of Boston and attended a predominantly White school. She also went to a pre-school that, in her opinion, had "helped tremendously to prepare me for kindergarten." Somewhat sarcastically, she even told me that she "went to a pre-school where, when I came to kindergarten, I wasn't like, "Oh, my God! I don't know any of this,"" which, according to her, seemed to be true for some of

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the ELLs she had met and observed. Specifically, she felt like these students were at a disadvantage because they had not learned English or developed literacy skills. Teachers like Jennifer may not understand or accept the fact that not all students receive the same pre-school preparation that they have. Indeed, Jennifer admitted that she had since forgotten how she herself learned to read and that she did not know how reading instruction for ELLs might be different from that of native English speakers.

Furthermore, at times Jennifer (and others) seemed to over-emphasize learner variables such as student motivation, aptitude, and willpower at the expense of contextual factors like instruction. This way of thinking, which is seen in the quote that follows, likely stems from Jennifer's own educational background and success:

> One of the most interesting aspects of this continues to be student motivation, because I think that, yes, teachers have a huge ability to affect that, but there's also something innate in a student, where I know, regardless of who my teacher was…I've had some really bad teachers. I went to public school, and that wouldn't affect my ability to want to learn at all. I might not like doing it; my enjoyment level may be not high in certain classes because of poor teachers, but, no matter what, something about me, and it could be because of my parents or whatever, but I will still want to learn.

Although Jennifer recognizes that teachers can affect student motivation, she downplays this explanation in relation to students' innate abilities. In doing so, she fails to consider both the source of her own motivation and the implications this has for working with ELLs.

Majority versus minority status

A fourth background factor that seemed to influence the teachers' perspectives throughout the field experiences was whether they themselves were members of a majority or minority culture in the U.S. As shown in previous sections, most of the White

participants (*e.g.*, Jessie, Jennifer, Chris) frequently expressed mainstream (and sometimes deficit-model) views regarding culture and language. A good example is the issue of non-standard varieties of English, which Jennifer and Chris deemed as inferior or unacceptable. Likewise, Jennifer at times adopted an assimilatory stance toward ELLs and argued that many of them would not wish to identify with their home cultures, a decision that she understood and perhaps even favored. Importantly, such mainstream ways of thinking often fail to consider the role of power as well as the dominance of the majority culture. It is noteworthy that Brandon, who was also White but had grown up in a diverse neighborhood and attended a diverse school, did not usually share these opinions.

Jackie and Elena, who were the only participants in my study from minority backgrounds (African-American and Hispanic, respectively), also tended not to express mainstream views. Jackie, for example, noted in her final class presentation that, "being a minority, I understand the struggles of being taught information that is tailored for the majority." While she never said she identified with the experiences of an ELL, she did seem more conscious than most of the other participants of how it felt to be a member of a minority group. As described in her portrait in Chapter IV, Jackie once made the following comment:

> Not only am I a woman, as a minority, but I'm African-American, too, as a minority, so I have it coming from both ways. So in just about anything that you can think of, from education to religion to politics, I have a different spin on it than you could say a White woman would.

At the same time, it is important to remember that Jackie admitted to identifying more with Whites than with other African-Americans, based on her upbringing. Elena, who had also not been an ELL, *did* seem to identify with and be sensitive to this experience.

To give an example, on one occasion she talked about the ways in which the struggles

faced by an individual she met at the Somali Community Center resembled her own:

> I am at a disadvantage when it comes to academic words. I feel really
> underprivileged when it comes to academic words because I've never had even a
> dictionary in my house growing up, compared to these kids that were made to
> read the dictionary. So, I feel like, someone that came from different countries
> and are piecing all these words together and then they come and, I feel like
> academic language is almost foreign all in itself. And, he's [the interviewee] kind
> of talking about how he sometimes has to write words and look it up later and
> kind of go with the flow and stuff like that, and, secretly, that's what I have to do,
> but at the same time it would be so much harder if it was like other languages
> kinda piece too.

In this quote, Elena identifies as disadvantaged in terms of knowledge of academic

language, although she herself was never an ELL. She acknowledges that coming from a

minority background *plus* learning English as a second language must be even more

difficult.

As stated in previous sections, Elena found many connections between the course

content, including the field experience, and her own life. Growing up in a predominantly

Hispanic, Spanish-speaking neighborhood had given her a perspective that was quite

distinct from that of her classmates.

Religious affiliation

Several of the participants talked about their religious affiliations (or lack thereof)

and the ways in which their personal beliefs and practices either facilitated their field

experiences or served a mediating role in their thinking about specific aspects related to

the education of ELLs.

Both Chris and Jessie, who chose to spend time at Hispanic churches, mentioned

that the fact that they themselves were Catholic had made their experiences a little more

"comfortable." For example, they pointed out that, even though they were unable to understand the words recited in Spanish during Mass, they "recognized the parts" of the service and could follow along for the most part. In other words, this was not such a new and unknown experience for them. Chris also commented on various occasions that he enjoyed being at the church because he felt comfortable there and was immediately welcomed and accepted by its members.

The participant that referred most often to religion was Jennifer, who made several references to her non-religious background when discussing the issues of culturally relevant pedagogy and assimilation. To give an example, in one instance she talked about the danger of assuming that students would want to read books about certain topics based solely on (supposed) aspects of their home cultures:

> I kind of feel very similar. I could really relate to it because my mom grew up as an Orthodox Jew and completely rejected it, and I was therefore brought up with absolutely no religion…My dad is Catholic, so we used to…I don't even really know if he's Christian but didn't really grow up with religion either, so we always got Christmas trees up until now. With just my parents at home, we don't even get one anymore. And all my friends were like, "Wait, you don't?" I mean, I guess I'm kind of Jewish, but I don't identify with that at all, and I think that…if I had had any teacher that was like, "Jennifer, this was a great book about the Holocaust. I think you would really enjoy it." I would be like, "Why would I like it more than anyone else would?"

On another occasion, Jennifer made a somewhat similar comment involving religion:

> It made me recognize a fine line between A) how you make people feel like it is good to know both their cultures and B) also letting them choose how much of their own culture they want to embrace. And, I think that's something that, the best way, in my opinion, to do it is to educate everyone, not just a certain group of students, but to expose everyone to a variety of cultures. Because, in reality, for some reason, I find that we're a lot more accepting when it comes to religion about this kind of idea. I mean, certain people aren't, obviously. But, in a school system where we have separation of church and state, we still learn about a multiplicity of religions. I remember as part of world history we learned about it in a historical sense. You learned about the development of Christianity, the split of Catholicism and Protestantism. We had some world religions part of our

history. We learned about Hinduism and Buddhism. It's one of those things where you learn about all of them, and everyone does. Not just kids that are Muslim learning about Muslim. I kind of always grew up in a family where, I mean, my family's not religious, but my dad is a self-proclaimed Buddhist. And if I got interested in something that wasn't culturally my religion, he would be like, "I'm really glad you found something that works for you." And I feel like, as we move towards a more diverse culture and a really multicultural society, not just should it be acceptable and allowable for people to assimilate into American culture, but there are plenty of people who find that other cultures kind of suit their needs better.

In the first quote, Jennifer makes a valid point in that teachers should not make assumptions about students' desired affiliations. However, she fails to recognize that culturally relevant pedagogy refers to the practice of drawing on students' *lived* experiences (Gay, 2000), and teachers employing CRP find ways to learn about their students' actual backgrounds and interests before making these connections. In the second quote, Jennifer likewise makes a valid and well-articulated argument. Nevertheless, she fails to take into account that particular cultures are allotted more or less prestige in the U.S. and thus that the idea of "choice" is more complex than it seems.

In all of these cases, it was clear that particular aspects of the participants' backgrounds and prior experiences had mediated their learning, understandings, and beliefs during the fall semester.

Conclusion

The results presented in this chapter show both promise and concern with regards to the learning of prospective teachers in courses linked to cross-cultural field experiences. In all six cases, the teachers displayed newly developed knowledge and productive beliefs related to the education of ELLs, suggesting that the field experience had been successful. Nevertheless, in some instances, they ended up with only partial

understandings of certain issues, they had difficulty translating knowledge into practice, they continued to make a number of unsubstantiated claims, and some of their perspectives were still grounded in deficit models. These findings suggest that, while the multiple forms of mediation they received definitely pushed the participants in the right direction, on occasion the course and field experience were insufficient to equip them with deep knowledge and affirming beliefs pertaining to the lives and education of ELLs.

Moreover, the study highlighted several successful features of the field experience as well as issues that seemed to either frustrate participants or limit their potential learning in one way or another. Based on these findings, in the next chapter I make specific recommendations for improvement of the project that should guide future implementation. It was also clear that both the learning trajectories and the learning outcomes were quite different for each teacher, depending on the nature of the knowledge and beliefs with which they entered the course and on particular aspects of their backgrounds and prior experiences. This finding suggests that different teachers will likely require different forms of support as they participate in the project.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I begin by providing a brief summary of the research study, including its overall purpose, the theoretical framework, the four guiding research questions, and the methodology. I then summarize the major findings and discuss their importance in terms of previous research and a number of theoretical constructs within sociocultural theory. This discussion leads to a proposed categorization of prospective teachers based on their backgrounds and prior experiences. Subsequently, I highlight the study's pedagogical implications, focusing on issues concerning the design of university courses and associated field experiences whose aim is to maximize teacher preparation for diversity and ELLs. Finally, I comment on the limitations of the study as well as offer specific directions for future research.

Summary

The dissertation study focused on the impact of a cross-cultural field experience, which itself was embedded in a semester-long course focused on the foundations of teaching linguistically diverse students. The study examined whether and how the field experience served to equip pre-service teachers with empowering beliefs about English language learners as well as increased understandings of important issues related to the education of this group. In particular, the study looked at the process of change in teachers as it occurred during the course and field experience, meanwhile identifying

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some of the specific features responsible for such change. Additionally, the study investigated the mediating effects of certain facets of teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences.

Situated within sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985), this research examined the social nature of teacher learning within specific contexts and activities (*e.g.*, interactions with ELLs in the field, class discussions at Vanderbilt). It also considered the roles that teachers' previous experiences played in shaping their learning. Importantly, teachers were viewed as complex, agentive individuals who interacted with the tools/artifacts available to them within the socially constructed environment of the course and field experience (*e.g.,* readings, the personal stories of ELLs). The three specific constructs from SCT that were used as interpretive lens included the *zone of proximal development*, *mediation*, and *internalization*. One of the main contributions of my study is that I used these theoretical constructs to show how the immersion project served as a form of mediation that allowed the participants to see and experience understandings that were previously invisible to them. Importantly, the fact that the field experience was closely linked to the foundations course led to more meaningful learning and thus more productive internalization of course content. At the same time, these constructs illuminated the mediating force of various aspects of the participants' backgrounds and prior experiences, underscoring the need for qualitatively and quantitatively different types of intervention and assistance based on what teachers initially bring to the course.

According to Lantolf (1993), the ZPD, or the difference between actual and potential development, is constructed and negotiated through interaction. Thus, it was

hypothesized that pre-service teachers would develop new knowledge and dispositions as a result of their engagement in appropriately scaffolded interactions throughout the semester. Moreover, teachers were exposed to a variety of culturally based mediational means (*e.g.*, readings, group discussions, interactions with teachers and learners) that were designed to push them to "reconceptualize and recontextualize" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003) their previous understandings and dispositions with regards to ELLs. In the same vein, it was hoped that the teachers would internalize (and hence actively construct and transform) their knowledge (Wertsch, 1998) in productive ways based on constant interactions between what they already knew and believed and new ideas and discourses provided throughout the semester. It is worth mentioning that research on teacher learning from a sociocultural perspective is still in its infancy (Artiles *et al.*, 2000; Johnson, 2006), thus making this study an important contribution to the field.

The following four research questions guided the study:

1. What do teacher candidates bring to the course in terms of prior understandings and beliefs regarding work with diverse learners, including ELLs?

2. What new understandings and beliefs do the candidates develop during the course?

3. What features of the cross-cultural field experience are most significant in bringing about development in the prospective teachers?

4. How do the candidates' background characteristics and prior experiences mediate their learning?

The study examined both the learning outcomes of the pre-service teachers as well as the specific conditions that supported or hindered their learning throughout the semester. I

focused in particular on the impact of the cross-cultural field experience, in which the teachers were required to spend at least 15 hours immersing themselves in non-English-language activities and interacting one-on-one with ELLs.

Data for the main part of the study were collected from August-December 2008 (five months) on six focal participants who were selected based on specified criteria, namely a range of background characteristics and prior experiences (*e.g.*, previous exposure to diversity, minority/majority status, foreign work/travel). Significantly, the participants engaged in a variety of field experiences, allowing an additional comparison and contrast across sites. The data sources included pre- and post-term surveys, a demographic and background questionnaire, video-taped classroom observations, a series of audio-recorded interviews, and classroom assignments (reflection papers, exams, and final presentations). Most of the data were analyzed qualitatively in accordance with the constant-comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), with the exception of the surveys, which were analyzed quantitatively. The analysis was systematic and ongoing and was guided by the four research questions as well as by sociocultural theory. In the next section, I summarize the major findings and discuss their importance with regards to both previous research and relevant theoretical constructs.

Findings and Interpretations

Participants' initial understandings and beliefs related to diversity and ELLs

Understandings. Based on their responses on pre-term questionnaires, surveys, and interviews, most of the focal participants began the foundations course with

relatively limited knowledge of and experiences with diverse learners, including ELLs. According to the findings of major reviews of research on diversity (*e.g.*, Hollins and Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Sleeter, 2008), this seems to be a national trend, particularly for the typical White, female, middle-class, monolingual teacher. That said, there were a few exceptions. For example, both Elena and Brandon had had past experiences with diverse learners in their homes, schools, and/or communities and thus brought considerable personal knowledge of some of the topics to be covered in the course. This finding is not surprising given that I purposely selected case-study teachers who brought differing levels of prior experience with diversity, among other background characteristics (*e.g.*, prior L2 study, race/ethnicity). The other four participants (Jackie, Jessie, Jennifer, Chris) entered the course with much less past experience with diversity as well as with minimal knowledge of issues pertaining specifically to the education of ELLs.

At the beginning of the semester, the pre-service teachers claimed to know the most about the following topics: immigrant issues, rationales for bilingual/ESL instruction, and opposition to and support for bilingual/ESL instruction. Importantly, some of them indicated that the course content did not seem relevant or useful to them given that they had already taken a course in which they felt that these topics had been sufficiently covered. Although this previous class had not focused centrally on ELLs— but rather on diversity more generally—the pre-service teachers had been exposed to ideas such as culturally relevant pedagogy and bilingual education. This sentiment led one participant (Jennifer) to openly state that the foundations course was redundant. This finding is significant because it suggests that teachers may over-estimate their understandings of certain topics, such as those concerning ELLs, based only on limited

exposure. It is highly unlikely that such limited exposure was enough for Jennifer and the other pre-service teachers to fully internalize relevant concepts and hence develop a strong knowledge base, and later in the semester Jennifer admitted that she knew much less than she originally thought. This finding suggests that participating in the course and field experience had made her more aware of the need to continue developing knowledge and practice related specifically to the education of ELLs. The participants had undoubtedly also been exposed to views about immigrants and bilingual education through the media, especially given the controversial and ever-present nature of these issues. Of course, a lot of the discourses to which they were likely exposed are negative and/or based on myths and misconceptions (Jiménez & Teague, 2007), meaning that certain types of interventions or mediational means (*e.g.,* coursework, field experiences) are necessary in order to counter these views.

When asked about their goals for the course, most of the participants expressed an interest in learning about *practical strategies* for working with ELLs. For instance, they wanted to know "what works," "how to teach," "how to help," "practical applications," and "strategies." To a much less extent, they were interested in learning more about relevant issues and concepts (*e.g.*, English-Only movements) or theories (*e.g.*, second language acquisition). This is important because it suggests that many future teachers may dismiss the role of conceptual/theoretical knowledge and instead perceive only a need for a toolkit of "practical" strategies that would allow them to work more effectively with diverse learners, including ELLs. While it is certainly important for prospective teachers to learn about practical strategies, this knowledge is unlikely to have a significant impact on student learning unless teachers are likewise familiar with the larger

sociopolitical context surrounding the education of this group (Nieto & Bode, 2008) as well as the major theories used to frame and understand the learning of ELLs. This finding also suggests, as Reeves (2004) and others have pointed out, that teachers may resist learning about ELLs and radically altering their practices for this particular population. Stated otherwise, teachers may insist only on "practical strategies" either because they are unconvinced that working with ELLs is or should be any different from working with mainstream students and/or because they believe that it is unfair for them to have to change their practice to accommodate new types of learners, especially those who are often considered "illegitimate" or unwelcome members of society (Jiménez & Teague, 2007).

Beliefs. Participants' beliefs about diversity and ELLs were generally positive and supportive, although there were some exceptions. This finding contrasts with that put forth by other researchers (*e.g.,* Hollins & Torres-Guzmán, 2005; Marx, 2000; Sleeter, 2008), who have reported that pre-service teachers generally begin their programs with somewhat negative beliefs and attitudes about diversity. To give a few examples, all of the teachers in my study agreed on the important role of parents in education as well as the fact that immigrant parents typically value education for their children. They also agreed on the benefits of fostering L2 learning among all students and the need to acquire specialized forms of knowledge and practice to be an effective teacher of ELLs. Moreover, most of the teachers felt that focusing only on "correct English" was problematic, that students should be allowed to use their native languages at school, and that teachers should find ways to draw on students' cultural and linguistic resources.

The exceptions were Jackie and Chris. Jackie considered that a focus on "correct

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English" for ELLs was essential, signaling a lack of knowledge about effective ESL instruction. Chris was unsure whether teachers should allow students to use their native languages or whether they should draw on students' cultural and linguistic resources, and he admitted that he needed to learn more before forming any definite opinions, suggesting a close relationship between knowledge and beliefs with regards to the education of ELLs (see Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003 for further evidence of this finding). While it is possible that some of the teachers who provided "favorable" responses simply anticipated what they thought the course instructor wanted to hear, it is more likely that they had familiarized themselves with the discourses promoted on a more program-wide level (*e.g.,* parents are important partners in education, it is important to build on students' background knowledge and experiences). In this fashion, by the time they entered the foundations course (during their junior year), a number of the participants' key beliefs pertaining to the education of ELLs and other minorities had already been productively mediated, and, for the most part, the teachers seemed to have adopted or internalized these favorable dispositions.

The participants were initially more divided on the issues of L1 instruction and maintenance, similar to the undergraduates in Katz' (2000) study. More specifically, some leaned more toward English-only models (especially Brandon and Jennifer), whereas others were more supportive of bilingualism and bilingual education. Others (*e.g.*, Chris) indicated no preference either way. The same can be said about the participants' beliefs about the role of motivation and hard work in the SLA process. Two of them (Jackie and Jessie) initially agreed that these were the *most important* factors involved in learning a second language, while two others (Elena and Jennifer) stated no

preference, and the final two (Brandon and Chris) disagreed. These findings, which were confirmed through pre-term interviews, indicate that pre-service teachers enter programs with a diverse range of previously formed beliefs and attitudes on issues such as bilingual education, the use and maintenance of the L1, and the second language acquisition process. Such dispositions probably have their roots in a combination of personal experiences, exposure to the media and others' opinions, and prior coursework.

Most of the participants seemed to agree that diversity was a resource to be respected and promoted, which, as before, likely stems from more program-level discourses. One participant (Jessie) admitted that she had not thought much about diversity before entering the teacher-education program at Vanderbilt—a result of her lack of prior personal experience with diverse individuals. Interestingly, three of the participants (Jackie, Brandon, Elena) entered the course with clear orientations toward social justice. Specifically, their goal was to eventually work with underserved students in urban settings, as they believed these were the types of learners most in need of quality educational opportunities. It is notable that these three individuals were either from minority backgrounds (Jackie and Elena) and/or had had extensive prior personal experience with diversity (Brandon and Elena). In contrast, Jennifer (a White female) indicated that she hoped to eventually work with more privileged students like herself, following the national trend of teachers who prefer jobs in suburban, higher-SES schools (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, Michelli, & Wyckoff, 2006). Finally, although all the participants claimed that parents played a fundamental role in education, as noted above, Jackie and Jennifer made comments suggesting that immigrant families should speak English in the home in order to alleviate later language barriers at school. Clearly, these

ways of thinking reflect mainstream discourses around immigrants and English learning as well as simplistic solutions to complex problems. As such, they are prime targets in need of educational intervention.

Participants' developing understandings and beliefs related to diversity and ELLs

   Understandings. Data from my research indicated that the course and field experience led to some positive changes in the focal participants' understandings of diversity and ELL issues. This finding is consistent with a number of other empirical studies (*e.g.*, Clark & Flores, 1997; Clark & Medina, 2000; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Mora & Grisham, 2001; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Willard-Holt, 2001; Xu, 2000a, 2000b), which have reported that carefully structured courses and field experiences focused on ELLs typically lead to increased and more accurate knowledge. The prospective teachers claimed to have learned the most about program models, theories, SLA, and program evaluations, and they were able to make explicit connections between the course material and certain aspects of their field experiences. Importantly, the field experience served as a concrete means of understanding and processing the more abstract information taught in the course, a theory-practice approach advocated by Sleeter (2008) and supported by the sociocultural-theoretic notion of *learning in doing* (Wertsch, del Río, & Álvarez, 1995). While, overall, the connections they made were accurate and insightful, in a few cases participants demonstrated only partial understandings of the theories or concepts they were discussing, which implies that these ideas had not been fully internalized.

Furthermore, one of the teachers (Elena) made almost no explicit connections to readings and lectures, suggesting that she had difficulty performing this task successfully without more guidance. Accordingly, Elena could have received more explicit help with her academic writing skills, specifically the practice of choosing relevant ideas from texts and citing them in her papers. For example, the course instructor could have provided her with this extra help outside of class and, if necessary, referred her to the university's Writing Studio. By engaging in the field experience, the participants also evidenced their familiarization with local community resources; specific cultural practices, histories, and values; as well as student and community demographic characteristics and language proficiencies. The activities in which the teachers engaged throughout the semester (*e.g.*, interacting with ELLs, observing culturally based practices) had mediated their learning of these aspects.

Additionally, the participants came to articulate a plethora of instructional practices and implications stemming from their time spent in the field. For example, they began to stress the importance of knowing about students' outside-of-school lives and interests, and they identified particular ways of obtaining this information as teachers. They also mentioned many different means of drawing on student's cultural and linguistic resources, or their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), in line with the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2002). One of the participants (Chris) had trouble translating his ideas into actual teaching strategies, highlighting the distinction between knowing and doing (Wideen *et al.*, 1998). In their research, Arias and Poyner (2001) reported a similar finding, specifically that teachers taking part in a field-based literacy course learned to value diversity but that they were unable to act upon this

learning. Another participant in my study (Jennifer) actively resisted the idea of culturally relevant pedagogy, claiming that ELLs just want to "be normal." Implicitly, she was claiming that these students would benefit from learning English and assimilating to U.S. culture while leaving behind their native languages and cultures, and her thinking represents a normative discourse in which diversity is seen as deviant as opposed to resourceful. Although the foundations course had exposed her to alterative (non-mainstream) discourses on immigrants and education, she had not internalized (appropriated) these discourses, or made them her own (Wertsch, 1998). This finding suggests that deeply ingrained beliefs and ideologies are the ones that are most difficult (if not impossible) to change, whereas more neutral dispositions may be rather malleable given appropriate educational interventions (see also Katz, 2000).

The participants also came to discuss ways in which they could draw on the community resources (*e.g.*, community centers, key members of the community) they had become familiar with during the semester, even though a few of them struggled to name concrete educational tasks that might meaningfully incorporate these resources. This finding once again highlights the gap between knowing and doing (Wideen *et al.*, 1998) and implies that more appropriately scaffolded support is needed to make this next step, such as providing teachers with a specific method for translating their ideas into instructional activities. One idea, suggested by Jennifer, is to have future teachers complete lesson plans that require them to articulate specific ideas for making their teaching culturally responsive. The prospective teachers also talked about means of: providing comprehensible input; fostering interaction both among ELLs and with native English speakers; creating comfortable, non-threatening classrooms; offering extra help

to ELLs, understanding the SLA process; empowering students; and, involving parents. Such learning offers evidence of the process of internalization, which was mediated via interactions taking place within both the foundations course and the field experience.

Beliefs. While, as a group, the focal participants began the course with relatively positive and supportive beliefs toward diverse learners, including ELLs (see above), many of the beliefs they developed throughout the semester were even more positive and affirming. Even though researchers are still debating the extent to which teachers' beliefs can be changed (see Wideen *et al.*, 1998), studies have shown that well-structured interventions such as coursework and field experiences can help move them in a more positive direction (*e.g.,* Arias & Poyner, 2001; Ference & Bell, 2004; Katz, 2000; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003; Nel, 1992; Rymes, 2002; Torok & Aguilar, 2000). Importantly, my research provides further support for this claim. The participants in my study came to adopt and articulate beliefs and attitudes that were promoted within the foundations course, such as the importance of combining language and content instruction and the necessity of holding high expectations and providing extra support to ELLs. Notably, most of these opinions reflect an emphasis on the role of teachers and schools as opposed to the more common tendency to blame learners for their own school failure (Xu, 2000a).

With a few exceptions, the pre-service teachers also articulated more positive beliefs regarding the use and maintenance of students' L1s and C1s, in contrast to the beginning of the semester, when some of them were either uncertain or completely against this idea. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, they often struggled to provide examples of specific ways in which to capitalize on students' backgrounds.

While the beliefs outlined above were typically positive in nature, it was clear that some of the prospective teachers also continued to hold on to negative views and judgments. As Katz (2000) pointed out, teachers who begin courses (focused on ELLs) with strong negative attitudes may never change them, despite the constant mediating attempts of teacher educators. In my study, many of these negative comments were made by one participant (Jennifer), who frequently expressed mainstream, elitist views reflecting dominant discourses about immigrants and English learning (*e.g.,* that immigrants should be taught English as early as possible and speak it in the home). She also made it clear that, in her opinion, there were "correct" (standard) forms of English that minority students lacked and needed to master.

Additionally, the participants claimed a number of unsubstantiated assumptions that stemmed from their field experiences (*e.g.,* that particular students had not been exposed to literacy until kindergarten). Not all of these assumptions persisted throughout the entire semester, however. In fact, at some point in the project (especially toward the end), most of the teachers revealed some of their own assumptions that had been challenged through their fieldwork. Other researchers (*e.g.*, Ference & Bell, 2004; Pence & Macgillvray, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001) have shown that challenging potentially problematic assumptions is one of the most common outcomes of requiring prospective teachers to participate in cross-cultural field experiences. In particular, interacting firsthand with members of a different cultural and linguistic group is a mediating process that leads individuals to reflect on, question, and revise their taken-for-granted knowledge and beliefs.

The data indicated that, in addition to shifts in their beliefs, the pre-service teachers were also experiencing what could be considered *affective* responses and changes (both positive and negative). For example, many of the participants expressed feelings of discomfort, nervousness, and awkwardness during their time in the field, especially when trying to initiate conversation with ELLs. Similarly, López-Estrada (1999) and Rymes (2002) found that many of the White teachers who took part in their research experienced significant levels of discomfort, frustration, and irritation during cross-cultural field experiences. While there were factors that facilitated this situation for some of my participants (*e.g.*, knowing the language of the group, sharing a religious background), it was apparent that at least some of the teachers were reluctant to be in certain settings (*e.g.*, Hispanic churches) and to have to speak to people when there was a clear difference in ethnicity, race, language, and SES. These feelings were likely a result of their lack of prior experience with diversity, as sustained interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds typically lead to more positive attitudes (Tajfel, 1982).

Finally, some of the participants felt better prepared to work with ELLs, and one person (Jessie) expressed a newfound sympathy for ELLs. Overall, these positive affective changes concur with the findings of previous work focused on the impact of cross-cultural field experiences (see Clark & Flores, 1997; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Willard-Holt, 2001), suggesting that researchers and teacher educators should take into account prospective teachers' affective states in addition to the typical tri-partite of knowledge, beliefs, and practice.

Successes and shortcomings of the cross-cultural field experience

The field experience in its current form was successful in many ways. By the end of the semester, participants felt they that had learned a great deal about ELLs, and they recognized the multiple benefits of having participated in the out-of-class experience. Previous research (*e.g.*, López-Estrada, 1999; Rymes, 2002) reports that teachers engaging in cross-cultural field experiences often feel frustrated and uncomfortable toward the *beginning* of their projects but that they eventually adapt and enjoy what they are doing. This finding implies that the more extended the experience, the better in terms of teachers' attitudes toward it. Likewise, for the most part, the pre-service teachers expressed satisfaction with the particular sites and cultural groups they had chosen, and this finding was especially true for those who had spent time in academic settings. The interview assignment was particularly useful in that it put the teachers in direct contact with ELLs and allowed them to link concrete, personal experiences with more abstract course content (Sleeter, 2008). Furthermore, the participants who attended Spanish-language churches expressed an increased awareness of the frustration often faced by ELLs, although it is important to stress that this experience of "being the minority" is only temporary and not fully comparable to actually being a member of a minority group.

Another very useful element of the field experience included the debriefing sessions, given that these sessions afforded teachers the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their experiences, receive helpful comments and feedback, and work out difficult issues. During these discussions, a variety of ideas and perspectives were provided, and, in this manner, the teacher learners could collaborate to co-construct new forms of thinking and believing within their ZPDs (see Donato, 1994 for additional examples of

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the co-construction of knowledge by learners). At the same time, engaging in conversations with their peers allowed them to learn about multiple groups simultaneously. All in all, these features are among those typically promoted in the literature on cross-cultural field experiences (*e.g.*, Aguilar & Pohan, 1998; Ference & Bell, 2004; Lucas, 2005; Sleeter, 2008), and they were included per these recommendations.

There were also several features of the project that seemed potentially problematic and hence in need of careful thought and revision for future implementation. In many cases, these features caused conflict, resistance, and frustration with the teachers. For instance, most of the prospective teachers had difficulty working out the directions for their own projects and arranging for visits at suggested sites. These kinds of decisions, which the teachers were not used to making for themselves due to the way in which practica experiences at the university are typically pre-arranged, led to a great deal of frustration and even resentment. For example, some teachers delayed starting the project and did only minimal work on it throughout the semester. Researchers like Lucas (2005) and Zeichner and Melnick (1996) caution that teachers must be well prepared for field experiences before they begin and that this process requires careful planning and monitoring (see below for specific examples of this process). Similarly, many of the participating teachers found it difficult to identify useful community activities and to interact with ELLs, especially adults. In some instances, the participants were fearful that they would not be able to communicate, which prevented them from even making the attempt in the first place. Some seemed angry that they were expected to take on so much

responsibility for their own work, and they often complained due to the fact that the course instructor had not pre-selected sites, activities, and interviewees.

Additionally, the teachers felt a tension between the project's focus on a single cultural group and the likelihood that they would be working with ELLs from multiple backgrounds in the future. This finding suggests that they may not have clearly understood that one of the main aims of the project was to *equip them with the skills and knowledge required to collect information about students for culturally responsive instructional purposes* (see Gay, 2002). In other words, while they were expected to learn about particular cultural groups, they were also expected to develop tools/strategies that they could later use to collect this sort of information on their own. Some of them were also unclear on the specific goals of the experience, namely whether they were expected to "immerse" themselves or "study the culture" from the perspective of an outsider. Of course, ethnographic researchers are trained to do both simultaneously in the form of participant observation, and teacher educators such as Ference and Bell (2004) suggest explicitly training teachers on ethnographic techniques (*e.g.*, observing, interviewing) before sending them out into the field. Similarly, some of them resisted the community focus of the project given their desire to be in classroom settings, which they perceived as "more comfortable" and even the only appropriate placement for a future teacher. Finally, the participants who spent most or all of their time in church settings found it difficult to make connections to the course material, suggesting, again, the need to provide more support to teachers regarding ways to identify out-of-school practices that could be capitalized on for instruction. In general, teachers resisted going to church settings, and

once they had gone, they often complained that they had not learned anything useful for the class.

These issues bring about a number of specific recommendations for improvement of the field experience (see Table 13 for a summary). First, course instructors could provide increased support and scaffolding, especially during the initial phases of the project. Such preparation could include discussions of intercultural communication and ethnographic research techniques, clear guidelines and tasks for each visit, and even pre-selected sites which instructors know will provide access to useful learning (see Lucas, 2005 for similar recommendations). For instance, in the case of intercultural communication, instructors could have teachers choose specific cultural groups (*i.e.*, the ones they wish to focus on for their projects) and then do some background research on the communication conventions of the culture. This information could be found on the Internet. For example, do members of the culture usually greet one another by shaking hands, bowing, or kissing on the cheek? Also, what words and phrases do they typically use when greeting? The teachers could learn a few words and phrases of the group's native language (*e.g.*, for Spanish speakers, *Hola, Buenos días. ¿Cómo está usted? Mucho gusto. Mi nombre es…*) and then role-play the greetings in class with other teachers before going out into the community.

Along the same lines, teachers could practice simplifying their spoken English (*e.g.*, eliminating slang and idioms and using only basic vocabulary) as well as prepare in advance and practice the types of things they might say during an initial conversation

Table 13. Issues to Anticipate and Potential Solutions

Issue	Potential Solution(s)
Difficulty navigating experience (especially at the beginning of the semester)	1. Instructors pre-contact a variety of sites that have worked well in the past, identifying key people, explaining the goals of the project, and seeking cooperation 2. Encourage pre-service teachers to work with a partner, at least initially (allow teachers to select sites based on interest and availability) 3. Before project begins, dedicate class time to discussing topics such as: how to interact with ELLs, what to say about the project, and how to conduct ethnographic observations and interviews 4. Instructors provide pre-service teachers with explicit guidelines (*e.g.,* guiding questions) for each visit
Difficulty interacting	1. See number 3 above 2. When deciding on initial sites, instructors make sure opportunities to interact with ELLs exist
Difficulty immersing	1. Explicitly define "immersion" and give examples of possibilities (*e.g.*, attending a non-English-language church service or home/community event) 2. Provide pre-service teachers with a list of potential sites and activities 3. If feasible, work with local immigrant families to serve as hosts
Learning about single versus multiple cultures	1. Pre-service teachers choose one cultural/linguistic group to focus on throughout the semester 2. Instructors organize multiple opportunities throughout the semester for teachers to share what they have learned (*e.g.,* roundtables, presentations, posters)
Learning about different aspects of the culture	While initial sites will be pre-arranged, pre-service teachers will be encouraged to move around to other sites (*e.g.,* homes, local events, churches, community centers) to gain multiple perspectives on their culture of choice
Making connections to course material	1. Pre-service teachers will do readings on "culturally relevant pedagogy" so that they are clear about the goals and methods of the project 2. Instructors will make sure that course readings and lectures relate to the types of experiences teachers are having at their sites
Time and Transportation	1. While a variety of initial sites will be pre-arranged, pre-service teachers will have the option of choosing times and places that work with their schedules 2. Teachers will receive 1 additional hour of practicum credit for the field experience 3. Teachers will have the option of carpooling and/or renting university cars (when this is not possible, instructors will arrange for alternative forms of transportation)

with someone from another culture (*e.g.*, "I want to be a teacher, and I want to learn more about your culture."). In this way, prospective teachers would be equipped with tools that would likely enhance the success of their communication with members of other cultures.

Second, while transportation will certainly be an issue, participants should be encouraged and supported to learn about their communities of choice through multiple means. More specifically, they could attend church services, make home visits, visit community centers, and/or observe students at school. Both academic and non-academic settings should be included, if possible, given that each context serves a different purpose and provides unique types of experiences. Also, teachers should be encouraged to interact as often as they can with students and their families, given the importance of personal contact and relationship-forming (Sleeter, 2008).

Likewise, teachers should be guided to make constant connections between their field experiences and culturally relevant activities for the classroom. Of course, the degree of support necessary would differ depending on the ZPDs of particular learners, and this task could be accomplished in small groups. One way of doing this is through the creation of lesson plans with instructional activities as the focus. For instance, teachers could be asked to develop lessons that incorporated at least one of the community resources they had previously identified, such as a guest speaker. In order to complete this activity, they would need to consider the following types of questions: What is the focus of the lesson? Who in the community might be able to give a perspective on this topic? At what point in the lesson would this person come to class? What kinds of things do I need to consider to make sure this part of the lesson goes smoothly? To give a more specific example, for a math lesson focused on addition and subtraction, the teacher could

plan to invite the owner of a local restaurant (from a particular community) and have this person talk about and demonstrate the ways in which he or she uses math at his or her place of work (*e.g.*, adding up items on customers' bills, subtracting items when customers bring in a coupon, etc.). While, initially, the creation of lesson plans that draw on students' funds of knowledge might be unnatural for the teachers (and will therefore need to be scaffolded with questions and suggestions), over time incorporating these kinds of resources should become second nature.

In order to allow future teachers to learn as much as possible about several different cultural groups, instructors could make sure there are increased opportunities for sharing and debriefing, for example, through group discussions and/or informal and formal presentations. The more chances teachers have to talk about their projects and thus reflect on their experiences, the more knowledge they (co-)construct, not only about their own groups but also about all the others represented among their peers. Indeed, reflection, debriefing, and ongoing feedback are frequently touted as key components of successful cross-cultural field experiences (Aguilar & Pohan, 1998; Ference & Bell, 2004; López-Estrada, 1999; Lucas, 2005; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Rymes, 2002; Sleeter, 2008) and align well with the central tenets of sociocultural theory (*e.g.*, mediation, social interaction, negotiated assistance within the ZPD).

The mediating role of participants' background characteristics and prior experiences

My study revealed five background characteristics and prior experiences that played an important mediating role in shaping participants' understandings, beliefs, and learning regarding diverse learners, specifically ELLs. First, the two prospective teachers

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who entered the course with considerable prior exposure to diversity (Elena and Brandon) had numerous personal experiences that they could connect with the course content and field project. Importantly, these past experiences had helped them to develop non-mainstream, critical perspectives on education that made them less likely than the other teachers to express deficit views toward ELLs and to feel uncomfortable with the project. For example, they tended to emphasize the role of teachers and schools in the success or failure of ELLs as opposed to focusing only on students. They also valued all types of diversity as resources for instructional purposes. These findings are consistent with those of other researchers (*e.g.*, Byrnes *et al.*, 1997; Youngs & Youngs, 2001), who have reported that teachers who were directly exposed to cultural diversity through mediating experiences such as living/working abroad and/or prior work with ELLs typically held more positive attitudes toward this population of learners.

Second, the participants who knew some Spanish and chose to work with the Hispanic community (Jennifer and Jessie) found that their L2 abilities served as cultural tools that facilitated their experience. That said, this facilitation was minimal due to the fact that they tended to struggle when attempting to communicate orally in Spanish, given that their previous language classes had focused much more heavily on the academic aspects of the language. Youngs and Youngs (2001) found that teachers who had studied at least one year of a foreign language tended to hold more positive attitudes toward ELLs. However, these researchers did not address the issue of whether teachers actually used this knowledge with students from the same language background. My study found that, although the pre-service teachers attempted to draw on their knowledge of Spanish, they had difficulty doing so. Also, it is worth noting that the participants' past

experiences as language learners had shaped their understandings of what a language class should look like—in the way of an "apprenticeship of observation" (Bailey *et al.*, 1996; Johnson, 1994; Lortie, 1975)—as they entered the course with previously formed conceptions of ESL instruction as a passive, teacher-centered process. For example, Jessie and Brandon initially thought that ESL classes were made up of groups of students who had difficulty understanding English and thus simply stared at the teacher.

Third, in the case of Jennifer, it was apparent that her own prior educational experiences (*e.g.,* home environment, pre-school, K-12 education) had been of high quality, and she tended to implicitly categorize students who lacked similar experiences as "deficient." Moreover, she overlooked the important role of her own educational background and instead attributed her personal success to her motivation and innate learning abilities. Clark and Medina (2000) and Xu (2000b) similarly reported that some of the teachers who participated in their research were not consciously aware of the role played by their own socio-cultural backgrounds until they were required to reflect on these factors in teacher-education programs. That said, pre-service teachers like Jennifer may fail to realize that educational opportunities are differentially structured for diverse populations (Banks *et al.*, 2005) unless their thinking is mediated through activities that require them to consciously analyze their own and others' experiences using a more critical lens.

Fourth, the participants in the study who came from minority backgrounds (Elena and Jackie) brought somewhat different perspectives to the course, presumably as a result of their own social positioning vis-à-vis the majority culture. In particular, they claimed to understand the struggles many minorities face within the U.S. educational system and

thus identified to a certain extent with the ELL experience. Somewhat similarly, López-Estrada (1999) and Rymes (2002) found that the participants from minority and/or international backgrounds who were involved in their work tended to have an easier time with the cross-cultural exchange process due to their own experiences as cultural and/or linguistic minorities. Specifically, the learners in their studies were accustomed to being the minority and had already undergone the experience of adjusting to new cultures and/or languages.

The fifth background characteristic/personal experience that played a role in participants' understandings, beliefs, and learning was religion. Two participants (Jessie and Chris), both of whom were Catholic, found that their religious affiliation provided a connection between them and the Hispanic community and thus facilitated (made more comfortable) the time they spent at Spanish-language churches. In contrast, another participant (Jennifer) made constant references throughout the project to her *lack* of religious affiliation, especially when trying to justify the point that many ELLs just want to "be normal" and fit in with the mainstream. In other words, she used her personal experience with religion as an analogy to express her implicit opinions with regards to assimilation. Her frequent references to this aspect of her background illustrate the significant impact that one's prior personal experiences can have on his or her thinking. As mentioned above, even though the course and field experience had exposed Jennifer to alternative discourses about immigrants and their education, she actively refused to internalize these new ways of thinking and instead held on to her previously formed (mainstream) notions. This finding reiterates the fact that individuals—including prospective teachers—are active determiners of "the terms and conditions of their own

learning" (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001: 145) and thus may resist the adoption of new ideas. In Jennifer's case, perhaps the best way to challenge her thinking would be to convince her of the problems with her argument, such as the fact that culturally relevant pedagogy capitalizes on student's *lived experiences and affiliations* (Gay, 2002) as opposed to those that might be *assumed* (*e.g.*, her Jewish background)*.* Moreover, she could be encouraged to reflect more carefully on the role that power plays in students' desire to "fit in" or "be normal," particularly since her comments reflect an unexamined mainstream discourse.

Categories of Prospective Teachers of ELLs

The findings of my study, coupled with those of other researchers (*e.g.*, Byrnes *et al.*, 1997; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) suggest that, to a certain extent, prospective teachers of ELLs can be placed into categories depending on their backgrounds and prior experiences. Stated otherwise, once we know certain things about teachers (*e.g.*, whether they have had significant past exposure to diversity), it seems possible to predict the kinds of understandings, dispositions, and feelings they are likely to bring with regards to the education of ELLs. These categories and predicted outcomes are represented in Figure 1.

It is important to consider a variety of background factors, including educational experiences, life experiences, and demographics. As shown in the figure, generally speaking, prospective teachers who have previously dealt with diversity in the forms of personal prior exposure, multicultural education coursework, ESL training, graduate study, international travel/work, foreign-language study, and/or being a minority are

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│ │                  Prospective Teacher Backgrounds                   │ │
│ │   Educational experiences (e.g., home education, schooling/        │ │
│ │                      coursework, L2 study)                         │ │
│ │       Life experiences (e.g., hobbies, family, work, travel)       │ │
│ │  Backgrounds (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, SES, language            │ │
│ │                   background, religion)                            │ │
│ └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘ │
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┌────────────────────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Prior exposure to diverse           │      │ Lack of these experiences[1] │
│ students/ELLs                        │      └─────────────────────────────┘
│ Multicultural education coursework   │
│ ESL training                         │
│ Graduate degree                      │
│ International travel/work            │
│ L2 study                             │
│ Minority status                      │
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┌────────────────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Diversity as a resource/cultural    │   │ Diversity as a problem/assimilation │
│ pluralism                            │   │ Few to no relevant personal         │
│ Some to many relevant personal      │   │ connections                          │
│ connections                          │   │ Uncomfortable, awkward, out-of-place │
│ Feelings of comfort in diverse      │   │ Mainstream, non-critical perspective │
│ settings                             │   │ Blame students and families for      │
│ Non-mainstream, critical perspective │   │ failure                              │
│ Belief in empowerment through        │   │                                      │
│ education                            │   │                                      │
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│ │                        Foundations Course                          │ │
│ │   Cross-cultural field experience (observation, interaction,       │ │
│ │                            immersion)                              │ │
│ │  Related assignments: exams, reflection papers, interview, final   │ │
│ │                         presentation                               │ │
│ │                        Course readings                             │ │
│ │               Lectures, discussions, and activities                │ │
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│ ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ │
│ │                        Desired Outcomes                            │ │
│ │  Knowledge (deep knowledge of theory, concepts, self, students,    │ │
│ │                      content, pedagogy)                            │ │
│ │      Beliefs and Attitudes (empowering, supportive, positive)      │ │
│ │  Practice (repertoire of effective practices, ability to apply     │ │
│ │               them according to context)                           │ │
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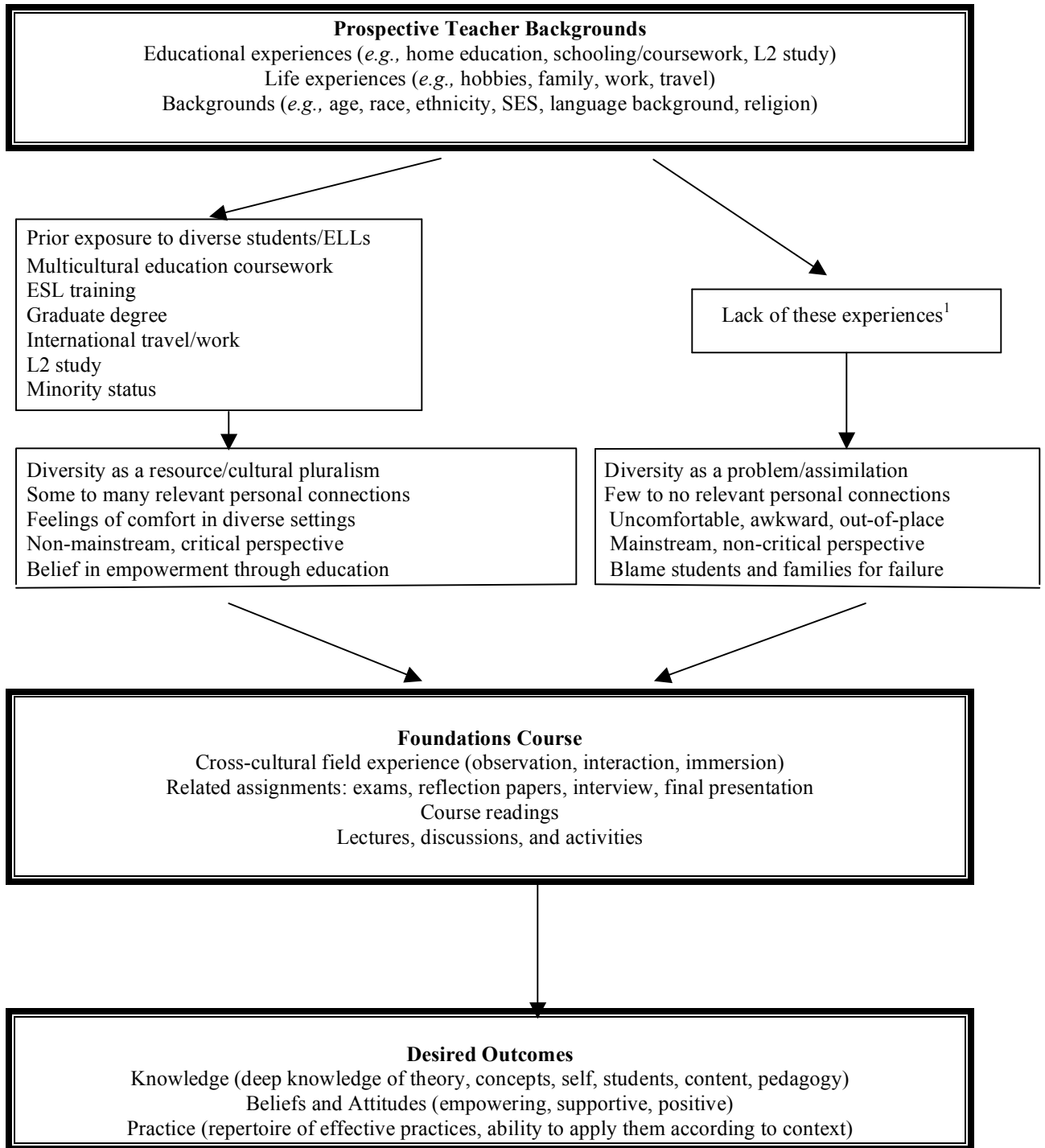
Figure 1. Categories of Prospective Teachers of ELLs

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[1] It is likely that prospective teachers will fall somewhere on a continuum between these two categories.

more likely to 1) think of diversity as a resource and value cultural pluralism, 2) bring some to many relevant personal connections to course material focused on ELLs, 3) feel comfortable in diverse settings, 4) hold non-mainstream, critical perspectives regarding diversity and ELLs, and 5) believe in empowerment through quality education. In my study, Elena, Brandon, and Jackie would fall under this category. On the other hand, those who lack these experiences altogether and/or possess them to a much lower degree (which will often be the case) are *more likely* to 1) see diversity as a problem to be overcome and prefer assimilation, 2) bring few to no relevant personal connections to the course material focused on ELLs, 3) feel uncomfortable, awkward, and out-of-place in diverse settings, 4) hold mainstream, non-critical perspectives regarding diversity and ELLs, and 5) blame students and their families for school failure. In my study, Jennifer, Jessie, and Chris would fall under this category.

While I have proposed these categories for the sake of better understanding and working with our teacher learners, it is important to clarify that teachers are likely to fall somewhere on a continuum between one extreme and the other. For instance, in my study there was no one who had not had *any* prior exposure to diversity. Likewise, the teachers had differing degrees of L2study, international work/travel, and related prior coursework. Thus, we must be careful not to incorrectly place prospective teachers at either extreme. Moreover, as with all learners, it is imperative to confirm any hunches or assumptions we may have about pre-service teachers with evidence. Specifically, teacher educators should collect data on teachers' *actual* understandings, dispositions, and feelings toward diversity and ELLs through means such as questionnaires and surveys, informal conversations, and class discussions.

At any rate, it is clear that pre-service teachers enter courses and programs with diverse backgrounds and hence knowledge, beliefs, and practice. That said, these past experiences mediate their participation in course discussions and activities—including field experiences—as well as their completion of assignments and readings. Importantly, teachers who fall under the second category described above (those who lack significant prior experiences with diversity) will typically require more intervention and support than those who bring this background, both because they likely bring little relevant knowledge of ELL issues and because they are more likely to hold negative, mainstream, non-critical perspectives on the education of this population. Furthermore, these kinds of pre-service teachers are more likely to see diversity as a problem to be eliminated through assimilation. Also, since this group of teachers is prone to feel increased levels of discomfort when engaging in cross-cultural field experiences, course instructors should be prepared to offer more support in these cases in the specific ways outlined above.

Along these lines, it might be useful for instructors of courses focused on ELLs to begin the semester with an activity that raises prospective teachers' awareness of how their backgrounds and prior experiences have influenced their knowledge and beliefs with regards to diversity and ELLs. For example, instructors could give teachers a list of the types of experiences listed in Figure 1 (*e.g.*, prior exposure to diversity/ELLs, international work/travel) and ask them to mark the ones they have had and reflect on the ways in which these experiences have shaped what they know and believe. They could then compare their responses to the "predicted outcomes" shown in the boxes below (*e.g.*, ideas about diversity, number of relevant personal connections, etc.). Engaging in this activity would serve to heighten teachers' awareness of their current knowledge and

dispositions and would help them realize how their backgrounds and prior experiences

had mediated their thinking. Of course, it goes without saying that it would be

counterproductive to look down on teachers based on their backgrounds and/or the types

of experiences they have had. However, once teachers' understandings were made

explicit through this activity, instructors would have a better sense of what they brought

to the course and hence be able to determine the most promising types of interventions

for each person. Regardless of pre-service teachers' backgrounds, the ultimate goal of

university courses such as the foundations class should be to help them develop deep

knowledge, positive and supportive beliefs and attitudes, and effective practice.

Pedagogical Implications

This study has several implications concerning the design of university courses

and associated field experiences whose aim is to maximize teacher preparation for

diversity and specifically for work with ELLs. Many of these implications have already

been outlined to some extent in previous sections (see Tables 12 and 13 in Chapter V),

given that one of the major goals of the dissertation was to identify and explain the types

of support that needed to be in place in order for the course and related cross-cultural

field experience to be optimally effective. Therefore, at this point, I will simply highlight

a few of the main findings and implications with regards to single courses such as the

foundations class as well as discuss what this means in terms of the larger structure of

university teacher-education programs.

Currently, most future (mainstream) teachers take only one or two university-

level courses focused on ELLs as part of their professional preparation (Lucas &

Grinberg, 2008), either by their own choosing or as a result of the ways in which their plans of study are organized. Fortunately, it was quite obvious that the pre-service teachers who participated in my study developed some knowledge and, in most cases, more productive beliefs about ELLs, which goes to show that single, well-structured university courses that include certain kinds of experiences (*e.g.*, closely linked cross-cultural field experiences) have the potential to help teachers reach the goals that we as teacher educators have in mind for them. At the same time, it was also clear that the participants evidenced gaps in their knowledge, that they were not always able to translate the concepts and ideas they had learned into practical activities, and that some of them retained a number of problematic beliefs and assumptions. This dilemma can be dealt with in at least two ways. First, teacher educators could strive to accomplish as much as possible within their individual classes, thus maximizing learning within a limited time frame (although the possibility always exists that learning will occur on a more superficial level). Second, prospective teachers could be encouraged and perhaps even required to take additional coursework focused on teaching ELLs, meaning that ELL issues would be infused throughout teacher-education programs. In my opinion, both solutions can and should be sought simultaneously.

My research shows that, within introductory or survey courses such as the foundations class, including outside-of-class components like the cross-cultural field experience offers teachers an extra means through which to understand and process the material being presented in the course. In particular, it makes the often abstract, de-contextualized readings and class discussions more of a concrete reality (Sleeter, 2008). Given appropriate guidance, teachers begin to make connections between the theories and

concepts introduced in the course and the actual lives and education of individuals for whom English is a second language, which ultimately makes their learning more meaningful. The immersion project also puts future teachers in direct contact with diverse people and communities, an experience that can serve to help them challenge beliefs, assumptions, and stereotypes as well as deal with their own affective (emotional) responses regarding diversity. As such, the field experience is an important and potentially effective addition to an already existing course.

That said, teachers' learning in field experiences must be carefully scaffolded depending on their backgrounds and prior experiences (see previous section). Otherwise, desired forms of learning may not take place, and teachers may become frustrated, turned-off, and even resistant. The specific types of support I have recommended include: 1) engaging prospective teachers in a number of preparatory activities (*e.g.*, discussions of intercultural communication, ethnographic research methods, explicit examples and guidelines) before they go out into the field, 2) facilitating contact with schools, community organizations, and key people, 3) creating multiple opportunities for teachers to collaborate with their peers and debrief, 4) including readings and tasks that help teachers make connections to the course material and that help them translate their ideas into practical activities, and 5) working closely with teachers and community organizations to make sure that time and transportation issues are resolved. Importantly, these are the specific kinds of support that teacher educators should be ready and willing to provide in order to ensure the optimal effectiveness of cross-cultural field experiences linked to their university courses.

While well-designed single university courses, especially those that include experiences such as the cross-cultural immersion project, can arguably go a long way in pushing positive development in pre-service teachers, it is doubtful that only one or even two classes will have a significant effect on their learning in the absence of continued support. Several researchers whose work focuses on ELLs (*e.g.*, Athanases & Martin, 2006; Costa *et al.*, 2005; Meskill, 2005) point out that future teachers need exposure to ELL issues throughout their entire teacher-education programs. In this manner, the education of diverse learners, including ELLs, becomes a program-wide emphasis and priority as opposed to an isolated course that is often perceived by those who take it as simply a requirement that they have to fulfill.

A program-level infusion of ELL issues is particularly important in light of some of my findings, which, as mentioned above, indicate that not all of the participating pre-service teachers completed the foundations course having developed target knowledge and beliefs. For example, Jackie demonstrated only a partial understanding of important course concepts (*e.g.*, Cummins' Threshold Hypothesis and the definition of Transitional Bilingual Education), and Jennifer continued to hold onto negative judgments and beliefs pertaining to standard/non-standard language varieties as well as immigrants and English learning/use. Although some teachers, for example, Jessie, may come to display target-level knowledge and beliefs within a single semester, other teachers will not and will require continued educational intervention providing them with further exposure to scientifically based ideas and alternative discourses. In this vein, further coursework on ELLs coupled with related field experiences is a necessary move.

In brief, while single courses can be designed in such a way as to maximize their effectiveness concerning the preparation of teachers of ELLs, the ideal solution is to combine multiple, well-structured courses into a more long-term and coherent program of study. For example, prospective teachers could be required to complete an introductory course focused on the foundations of ELL education (similar to the one examined in this study) in addition to *several* of the following more specific courses: TESOL methods, second language acquisition (including second language literacy), sociolinguistics, multicultural education, the structure of the English language, and ESL assessment. Ideally, each of these courses would include carefully selected readings, opportunities for discussion and application of the material covered, and experiences that put teachers in direct contact with ELLs and their families and communities.

Limitations

A first limitation of the study was that it involved a relatively small number of participants. The research focused on a single university class and more specifically the in-depth experiences of six focal participants. It is quite possible that these six individuals are not representative of the larger population of pre-service teachers across the country. Nevertheless, the fact that I established specific criteria for the selection of participants reduces this possibility. In particular, I chose participants representing a range of backgrounds and prior experiences to ensure as much heterogeneity as possible. While the results are not necessarily generalizable, I have included enough information on the research context and the participants to allow for a potential *transferability* (Erlandson *et al.*, 1993) of or *extrapolation* (Patton, 1990) from the findings across a variety of settings

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and participants. It will ultimately be up to the readers of my work to decide how similar or different their own teaching situations are.

A second limitation of the research was that I did not have the chance to actually observe the participating prospective teachers when they visited their field sites and when they interacted with ELLs in the community. Thus, my conclusions about what the teachers did and what they learned from these experiences is based solely on what they reported in their reflection papers, final presentations, class discussions, and interviews. That said, it is possible that what the participants said and wrote is more reflective of what they considered to be "favorable" or "desired" responses as opposed to their true thoughts, beliefs, and feelings, especially since they knew that I would be helping the instructor grade some of their work for the class. Nevertheless, I tried to minimize this possibility by collecting multiple forms of data (oral/written, edited/unedited) on the pre-service teachers and by working with them throughout the entire semester. Indeed, as they became more comfortable participating in the project, they seemed more forthcoming and honest in their responses. This was especially true when the participants were together during the focus-group interview and during in-class discussions.

A final shortcoming of this work was its relatively short duration (one semester). Since this study focused on a particular aspect of pre-service preparation, I cannot be certain at this point whether what the teachers learned during the foundations course and field experience will influence their actual practice with ELLs or the specifics of how such learning might eventually play out. It is possible that they will forget some (or all) of what they learned and/or that they will have trouble applying it when they have the opportunity to work with ELLs in their own classrooms. Similarly, it is impossible to

predict whether what the teachers learned in the course and field experience will impact their practice in a way that will ultimately benefit the learning of actual ELLs. In order to answer both of these questions, more long-term work that documents the path from teacher preparation to teaching to student learning is necessary.

Directions for Future Research

As pointed out by Lucas and Grinberg (2008), empirical research focused specifically on the preparation of teachers of ELLs is still in its infancy. Thus, the possibilities for future research are limitless. In this section, I describe three separate albeit related research programs that derive from my dissertation work and that would make significant contributions to the field in terms of better understandings of the effective preparation of teachers of ELLs.

First, I located only a handful of studies that looked at the role played by prospective teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences. My study added to this discussion by identifying and describing the influence of teachers' prior exposure to diversity, L2 study, prior educational experiences, minority status, and religion. More research needs to be conducted to closely examine the ways in which these and other background factors impact teachers' learning within teacher education programs. At the same time, I suggested that different teachers likely require different kinds of interventions depending on their backgrounds; therefore, we need a better understanding of the specific mediational strategies and experiences that work best for each type of incoming teacher candidate.

Second, the field would benefit immensely from more long-term research that followed teachers from their first course focused on ELLs all the way through their student teaching and their actual teaching placements. As mentioned above, one of the greatest limitations regarding work on teacher education, including that focused on ELLs, is the fact that we simply do not know whether and how teachers eventually use and apply what they learned in their programs (see Zeichner, 2005). I found only a few studies that back-mapped from teaching practice with ELLs to teacher education programs, but, even then, most of the data collected was based on self-report as opposed to systematic study and documentation of effective practice (*e.g.*, through observation). Additionally, we need studies that link teacher practice to student learning, since, ultimately, the goal of our teacher education programs is to prepare teachers who increase the learning opportunities for ELLs.

Third, researchers could compare the effects of different types of cross-cultural field experiences, such as those carried out in teachers' own communities (as in my work) as well as those completed in other parts of the U.S. and/or abroad. To be most useful, these studies would include observations of teachers at their sites and would follow them into other courses and ultimately into their teaching placements.

Conclusion

This study focused on the impact of a cross-cultural field experience on the developing knowledge and beliefs of future teachers of English language learners. Through close examination of the teachers' learning throughout the semester, I found that their knowledge and beliefs were shaped in mostly productive ways as a result of their

participation in the course and field experience. In some cases, there were gaps in their knowledge, and at least one participant held onto negative and potentially problematic beliefs and attitudes related to the education of ELLs. I likewise identified the effective and not-so-effective features of the project in its current form and made specific recommendations with regards to future implementation. Most importantly, I discovered that prospective teachers require a considerable amount of support in terms of preparatory work as well as continued guidance throughout the entire experience. Finally, I documented how five different aspects of teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences mediated their learning. In particular, the participants drew on these factors to understand, interpret, and justify their developing understandings and beliefs. These findings add to the literature on preparing teachers to work with ELLs and suggest that such preparation is a complex process that involves a consideration of the interaction between teachers' backgrounds and prior experiences and the mediational means (*e.g.*, coursework, field experiences) provided to them in teacher education programs. Given the increasing likelihood that all pre-service teachers will eventually work with ELLs in their classrooms, it is imperative for teacher educators to be aware of these issues so that they can offer interventions that are optimally successful in helping teachers develop deep knowledge, positive beliefs, and effective practice.

APPENDIX A

OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Research Questions	Data Collection Measures (Phase)
1. What prior understandings and beliefs regarding diversity and English language learners do the teacher candidates bring to the course?	Knowledge of ELL issues survey (II) Personal and professional beliefs about diversity survey (II) Interviews with focal participants (II)
2. What new understandings and beliefs do the candidates develop during the course?	Course assignments – reflections, exams (III) Knowledge of ELL issues survey (IV) Personal and professional beliefs about diversity survey (IV) Interviews with focal participants (IV) Final presentations (IV)
3. What features of the cross-cultural field experience are most significant in bringing about development in the prospective teachers?	Class observations (III) Interviews (III, IV) Course assignments – reflections, exams (III)
4. How do the candidates' background characteristics and prior experiences mediate their learning?	Demographic & background questionnaire (II) Class observations (III) Course assignments – reflections, exams (III) Interviews (II, III, IV)

DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:_____ **Date:** _____
            (First)   (Last)

Address:_____

Phone(s):_____

E-mail address:_____

Current degree program:_____

Hometown:_____

Other places you've lived: _____

Age: _____

Race/ethnicity: _____

Teaching experience (grade level, number of years, place, responsibilities)
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Foreign language background (number of years studied, level of proficiency obtained)
_____
_____
_____

Time spent abroad (indicate where, how long, purpose)
_____
_____
_____

Do you have experience working with culturally and/or linguistically diverse learners? ___
If so, explain this experience.
_____
_____
_____

Prior coursework related to diversity and/or English language learners (list courses)
_____
_____
_____

Briefly explain your reasons for taking this course.
_____
_____
_____

What do you hope to learn?
_____
_____

APPENDIX C

KNOWLEDGE OF ELL ISSUES SURVEY

Instructions: On a scale from 1 to 5, please indicate your self-assessed current knowledge of the following topics. Please circle only one number for each item.

1 = No knowledge
2 = Little knowledge
3 = Some knowledge
4 = Quite a bit of knowledge
5 = A lot of knowledge

1.	Immigrant issues and policies	1	2	3	4	5
2.	ELL communities	1	2	3	4	5
3.	English-only movements	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Rationales for bilingual/ESL instruction	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Opposition to and support for bilingual/ESL instruction	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Bilingual/ESL program models	1	2	3	4	5
7.	History of bilingual/ESL education	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Legislative & judicial milestones in bilingual/ESL education	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Bilingual/ESL theories	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Bilingual/ESL program evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Second language acquisition process	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Effective instructional strategies for ELLs	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Learner backgrounds and their role in education	1	2	3	4	5

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BELIEFS ABOUT DIVERSITY SCALES
(Adapted from Pohan & Aguilar, 2001 and Torok & Aguilar, 2000)

Instructions: On a scale from 1 to 5, please indicate your beliefs regarding the following topics. Please circle only one number for each item.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = No preference
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

1. It is more important for immigrants to learn English than to maintain their first language.
        1   2   3   4   5

2. Whenever possible, second language learners should receive instruction in their first language until they are proficient enough to learn via English instruction.
        1   2   3   4   5

3. All students should be encouraged to become fluent in a second language.
        1   2   3   4   5

4. Students should not be allowed to speak a language other than English while in school.
        1   2   3   4   5

5. Teachers should place great value on students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
        1   2   3   4   5

6. Parents from low-income families do not generally care about education.
        1   2   3   4   5

7. Teachers should focus all their attention on teaching ELLs correct English.
        1   2   3   4   5

8. The keys to successful second language learning are motivation and hard work.
        1   2   3   4   5

9. Teachers who work with ELLs do not need special forms of knowledge and practice.
        1   2   3   4   5

10. Parents and community members should play a minimal role in the school.
        1   2   3   4   5

INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why did you decide to choose the major that you did? Explain.

- How diverse would you say that your hometown is in terms of racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups? Justify your answer.

- Did you ever interact with people from other cultures and language backgrounds when you were growing up? If so, what was the nature of these interactions? If not, why do you think this was the case?

- What about the other cities/towns you have lived in? How diverse were they? In what ways did you interact (or not) with individuals from diverse backgrounds?

- Have you ever been in a position in which you felt like the minority? If so, explain the context and how you felt. Why do you think you felt this way?

- Would you say that Vanderbilt/Peabody is diverse? Why or why not?

- Tell me about your teaching experience. Where did you work? What did you do? Were there any ELLs in the school or program? If so, did you interact with them? How?

- Talk about your experiences learning a foreign language. Did you find it easy or difficult? Why? How proficient do you consider yourself in this language? Where have you used it outside the classroom? Who have you spoken with?

- Have you ever traveled or studied abroad? If so, what was this experience like? Were there any frustrating moments? If so, tell me about them.

- What did you learn from spending time in another country? Would you recommend it to your peers? Why or why not?

- How familiar are you with the immigrant population here in Nashville? Do you have friends whose first language is not English? If so, how did you meet them?

- Have you ever worked with anyone from another language background? If so, explain.

- What was your motivation for taking this course? Did you take it to fulfill a requirement? Were you interested in the topic? If so, why?

- What other courses have you taken that you think might be related to this one? What did you learn in these classes? Would you recommend them? Why or why not?

- What do you hope to learn in this course? What would you like to know and/or be able to do once it is finished? Why is this an important goal for you?

APPENDIX F

FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- I would like for you to talk to me about your field experiences. What have you been doing? Where have you been spending time? Who with? How long?

- What have you learned from this experience in terms of ELLs and diversity?

- Describe any problems or issues you have confronted. What happened? What did you do to resolve them?

- In your reflections you mentioned _____. Could you elaborate on that a bit? Why did that particular incident stick out to you?

- In what ways does the field experience connect to the class, in your opinion? How have you related what you've learned to the course readings and discussions?

- How would you compare your field experience with that of your classmates (based on class discussions related to this assignment)? How is it similar to the others? How is it different?

- If you could start the assignment again, would you choose the same site? Why or why not? What else would you do differently?

- Talk about the experiences of the people you've been working with. How long have they been in the country? How old are they? What were their situations before immigrating to the U.S. (if they weren't born here)?

- Are any of these individuals enrolled in local schools? If so, what have they said about their programs and classes? What challenges and successes have they described?

- What is the role of the native language in these people's lives? Are they maintaining it or losing it? Why do you think this is the case?

- How have your views of diverse learners changed since working with this population? Did you have any misconceptions that have been recently challenged? If so, explain what they are and how they were challenged based on your field experience.

- In your opinion, how useful is this assignment? Would you recommend it as an important part of the course? Why or why not? How might it be modified for better results?

- How has interacting with linguistic minorities made you feel? Have there been any instances of frustration? If so, describe them.

APPENDIX G

FINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Now that the field experience assignment is (almost) finished, how do you feel? Are you ready to suspend your interactions, or do you wish you could continue? Do you plan to stay in touch with the individuals you've been working with? Why or why not?

- Tell me 3 things you have learned from this experience.

- If you had students from this particular culture in one of your future classes, how would you teach them? What should you as a teacher know about their backgrounds?

- How could you involve community members in their education? Would this be important? Why or why not?

- Overall, how would you rate the value of this assignment? Would the course readings, exams, and discussions have been sufficient without it? If not, what did this experience add to your learning this semester that was otherwise missing?

- Many teachers feel that diverse learners, including ELLs, should assimilate and speak only English. Do you agree with this view? How would you respond to these teachers?

- What have you learned regarding the role of the native language in the education of ELLs? Under what circumstances might it be beneficial? Why?

- What were the backgrounds of the individuals you worked with (L1 literacy, prior schooling, SES, English proficiency, expectations and aspirations)? What role might these factors play in their education?

- What types of language programs might be more effective for ELLs enrolled in Nashville-area schools? Explain your answer.

- What types of instructional practices are the people you worked with this semester typically exposed to in local schools? Do you think these are effective? If not, how might they be modified, in your opinion, to be more effective?

- What are the benefits and challenges you associate with diversity? Is diversity important? Why or why not?

- In your opinion, should all students be required to learn a second language to a high level of proficiency? Why or why not?

- Would you recommend this class to others? Which aspects were most helpful? Which aspects would you change or omit? Explain your answer.

APPENDIX H

DESCRIPTION OF FIELD WORK ASSIGNMENT

A major part of your grade for this course (35%) will be based on your participation in a community immersion project. This immersion experience will put you in direct contact with ELLs in the local community. My expectations are 1) that you will come to better understand the backgrounds and cultures of the individuals with whom you interact and 2) that you will be able to describe possible implications that this learning has for your future teaching. In short, this experience will allow you to reflect on practice, question assumptions, and to expand your perspective on immigrant communities and language learning. Each student will design his or his own project. The main requirement is that you interact and immerse yourself *first-hand* with individuals and/or families from a non-English-speaking background. We prefer that you choose a linguistic and cultural group with which you are not already very familiar.

You are required to spend at least fifteen (15) hours in a community and/or home setting. Given that you will be submitting written assignments on a regular basis, you need to begin spending time in this setting by the second week of class. You may use the list given to you (these places have been pre-contacted) and/or other means to select an organization as an entry point into the community of your choice. The first time you contact someone from the organization, briefly describe the objectives of the foundations course as well as the expectations for the cultural immersion project.

The assignment includes descriptive observations, ongoing interactions, and at least one (1) formal interview. You will be asked to submit three (3) reflection papers of between 3-5 pages each based on your experience as well as an interview transcript and analysis. You will also be expected to discuss what you are learning during regular class sessions. Finally, at the end of the term you will give a presentation based on what you have learned during this whole experience. As noted on the syllabus, the presentation will count as an additional 10% of your final grade.

Project Plan (due Wednesday, September 3) – a one-page, typed summary describing your choice of site for the project. This should include places you have contacted, people with whom you have spoken, and any other ideas you might have for completion of the project. All projects need to be approved before you begin.

Reflection 1 (due by Monday, September 15)
Reflection 2 (due by Wednesday, October 8)
Reflection 3 (Interview) (due by Wednesday, November 5)
Reflection 4 (due by Monday, December 1)
***More specific details will be provided with each of these assignments as they approach.

While each student's reflection papers and interviews will likely focus on different issues, we expect everyone to cite and refer to the class readings when relevant (for example, when the literature either confirms or contradicts your findings and observations).

APPENDIX I

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION ONE

1. Describe the setting you have chosen.

2. What have you observed thus far?

3. What have you learned from your visit(s)?

4. What would you like to explore further?

APPENDIX J

GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTION TWO

By now, you have had more opportunities to immerse yourself in a new community and interact with some of its members. The purpose of Reflection 2 is to critically analyze your learning and relate it to the course content as well as to your own life experiences.

Your paper should include the following sections:

<u>Parts of paper</u>
1. Description of your experience thus far (3 points)
   - be as objective as possible
   - include specific details regarding new cultural understandings of the community
   - provide evidence of both interaction and immersion
2. Analysis of this experience (3 points)
   - make thoughtful, explicit connections to the literature
   - avoid superficial references
   - critique your assumptions or judgments
3. Specific directions for future work (2 points)

Format: 3-5 typed pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, APA style, reference list. *Note: Failure to follow these guidelines will result in an automatic deduction of 1 point.*

APPENDIX K

GUIDELINES: INTERVIEW WITH AN ELL (REFLECTION THREE)

1.   Locate one person to interview. Unless you have discussed other alternatives with me, this person should come from the community you have chosen to investigate for your cultural immersion project.
2.   Develop an interview protocol. A protocol is the list of questions you will ask during your interview. Between 8 to 10 questions is probably sufficient, especially since you should be asking follow-up questions to comments made by your interviewee. Remember, your job is to understand what your interviewee is telling you. I will look for evidence that your questions are grounded in the readings and class lectures and discussions and that they probe relevant issues.
3.   Get necessary background information.
        When the family or individual arrived in the U.S. (age at the time, year)
        Prior schooling before arrival in the U.S. (grades completed, private vs. public schooling)
        Knowledge of English on arrival (Had he/she received English lessons? Did the family speak English?)
        Parents' occupations and level of schooling
Some possible areas you may wish to probe are as follows:
        Interviewee's current attitudes toward native language/culture (*e.g.*, relationships with non-English-speaking relatives). *How do you maintain ties to other speakers of your language, other members of your cultural group?*
        Interviewee's self-assessment of native language proficiency/cultural competence. For example, *How well do you speak, read, write Spanish*?
        Interviewee's memories of what *occurred* during their placement in a bilingual or ESL program (probe feelings, specific events, or incidents). *What are your overall impressions of your experience in a bilingual or ESL program? Who was involved in teaching you English? What materials did you use?*
        Interviewee's memories of what he/she *learned* while in a bilingual or ESL program *How well did the program prepare you for life in the mainstream classroom, in terms of math, science, social studies, reading, and writing*? Earliest memories. A typical class or day in school.
        Interviewee's understanding of the influences of bilingualism on cognition (affective influences, necessity of bilingualism for different purposes). *Describe the differences you feel when speaking X language and English. How does your knowledge of other languages and cultural groups advantage you in terms of careers or jobs?*
        Interviewee's reactions to current political climate toward language-minority groups, such as legislation dealing with immigration and restrictions on bilingual instruction.
4. You will need to take detailed, hand-written notes or tape-record the interview. If you choose not to use a tape-recorder, your job will be much more difficult but definitely doable. A good interview typically includes about 10 times as much discourse from the interviewee as from the interviewer. In other words, you will want to put your interviewee at ease and get him or her to talk. If your interviewee is taciturn or unwilling to share information with you, you may need to revise your protocol or find someone else.
5. Include a reflective section after the transcribed portion of the interview. This is a discussion and interpretation of the information provided to you by the interviewee that demonstrates knowledge of the required readings and class lectures and discussions. You will be graded in terms of how thoughtfully and deeply you make relevant connections to the coursework! I cannot stress this enough. I will actively search for your understanding and application of key concepts.

APPENDIX L

GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTION FOUR

This is the final reflection assignment for the community-immersion project. Throughout the semester you have participated within the community and interacted with its members. We have also discussed, at length, the value of understanding what students know, have, and do in order to better instruct them in schools. Accordingly, this assignment focuses on the direct implications your experience will have on you as a teacher.

Your paper should include the following sections:

<u>Parts of paper</u>
1. Specific examples from your experience (5 points)
    ▪ be as objective as possible
    ▪ What specific resources upon which this community draws can you utilize in your classroom?
    ▪ What specific practices in which this community engages can you capitalize on in your classroom?
2. Implications for you as a teacher (4 points)
    ▪ What have you learned that informs the way in which you can adapt your instruction or accommodate these students?
    ▪ Avoid sweeping statements that are unspecified (*i.e.*, I have learned that it is important to learn about my students' communities.).
3. Continued "education" for you as a teacher (1 points)
    ▪ Given that every community, even within similar ethnic groups, is different, what can you do to more fully understand the students in your classroom?

Format: 3 typed pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, APA style, reference list.

Note: Failure to follow these guidelines will result in an automatic deduction of 1 point.

APPENDIX M

GUIDELINES FOR FINAL PRESENTATION

The purpose of this assignment was three fold: 1) immerse yourself within a community that was not your own, 2) gain specific understandings of the community related to course content, and 3) recognize the resources upon which the community draws. The final presentation will be the culmination of your experience within the community you have chosen. The sections of the presentation, outlined below, offer you a chance to reflect on your experience in terms of these purposes.

Your presentation should include the following three (3) sections:

Parts of presentation
1. Methodology (2 points)
   a. Report on *how* you navigated your way through this experience. Consider the following questions:
      ▪ When, where, and how often did you participate in the community?
      ▪ How did you choose the community in which you immersed yourself?
      ▪ In what ways did you begin to interact with members of the community?
      ▪ What other resources did you access to aid your participation?
      ▪ What would you have done differently to more fully participate in the community?
2. Description/Analysis (3 points)
   b. Report on *what* you did and analyze you understandings. Consider the following questions:
      ▪ Why did you choose this particular community and what did you learn about it?
      ▪ With which members of the community did you interact?
      ▪ How did your experience intersect with the material discussed in class?
      ▪ What was your major focus of observation/participation?
3. Implications (5 points)
   c. Imagine you have students from this community in your classroom. Answer the following questions:
      ▪ What have you learned that informs the way in which you can adapt instruction or accommodate these students?
      ▪ What specific resources upon which this community draws can you utilize in your classroom?
      ▪ What specific practices in which this community engages can you capitalize upon in your classroom?
      ▪ Based on what you now know, what questions would you pursue in order to more fully understand the specific community from which these students come?

Other needs: 1) A poster that presents the above information and 2) a 1-page handout designed to succinctly inform your classmates about your experience.

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