

# No English Learner Left Behind: How Can States and Teacher Preparation Programs Support Content-Area Practitioners?

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## Abstract

This study investigates the responses that education stakeholders give to regular teacher and teacher candidate professional needs because of the increasing number of English learners. Two major research questions related to the increase of English learners in US schools and to the responses that stakeholders have provided guided the inquiry. Using a case study approach, the results show that not only have the numbers of English learners risen, but also that some school districts have witnessed drastic demographic shifts. In response to these shifts, decision makers have attempted to meet teacher professional needs. In light of these findings, I formulate recommendations to educational stakeholders at national, state, local, and to teacher preparation program developers to engage in systematic reforms to meet regular practitioner needs.

**Keywords:** English language development, English learners, heterogeneous classrooms, schools, TESOL

## 1. Introduction

Educational practitioners and scholars have been regrettably noticing the lack of effective preparation for regular classroom teachers to plan and implement instruction tailored to meet both the needs of English learners and those of the mainstream students. Teacher preparation programs have often not provided their teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills allowing them to be effective professionals that can attend efficiently to the academic and learning needs of multiple audiences (Gomez & Diarrassouba, 2014). School districts, on the other hand, have been attempting to supply the needed knowledge and skills to these practitioners in the forms of professional development workshops. However, these professional developments have traditionally consisted of one to three days workshops. Rarely does this model transform teacher practice and effectiveness. The assumption behind these workshops is that once run, teachers are able acquire and apply what they have learned in their classrooms (Hutchinson & Hadjoannou, 2010). Research on teacher professional development workshops indicates that it is unlikely that the knowledge and skills presented at workshops transfer to classroom practice (Eun, & Heining, 2007, Gomez & Diarrassouba, 2014). Educational stakeholders, including national, state educational decision makers, and teacher preparation programs, ought to address that issue of preparation of regular classroom teachers. The need to address regular teacher preparation to be effective is particularly urgent in schools where data show that not only that these practitioners are likely to have ethnically and culturally diverse bodies of students, but also contexts where the numbers of English learners have been rising. Teacher preparation programs for English learner teachers have important roles to play in the preparation of not only their traditional English language development (ELD) teacher candidates but also in assisting regular teachers to become effective in their professional settings.

The number of English learners in the United States has been increasing over the last decade (Crumpler, 2014). However, few states and teacher preparation programs have made changes to their required curricula to meet the full scope of the professional needs of general education teachers. Researchers and practitioners in English language development (ELD) now commonly cite the increasing number of English learners (ELs) in U.S. schools to justify their studies and works. Beyond using the increasing numbers to rationalize their research, production of professional documents, and use of instructional and learning materials, very few researchers and practitioners have analyzed these numbers at local levels and explored the implications for teacher preparation programs. The purpose of this study is to investigate the responses given by various education stakeholders to the needs of teachers and teacher candidates in relation to English learners and to make recommendations. Two major research questions guided the study: 1) How have English learner population changed at the national, state, and local levels? What responses have education stakeholders given to the English learner demographic shifts at the national, state,

local, and teacher preparation program levels? The paper starts with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that serve as a backbone for the analysis and interpretation of the findings. It continues with the method in which the research design, the population, and the research sites are described. Following the method section, the results and the literature review are discussed. Finally, the last section deals with recommendations to stake holders.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Analysis

This paper draws on two major, complementary theoretical frameworks—those that have emerged from the work of Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015) and Cadiero-Kaplan and Rodriguez (2008). Cochran-Smith's and Villegas' framework, which dealt with teacher preparation issues during the last 50 years, was divided into two major parts: the larger historical-social setting and research as social practice. This paper is concerned with the former.

In the first part of their framework, Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), after a meta-analysis of more than 1,500 educational research works on teacher preparation and certification, concluded that the focus in education areas related to teacher preparation was marked by three interconnected trends: (a) an unparalleled focus on teacher quality and accountability, (b) a shift in epistemology, and (c) a growing number of diverse student bodies and an increase in inequality. They argued that, during the last five decades, the world moved from an industrialized economic stage to a neoliberal global market economy characterized by production, exchange of goods and services, and information. In the same period, new massive migratory movements were also observed. With the acquisition of new markets, new social and cultural conditions developed. To adapt to these new conditions and the neoliberal market economy, education and educational reforms were felt to be critically important. Hence, a focus evolved on the quality of teacher preparedness and teacher preparation programs. Teachers in the neoliberal market economy were to provide learners with the skills and knowledge that would allow them to be successful. Going from the assumption that U.S. schools were failing, educational reforms were undertaken to prepare learners for a business-based economy. Academic success became synonymous with measuring knowledge and skills through tests that would assure a certain degree of accountability.

Concomitant with the neoliberal economic development philosophy, curricular foci and the ways people learn changed. With the automation of manufacturing and the relocation of factories overseas, it became necessary for schools to adapt to the new economic landscape, which was marked by cooperation and collaboration to solve problems. Along with these developments schools implemented new forms of learning based on constructivism—a learning philosophy in which active construction of knowledge and the development of skills occurs by engaging students in meaningful tasks. The roles of teachers shifted as well. Teachers became “experts” that engaged students in meaningful problem-solving activities. To fully play these roles, they had to build communities of learners, act as facilitators and supporters, consciously trigger students' prior knowledge on which they built new information, and continually adapt their practice to the specific populations in their rooms. As the traditional conception of the roles of teachers shifted, teacher preparation programs had to fulfill the professional needs of teacher candidates. According to Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), learning to teach in the new manner became a lifelong professional development process, which implied that teacher preparation programs should provide teacher candidates with substantive professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that would be further developed through strong mentoring support.

The last trend of Cochran and Villegas' theoretical framework dealt with the diversity in student populations. They contended that, as the world economy became globalized and new forms of technology emerged, rigid boundaries among nations became fluid. Along with the fluidity of borders, unparalleled migratory movements were observed across the world. Consequently, many countries witnessed large diverse-student demographic shifts. With these changes in the composition of school populations came a number of challenges. One of these related to achievement disparities between minority and mainstream students, which policy makers sought to end in an effort to parallel economic development. Another difficulty related to the discrepancy between an increasingly diverse student population and the faculty. For the most part, students came from various racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds; faculty were mainly English-only speakers, came from middle class backgrounds, and tended to be White racially. Therefore, the linguistic, cultural, and economic differences posed problems to teachers who were unprepared to face these challenges.

The second theoretical framework that informs this paper relates to the educational responsiveness concept developed by Cadiero-Kaplan and Rodriguez (2008). They defined educational responsiveness as an “approach to and implementation of policies and practices that promote equity and excellence in education through the recognition, and understanding, and utilization of students' linguistic and cultural assets” (p. 374). Their framework was based on four major assumptions: (a) having teachers who are well prepared to satisfy all students' needs; (b) having highly qualified practitioners who are able to identify and analyze learner needs, assess their

growth, and select curricular materials and learning strategies that are likely to support student performance; (c) considering various influences and supplies, which include the “time and decision-making power” (p. 376) needed to support the faculty and English learners; and (d) being able to allocate resources that promoted adequate assistance and ample professional development opportunities.

### 3. Method

Although numerical data were utilized, the design for this study was most closely related to qualitative case studies and it complied with both Yin’s (1989) and McMillan and Schumacher’s (2001) conceptions of such studies. Case studies purport to study in-depth phenomena in their natural settings (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1989). Yin (1989) defines a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources are used.” (p. 23). Furthermore, he argues that case studies are appropriate when they illuminate a decision or set of decisions. The foci of case studies can be institutions, processes, programs, neighborhoods, events, or organizations. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) agree, affirming that “Qualitative research uses a case study design meaning that the data analysis focuses on one phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth regardless of the number of participants for the study” (p. 398). This case focused on the English learner population in Grand Rapids and surrounding and the TESOL teacher preparation program in the College of Education (COE) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), which is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Therefore, it complied with at least two criteria of case studies: neighborhoods and programs.

The population for this study was essentially archival, consisting of data gathered via the Internet from a number of websites, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Education, and literature review. The data were analyzed, interpreted, and when appropriate, put into tables. As such, there was no clear demarcation between the literature review and data analysis. However, the study was organized to follow a sequential pattern from the U.S. national context, through the state, to the local context in relation to English learner demographics.

The metropolitan area of Grand Rapids, Michigan, encompasses a number of counties, including Kent, Ottawa, Montcalm, and Barry. In this study, only schools located in Kent County were examined, as the city of Grand Rapids is situated in that county. According to recent census data, the population of the metropolitan area of Grand Rapids is over one million people (Dewey, 2013; McMillin, 2013). The U.S. Census Bureau (2016) estimates the population of the city itself at more than 196,445 people, of whom 64% are White; 20% are Black or African American; 1.9% are Asian; 15.6% are Latinos; and 0.8% are Native American, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander. Of that population 9.9% are said to be foreign born.

The second element examined in this case—the TESOL program at GVSU—was first accredited by the state in 2002 and has seen over the years a number of reforms. First jointly run by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and the COE, it is now entirely housed in the latter college. While the program primarily serves K-12 teacher candidates, it also has a number of candidates who would like to teach in adult English language development institutions. Within the COE, the program belongs to the Department of Literacy Studies and Technology. Students enrolled in the program can prepare for an endorsement in K-6, 6-12, or K-12 depending on their primary certification area or on obtaining a master’s degree in literacy studies with an emphasis in TESOL. The program is also tasked with preparing regular classroom teachers to deliver instruction to English learners. Its graduates are mostly teachers in Michigan K-12 schools, however, a number of them teach in intensive English programs in colleges and universities, both domestically and overseas. Others are either teachers or managers of community-based literacy development institutions. The following sections describe in detail the data pertinent to this case study.

### 4. Results and Literature Review

The results and the literature review responded to two major questions. The first question related to demographics of English learners on a US national scale and its corresponding changes in the state of Michigan and in the metropolitan area of Grand Rapids choosing some specific schools to illustrate those shifts. The second question related to the responses that education stake holders have reserved to these shifts. The stake holders dealt with comprised federal instances of decision making (essentially court rulings and bills signed into laws), publishers, state education decision makers, and teacher preparation programs in the area of English language development.

#### 4.1 National Data

U.S. Department of Education (2017) data show that, over the last decade, approximately 10% of the student population has been receiving ELD services. Eight states have a percentage that approximates or is higher than the

national mean of 10%: California (30%), Texas (15%), Colorado (11.4%), Florida (8.8%), Illinois (8.5%), Arizona (7.8%), New York (7.3%), and North Carolina (7%) (Wright, 2015, pp. 7-8). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2015) also reveals that most ELs are concentrated in urban centers, where they constitute 16.7% of the population. Suburban and rural school districts have substantially smaller percentages: 5.9% and 3.5%, respectively.

#### 4.2 State of Michigan Data

According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA, 2016), the EL population in Michigan grew dramatically between the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year, from nearly 81,000 to just over 88,000 students, showing a 9% enrollment increase in one year. During the academic year 2013-14, Michigan employed approximately 500 certified teachers to work with ELs, a ratio of about one teacher for every 176 ELs. However, most of these regular classroom teachers did not feel adequately equipped to meet the needs of ELs (Gomez & Diarrassouba, 2014; Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2012). In their mixed-methods case study about teacher perceptions of preparedness for teaching ELs, Hutchinson and Hadjioannou found that 65% of teachers did not feel prepared to teach ELs and only 22% said they tried to incorporate English as a second language (ESL) strategies into their instructional delivery. Gomez and Diarrassouba found that in Michigan, even when regular classroom teachers had been exposed to some form of cultural awareness and understanding either in their teacher preparation programs or during district professional development sessions, that exposure did not deal with how to integrate culture and language issues in lesson plans and instructional delivery.

Michigan represents an interesting case in that it is not recognized as a state with a significant EL population. As a matter of fact, Michigan overall is far from the U.S. national mean of 10%. As shown in Table 1, the Michigan EL population has consistently remained around 3% to 4%.

Table 1. Michigan EL population, 2002-2013

Year	Percentage
2002-2003	3.2%
2007-2008	3.0%
2008-2009	3.6%
2009-2010	3.5%
2010-2011	3.5%
2011-2012	3.7%
2012-2013	4.1%

*Note.* National Center for Education Statistics, 2014.

However, state-level data percentages do not reflect the population influx in particular regions or cities, particularly in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area.

#### 4.3 Grand Rapids Area Data

As shown in Table 2 below, it appears that the numbers of EL students in various districts—along with students known as culturally and/or linguistically different (CLD) or ethnolinguistic students (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002)—have been steadily increasing. Even Grand Rapids' rural districts, such as Caledonia where the population was seemingly homogenous, saw an increase in the percentage of CLDs between 2001-2002 and 2011-2012. However, the largest enrollments of ELs and CLDs continue to be in urban and suburban environments. For instance, Grand Rapids Public Schools witnessed an unprecedented increase in its EL and CLD demographics between 2001-2002 and 2011-2012, with ELs rising from 15% to 20.3% and CLDs growing from 72% to 79%. In the suburbs of Grand Rapids, Kentwood Public Schools had an unprecedented growth in its EL population, increasing from 2% in 2001-2002 to 15% in 2011-2012. Approximately similar percentages of increase developed in districts such as Godwin Heights Public Schools and Wyoming Public Schools. Suburbs that are perceived as inhabited by upper middle-class residents, such as East Grand Rapids Public Schools, enroll fewer EL and CLD students.

Table 2. Diversity comparison: grand rapids and neighboring districts' school demographic percentages

School District	School Year	School Year	School Year	School Year
	2001-2002	2011-2012	2001-2002	2011-2012
	ELs*	ELs*	CLDs**	CLDs**
Caledonia Community	0%	0.07%	3%	8%
East Grand Rapids Public	1%	0.04%	6%	9%
Forest Hills Public	2%	0.01%	6%	15%
Godfrey Lee Public	24%	32.40%	58%	89%
Godwin Heights Public	n/d	13.00%	n/d	73%
Grand Rapids Public	15%	20.30%	72%	79%
Kentwood Public	2%	15.00%	37%	58%
Wyoming Public	8%	14.30%	28%	59%

*Note.* Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014.

\*English learners. \*\*Culturally and/or linguistically different students.

## 5. Responses to Teacher Preparation for English Learners

Given the growth of in the number of ELs—and reforms and even major transformations in teacher preparation programs—colleges, universities, and professional development workshops at state and school district levels need to be revised, implemented, and reinforced.

### 5.1 National Responses

At the national level, the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court ruling of 1974 (Wright, 2015, Curtin, 2009) was the landmark for the official creation of bilingual and ELD programs, together with districts' attempts to accommodate ELs. *Lau v. Nichols* related to a civil case in which Mr. Lau sued the San Francisco school system for not accommodating his daughter, who had not developed enough English proficiency to benefit from instruction. The San Francisco educational decision makers argued that they provided the same learning opportunities and equal treatment to everyone. After losing in California state court battles, Lau took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court ruled that, by not providing non-native speakers of English with accommodations, the San Francisco school system was in violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The court further stated that treating everyone the same does not result in equality and that non-native speakers of English need to be provided with supplemental support systems.

This court ruling was interpreted in various ways. However, two major categories of programs have emerged and are currently implemented nationwide: ESL and bilingual education programs. These two categories of instructional and learning programs have evolved over time. For example, Curtin (2009) wrote that, at their inception, non-native speakers of English did not partake in mainstream instructional processes, but were secluded in self-contained rooms until they became proficient in English. For many, particularly those in upper high school grades, that seclusion meant they were unable to graduate with a regular high school diploma. But Title I of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 mandated that all schools receiving federal funding implement education of high enough quality that all students would have the opportunity to pass state proficiency tests. In the same vein, Title III of the NCLB Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2012) aimed at ensuring that “English learners and immigrant students who are non-native speakers of English achieve language proficiency and meet the same standards as their English-speaking peers in content areas” (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014, p. 46). Because many states receive funding from the federal government and they have significant numbers of ELs, they have been left with little or no choice but to assure that this specific category of students receives adequate instruction.

Recently, the U.S. government adopted a new educational law called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This new law is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (U.S.

Department of Education, 2017.) Although the ESSA Act has replaced the NCLB Act, it introduces flexibility in accountability measures and allows state and local educational decision makers to design their own goals for school improvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As far as ELs are concerned, Title III of ESSA, which specifically and directly relates to this category of students, has maintained its commitment to support their education. Title III also acknowledges diversity and the complex nature of learning a second language. The new law acknowledges that ELs with disabilities should be documented and provided with appropriate services. As a result of the complex nature of acquiring a second language, states are not required to test newly arrived students in their first year of schooling in the United States. In addition, states are allowed to exclude them from the accountability system for four years.

In a similar vein, Title I of the ESSA Act emphasizes the importance of quality education for high-needs children by funding their education. Under the new law, ELD has become a priority for states. The law requires that states account for academic performance of long-term English learners and those with special needs (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; TESOL International, 2015). Although this law is beneficial for ELs, TESOL International has stated that it does not explicitly address a number of issues related to teacher preparation and teacher professional development. For example, the law does not deal with increasing the number of ELD and bilingual practitioners. Also, the law does not specifically, explicitly address support for various bilingual and multicultural programs that have demonstrated effectiveness. The theoretical frameworks of Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), and Cadiero-Kaplan and Rodríguez (2008), are applicable in that they relate to the increase in diverse populations in schools and how the needs of those students are met. However, Cadiero-Kaplan and Rodríguez would deplore the fact that there are no explicit supports for ELD, bilingual, and multicultural practitioner preparation or professional development. Ultimately, in light of court decisions and federal legislation attempting to meet ELs' needs, publishers and other experts have been the ones to respond and argue for the need to provide regular teachers with adequate professional preparation and development.

### 5.2 *Publisher and State Responses*

Following the federal government's efforts to provide all students with equal opportunity to become proficient in English and in academic disciplines, publishers and experts in the area of ELD started producing materials. For the most part, recent efforts have focused on sheltered English instruction programs in which ELD specialists and regular teachers receive preparation that allows them to teach not only ELs but also native English-speaking students. Some of the most well-known teaching approaches developed during the last two decades have been the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), and Differentiated Learning or Instruction (Chamot, 2005, Curtin, 2009, Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). All of these approaches claim to focus on providing teachers, particularly regular and disciplinary teachers, with the knowledge and skills they need to teach not only content but academic English in a heterogeneous classroom setting.

Recently, the proponents of a number of these teaching methods have recognized the complex nature of ELs, who may not only be challenged by academic content but also may be experiencing developmental issues. For instance, Echevarria, Voght, and Short (2012), in the fourth edition of *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model*, wrote a chapter about how to teach ELs that may be identified as special needs students, thus making their approach interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary. Other researchers have also been giving attention to that issue and making recommendations for improved teacher training (Reed, 2013; Rodriguez, 2009.) These authors have also published textbooks describing strategies to use when teaching specific disciplines in heterogeneous classrooms.

At the same time, many states have recognized the need to provide regular classroom teachers with adequate training, allowing them to not only comply with federal mandates but also integrate ELs in instructional and learning processes. Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy (2008) divided states into five major categories in relation to professional preparation and the continuous training required of regular teachers. They ranked the states from those who have specific course or certification requirements to those that have no obligations. Only seven states require that regular teachers be certified or have completed a significant amount of coursework dealing with sheltered instruction. Seventeen states expect their teachers to have graduated from, or taken courses from, an approved teacher preparation program. Michigan belongs to that category and, in fact, asks that teachers fulfill the requirements of a reading diagnostic course to maintain (or renew) their current teaching certificate.

### 5.3 *Teacher Preparation Program Responses: The GVSU Case*

Within this larger context of reform, teacher preparation colleges have been meeting the requirements of their states and of accrediting organizations in various ways. While some have included specific courses dealing with

ELD issues, others have developed entire programs. This is the case of the College of Education (COE) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in Grand Rapids, where undergraduate and graduate programs have been specifically designed to meet the needs of preservice and in-service teachers. GVSU's Teaching of English to Speakers or Other Languages (TESOL) is one such program.

Given district and teacher needs, and requirements of the Michigan Department of Education, the COE at GVSU reformed its existing TESOL program and obtained the necessary approvals to create an undergraduate minor. In reforming the program, a number of considerations were taken into account, including the interdisciplinary aspect of courses offered and area school districts' needs. In addition to linguistics courses, which were tailored to meet practitioner needs, the program integrated second language theory and special needs population issues into one class. In a similar vein, the assessment course was modified to include EL testing and evaluation issues. The program did not have a course that dealt with technology integration and usage. So existing technology courses geared toward elementary and secondary school teachers were adapted to meet the needs of classroom practitioners who were (or would be) teaching not only English learners, but also native speakers of English. The assumption for such an approach was that if teacher candidates were proficient in integrating and tailoring technology to meet the learning and academic needs of heterogeneous learner groups, they could adapt to monolingual classes or specific groups.

Contributing to its commitment to satisfy the requirements of school districts and practitioners providing services to ELs, two new courses were developed. One deals with teaching content in a heterogeneous learning context, and the other focuses on bilingualism and the development of biliteracy. While these courses can be offered on campus and/or in a hybrid format, they are usually delivered on site either at school district main offices or at a school.

In an effort to meet the needs of school districts, teacher candidates (in-service and preservice teachers), and adult ELD institutions, the program also engaged in various partnerships. Some current partnerships provide preservice teacher candidates with a foretaste of what it looks like to be part of teaching staff or encourage them to participate in school-related activities in what is known as field experience. Other forms of collaboration have been aimed at using classroom teachers as partner instructors in some specific courses, or as co deliverers of instruction with university professors

In spite of the COE's various efforts to meet teacher professional needs, improvements are still needed to provide practitioners and teachers-to-be with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to be effective in a heterogeneous professional context. These improvements cannot be achieved if there is no support from policy and educational decision makers.

## **6. Recommendations and Concluding Remarks**

Given the increasing number of ELs, even in areas that once were ethnically homogenous, the need to prepare in-service and preservice teachers to provide those learners with adequate support is pressing. The federal government has set the frame to integrate ELs into the mainstream classroom with two important laws, which have evolved over the years. The most important law, which has served as the foundation on which other reforms have been built, was the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These laws have aimed at providing quality education as well as funding to low socioeconomic status students, ELs, and immigrants. However, they have often not been fully implemented and court systems intervened to compel school districts to include ELs in the instructional processes. Such was the case of the *Lau v. Nichols* court case in California.

Cochran-Smith and Villegas's (2015) and Cadiero-Kaplan and Rodriguez's (2008) theoretical frameworks seem to have captured the complexity of the education of ELs. In that regard, if there have been notable advances in the education of ELs, more needs to be done. For example, the TESOL International Organization (2015) has noted that the ESSA Act does not explicitly address the issue of teacher preparation for ELs and bilingual students. However, teacher preparation programs will still need to reach out to school districts and institutions dealing with these populations to prepare their practitioners for meeting the needs of not only their learners, but also for fulfilling the requirements of the new law. In a similar vein, these teacher preparation programs, to be fully responsive, will have to expand their traditional areas of expertise and professionalization to include issues that confront both teachers and preservice teachers.

States like Michigan that are refugee and immigrant friendly should focus on providing their teachers with the knowledge and tools that allow them to be effective in heterogeneous classroom contexts. Although Michigan has required reading diagnostic courses for teachers as part of the renewal for their professional certificates, that effort remains insufficient. The state needs to require significant coursework from its teachers in the areas of ELD or TESOL. The Michigan Department of Education, like many state education departments, has created ESL and bilingual endorsements, but these endeavors remain insufficient regarding regular teachers' needs to respond to the

challenges that ELs pose. Michigan and other states that do not have requirements for regular teachers to take significant coursework in ELD should pass legislation for that purpose. When mainstream teachers are prepared to teach ELs, that category of learners feels welcome and can academically perform well. To be concomitant with the responsive pedagogy, funding must follow the passing and implementation of the law. Currently, the practice is to have ESL interventionists that act in various capacities to support ELs and regular classroom teachers. These interventionists are provided with minimal preparation allowing them to function in school settings. However, as soon as they obtain a better position they leave. Preparing regular classroom teachers to meet the ELs' academic needs would allow schools to avoid such a support attrition and provide quality education.

School districts have been requiring a number of their teachers to prepare in sheltered instructional methods. However, for the most part, that professional development has focused on only one teaching method: the SIOP. Additionally, there are no follow-ups to ensure that teachers truly implement that teaching method and do not experience difficulties in its implementation in their daily instructional processes (Hilliker, 2015). In addition, the SIOP method is limited in a number of aspects. Although its proponents have integrated special education issues in their most popular textbook—Echevarria et al's *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model*—that text does not explicitly take into consideration parameters such as culture and other external factors that may affect learning. Also, focusing preparation on just one method does not appear to include various teaching approaches. Districts with high concentrations of ELs need to go beyond the one teaching model to require that their teachers be conversant in a number of instructional, materials, and curricula development approaches.

Teacher preparation programs need to embrace interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary approaches if they want to educate their candidates to be adaptable to various teaching and learning contexts. Specifically, they need to develop interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary certificates. For example, endorsements can be delivered to teachers in TESOL and early childhood or TESOL and special education. The efforts to create these certificates must be encouraged while strongly promoting existing programs. The encouragement must come from state departments of education and university authorities in the form of policies that tend to create interdisciplinary and/or cross-disciplinary standards and through the creation of courses that meet school districts' and teachers' needs. On another level, TESOL programs that are still grounded in face-to-face traditional delivery models may need to offer their programs either online or in hybrid format, as many teachers are in remote areas and experience difficulties attending classes in person. TESOL teacher preparation programs, such as the one at GVSU, need to further develop endeavors that aim at providing teachers with professional development courses that lead to earning academic credit. In addition, programs of that nature need to expand with the creation of bilingual endorsements and master's degree programs. They also ought, in the absence of explicit policies toward increasing the number of ELD and bilingual specialists, to provide professional development opportunities to regular teachers and communities working with refugees and migrant workers.

This article has not dealt exhaustively with ways to meet the training needs of teachers who serve English learners. However, implementing these few recommendations could assist in fulfilling the requirements of states and school districts. Research still needs to be undertaken to compare the effectiveness of teachers who are in states that have mandated preparation in TESOL to those without such a policy. Similarly, investigation should be conducted on the effectiveness of interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary endorsement holders in their interactions with ELs and culturally and linguistically different learners.

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