



Learning to Educate English Language Learners in Pre-Service Elementary Practicums

By Shannon M. Daniel

Introduction and Purpose

Studies have repeatedly shown that English language learners (ELLs) in elementary and secondary schools are frustrated because the school system is failing to support them in achieving their goals of acquiring English and obtaining postsecondary education (Menken, 2008; Olsen, 1997; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008; Valdés, 2001). Teachers of ELLs often tell students to stop speaking their native languages, require students to repeat tedious grammar drills that are not cognitively demanding, and communicate low expectations of these students. Many ELLs are left wondering “when, if ever, [they] will experience the kind of teaching [they] need” to succeed in elementary and secondary schools (Jiménez & Rose, 2010, p. 403). Too often, this growing population of ELLs, which likely will be one in every four students in K-12 schools by 2025 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), is not getting the educational services they need to thrive within and beyond school.

All K-12 teachers, not just English language specialists, are responsible for educating ELLs (Harper & de Jong, 2009; Valdés, 2001). To support students learning English as an additional language, however, all teachers need opportunities to learn how they can educate these learners effectively. Because teacher quality af-

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ffects students' academic success (Rockoff, 2004) and teacher education can enhance teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2000), more evidence is needed regarding how and when teacher candidates learn to educate linguistically diverse students in their teacher education programs (Jiménez & Rose, 2010; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). More specifically, because students' academic achievement in elementary school directly predicts high school success and graduation rates (Hernandez, 2012), and vocabulary and reading abilities in first grade predict academic success in eleventh grade (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997), further analysis into how elementary teachers learn to work with ELLs in their pre-service programs is an especially urgent need.

In this article, I report major findings from a study that documented how and when pre-service elementary teachers learned to educate ELLs during their thirteen-month Masters with Certification in Elementary Education (MCEE) program. First, I provide a synopsis of the literature on what we already know about preparing teachers to educate ELLs. Then, I describe my theoretical perspective, methods, and findings. Finally, I discuss implications for research and practice that could enhance the ways we guide teachers to educate ELLs.

What Do We Know about Preparing Teachers to Educate ELLS?

We know that:

- (1) Infusing culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy into teacher education programs can enhance students' experiences in K-12 schools.
- (2) Certain projects, courses, or practicum experiences can be shaped to help candidates learn to educate ELLs.
- (3) We have to think broadly about how pre-service programs guide candidates to learn not only knowledge and dispositions but also skills *across* program experiences.

Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy in teacher education engages teacher candidates in reflecting on their own backgrounds, affirming students' prior experiences as assets to learning, finding ways to bridge students' prior knowledge with new content, recognizing inequalities in K-12 schools, and embracing the role of advocate for increasing equity in K-12 schools (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Additionally, *linguistically* responsive pedagogy in teacher education guides candidates in gaining awareness of principles of second language acquisition, the importance of learning about and using students' linguistic backgrounds, and incorporating knowledge of language acquisition theories and students' experiences into practice (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). If and when teacher candidates incorporate principles of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy into K-12 settings, children's academic experiences will be enhanced. Guiding teacher

candidates in understanding and enacting these key principles, then, can help them interact with ELLs in their classrooms in meaningful ways that enhance ELLs' engagement in learning activities (Garcia, Arias, Murri, & Serna, 2010; Jiménez & Rose, 2010). Research that has examined how these principles inform teacher education practice is described in detail in the following paragraphs.

In the past decade, several scholars have highlighted specific efforts to prepare teachers to work with ELLs within teacher education programs. Initiatives within courses include asking teacher candidates to write a reflective cultural memoir in which candidates define culture and describe how it affects identity (Allen & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2004) or read Latino children's literature and discuss how to use these resources in their instruction (Escamilla & Nathenson-Mejia, 2003). Other possibilities for preparing teachers to work with ELLs include creating experiences dedicated to preparing teachers to educate ELLs, such as Nero's (2009) work on bringing candidates into a one-month immersion in the Dominican Republic to help monolingual teachers gain insights into cross-cultural communication and the language learning process. Tutoring adults learning English as an additional language in service-learning projects has also proven beneficial in helping teacher candidates learn to educate ELLs effectively (Bollin, 2007; Hooks, 2008). Observing ELLs in various classroom settings in K-12 schools (Virtue, 2007) and conducting action research projects with ELLs (Sowa, 2009) are other small-scale efforts that have helped candidates gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with ELLs. Additionally, a professional development seminar series for faculty in a college of education supported instructors in addressing the education of linguistically diverse students within the courses they taught, which enabled faculty to increase candidates' awareness of the unique challenges and opportunities in teaching ELLs (Costa, McPhail, Smith, & Brisk, 2005). These researchers identified potential strategies for preparing teacher candidates to educate ELLs, but these were mostly add-ons that were targeted to specific candidates rather than providing all candidates with an understanding of the needs of ELLs.

Only a handful of studies in which researchers employed survey and case study methodologies document how teacher candidates learn to be culturally responsive *across experiences* within their teacher education programs rather than focusing on one specific initiative. Teacher candidates' responses to questionnaires with items such as "expecting less from ELLs is rational" upon entering and exiting the teacher education program demonstrated that teacher education programs have to think broadly about their preparation of all teachers (Enterline, Ludlow, Mitescu, & Cochran-Smith, 2008). In another study, teacher candidates' responses to questionnaires administered four times throughout their teacher education program showed that candidates' knowledge and attitudes regarding "bilingual education, building minority pupils' self-esteem, culturally related behaviors, and assimilation of minority pupils into U.S. culture" was highest immediately after candidates participated in a multicultural education course (Capella-Santana, 2003, p. 186).

A few case studies inform teacher educators on how to attend to the preparation

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of teachers of ELL students. In one comparative case study, McDonald (2005) chose two programs that explicitly focused on preparing teachers to teach for social justice, and she posed the questions, “How do teacher education programs implement social justice in an integrated fashion across the entire program? What do prospective teachers’ opportunities to learn about social justice look like in such programs?” (p. 420). Candidates in McDonald’s (2005) study reported that they learned more conceptual tools related to “socially just pedagogy” than practical tools that would enable them to enact socially just pedagogy in their classrooms. Additionally, McDonald expressed concern that when programs only attend to educating ELLs through dedicating one day of one course to the subject, candidates may compartmentalize linguistically responsive pedagogy rather than consider ways of adapting their daily practice to support ELLs. Although McDonald’s (2005) focus on ELLs was only a subsection of her larger exploration of socially just teaching, Athanases and de Oliveira (2011) explored how one program with an explicit aim of preparing candidates to educate ELLs strove to reach this goal by examining the content, processes and context of programmatic efforts. This study illuminated the need for a coherent effort between all course instructors and internship supervisors to emphasize the importance of advocacy, larger sociocultural contexts and equitable instruction, and content-area instruction when preparing candidates to educate ELLs.

While these studies contribute to our knowledge of how to prepare teachers to educate ELLs, we still do not know enough about how teacher candidates learn to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students during typical pre-service teacher education programs (Hollins & Guzmán, 2005; Jiménez & Rose, 2010; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). Given the increasing attention to practice-based and field-based components of teacher education (Ball & Forzani, 2009) and the need to research what and how candidates learn from field experiences (Anderson & Stillman, 2013), this article attends specifically to how candidates learned to educate ELLs in their student teaching internships. Thus, the need for an in-depth case study that explores candidates’ perceptions on their opportunities to learn to educate ELLs as they participate in a more typical teacher education program emerges. In the remainder of this article, I focus on the research question: How and when did teacher candidates in a thirteen-month, pre-service Masters with Certification in Elementary Education (MCEE) program learn to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students in their year-long teaching internship?

Theoretical Perspective

Teacher learning occurs through interactions with others in situated contexts (Greeno & MMAP Group, 1997; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Putnam & Borko, 2000) in ways that socialize teacher candidates and new teachers into the profession (Lortie, 1975; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). This perspective of teacher learning, which I employed in this study, suggests that both implicit and explicit values and norms

affect teacher candidates as they learn (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), and that emotional (Korthagen, 2010) and relational aspects of teaching (Grossman & McDonald, 2008) must be considered inasmuch as interactions influence individual development (Van Huizen, Van Oers, & Wubbels, 2005). Newcomers (in this case, teacher candidates) apprentice to join and become “oldtimers” (teachers) through “broad exposure to ongoing practice” and “a demonstration of the goals toward which newcomers expect, and are expected, to move” (Lave, 1993, p. 71). As teacher candidates strive to enter the community of elementary teachers, they attend to their environment, which “present[s] and model[s] an ideal standard of achievement and provide[s] supporting conditions for a successful approximation of this standard” (Van Huizen, Van Oers, & Wubbels, 2005, p. 272). Members in a community of practice demonstrate not only explicit purposes, rules, and goals, but also “what matters and what does not, what is important and why, what to do and not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore, what to talk about and what to leave unsaid, . . . when actions and artifacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement” (Wenger, 1998, p. 81). In rejecting the technical-rational model of teacher education in this study, I recognized the complexity of teaching, which attends to “the whole of a teacher’s perception of the environment as well as the images, thoughts, feelings, needs, values, and behavioral tendencies elicited by the situation” (Korthagen, 2010, p. 101).

I primarily explored teacher candidates’ perceptions of how they learned to educate ELLs during their teaching internships, because (1) socialization during student teaching has stronger effects than other parts of teacher education (Zeichner, 1996), and (2) I perceive candidates as trying to enter the community of practice of elementary teachers. In addition to requiring teacher candidates to intern in schools with culturally and linguistically diverse populations (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner & McDonald, 2011), experienced mentors (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) and strong connections between university-based and internship-related teacher educators (Zeichner, 2010) can help candidates learn to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The quality of student teaching affects teacher candidates’ feelings of efficacy as well as their future goals (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012), and culturally responsive mentoring supports student teachers in developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to educate diverse learners (Zozakiewicz, 2010).

Often, in fact, practicum experiences do not enable teacher candidates to learn to teach in the ways that teacher educators would like (Clift & Brady, 2005), which is perpetuated by the fact that K-12 teachers and university-based faculty seldom interact or discuss their differing policies and beliefs about education (Griffin, 1989). Experiences in internships influence teacher candidates more heavily than their experiences in coursework (Levin & He, 2008), but placing candidates in schools in which “state-of-the-art practice become training grounds for new recruits to the profession” is a challenge (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 43). Given these continuing tensions, exploring how and what teacher candidates learn in their practicum

settings is an imperative step toward evaluating and improving teacher education practices. In this article, I explore what and how teacher candidates learned about educating English language learners in elementary school settings.

Context of the Study

The teacher education program I studied is a thirteen-month program in which candidates take courses in summer, fall, spring, and summer semesters and student-teach during the academic year (fall and spring semesters). This Masters with Certification in Elementary Education program (MCEE), takes place at a large university in the mid-Atlantic United States, and is an increasingly common type of alternative certification program that has been growing in popularity in the United States over the past few years (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). Upon graduation from the program, teacher candidates in the MCEE earn a master's degree and fulfill all of the major requirements for certification in elementary education in the program's home state and in forty-eight other states due to reciprocity in certification requirements. According to teacher education policies in this state, teacher candidates are not required to participate in courses or fieldwork focused on educating English language learners.

As this type of program is becoming a more prominent path toward teacher certification, this case study is both critical and typical (Miles & Huberman, 1994), because the site "permits maximum application of information to other cases" and "highlights what is normal or average" (p. 28). Additionally, the majority of the teacher candidates in this program were white, female, native English speakers, thus reflecting the national population of teachers, which is seventy-five percent female and eighty-three percent white (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006).

Participants

My goal was to work with a sample of participants who "adequately capture[d] the heterogeneity of the population," (Maxwell, 2005, p. 89) including factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, languages spoken, and years of experience in education. To do so, I purposefully sampled candidates with maximum variation to "document diverse variations" among teacher candidates (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 111). Thus, I worked closely with four of the sixteen teacher candidates in the 2010-2011 cohort: (a) Robert, one of the two white, native English-speaking males in the program; (b) Rachel, a bilingual Bengali-American female; (c) Becca, a white, female, native English speaker who knew some Spanish; and (d) Oxiana, a white, native-English speaking female who was fluent in Spanish. I varied my sample of teacher educators vis-à-vis their positions in the program. Table 1 gives some basic background information of the four focal candidates in my study.

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Robert and Oxiana interned at Fox Elementary School and Becca and Rachel interned at Lake Elementary School. Robert, who interned in a second grade classroom with three ELLs out of eighteen students, once described himself as “a little white Jewish kid from an upper-middle class area.” He had spent a couple of years working for a collection agency before realizing that his favorite part of the job was training new hires, at which point he applied for the MCEE. Oxiana worked with a mixed third-fourth grade class in her internship. After graduating with a degree in sociology with some focus on education and the Spanish language, Oxiana worked with immigrant high-school students in an after-school program for three years and then applied for and joined the MCEE. Rachel and Becca were both unsure of what they wanted to do, but after each of them spent one to two years working at a technology company and nannying, respectively, they applied to and joined the MCEE. Rachel interned with the second graders while Becca worked with the third grade class. While Oxiana and Rachel each had two ELLs in their classes of approximately twenty students, nine of Becca’s eighteen students were learning English as an additional language.

Table 1
Focal Participants

Candidate	Language(s) spoken	Bachelor’s degree, work experience prior to MCEE	Internship context
Robert	English (native), some Hebrew words	History, worked for a collection agency for 2 years	2nd grade classroom at Fox Elementary (2 ELLs out of 20 students)
Oxiana	English (native), Spanish (fluent)	Sociology, worked with an after-school program serving immigrant high school students for 3 years	3rd-4th grade classroom at Fox Elementary (3 ELLs out of 22 students)
Becca	English (native), some Spanish words	Art history, worked as a nanny for 2 years	3rd grade class at Lake Elementary (9 ELLs out of 18 students)
Rachel	Bilingual Bengali-English	Family studies, worked at an information-technology company for 2 years	2nd grade class at Lake Elementary (2 ELLs out of 21 students)

Methods

To extend the work of scholars such as McDonald (2005), I needed to identify and describe opportunities and challenges teacher candidates experienced in learning about educating ELLs as well as the efforts and perceived challenges of teacher educators working to provide such opportunities for candidates throughout the processes of the MCEE program. Thus, I strove to collect enough data to give a holistic account (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011) of the complex processes of the program and provide a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5) through employing qualitative, case-study methodology. I emphasized case study methods instead of taking a primarily ethnographic approach, because my goal was to “understand some external theoretical question or issue” (Berg, 2009, p. 326)—opportunities candidates had to learn to educate ELLs—instead of understanding the overall culture of the program.

Employing a case study approach (Yin, 2006), I collected data from various sources, including interviews with teacher candidates and teacher educators, observations of the processes within the teacher education program, and documents and artifacts from the program. I interviewed Robert, Rachel, Becca, and Oxiana individually four times throughout their program, observed each of them teach in their internships three times throughout the program, collected samples of their work such as their action research projects and teaching portfolios, and conducted a focus group interview with the four of them at the end of the program. Topics in these semi-structured interviews included how they learned to educate ELLs vis-à-vis teacher education processes (interactions with students and teachers in their internship as well as discussions and assignments within their university-based coursework), their rationale for their instructional choices in the lessons I observed them teach, and their overall perceptions of teaching ELLs in elementary schools. The initial interview with each of the four teacher candidates occurred in November of their cohort year, and subsequent observations of their instruction and follow-up interviews occurred in January, March, and May.

To gain a broader understanding of all teacher candidates’ experiences, I asked the entire cohort to respond to one survey in September of their program and one survey on their last day of their program, and I conducted a focus group interview with four candidates aside from the four focal candidates. The surveys and focus group interview included open and closed-ended questions addressing teacher candidates’ experiences of learning to educate ELLs in the program, their perceptions of how to teach ELLs effectively, and their confidence in being able to do so. I observed over 100 hours of teacher education class meetings to identify opportunities and challenges teacher educators had in guiding candidates to learn about educating ELLs. These courses included the two diversity classes in summer and fall semesters, two reading and literacy classes in fall and spring semesters, and one social studies methods course in the spring semester. Finally, I interviewed eight teacher educators, including

one mentor teacher, one internship supervisor, the former chair of the department, the director of the MCEE programs, the coordinator of the professional development schools, and three tenure-track course instructors.

During initial data analysis, I sought instances of teacher candidates learning the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of educating English language learners (for some examples of these initial “sensitizing constructs” (Brenner, 2006, p. 360), see Appendix A). In alignment with Horkheimer (1932), who argued that assigning narrow sets of concepts to the fluidity of social interactions was insufficient, I also approached analysis with open coding, in which I developed major themes based on my observations, moved to axial coding, in which I connected different categories of codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and employed the constant comparative approach (Creswell, 2007). Iterative data analysis included methodological, thematic, and theoretical memos (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) and aspects of grounded theory to enable me to “seek naturally occurring classes of things, persons, and events” and to identify “patterns in the data” (Berg, 2009, p. 148). Finally, I remained “still sensitive to how the informants frame their own experience” (Brenner, 2006, p. 361), and I focused my data analysis and report my findings based on the ways they described their experiences. I transcribed all interviews and emailed these transcripts to participants for member checking (as recommended by Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Findings

Throughout their internships, teacher candidates heard, observed, and participated in multiple teaching and learning processes that perpetuated inequitable education practices for ELLs in elementary schools. Five major findings emerged primarily from the interviews and observations with the four focal candidates. While four of the key findings identify challenges in guiding candidates to embrace and practice culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, the fifth finding offers some hope by indicating the ways in which candidates had opportunities to learn to educate all students effectively and equitably.

1. Effectively Educating English language Learners Is “Not Discussed.”

Of the sixteen candidates in the 2010-2011 cohort, only five worked in internship classrooms with linguistically diverse students. Oxiana articulated this problem quite clearly:

Almost no one’s in a linguistically diverse [internship] school...it’s totally shocking, because this area is so linguistically diverse, and they put us in schools where there are almost no English learners...And even culturally diverse...It seems to me that a lot of my classmates are in [internship] schools that are not that culturally diverse, whether it’s diversity within the school or diverse from their own culture.

More importantly, even when candidates interned in schools with culturally and

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linguistically diverse students, they did not have opportunities to learn how to educate or interact with diverse students effectively. Two of the candidates in the cohort, for instance, were unsure whether or not any of their students were ELLs. Furthermore, even though the focal candidates interacted with English language learners in their internships, they informed me that they did not learn much about educating ELLs. Oxiana said,

The school, since we only have an ESOL teacher here a couple times a week... in general, the school doesn't really talk a lot about addressing the needs of English learners. So it's not very apparent, it's not discussed, like how we differentiate for them or anything like that.

Rachel's mentor Melissa at Lake Elementary also shared that she had talked about educating ELLs with Rachel only briefly. She said that there "hasn't been a great focus on ELLs, but just a little bit, at least touching on the subject" in their conversations, because there were only two ELLs in Rachel's class and Melissa herself had limited experience in working with linguistically diverse students. Melissa said, "This is the first year, because of the boundary changes, that our school has had so many ELLs. So this is the first time I've had to interact with them like that." In fact, as far as seven months into the internship, Rachel referred to one of her students and said, "*I don't know if he gets pulled for ESOL,*" and she turned to another teacher to ask, "Rex is an ELL, right?" Rachel's lack of awareness about whether or not her students participated in ESOL-related services indicated that she was not considering ways to support students learning English as an additional language in her instruction.

2. Mentors Do Not Model Supporting Students in Overcoming Linguistic Demands

Despite Rachel's lack of understanding about this student's school experiences, she was able to thoughtfully and articulately describe what she and her mentor would do when I asked how they would respond to new ELLs coming into their classroom. "We would come up with a plan to work with those students and see if they needed to see the ESOL teacher, or see if they're able to work along or with another students' help," Rachel responded. However, when she talked about Rex, the ELL currently in her class, she told me that he was not doing his work. When I asked her if she reflected on how her assumptions may differ from her students' assumptions about teaching and learning, she walked me through her developing understandings of Rex's behaviors:

It's just easy to make that assumption when working with ELLs, when they're not doing their work, you attribute it to something that you think you understand. When with another student, who might be struggling or doing the same thing, you say, you're just lazy. *But you give the ELL student kind of a free ticket. Like, he doesn't get it. It's not really his fault.*

Rachel said that she and her mentor did not know what to do to support Rex, “since he’s not very vocal, and he doesn’t do a lot of his work.” Furthermore, she added, “Since we don’t really have that many ELLs, we don’t really modify the work or anything like that.”

Melissa, Rachel’s mentor, did not model the ways teachers can support ELLs, and this lack of modeling and discussion around supporting ELLs seemed to affect Rachel’s priorities in teaching. These unspoken norms permeated other teacher candidates’ instructional choices as well. Robert said that teaching ELLs “is not talked about by the mentor teachers at all. I don’t want to say that it’s a whole sweeping-under-the-rug thing, but...it’s been lackluster.” Oxiana, who mentioned educating ELLs as a nonissue in her internship school due partially to an itinerant ESL teacher, said, “Unfortunately, I haven’t been giving [how to instructionally support ELLs] probably as much attention...When I’m a more experienced teacher and sort of know what I’m doing a little more, hopefully I would be able to accommodate better.” Even if mentors did not feel as though they had expertise in teaching ELLs that they could have shared with the candidates, perhaps mentors could have better prepared candidates to educate ELLs had they collaborated with the ESOL teachers at their schools.

3. Mentors Did Not Model Collaboration with Other Teachers in the Internship Schools

According to end-of-program survey results, fifteen out of sixteen mentors rarely or never collaborated with the ESOL teachers. Unsurprisingly, fourteen out of sixteen teacher candidates never talked with or observed the ESOL teacher. One teacher candidate in the additional focus group, which occurred in the tenth month of the thirteen-month program, said, “*I don’t even know who the ESOL teacher is. I don’t even know what kinds of services are available at our school...I wouldn’t know how to advocate for an ELL kid. Obviously the ELL teacher has important things to do, I just don’t know what they are.*”

Robert stated, “I don’t think there is any collaboration” between his mentor and the ESOL teacher, and what he observed seemed to impact him, as he did not observe the ESOL teacher either. Oxiana, whose classroom was across the hall from Robert’s, confirmed, “No one collaborates with the ESOL teacher.” Rachel’s mentor said, “In ESOL, I’m not quite sure of everything that they do,” referring to times during the school day when the ESOL teacher pulled her students out for ESOL instruction. In another interview, Rachel echoed her mentor: “I’m really not sure what [the ESOL teacher] does with them.” While relationships between teachers are important for developing and maintaining effective education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, relationships between students and teachers are absolutely essential in meaningful teaching and learning.

4. Mentors Did Not Model Caring Relationships with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

During the internship, Rachel and Becca experienced tensions between the expectations that university-based and internship-based teacher educators had of them, namely in the ways in which they were expected to interact with students. Becca's university-based internship supervisor wanted her to practice cooperative learning techniques and have a "mutually respectful classroom." On the other hand, she said, "with my mentor teacher, it's a very us-them relationship, like you listen to me because I'm in charge. They [the mentors] yell a lot. They embarrass students a lot. [My supervisor] tells me I shouldn't be picking up these bad habits. But when I try to be more like her, the mentor teacher says that I'm not growing. It's just very hard." Toward the end of the school year, Becca said that her "mentor's philosophy" was to "just stay on top of [the students]. They're so helpless." During that first semester, Becca noticed that one ELL in her class was not progressing. She explained, "the little boy Luis speaks, like, absolutely no English...it's getting really frustrating for me. Or at least he pretends he doesn't understand." In this instance, Becca seemed to emulate her mentor's attitude of having frustration and mistrust toward the student, which signified an "us-them" relationship when interacting with students.

Rachel, who interned in the same school as Becca, also seemed to observe and internalize negative attitudes toward students and classroom management. In discussing how she learned to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students, Rachel said, "we do have students that I mean, I wasn't used to, you know, ready for," which she claimed better prepared her to educate diverse learners than if she had been in a middle or upper-class school with predominantly white, native English-speaking students. She explained:

Almost all of the entire population here are free and reduced lunch, so they're, you know, low SES...and we usually don't get support from parents... You can see how your teaching changes, just depending on the kids that you work with. So I mean at a school like this, you have to be very aggressive, just with your approach in the way that you speak to students. And discipline is very strongly emphasized, and you know, being respectful. But at another school, you might not have to put forth as much effort to get the kids to do what you want to do.

The mentors and teaching community to which Becca and Rachel were exposed did not model culturally responsive skills or dispositions, which influenced Becca and Rachel's learning trajectories, their attitudes toward their students, and their interactions during their internships.

5. Interactions with Students Enabled Teacher Candidates to Practice Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

Despite the ways in which teacher candidates observed, perceived, and participated in teaching and learning experiences that perpetuate inequitable instruction for cultur-

ally and linguistically diverse students, teacher candidates learned promising skills to promote effective education from the students themselves. For instance, Robert identified a key learning experience regarding the instruction of ELLs as when he noticed that students were unable to respond to his questions. He explained,

I've learned you have to pre-meditate your language. You have to be very sure that the questions you're asking them, they can have a response to...I learned that you have to be very precise, so that they can digest it before they respond to you. Since then, it really has been about language for me.

Robert's interactions with individual students also helped him realize that learning about students' prior language and educational backgrounds can help inform his instructional choices. For instance, through giving one student a mathematical word problem in Spanish and talking more with the student, he learned that the native-Spanish speaking student had strong mathematical skills but that she was still developing literacy skills in both languages.

Oxiana noticed that maintaining consistent reading groups rather than frequently changing student groupings helped one seemingly shy ELL become a more active participant who began volunteering answers and helping her peers. From participating in a parent-teacher conference with an ELL's mother, Rachel learned about the students' first language abilities and more about the parents' abilities to support the child and what the family does at home, which informed her understandings of the student's interests and motivations. Finally, Becca learned that incorporating her basic knowledge of Spanish into her instruction could support native-Spanish-speaking ELLs in both comprehending and responding to her prompts. Teaching in a class with several ELLs also helped Becca to recognize that task-based, interactive activities significantly increased ELLs' engagement.

Discussion

This study describes teacher candidates' perceptions of how they should educate culturally and linguistically diverse students in elementary schools, which stemmed primarily from the internship portion of the MCEE program. In their coursework in the MCEE, teaching ELLs was "pushed out," because, as Becca said, "[teaching ELLs] took the lowest, the back of our brain, because we *really* need to know how to teach math, how to teach reading, how to do lesson plans." Indeed, after having observed over one hundred hours of university-based coursework in the program and interviewing teacher educators, I can confirm that discussions of supporting ELLs occurred only sporadically during their class meetings. Thus, when the clinical practicum is not structured purposefully around mentors who excel in culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, they miss valuable learning opportunities and they are in danger of gaining knowledge, skills, or dispositions that perpetuate inequitable education.

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In this study, teacher candidates observed and mimicked mentors who viewed the teacher's role as authoritarian, a perception that perpetuates the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 1991). Giving ELLs a "free ticket," or letting them do less work due to low expectations and deficit views of their potential due to their linguistic backgrounds can make children believe they are unworthy of good teaching, caring from others, or opportunities for future success (Gay, 2000; Goodlad, 1990; Irvine, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Zeichner, 1996). Unfortunately, the common misconception that simplifying material is an effective way to support ELLs (Harper & de Jong, 2004) seemed to be a misconception that Rachel held during her internship. The lack of collaboration between mentors and ESOL teachers in this study—and the fact that most of the teacher candidates did not talk with the ESOL teacher or even know who the ESOL teacher was—hinders teachers' abilities to learn about ELLs (Percy & Martin-Beltrán, 2011) and can keep ELLs stuck in the "ESOL ghetto" (Olsen, 1997).

An important question to ask about Rachel, one of the teacher candidate participants in this study, is whether Rachel was giving the ELL "a free ticket" or whether she and her mentor were giving themselves "a free ticket" in having to do extra work to support this child. Rachel said that she and her mentor did not accommodate their instruction for linguistically diverse students because they only had one or two ELLs in the class, but each and every student should be worth the effort. Supporting ELLs in overcoming linguistic demands while scaffolding and pushing them to perform high-quality, cognitively challenging content-area skills is a large feat for teachers who do not have ongoing, purposeful practice grounded in structured professional development. Perhaps Rachel or her mentor would have worked harder to differentiate instruction for ELLs if they had opportunities to practice new ways of supporting ELLs academically while getting feedback from other teachers. Oxiana and Robert said that the teachers in their school did not discuss ways of supporting ELLs, which shows that linguistically responsive instruction was not a priority. For ELLs to get equitable opportunities to high-quality K-12 education, school leaders and all staff must become aware of the unique needs and strengths ELLs bring to school and fundamental ways in which schoolteachers can support ELLs (Griego-Jones, 1995; Suttmilller & González, 2006).

Gaining teacher candidates' personal perspectives on what and how they learned about educating ELLs provides insights into how prepared they felt to educate ELLs. On the last day of the MCEE program, Rachel drew a picture to describe how prepared she felt to educate ELLs (see Figure 1). Rachel's drawing shows that she felt under-prepared to educate ELLs at the end of her program, which corroborates previous findings that new teachers lack self-efficacy in teaching ELLs (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Within a community of practice framework (Wenger, 1998), in which unspoken shared goals affect newcomers' expectations of their roles, the systemic and sociocultural norms of "when actions and artifacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement" (p. 81) affected

teacher candidates' developing understandings of how to support ELLs in elementary schools. Simply, the teacher candidates did not hear or observe teachers in their internship placements work toward educating ELLs effectively, which informed the practices and understandings that the teacher candidates themselves valued. Given a sociocultural framework, one hopes that these four teachers, and the other members of the 2010-2011 MCEE cohort interacted with students and teachers who helped them gain dispositions and skills that support ELLs once they entered the teaching profession. But certainly, teacher educators working in pre-service programs can do more to guide candidates in learning to educate students learning English as an additional language.

Two imperatives for research emerge from this study. The first is the need to answer the question: How prevalent is this problem of teachers, teacher educators, and teacher candidates giving themselves a "free ticket" when it comes to learning to educate ELLs effectively? In the future, large-scale studies in which researchers

Figure 1
Rachel's Response to the Prompt: "Draw or write about how you would feel if you had many ELLs in your class next year."



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survey teacher candidates, new teachers who recently completed their programs, and teacher educators in pre-service programs in multiple states would begin to provide answers to this question. A second major research issue that needs to be considered is how and to what extent ELLs in elementary schools are affected, as Hollins and Guzmán (2005) have suggested, by unprepared teachers who provide a “free-ticket?” While one can presume that K-6 students are negatively impacted when their teachers do not have opportunities to learn the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to build on their strengths and help them overcome linguistic demands, collecting artifacts and observations of student work, interviews with students, and other indicators of academic performance would further inform this issue.

Specific implications for teacher practice are multiple. First, candidates identified the most positive opportunities about learning to teach from observing and interacting with the students. Teacher educators must continue to place teacher candidates in internship sites with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Too often, “attending to students as humans in search of meaning seems forgotten” in teacher education and professional development (Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2008, p. 6), which leads to subpar K-12 practices in which “no attempt is made to connect with [ELLs] as living, feeling beings” (Jiménez & Rose, 2010, p. 403). Thus, within coursework, teacher educators need to provide candidates more opportunities to learn from students themselves. Learning from K-12 students can be difficult in university-based settings, but teacher educators can ask candidates to tutor ELLs or engage in service-learning, listen to students (as suggested by Jiménez & Rose, 2010), watch and respond to videos of students problem-solving together to determine how they would intervene and support these students, or watch classroom interactions between students and teachers to consider how they would respond to students’ thinking and behaviors. Additionally, greater connections can be made between the internship experiences of programs and the university-based coursework (Zeichner, 2010) through increased interactions between teacher educators in multiple settings and through structured assignments that encourage candidates to apply what they learn in coursework in their practicum settings. Ideally, teacher candidates would video-record students in their practicum placements and bring these videos of their students interacting with them to their teacher education courses for collaborative discussion and reflections (Stanley, 2011).

Teacher educators need to select mentors and internship placements carefully to ensure candidates have opportunities to observe culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy in practice (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Grant, 1994; Zeichner, Grant, Gay, Gillette, Valli, & Villegas, 2008). Simply placing candidates in schools with diverse student populations is not enough. Prior to selecting mentors, teacher educators at the university should take the time to observe their teaching and talk with them to determine how the potential mentors foster communication with all students, including those learning English as an additional language. In this study, none of the focal candidates’ mentors modeled

accommodating ELLs in their instruction, and only one of sixteen mentors collaborated with the ESOL teachers. Choosing mentor teachers who embrace and strive to practice equity pedagogy can help teacher candidates learn to hold high expectations for all students and develop skills to support all students in achieving highly (Télez, 2008).

Finding excellent mentors can be challenging, thus, teacher educators must at least encourage teacher candidates to think critically about mentors' practices. Framing the relationship between mentor and intern as more collaborative than hierarchical would enable candidates and mentors to learn from one another and let candidates question "how teachers' everyday actions challenge or support various oppressions and injustices" (Zeichner, 1993, p. 11). Choosing culturally responsive mentor teachers and framing the student teaching internship in a way that enables teacher candidates to develop their abilities to "teach against the grain" (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 280) can help candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to provide an equitable education for ELLs. "Making practice the centerpiece of teachers' education would elevate the professionalism of teaching and teacher education" (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 509), but this practice must include opportunities for candidates to think critically and strive to enact the tenets of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

Finally, and more broadly, teacher educators need to embrace uncertainty. Teacher candidates, as newcomers to the profession, are noticing that many teacher educators are not prioritizing the education of ELLs. This implicit norm of keeping the education of ELLs at the periphery of teacher education often stems not from a lack of desire to help candidates learn to educate ELLs, but from teacher educators' feelings that they lack expertise or self-efficacy in being able to take on this task (Daniel & Peercy, forthcoming). In encouraging teachers to embrace anti-oppressive education, Kumashiro (2004) suggested, "we need to learn to want to teach in ways that center the uncertain elements of our teaching...perhaps the desire for certainty and control is what has prevented us from imagining and engaging in ways of teaching that would allow us to escape the oppressive relations that have seemed inescapable in education" (p. 115). Embracing uncertainty can empower teacher educators and teacher candidates to shift from a desire for exact methods and content to bring human interaction back to the center of instructional decision-making.

ELLs must be considered the responsibility of all teachers (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Valdés, 2001). Unless teacher educators do not take greater, more determined actions to help teacher candidates learn how to educate ELLs effectively, ELLs will continue to be denied their civil right to instruction from which they can understand and learn (AACTE, 2002). In this article, I identified one key reason that teacher candidates are not learning to educate ELLs in K-12 schools: teacher educators at internship sites are neither modeling nor discussing effective knowledge, skills, and dispositions of supporting linguistically diverse students. Uncertainty about the best

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course of action for supporting ELLs is not a good reason to take no action at all; instead, we must continue to try new ways of supporting candidates in learning to educate ELLs, and we must document our challenges and successes along the way (Daniel, forthcoming). This “moral debt,” or “disparity between what we know is right and what we actually do” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 8) with culturally and linguistically diverse children in K-12 schools must be remedied in future research and practice.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the anonymous reviewers and editor for helping me to refine this piece, to Megan Peercy and David Imig for advising me throughout my dissertation, and to Pei-Jie Chen and Xiao Liu for commenting on an earlier draft of this manuscript.

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Appendix

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions Needed in Effectively Educating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions Listed Below Keyed to Sources That Follow

Knowledge:

- Difference between BICS and CALP (1, 2), or the complexity of academic instructional language (10)
- Krashen's language learning hypotheses (1, 2)
- Personal experience learning another language (2)
- Language functions common in various content areas (1, 2)
- Vygotsky's theories of interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development (2)

Skills:

- Organize instruction to build on students' first language and second language (1, 4)
- Use strategies to provide opportunities for interaction (1, 4)
- Provide challenging yet comprehensive input (1)
- Communicate cross-culturally (2)
- Create a safe, comfortable environment to reduce anxiety (2)
- Explicitly teach language form and function (1)
- Bridge students' prior knowledge and experiences to current teaching and learning (1, 2, 4, 7)
- Connect students' needs with standards-based curriculum (4)
- Help students understand and question the curriculum (9)

Dispositions:

- Interest in learning about students' Funds of Knowledge and prior language (4, 7, 9)
- Value what students bring from home (4, 7, 9)
- Understanding that language and culture mediate classroom expectations and assumptions about teaching and learning (6, 8, 9)
- Realization that culture and identity are connected (2, 9)
- Willingness to collaborate with ESOL professionals (2, 3)
- Interest in continuous professional development on ELLs' issues (2, 3)
- Developing commitment to be an agent of change (9)

Sources:

- 1: Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez (2008)
- 2: Lucas & Grinberg (2008)
- 3: Lewis & Moreno (2007)
- 4: Commins & Miramontes (2006)
- 5: Ovando, Combs, Collier (2006)
- 6: Waxman et al. (2006)
- 7: Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992)
- 8: de Jong & Harper (2005)
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10. MacSwan & Rolstad (2003)