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Research on Preparing Preservice Mainstream Teachers for Linguistically Diverse Classrooms

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Abstract

Despite an increasing number of English-language learners (ELLs) in U.S. schools and a trend toward placing them in mainstream classrooms, relatively little attention has been paid to synthesizing and appraising the extant research on how future mainstream teachers are prepared to teach this student population. To shed light on this topic, the article analyzes the limited but expanding body of research on the preprofessional preparation of mainstream teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms. The authors found that between 2000 and 2018, teacher educators experimented with a variety of pedagogical strategies, most of which situated learning to teach ELLs in diverse classrooms, schools, and communities—both

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in the United States and elsewhere. The authors conclude that despite having equity goals and including a variety of pedagogically rich ideas for preparing future mainstream teachers to teach ELLs, the vast majority of the studies leave unquestioned the power dynamics that sustain existing educational and social inequalities, thereby perpetuating the status quo.

Introduction

Recently, public schools in the United States passed a major milestone. For the first time in history, students of color composed the majority of enrollments in elementary and secondary schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). Accompanying this demographic shift has been a substantial increase in the number of children and youth who speak languages other than English at home. According to recent estimates, approximately one in nine students enrolled in K–12 schools speak a language other than English, up from about 1 in 20 students in 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). In fact, English-language learners (ELLs), as these children are often called, have become the fastest growing segment of the U.S. student population (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). Before the 1950s, immigrant children in U.S. schools were largely from Europe; however, ELLs today are mostly from Latin America and Asia (NCES, 2017). Many have attended schools in their native countries, but a sizable number—especially those from war-torn nations and rural areas—have had little or no schooling prior to their arrival. Some are literate in their native languages, but many are not. And a large number have experienced extreme poverty in their homelands, with many continuing to live below the poverty level in this country (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). This broad range of background experiences can pose a challenge to teachers who are unprepared to address such diversity in student backgrounds.

From the adoption of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 through the 1990s, ELLs enrolled in U.S. public schools were generally placed in bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) programs to be taught by teachers with specialized preparation in second language development. However, for reasons we discuss later in this article, an increasing number of ELLs are now mainstreamed into “regular” classrooms for longer portions of the school day or placed in mainstream classes full time. As a result, mainstream teachers, who historically have received no preparation for teaching ELLs (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008), are finding increasing numbers of these students in their classes. Despite the clear trend toward mainstreaming ELLs since the early 2000s, many teacher educators continue to struggle with how to prepare future mainstream teachers to teach this student population. To help address this problem, we reviewed the research literature, seeking answers to the following question: How are prospective mainstream teachers prepared to teach ELLs?

This article is organized into five sections. We first present the theoretical/analytic framework that informed our review. Then we describe the methods we used to locate and analyze the empirical studies discussed here. The third section summarizes and discusses what we learned from our analysis. This is followed by a discussion of the relationship between the research practices described, on one hand, and social, economic, and political power, on the other. The final section offers concluding comments.

Theoretical/Analytic Framework

This article is informed by the theoretical/analytic framework we recently developed for a major review of the empirical literature on the overall preparation of preservice teachers (Cochran-Smith, Villegas, Abrams, Chavez, Mills, & Stern, 2016). The framework combines ideas from the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1936/1949) and from research as social practice (Bourdieu, 1977/1980; Heilbron, 2009; Herndl & Nahrwold, 2000). The sociology of knowledge, a field of study within sociology, owes much to Mannheim. In his classic text *Ideology and Utopia*, Mannheim (1936/1949) argued that thinking is an instrument of collective action. In his view, dominant modes of thought that flourish at a given historical moment are situated within and emerge from complex economic and social contexts. Building on this premise, he urged sociologists to take up the task of analyzing the relationship between patterns of thought that rise to prominence and the concrete historical-social situations that sustain those ideas.

Research as social practice, the second intellectual strand in our framework, offers a way to understand the connection between the economic and social forces at play in a society at a given time in history and ideas that ascend to dominance during that historical period. Informed by Bourdieu's (1977/1980) "theory of practice," Herndl and Nahrwold (2000) argued that research is a social activity and that researchers' social interests and commitments—not simply their methodological orientations—guide their research by influencing how they construct research problems, the range and variation of questions posed, the research designs and methods adopted, the researchers' purposes and intended audiences, and other key decisions researchers make. Taken together, these two related sets of ideas offer a powerful lens for reviewing research, especially on a contested topic like the preparation of mainstream teachers for linguistic diversity given the growing anti-immigrant and nativist political forces in this country.

In this article, we argue that research on preparing mainstream teachers for linguistic diversity is a historically situated social practice, a process wherein differently positioned researchers with somewhat diverse aims and objectives engage in different research practices. Drawing on this thinking, we first discuss the complex social/economic context from which the idea of preparing mainstream teachers to teach ELLs—the central topic of this review—is historically situated. To make sense of the studies reviewed here, we then examine the social practices the researchers—who in most studies reviewed here were also the teacher educators—engaged in, including how they constructed the research problem, the questions they focused on, the methodological decisions they made, and their intent and target audience. Building on our analysis, we identify trends in the findings and then show that although this body of research challenges the "business as usual" approach to teaching ELLs that prevails in mainstream classrooms, the studies are generally silent about the power dynamics that sustain existing inequalities in schools and society.

As our framework makes explicit, researchers use particular lenses to do their work, and this focus influences what they consider worthy of investigating and reporting and how they see those topics. This idea also applies to reviewers of research. Thus we want to acknowledge the perspectives we bring to our review of research on the preparation of teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms. The first author is a teacher educator with a literacy background and a former classroom teacher. Based on her experiences educating children of migrant farmworkers in the state of Washington, children of immigrant families in Arizona, and children of poverty in rural schools, she brings a strong investment in linguistically and culturally responsive teaching to this review. The other two authors are senior members of the professional teacher education community with established records as researchers and practitioners. Both are committed to studying issues of diversity and equity and have long been involved in scholarly critique of the complex political aspect of teaching and teacher education. All three of us are women; two of us are White, European American native English speakers; and one is a Latina who immigrated to this country as a child and learned English as a second language in urban public schools. Since our individual and collective orientations are inseparable from the review process, acknowledging our positionality, not just following the technical review methods described herein, is fundamental to ensuring the validity of our work.

Methods

We use the term *English-language learners* to refer to students who speak native languages other than English at home. We define *mainstream teachers* as those who teach early childhood/elementary grades (sometimes referred to as general education teachers) and those who teach a specific subject matter (e.g., science, mathematics) in elementary, middle, or high school grades but are not prepared as bilingual or ESL specialists.

Given the focus of this review, we sought empirical, peer-reviewed studies on the preparation of prospective mainstream teachers to teach ELLs published from 2000 through 2018, a period during which mainstream classrooms became more linguistically diverse. We limited our search to U.S. studies. To locate this literature, we conducted computerized searches through key educational databases, including Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, Education Resources Information Center, and PsychINFO, using different combinations of keywords—*English language learners, ELLs, English Learners, ELs, students of limited English proficient, LEP students, preservice/prospective teachers, teacher candidates, mainstream/general education/content area teachers, preservice teacher education, teacher education, teacher preparation*. This strategy produced an initial pool of 187 articles. We eliminated the majority of those articles through a preliminary review. Many were excluded because they focused on the preparation of teachers for cultural diversity but gave little to no attention to issues of language. Others targeted inservice teachers (not preservice teachers) or included both inservice and preservice teachers but did not report results separately for these two groups. Several other articles addressed the experiences of specialists (bilingual and ESL teachers) rather than mainstream teachers, and others were vague about the research methods used. At the end of this process, we were left with 29 studies.

We approached the analysis in two phases. First, we summarized each article using a template to capture key information (e.g., research purpose, teacher learning outcome sought, theoretical/conceptual framework(s), methods, major findings). Informed by our framework of teacher education research as historically situated social practice, we then analyzed each study, giving attention to how researchers constructed the problem they investigated, the questions they posed, who the researchers were, and their purposes and target audiences. We then looked across the studies to determine trends in the findings and how they were distributed along a continuum in which one end reflected social practices that tended to conserve existing educational and social inequalities and the opposite end challenged those inequalities.

Preparing Preservice Mainstream Teachers for ELLs: Research as Historically Situated Social Practice

In keeping with the intent of our review, this section discusses the historical context that has shaped not just the education of ELLs and ongoing efforts to prepare mainstream teachers for linguistic diversity but also the research on this topic. In sections that follow, we scrutinize the social practices of the researchers whose works we reviewed to gain insights into this body of research.

Historically Situating the Topic

The topic of this review is historically situated in major economic and social developments of the past 50 years, which have profoundly shaped social life in the United States and elsewhere. The most fundamental of these developments was the shift from an industrial economy based on manufacturing and material goods to a global, knowledge-based economy organized around the production and distribution of goods and services related to information. In today's global world, the rigid boundaries that previously separated countries have become more relaxed and fluid over time, and new technological developments have made travel easier, reducing geographic distances (United Nations, 2016). Of particular relevance to this review is the resulting mass movement of people across the world that has dramatically transformed the racial/ethnic and linguistic makeup of many developed nations, a pattern that is strikingly evident in U.S. schools. As we previously noted, the number of ELLs attending U.S. public schools has trended upward over the past 3 decades. While ELLs were previously concentrated in southwestern states like California and Texas, their presence is now undeniable across the country, even in states like Delaware, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and North Carolina, which previously served relatively few students of linguistically diverse backgrounds (NCES, 2017). Although the vast majority of ELLs continue to attend city schools, their numbers have also grown in recent years in suburban and rural schools (Kena et al., 2016). Given the overall growth of the ELL student population and its dispersal across geographic regions and school sectors, it is not surprising that issues of linguistic diversity drew the attention of educators, policy makers, and researchers during the nearly 20-year span of this review.

Beyond transforming the demographic makeup of the K–12 student population, the shift to a knowledge-based economy also focused unprecedented attention on the quality of educational systems worldwide (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). In the United States, this idea was initially brought to public attention by the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which linked the poor performance of American students in international tests relative to their peers in other developed nations to the loss of this country's previously unchallenged global economic strength. Because educational success was equated with economic success for individuals and the nation, the quality of schools received unparalleled attention. Informed by neoliberal thinking, educational reformers developed accountability systems to measure the success of schools in meeting the more rigorous academic standards of the 21st century based on students' scores on standardized tests, with serious consequences for those failing to meet expectations (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). In terms of ELLs, this strategy is clearly evident in major federal educational policies adopted since 2000. Concerned that ELLs—a group accounting for a significant share of the U.S. student population—lagged behind their English-proficient peers in test scores, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required schools to include these students in state testing programs and report their scores as a separate subgroup. This represented a significant change in federal policy, which until then had excluded ELLs from accountability testing and reporting requirements. Schools were also required to show adequate yearly progress in ELL students' reading and math test scores or suffer severe consequences. As a result, ELLs who had previously spent most of the school day in bilingual/ESL programs began to be "mainstreamed" for longer portions of the day or placed in mainstream classes altogether, to immerse them in English based on the belief that exposure to more English would improve their scores on standardized tests taken in English (Cadiero-Kaplan & Rodríguez, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2011). While the

Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced NCLB in 2015, authorized substantial increases in funding for ELLs, the accountability provision continued. This pressure on schools helps explain why mainstream teachers, a group that historically has received no preparation for teaching ELLs, are now finding these students in growing numbers in their classes (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008).

U.S. voters have also played a salient role in educational policies and practices related to ELLs. Although resistance to bilingual education has existed in this country since the Bilingual Education Act was adopted in 1968, the growing immigration—and, with it, the rising numbers of ELLs in U.S. schools—brought about a major political backlash. For example, the growth of the ELL student population in California during the 1990s resulted in the adoption of Proposition 227 in 1998, requiring all public schools in the state to conduct instruction in English, virtually eliminating programs of bilingual education. In so doing, Proposition 227 boldly ignored the *Lau v. Nichols* decision of 1974, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a lack of supplemental language instruction in public schooling for ELLs denied them of a meaningful opportunity to an education. (It should be pointed out, however, that in November 2016, voters in California passed Proposition 58, which repealed bilingual education restrictions enabled by Proposition 227 in 1998.) A similar English-only initiative was passed in Arizona in 2000, and then in Massachusetts in 2002. While supporters of English-only policies claimed that the United States needed a common language to avoid ethnic strife, critics contended that these initiatives were motivated, at least in part, by racist and anti-immigrant sentiments (Cammarota & Aguilar, 2012). As of 2020, 32 states had approved some form of English-only laws (Moore, 2018), helping to intensify the mainstreaming of ELLs in U.S. schools.

Interestingly, although the federal government—through the Every Student Succeeds Act—requires school districts to provide professional learning opportunities for mainstream teachers who work with ELLs, only 12 states require teacher education programs to provide preservice teachers some type of preparation (e.g., targeted coursework, bilingual education and/or ESL endorsement options, and English learner certificates) (Education Commission of the States, 2014). The developments discussed herein have put increasing pressure on preservice teacher education at colleges and universities to prepare mainstream teachers, not just bilingual education and ESL specialists, to teach ELLs. The studies reviewed here illustrate how some preservice teacher education programs have responded to this pressure.

Constructing the Research Problem

While the specific topics examined in the studies reviewed in this article varied somewhat, researchers typically constructed the research problems they investigated by situating the preparation of mainstream teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms in the context of the growing cultural and linguistic divide between teachers and students in the United States over the past 2 decades. Nearly all the studies used statistics to document that as the numbers of immigrant and native-born ELLs grew during this time, the teaching force remained predominantly White, monolingual English speaking, and middle class (e.g., Athanases & Wong, 2018; Colón-Muñiz, SooHoo, & Brignoni, 2010; Ference & Bell, 2004; Hooks, 2008; Hughes & Mahalingappa, 2018; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Pappamihiel, 2007; Pilonieta, Medina, & Hathaway, 2017; Pu, 2012; Ramos, 2017; Schall-Leckrone, 2018; Settlage, Gort, & Ceglie, 2014; Sugimoto, Carter, & Stoehr, 2017; Walker-Dalhouse, Sanders, & Dalhouse, 2009; Zainuddin & Moore, 2004; Zhao, Meyers, & Meyers, 2009). Reflecting a sociocultural perspective, most researchers argued that the cultural and linguistic divide between teachers and the growing ELL student population often led to serious misinterpretations of these learners' experiences outside of school contexts and of their academic needs.

In many of the studies, researchers were particularly concerned that the socialization most White, English-speaking teacher candidates received as members of dominant groups predisposed them to believing that students from linguistic and cultural minoritized groups lacked academic potential and/or motivation for learning, thus jeopardizing their school outcomes (e.g., Athanases & Wong, 2018; Bollin, 2007; Fitts & Gross, 2012; Hughes & Mahalingappa, 2018; Hutchinson, 2013; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Settlage et al., 2014). That is, an underlying assumption of the research is that preservice mainstream teachers hold deficit views of ELLs. Accordingly, study participants are seen as needing opportunities to inspect their beliefs about ELLs and linguistic diversity. Embedded in this idea is the assumption that a central role of teacher education is to engage prospective teachers in uncovering and confronting their beliefs about children who differ from themselves and the mainstream norm and to help them recognize the assets these students bring to school learning.

Other researchers worried that future mainstream teachers' limited exposure to learning second languages, coupled with their general lack of knowledge about second language development, clouds their understanding of the central role language plays in teaching and learning, an insight considered essential for teaching ELLs (e.g., Bunch, 2013; Fitts & Gross, 2012; Galguera, 2011; Hadjioannou & Hutchinson, 2010; Hutchinson, 2013; Settlage et al., 2014; Sugimoto et al., 2017; Walker-Dalhouse et al., 2009). Along these lines, some researchers emphasized that teacher candidates need to engage in the formal study of the English language, including its grammar and structure, principles of language development, and language variation and change (Hadjioannou & Hutchinson, 2010; Pappamihiel, 2007; Zainuddin & Moore, 2004).

Many researchers acknowledged that, for the most part, teacher preparation programs were working to prepare all teachers—not just specialists (bilingual and ESL teachers)—to teach a linguistically diverse student population by infusing attention to issues of language into existing teacher education courses, adding courses on language diversity to the professional education sequence, and/or creating bilingual and/or ESL endorsements for mainstream teachers. Nevertheless, the researchers also maintained that more and broader experimentation with innovative practices and pedagogies was needed to effectively prepare mainstream teachers for teaching ELLs (e.g., Athanases, Wahleithner, & Bennett, 2013; Athanases & Wong, 2018; Baecher, Schieble, Rosalia, & Rorimer, 2013; Colón-Muñiz et al., 2010; Hughes & Mahalingappa, 2018; Hutchinson, 2013; Kelly-Jackson & Delacruz, 2014; Pappamihiel, 2007; Pilonieta et al., 2017; Ramos, 2017; Siegel, 2014; Sugimoto et al., 2017; Virtue, 2009; Zainuddin & Moore, 2004; Zhang & Stephens, 2013). Consistent with this line of thinking, each of the studies included in this review experimented with some type of innovation, as we detail next.

Questions Posed and What Has Been Learned

Broadly, the studies examined here asked one central question: What is the influence of the coursework and/or fieldwork opportunities provided to preservice mainstream teachers on their learning to teach ELLs? The studies fell roughly into three groups, distinguished by the specific type of learning opportunity offered. The smallest group examined the influence of innovative pedagogies/strategies used by teacher educators in campus-based courses. The second group, the largest of the three, focused on learning opportunities offered in courses with linked field experiences, in diverse schools and/or communities. The final group explored the outcomes of opportunities that were offered to future mainstream teachers for learning to teach students different from themselves (particularly as related to language) through cross-cultural/linguistic immersion experiences.

Campus courses with innovative pedagogies/strategies. Nine of the 29 studies examined the influence on teacher candidates of courses about teaching ELLs taught entirely at the university. Two of these studies (Galguera, 2011; Settlage et al., 2014) used a language immersion approach to disrupt teacher candidates' comfort with the dominant language and develop empathy for students who are simultaneously learning academic content and language while also modeling for them how to scaffold instruction for second language learners. For example, Settlage and colleagues (2014) set out to learn how "trauma pedagogy" works as a tool to disrupt preservice teachers' preconceptions of ELLs and how to teach them. As part of a science teaching methods course, a guest instructor invited to model effective teaching practices for diverse learners delivered a lengthy physics lesson entirely in Spanish, a language few teacher candidates in the class understood. The instructor provided increasing amounts of targeted scaffolds as the lesson progressed. In the first segment of the lesson, she withheld linguistic supports, leaving preservice teachers on their own to make sense of the language and content presented. In the second segment, the guest speaker gave lesson participants only minimal linguistic scaffolding (e.g., a glossary of terms, a few diagrams, and some textual supports).

In the final segment, she modeled “exemplary language scaffolds and sheltered instruction methods” (p. 51). Drawing on multiple sources of qualitative data, including field notes focused on the communication efforts and levels of engagement demonstrated by the participants during the activity, a postimmersion class debriefing, and reflective essays completed by teacher candidates following the experience, the researchers found that even though the instructor used reform-based pedagogy (e.g., hands-on, problem solving, collaboration) throughout the entire lesson, the participants grew frustrated and struggled to learn without language-related supports. As the linguistic supports were gradually increased and became more responsive to the needs of the teacher candidates, they became less frustrated with the material. The researchers concluded that the immersion event jolted participants into understanding the importance of scaffolding ELLs’ learning and helped them become more empathetic of ELLs’ experiences in mainstream classes.

Along related lines, Galguera (2011) sought to help preservice teachers in his English methods class become more sensitive to the school experiences of ELLs and develop skills for teaching them English content. To this end, he exposed his students to a variety of experiential activities. For example, monolingual English-speaking teacher candidates were asked to read text in Spanish, a task that placed them in a position similar to that of ELLs in mainstream classes. He then modeled for the class two different teaching strategies to help make the Spanish-language text more accessible to the students. Based on his analysis of participants’ written reflections and in-depth interviews with a small sample of students, Galguera concluded that this “experiential teaching” approach helped teacher candidates in his class develop empathy for ELLs while giving them strategies to use in scaffolding language learning.

In four other studies in this group, digital technologies played a major role. In the Baecher et al. (2013) investigation, future English and TESOL teachers were brought together in a methods course to work on a project that involved blogging with high school ELLs enrolled in an ESL class at a nearby school district. Responses to a questionnaire completed by participants at the conclusion of the project revealed that the experience enabled preservice English teachers to increase their understanding of the challenges ELLs face with academic writing, and both groups unanimously agreed that the experience had encouraged productive collaboration across disciplines and helped develop their readiness for teaching ELLs. Using a similar approach, Walker-Dalhouse and colleagues (2009) and Hughes and Mahalingappa (2018) examined the use of digital pen pal projects. For example, preservice teachers in the Hughes and Mahalingappa study were enrolled in a course that aimed to develop their dispositions, knowledge, and skills for teaching ELLs. A central aspect of the course engaged participants in an exchange of E-Pal letters with ELL and non-ELL students in Grades 5 through 7 with whom they had been paired. Based on a qualitative analysis of teacher candidates’ digital letters, online journal reflections, and electronic discussion board posts over the semester, the researchers found that participation in the pen pal project improved preservice teachers' attitudes toward ELLs, increased their enjoyment in interacting with the students for instructional purposes, and enhanced their self-efficacy for teaching ELLs. Employing a somewhat different tack, Wade, Fauske, and Thompson (2008) used a critical stance to examine how two groups of teacher candidates in one multicultural education course discussed the problems of practice in a case focused on ELLs. To understand how the students framed problems and evaluated solutions proposed in their online discussion of this case, the researchers conducted a detailed discourse analysis of a print-out of a weeklong online discussion. While the researchers found some evidence of "reflective problem solving," they concluded that few participants had actually engaged in "critical" reflection that fundamentally questioned the teaching practices in the case. In fact, data showed that some responses actually reflected deficit perspectives, stereotypical thinking, and technical-rational problem solving.

In two other studies in this set, teacher candidates were registered in a course that placed them in direct contact with ELLs at the university campus itself. For example, in an introductory teaching course, Fitts and Gross (2012) paired preservice mainstream teachers with individual K–8 ELL students who were transported from a nearby district to the university for an after-school program 1 day per week to receive tutoring. A central objective of the course was to help preservice teachers develop an understanding of ELLs. During their time together, teacher candidates and tutees worked mostly on academic support activities but also engaged in individual or group projects. In their qualitative analysis of data collected through surveys and interviews at various points in the course, the researchers found that participating preservice teachers developed a more nuanced understanding of ELLs and a new appreciation of issues these students face in learning.

Taking a different tack, the final study in this line of research, conducted by Schall-Leckrone (2018), explored the extent to which five secondary history teachers—three in their student teaching practica and two in their initial 2 years of teaching—used scaffolding practices they were taught in their preservice program. As the researcher described, the teacher education program at this private institution was designed to prepare future content area teachers to teach ELLs. The instructional sequence included two courses focused on scaffolding strategies. Schall-Leckrone's analysis of her observation notes of study participants teaching revealed that all five consistently used visuals, vocabulary instruction, graphic organizers, and adaptation and/or annotation of texts to scaffold learning for ELLs in their classes.

Courses/seminars with linked field experiences in schools/communities. Fourteen of the 29 studies, nearly half of the total examined, focused on courses with linked field experiences. In 10 of them, the field experiences took place in schools with a large percentage of ELLs. Within the context of school-based experiences, teacher candidates engaged in a variety of activities, including completing an inquiry project focused on the writing skills of an ELL student (Athanases et al., 2013; Athanases & Wong, 2018), observing ELLs in schools/classrooms and providing individual support and/or tutoring (Hutchinson, 2013; Siegel, 2014; Zainuddin & Moore, 2004), conducting an action research project that used photovoice to identify science concepts that showed up in ELLs' everyday lives (Kelly-Jackson & Delacruz, 2014), engaging in rounds of observations of middle school ELLs in an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) class and mainstream content area classes (Virtue, 2009), carrying out a narrative inquiry reporting data gathered about an ELL student by shadowing that student throughout the day (Pu, 2012), writing and discussing narratives about observed classroom events involving ELLs (Sugimoto et al., 2017), and applying sheltered instructional strategies learned in the course in their fieldwork at a middle school (Zhang & Stephens, 2013). The action research study by Virtue (2009) illustrated this line of research. In this investigation, teacher candidates enrolled in a social studies methods class were asked to carry out an inquiry project that required them to observe an ESOL class at a diverse middle school and shadow an ELL student in a content area class. After receiving instruction on how to conduct classroom observations in the course, study participants carried out their fieldwork. For the most part, their observations focused on instructional strategies, learning activities, and classroom management techniques. They then debriefed the experience with the ESOL teacher whose classroom they observed and their course instructor, engaged in an online discussion with classmates about the experience, and wrote a reflection paper about what was learned. Data were collected collaboratively among the researcher and the participants, in keeping with action research protocols, and included shared field notes, observations of rounds, online discussions of the rounds experiences, and journal reflections written by the participants. According to Virtue, qualitative analysis of the data demonstrated that the classroom observations and interactions with real students challenged negative assumptions teacher candidates had about ELLs and also helped them understand the detrimental effect that content area teachers' glaring lack of attention to ELLs in their classes had on those learners.

The other four studies in this group (Hadjioannou & Hutchinson, 2010; Hooks, 2008; Pappamihiel, 2007) examined courses linked to field experiences carried out in diverse communities, although one also involved field activities in schools. In the Bollin (2007) investigation, teacher candidates in a diversity course completed a 10-week service learning experience, tutoring ELL students in the students' homes. As part of the project, teacher candidates kept a journal reflecting on their tutoring experiences. In their weekly meetings with the professor, participants discussed problem-based cases and professional text relevant to their service learning experience. Bollin found that by the end of the semester, most preservice teachers had become more empathetic of ELLs and gained confidence in teaching this student population. Similarly, preservice teachers in the Hadjioannou and Hutchinson (2010) study applied language teaching principles learned in a linguistic course while tutoring adult ESL learners in a local community agency. Using results from pre- and postcourse surveys and course assessments, as well as data drawn from reflective writings, artifacts, and classroom observations, the researchers concluded that the practice teaching experience gave study participants a better understanding of how to teach ELLs. Taking a somewhat different approach, Hooks (2008) documented the impact of an assignment in a teacher education course that involved teacher candidates using a mock parent conference to interview adults in an ESL class at a community center. This study provided evidence that the majority of the participants developed confidence about their ability to communicate with parents who spoke languages other than English. The final study in this subset, by Pappamihiel (2007), examined the learning outcomes of a course required of preservice content area teachers on teaching ELLs in which participants were taught basic second language principles (e.g., the difference between basic interpersonal skills and academic language skills, the silent period second language learners often undergo) and completed a service learning experience tutoring ELL students at a community agency. Pappamihiel's qualitative analysis of the reflective journals submitted by study participants revealed that many had begun to see themselves as teachers of ELLs rather than as teachers who had ELLs in their classes.

In brief, courses with field experiences—whether based in school or communities—targeted a wide range of teacher learning outcomes, including learning about ELLs and cultivating favorable dispositions toward them, having future mainstream teachers envision themselves as teachers of ELLs, gaining an understanding of the role language plays in learning, assessing ELLs equitably, and developing pedagogical skills and confidence to teach in schools with large numbers of ELLs. The majority of researchers reported favorable results, although the findings were sometimes uneven across participants within each study. As depicted in these articles, field experiences were anchored by the linked course, which prepared preservice teachers for their work in schools and/or communities and provided a space for making sense of those experiences through the lens of theories and principles studied in class. Thus field experiences typically helped participants better understand how key concepts studied abstractly in class applied in real-world settings, thereby bridging the theory–practice divide that often plagues teacher education. In nearly all the studies within this group, written reflection and feedback from faculty played a central role in helping teacher candidates interpret their fieldwork.

Cross-cultural immersion experiences. Of the 29 studies reviewed here, 6 explored the potential of preparing teacher candidates to teach ELLs through cross-cultural/linguistic immersion experiences, typically in international settings. These immersion experiences ranged from 1 to 13 weeks. Five of these studies (Colón-Muñiz et al., 2010; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Pilonieta et al., 2017; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao, Meyers, & Meyers, 2009) investigated the experiences of U.S. teacher candidates placed in international field settings (Belize, China, Germany, Honduras, Mexico, Spain), where they spent time teaching English to children in schools, observing in classrooms, living with host families, visiting cultural and historic sites, and meeting to debrief those experiences with teacher educators from their preparation programs. The study by Zhao et al. (2009) illustrated this line of research. In this study, 10 preservice U.S. teachers completed the last 4 weeks of their student teaching in Chinese schools. This international immersion experience was designed to help student teachers develop skills for teaching in cross-cultural settings and gain insight into linguistic diversity in general and the experiences of second language learners in particular. While in China, the student teachers had a variety of carefully planned experiences, including living with host families; teaching English in an elementary school and being supervised by university faculty, one of whom was the lead researcher for the study; writing journal entries in which they reflected on their ongoing teaching and learning experiences; and completing a project in which they compared educational practices in the United States and China. Through their qualitative analysis of participants' essays, interviews, blogs, teaching videos, and teaching projects, as well as researcher observation field notes and email correspondence with participants, Zhao and colleagues found that the immersion experience was highly effective in improving participants' respect for linguistic diversity, deepening their understanding of second language learners, and developing empathy for the experiences of ELLs in U.S. schools. Participants also gained skills for collaborating with other teachers.

Using a somewhat different approach, the last study in this group—by Ference and Bell (2004)—focused on the experiences of 25 White, middle-class teacher candidates immersed in a 2-week field experience within a Latino community located 60 miles from the university they attended, thereby avoiding the cost associated with international travel. In preparation for the experience, which was linked to a diversity course the researchers taught, participants learned about similarities and differences within the Latino culture. As part of their immersion, teacher candidates lived with Latino families and participated in their everyday activities, worked with children at a community center, and learned about the work experiences of immigrants who resided in the community. They were also required to reflect on their ongoing field activities. Throughout the 2 weeks, teacher candidates were exposed to a variety of situations in which Spanish was used as the sole or primary means of communication. The researchers, who as participant observers collected field notes, listened to students' ongoing discussions and comments, and observed students in classrooms, reported that the immersion experience improved teacher candidates' attitudes toward Latino students and helped them understand why different pedagogical methods were needed to teach ELLs effectively. Many study participants commented that their experiences as linguistic and cultural "outsiders" had sensitized them to the experience of being an ELL in schools and the many barriers immigrants confront in their daily lives.

Overall, these studies suggested that cross-cultural immersion experiences—

whether conducted in international or U.S. settings—tend to have a powerful influence on teacher candidates, including raising awareness of their own cultural assumptions, developing empathy toward the experiences of second language learners, and cultivating skills for interacting in cross-cultural contexts. The researchers attributed these gains to the immersion of preservice teachers in social settings where they were positioned as the cultural and linguistic "other." As was the case in studies focused on courses with linked field experiences, ongoing reflection was key to producing the desired teacher learning outcomes in cross-cultural immersion experiences.

Researchers and Their Purposes

As is true generally of the research on preparing teachers for diversity (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016), the studies reviewed here were conducted by university-based teacher educators, sometimes alone (e.g., Galguera, 2011; Ramos, 2017; Schall-Leckrone, 2018), but often in collaboration with other teacher educators at their own institution or elsewhere (e.g., Athanases & Wong, 2018; Hughes & Mahalingappa, 2018; Pilonieta et al., 2017; Settlage et al., 2014) or with practicing teachers involved in preparing preservice teachers in schools (Baecher et al., 2013; Zhang & Stephens, 2013). Researchers generally studied their own teaching, explored the influence of short- or long-term field experiences linked to courses they taught, and examined the outcomes of practica/student teaching experiences for teacher candidates they supervised. Typically, the researchers were positioned in the dual role of preparing study participants for linguistically diverse classrooms and studying the results of the practices under investigation. Thus they had two main purposes for conducting their studies—to improve their own practices and to advance the field's understanding of promising pedagogies for preparing future mainstream teachers for linguistic diversity. That is, beyond immediate personal and program consumption, this research was conducted for the use of other teacher educators with similar professional interests and concerns.

Consistent with the self-study focus of these investigations, the vast majority of studies (24 of the 29 reviewed) employed qualitative research methodologies to examine the influence of opportunities provided to preservice mainstream teachers for learning to teach for linguistic diversity. With few exceptions, researchers used teacher candidates' written course assignments as data sources. While the assignments differed across courses (e.g., unit or individual lesson plans, case studies of ELLs, action research reports, inquiry projects, digital pen pal letters, reading logs, web discussions and postings, blogs, capstone papers, portfolios documenting service learning experiences), reflective writing of some sort (e.g., journal entries, reflective essays, reflective memos, online journal reflections, tutoring logs, narrative reflections) was included in the majority of the studies. That is, reflection on experience/practice was used as the central tool to promote teacher learning but was also treated as an important source of evidence of that learning. Not surprisingly, reflection played a critical role in belief-related studies (to trigger teacher candidates' self-awareness or help them make sense of unfamiliar experiences).

Trends in the Studies

As we have shown, over the 19-year period of this review, teacher education researchers investigated a wide variety of topics related to preparing prospective mainstream teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms. One clear trend in this research is the strong influence of sociocultural perspectives on teacher learning. In keeping with this perspective, preservice mainstream teachers were engaged in constructing new ideas about ELLs and how to teach them through a variety of activities that either put them in direct contact with ELLs or placed them in situations in which they were the linguistic "other." Thus, instead of learning ideas and concepts about teaching for linguistic diversity solely in the abstract for future application, teacher candidates were provided opportunities that purposefully situated learning to teach in diverse classroom, school, and community contexts—both in the United States and internationally. Also reflecting a sociocultural learning perspective, the overwhelming majority of studies included some form of reflection.

A second trend evident in these studies is the emphasis given to teacher candidates' beliefs about ELLs and linguistic diversity. The researchers were mostly focused on designing learning opportunities to promote candidates' favorable views about ELLs. Those opportunities engaged future teachers in learning about people who were different from them (linguistically, racially/ethnically, and economically) through physical or digital contact with them or in the role of the linguistic "other" to help them develop empathy for second language learners.

Although mostly illuminating the role of beliefs related to learning to teach students from linguistically diverse groups, this research also gave some attention to the pedagogical skills teachers need to teach ELLs. In fact, several belief-oriented studies also addressed participants' teaching practices (e.g., Athanases et al., 2013; Athanases & Wong, 2018; Galguera, 2011; Settlage et al., 2014). This dual learning focus is illustrated, for example, in the studies by Athanases and colleagues (Athanases et al., 2013; Athanases & Wong, 2018), both of which involved teacher candidates conducting inquiry projects to learn about ELLs and their writing strengths, preferences, and needs for purposes of improving the teacher candidates' teaching of writing to those students. That is, by having teacher candidates identify ELL students' strengths as part of their inquiry, they were helped also to develop asset-oriented views of these learners.

A few other studies focused more sharply on teacher candidates' teaching practices. These included developing skills for differentiating instruction for ELLs (Ramos, 2017), using visual literacy strategies to help ELLs connect their lives to the topic of instruction (Kelly-Jackson & Delacruz, 2014), designing and enacting lessons that incorporated a functionalist approach to teaching grammar (Hadjioannou & Hutchinson, 2010), creating equitable assessments for ELLs (Siegel, 2014), collaborating with TESOL teacher candidates to support ELL learning (Baecher et al., 2013), and interacting with immigrant adults/parents who were speakers of languages other than English to develop facility communicating with the families of ELLs (Hooks, 2008).

A final trend has to do with the nature of the research itself. As mentioned earlier, nearly all of the studies were conducted by teacher educators in their own classrooms or in the classrooms of other teacher educators, mostly at their own institutions. A major benefit of self-studies within teacher education is their potential to inform the researcher/teacher educator' own practices. Since the studies in this review generally offered rich, detailed descriptions of the learning opportunities examined in relation to desired teacher candidate outcomes and how candidates experienced and responded to those opportunities, they also helped identify a variety of pedagogical options for other teacher educators to consider in their teaching. Overall, however, the studies were limited in three important ways. With one notable exception (see Schall-Leckrone, 2018), the researchers did not follow teacher candidates beyond the completion of the courses in which the pedagogies under investigation were examined; therefore little is known about the extent to which the reported learning gains persisted over time, if they did at all. Also absent from nearly all the studies were descriptions of the overall teacher education programs in which the courses and field experiences under investigation were embedded, so it was difficult to discern how those courses and field experiences were connected to other learning opportunities teacher candidates had in the programs. As a result, this body of research offers a disjointed understanding of how future mainstream teachers learn to teach for linguistic diversity. Still another problematic feature of this research is the relative absence of studies that attempted to establish connections between what teacher candidates learned about teaching ELLs in their preparation programs and their subsequent practices with ELLs, whether in the context of student teaching or beyond.

Relationship Between Researchers' Social Practices and Larger Sociopolitical Forces

As previously discussed, researchers' interests, commitments, and experiences, not merely their research paradigms, guide the research decisions they make. As Herndl and Nahrwold (2000) put it, researchers are engaged in social practices. This perspective offers an opportunity to examine how research practices relate to social, economic, and institutional power. One way to think about this relationship is to place the studies reviewed here along a continuum. At one end we would place studies that assume society and its institutions, including schooling, are meritocratic. In keeping with this view, teaching is seen as a technical and neutral activity. To teach ELLs, future mainstream teachers are perceived as needing to learn practices (other than those used in traditional mainstream classrooms) to give ELL students access to the school curriculum until these learners acquire sufficient proficiency in English to no longer require special support. From this perspective, the solution to the problems ELLs experience in mainstream classrooms is a temporary "fix" that can move students whose language (and culture) differ from the mainstream norm so they can participate in what could be characterized as "business as usual" in mainstream classrooms. That is, equity is defined as access to school knowledge, with no need to examine the broader social and material arrangements that created ELLs' lack of access in the first place. This perspective assumes that deficiencies in the students are the fundamental problem and that if school practices can be manipulated, albeit provisionally, the problem will be solved. In framing the problem this way, broader societal arrangements and ideologies (e.g., nativism, ethnocentrism, segregation, poverty) are left unexamined, thereby masking and perpetuating existing social inequalities.

At the other end of the continuum we would place studies that assume that neither society nor schools are meritocratic. Instead, both are structured in ways that conserve existing social inequalities by systematically privileging the language and culture of the dominant group. From this critical perspective, teaching is viewed as a political and ethical activity whereby the actions of teachers are seen as either perpetuating or disrupting existing inequalities. From this vantage point, although traditional school arrangements are thought to place ELLs (and other students from minoritized groups) at a disadvantage in learning, schools are viewed as sites with the potential to bring about social transformation, and a central role of teachers is to contribute to that transformation. Teacher education studies that build on these assumptions are designed to engage future mainstream teachers in inspecting the connections between social arrangements outside and inside schools, scrutinizing how customary school practices construct minoritized students (including ELLs) as deficient, examining their own beliefs about ELLs and linguistic diversity and the social roots of those views; replacing deficit views of ELLs with affirming perspectives that acknowledge the many strengths these learners bring to schools; envisioning inclusive classroom practices that are respectful of linguistic and cultural differences while developing the skills needed to enact those visions; and cultivating a commitment to work, both individually and with colleagues, to make schools socially just spaces for ELLs.

Not surprisingly, we found that none of the studies reviewed here were located at either extreme end of the continuum; rather, they are mostly clustered in the area in the middle. As we detailed, the vast majority of the studies focused on learning opportunities that engaged preservice mainstream teachers in inspecting their beliefs about ELLs to help them become more conscious of their deficit views, replacing those views with affirming perspectives, developing sensitivity to and empathy for the challenges ELLs face when taught academic content in a language they do not understand, challenging traditional conceptions of good teaching in mainstream classrooms, and cultivating teacher candidates' willingness to broaden their teaching and assessment practices to give ELLs access to learning while developing skills to act on this goal. Without question, the personal and professional transformations participants in these studies underwent, as described by the researchers, challenge the linguistically insensitive approach to teaching prevalent in mainstream classrooms, where ELLs are placed with increasing frequency. At the same time, this body of research also has a conservative slant (i.e., conserving existing inequalities). For example, while promoting the value of linguistic and cultural differences, teacher candidates in these investigations are never engaged in questioning why the language and culture of the dominant group are assumed to be the valued standard in schools. Nor are teacher candidates involved in examining the origins of the English-only movement in the United States and its effect on teachers and their teaching and on ELLs and their learning. For the most part, the researchers (who are also the teacher educators in most studies) accept, at least implicitly, that the purpose of schools is to assimilate ELLs into the dominant language and culture. And in most investigations, equity is defined as access to school knowledge, with little to no attention paid to broader social structures and systems that silently but powerfully perpetuate inequalities in ELLs' access to knowledge to begin with. Although many studies problematize standard teaching practices in mainstream classrooms, their critique is grounded on learning theory and its implications for teaching (the need to connect students' prior knowledge and experiences to the content being taught) or on linguistic considerations (the importance of having teachers who know basic principles of second language learning to support ELLs' learning), not on sociopolitical thinking that explicitly challenges the role of schools in reproducing existing social inequalities.

As the foregoing discussion suggests, there is a complex relationship between researchers'/teacher educators' social practices and social power structures. In brief, the studies reviewed here can be thought as positioned in a large middle area of the continuum between conserving power relations at one end and disrupting them at the other. Collectively, the pedagogical innovations studied aim to prepare future mainstream teachers to make needed changes in classroom practices that have the potential to ameliorate the barriers to the education of ELLs, but they do not fundamentally challenge central aspects of existing power inequality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we make three points. As our review shows, major gaps exist in the empirical literature on preparing preservice mainstream classroom teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms. We need more research that examines pedagogical interventions designed to give teacher candidates a clear understanding of the impact that social, political, and institutional factors have on teaching and learning. This could include studies that engage teacher candidates in critically appraising the widespread belief in meritocracy in light of existing inequalities in schools; deeply reflecting on the influence of their social privilege (or lack thereof) based on factors such as race/ethnicity, class, and language on their own schooling experiences and success; and developing consciousness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education. We also need research that addresses the major methodological limitations of the studies reviewed. Such research would include studies that explore the connections among teacher candidates' beliefs about ELLs, the practices they adopt to teach them, and student outcomes of different types. Similarly, we need investigations that extend beyond a single course or field experiences and take a program-level approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers learn to teach ELLs. We also need longitudinal studies that will give teacher educators a clearer understanding of how future mainstream teachers learn to teach ELLs over time.

Second, despite the limitations of the studies, as detailed earlier, this body of research sheds light on how teacher educators have responded over the past two decades to calls for preparing mainstream teachers to teach ELLs. Collectively, the studies offer insight into how future mainstream teachers learn to teach ELLs in individual courses and field experiences. A noteworthy aspect of this collection of studies is the creative and varied learning opportunities used to engage teacher candidates in learning to teach through direct experiences with ELLs and by being placed as the linguistic other in different learning situations. Also of note is the use of reflection, evident in nearly all the studies, to unpack field experiences in light of ideas addressed in courses, a practice that strengthens the connection between theory and practice. In brief, this body of research offers teacher educators concerned with preparing preservice mainstream teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms a rich source of ideas on which to build their work.

Our final point is about the research as historically situated social practice framework that guided our review, which allowed us to see beneath the surface of the studies examined and connect practices in teacher preparation research to social, political, and institutional power. We argue that this framework could also serve as a tool to help us—teacher educators and researchers—become more conscious of the ways our own teaching and research practices conserve and disrupt existing educational and social inequalities.

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