

Addressing the Teaching of English Language Learners in the United States: A case Study of Teacher Educators' Response

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Abstract

This article discusses teacher educators' response to how teacher education programs should prepare prospective teachers to be teachers of English language learners. In the case study presented, the authors note that discussions have ensued about whether teaching English language learners (ELLs) should be addressed through separate coursework or whether content areas (e.g., English language arts) should infuse this content into already existing disciplines. Though content fields, such as English language arts, have been encouraged to address the teaching of English language learners, Lucas and Villegas (2011) assert that teacher education programs have yet to adequately address the needs of ELLs throughout the curriculum. Findings illuminate the connection—and sometimes conflation—of the aims of teaching diverse learners and teaching ELLs, the importance of teacher education coherence, and the value of a partnership approach to the teaching of ELLs.

Keywords: Teaching English language learners (ELLs), teacher educators, teacher education and teaching English language learners

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It is estimated by the year 2030, over 40% of the K-12 population in U.S. schools will be children whose first language is not English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). As teacher education programs strive to decide how best to prepare new teachers for this reality, discussions have ensued about whether teaching English language learners (ELLs) should be addressed through separate coursework or whether content areas (e.g., English language arts) should infuse this content into already existing disciplines. Though content fields, such as English language arts, have been encouraged to address the teaching of English language learners, Lucas and Villegas (2011) assert that teacher education programs have yet to adequately address the needs of ELLs throughout the curriculum.

de Oliveira and Shoffner (2009) posit that the teaching of ELLs as addressed with future content-area teachers has generally resided under the umbrella of “teaching diverse students.” Yet, as classrooms in the United States become more culturally and linguistically diverse, perhaps it is unwise to characterize ELLs under such broad a category. Instead, the field must move toward a vision of both culturally and linguistically responsive teaching when working with ELLs. In this paper, we investigate how teacher educators respond to this issue. Through examining the results of a nationwide survey of English language arts teacher educators, as well as through the results of focus group interviews with a sub-section of these individuals, this article works to delineate how teacher educators in English language arts view the teaching of ELLs as part of their disciplinary field. Results of this study will help articulate how other content areas within teacher education might also seek to integrate the teaching of ELLs into their respective disciplinary fields.

Conceptual Framework

A Teacher Learning Approach to Learning to Teach ELLs in Pre-service Teacher Education

In this paper, we draw upon a *teacher learning* framework for effective teaching of ELLs. We look to the work of Nagle (2013), who, with colleagues, explores how teachers and teacher educators have responded to and learned from ELLs. Nagle recognizes that in the current era of accountability and its increased demand for recognition of multiple forms of literacy and literate practice, ELLs comprise a significant portion of the student population across the United States; therefore, teachers in all content areas must be responsible for providing high quality instruction that meets the needs of this group of students. Though the term “collaboration” can be read as somewhat cliché, Nagle and his colleagues outline that, through a teacher learning framework, collaboration does not merely mean working together. Rather, a teacher learning framework and collaborative perspective for teaching ELLs recognizes that each collaborator brings something different to the process of curriculum design for ELLs—whether that expertise is English language arts content or knowledge of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Outlining the essential components of the collaborative effort is key to understanding why a teacher learning framework can be successful within a given context.

One key aspect of a teacher learning framework articulates that university faculty may need further professional development that will enhance their understanding of teaching ELLs. From such professional development, faculty will be able to broaden their conceptual and pedagogical knowledge and more successfully integrate an awareness of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students into their syllabi and courses. A teacher learning framework stresses the importance of collaboration, inquiry into practice, and integration of disciplinary content knowledge with linguistically responsive teaching (Nagle, 2013). As our study focused on teacher educators’ response to teaching ELLs, we considered a teacher learning framework an important lens from which to view current teacher educators’ response. As the area of teaching ELLs is still somewhat a new area of emphasis within

teacher education, we wondered how teacher educators, themselves, would conceptualize how this area fit into already existing programs. In this paper, we ask:

- How do English teacher educators discuss the features of their own programs in terms of addressing the teaching of English Language Learners (ELLs)?
- In what ways do these features align with a teacher learning framework?

Literature Review

Instruction for ELLs: An Educational Area of Need

We situate our inquiry within a body of literature that recognizes the need for teachers to understand the significance of learning to teach ELLs. There is a need for improved instruction for ELLs in the United States (Giambo, Szecsi & Manning, 2005; Hooks, 2008). This need is magnified by the growing number of ELLs as well as the amount of pre-service and current teachers that are unprepared to teach them. Zhao (2002) states, “general education teachers, especially those in states with recent increases in ELLs, are often underprepared to educate ELLs without additional support or professional development” (as cited in Giambo et. al., 2005, p. 106). As Capps (2005) notes, “the impact of this lack of preparation is felt by everyone—teachers, administrators, and parents—but particularly by the ELLs who often exhibit a lack of academic progress. And, ELLs are not primarily students who are arriving in public schools from other countries; a majority of them were born in the United States and are in some cases are second- and third-generation students, suggesting that many children of natives who were LEP [limited English proficient] when they began school remain LEP through secondary school” (as cited in Hutchinson, 2013, p. 27).

Pre-service Teacher Education in Teaching ELLs

One promising approach to addressing the teaching of ELLs is better preparation for educators, especially at the pre-service level. Batt (2008) found that one of the greatest challenges affecting the education of ELLs was the qualifications of the mainstream teachers who worked with them. In her study, ELL educators who worked closely with these teachers perceived that “not all educators who work with ELLs in their schools were qualified to do work with linguistic minority students . . . [and many] indicated that their colleagues lacked an understanding of diversity or multicultural education” (as cited in Hutchinson, 2013, p. 27). Educators, often already involved in meeting core expectations, responding to standardized testing pressure, and contending with other obstacles in teaching, find themselves with no theoretical or practical background for teaching ELLs (Hutchinson, 2013).

Within English language arts education, preparing pre-service English teachers to meet the needs of diverse students in the classroom includes addressing the needs of ELLs in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has recognized that the needs of ELLs differ from the needs of other learners and has supported the creation of guidelines for preparing English language arts teachers in this area (NCTE 2006/CEE 2005). While there is recent research being done about and with ELL students in the context of teacher education programs, more generally (e.g., Athanases & de Oliveira, 2007; Lucas, 2011), within the context of English language arts education, the topic of teaching ELLs has received little research attention. Some recent accounts (e.g., Campano, Jacobs, & Ngo, 2014) have started to provide the field with portraits of successful ELA

programs that address the teaching of ELLs. Some universities find the appropriate approach for this preparation is within the structure of the English language arts methods course, and researchers de Oliverira & Shoffner (2009) “see the integration of ELL-specific issues in the methods course as one way to successfully prepare secondary English preservice teachers to meet the challenges diverse learners will face in their future classroom” (p. 95).

There is agreement that inclusion of the teaching of ELLs within pre-service teacher education is a growing need. For example, Batt (2008) acknowledges the gaps in pre-service education as well as continuing education for current teachers, and advocates the hiring of more specialists in order to help train mainstream classroom teachers. Hutchinson (2013) also addresses a need for a restructuring in all teacher preparation programs across our country due to the ever-increasing number of ELL students. Other researchers, such as Dong (2004), used their own classes to form suggestions about instructional methods for pre-service teachers preparing to teach ELL students. Dong (2004) examined the impact of his own Language, Literacy and Cultural Education course on the insight of pre-service teachers toward effectively teaching second language learners. Key components of the course included examination of the relationship between language and culture, the comparison of first language and second language acquisition and learning, language policies, bilingualism, bicultural identity, and the integration of language and content in various subject area classes.

As the literature suggests, there are multiple ways that the teaching of ELLs might be addressed in teacher education. This study contributes to viewing these multiple possibilities by consulting directly with teacher educators about their thoughts and concerns regarding the teaching of ELLs. While there are some accounts of successful work within teacher education surrounding the issue of preparing pre-service teachers to work with ELLs (Campano, Jacobs, & Ngo, 2014; de Oliverira & Shoffner, 2009), it is less clear how, apart from these exemplars, other programs are responding to the teaching of ELLs. This study inquires broadly across the discipline of English language arts teacher education in order to understand how programs from across multiple contexts and institutions in the United States are addressing this issue. In the following section, we describe the context of the study and discuss the methods for data generation and analysis.

Method

The data within this paper was generated as part of a larger study of the preparation of English language arts (ELA) teachers in the United States. The design for the nationwide survey came out of meetings of the Conference on English Education (CEE) Commission on the Teaching of ELA Methods, a special interest group that meets at the NCTE annual meetings, and from a working group of five English teacher educators who attended the 2011 Biennial CEE Summer Conference. In preparation for designing the nationwide survey, a preliminary review of research and commentary on the English methods course since 1995, the year that the last study of English teacher preparation (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995), was completed. During the following academic year, the authors developed the survey, piloted it, and refined it.

The National Survey on Preparation of English Teachers for Secondary Classrooms began with the completion of a literature review as a way to ascertain the current state of scholarship related to teaching ELA methods (Caughlan, Pasternak, Hallman, Renzi & Rush, 2012). In delineating what could be seen “new strands” in the teaching of ELA, the authors were influenced by a collection of position papers developed in 2005-2006 by the CEE, the English teacher education community of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Five key topics of focus for change in the school subject of English language arts were identified: 1) field experiences and their relationship with the ELA methods course;

2) preparing teachers for racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity; 3) new technologies and new literacies in English education; 4) content-area literacy requirements; and 5) K12 content standards and associated assessments. This paper is specifically interested in the strand that addresses preparing teachers for racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

Data Generation

The National Survey on Preparation of English Teachers for Secondary Classrooms was sent to English teacher educators throughout the United States over the course of one academic year.[1] An aim of the nationwide survey was to gain a holistic understanding of how English teacher education programs were situated within their respective institutions; another focus of the survey was to investigate how English teacher educators throughout the country viewed the five defined new strands as present within the English education programs in which they taught. It is the latter focus that this article engages with, specifically looking at teacher educators' responses to questions about teaching diverse learners and English language learners within the context of English language arts pre-service teacher education programs.

The survey consisted of four sections and included multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The electronically-distributed survey consisted of ninety questions, but included skip questions, so that most respondents did not have to answer all questions. Through the 2010 Title II report and state program lists, 1085 public and private colleges and universities in the United States that produce English teachers were identified. A total of 942 surveys were electronically distributed to English teacher educators across the United States over the course of one academic year; 250 respondents from 234 distinct institutions were received. See Appendix A for open-ended questions that were asked on the survey that were related to teaching ELLs and diverse learners.

As a follow-up to the survey, six hour-long focus groups were conducted with a sub-set of participants the following academic year. Participants who answered the open-ended questions on the survey about teaching racially, ethically, and linguistically diverse students were invited to participate in the focus groups. In the focus groups, participants were asked to respond to questions about the teaching of diverse learners and English language learners (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis

This article specifically engages with the views expressed by participants who responded to the survey as well as participated in the study's focus groups. Because of this, analysis is structured as a case study (Stake, 1995) of English language arts teacher educators' response to the topic of preparing pre-service teachers to teach English language learners (ELLs) as addressed through both the survey's open-ended comments and focus group comments. The case, bounded through examining the views of participants in the study who responded to both the open-ended questions on the survey as well as participated in the focus groups, seeks to learn from teacher educators and examine their views alongside the literature framing teacher educators' responses to the teaching of ELLs. All responses from the open-ended responses on the survey, as well as participants' responses in the focus groups, were coded inductively. We also coded the data deductively, emphasizing themes from Nagle's (2013) teacher learning framework. We organize the findings through the discussion of three central themes that were identified as salient across inductive and deductive codes. These three themes serve as platforms from which to discuss teacher educators' views on the topic of English language learners within pre-service teacher education.

Limitations

Survey research has inherent limitations, as researchers cannot member-check anonymous results. Researchers must also interpret missing data, which we omitted from the data set. We can only speculate on reasons for missing data, but our three main categories for explaining missing data are survey fatigue, lack of knowledge in particular areas, and skipping questions with negative answers. The open-ended responses provided clues regarding respondent non-reply, as a number of participants reported not knowing details about programs they did not personally supervise. Moreover, we suspect that participants sometimes skipped questions towards the end rather than recording negative responses. These are issues common to survey research (Groves et al., 2000). Through conducting focus groups, we aimed to complement the analysis of survey results in order to gain a more holistic understanding of English teacher educators' views of preparing pre-service teachers to teach ELLs.

Findings

Connection and Conflation of Teaching Diverse Learners and ELLs

Focus group comments illuminated the connection—and sometimes conflation—of the aims of teaching diverse learners and teaching ELLs. Participants in focus groups elicited a discussion of the term “diversity” by pointing to its many connotations and emphases within a teacher education program, therefore making the comment that, although a separate course devoted to the teaching of ELLs was often not included in a certification program, a diversity course was. One participant made the following comment about a lack of coursework that focused exclusively on the teaching of ELLs: “That's the case in [my state] as well. No separate certification for ESL. We do have a heavy push on diversity, even though, frankly, there's not a lot of diversity in [my state].” The so-called “heavy push” for diversity that this participant notes was a common sentiment echoed throughout the open-ended responses on the survey. On the survey, the term “diverse learners” was used as a way to capture the nature of changing demographics in K-12 classrooms, yet this term likely had a connotation with a very wide range of students. As one respondent to the open-ended questions on the survey noted, “We understand ‘traditional’ diversity, but we also discuss that everyone is diverse, depending upon with whom they happen to be at any time.” This very broad version of diversity led respondents to see the term itself as difficult to define, and, as a result, the open-ended survey responses clarified what the term “diverse” meant in respect to their teacher education programs. One respondent noted that: “Our program added a self-contained ELL course as well as two special education courses, required by the state.” Other participants in focus groups outlined that learning to teach ELLs was wholly absent from the teacher certification programs at their respective institutions. One participant commented:

Basically, there is no course in our program for any of our certification programs for ELL. I do think that's an enormous deficiency. We've had those discussions at the departmental level about adding that, but probably the same as with you, for any course that we want to put in, something would have to come out. We simply don't have any room in our certification programs even for electives for our English teaching candidates, so we don't really know what would have to be eliminated, so like [name of another focus group participant], the claim is we try to stream that type of instruction through a number of other courses, but I don't think it's done very well. I think it's done very inconsistently across the program, and so I don't think we're doing our candidates a great service with that.

The emphasis on both an “absence” and an “integration” of teaching English language learners caused an interesting dilemma for teacher educators, as they appeared unable to fully articulate this topic’s presence or absence within their program. Still others, especially those housed in different departments than the department in which the course about diversity was housed, expressed that the tangled web of politics was what governed where coursework for their students resided. The teacher learning framework proposed by Nagle (2013) recognizes that teachers of all content areas must be responsible for meeting the needs of ELLs. One participant noted that:

In our English [education] program, like [name of another focus group participant], our students are housed in English. Their degree is granted through the English department, but they [students] take basically a minor and a half over in education. There is a diversity course there [in the School of Education], but it deals more with cultural diversity. Not as much about special education, gifted, and talented. That’s a general course that everybody in the education programs takes. There is no course for language learners.

Still other participants noted that, although learning to teach English language learners within pre-service teacher education was an important topic, the sheer lack of time or opportunity was an obstacle. One participant noted:

For me, and I have a very limited time, I may not see my secondary candidates until the last semester of their senior year, so that’s a really compressed time. My focus is mainly on confronting that deficit perspective to prepare them to go into a population of students unlike themselves.

As this final statement indicates, English teacher educators felt that an awareness of the topic of English language learners was perhaps the most feasible reality concerning how this topic was addressed in pre-service teacher education; yet, there was little mention of how learning to teach diverse learners may be different from learning to teach ELLs.

Program Coherence and Prioritizing the Teaching of ELLs

When asked how the teaching of ELLs was incorporated into their respective teacher education programs, participants in the focus groups often sought to outline very practical, program-specific ways that the content of teaching ELLs was addressed. Beyond an individual course, participants often spoke either about “stand alone” courses devoted to the teaching of ELLs or program-wide goals that infused this content. In terms of discussing a “stand alone” approach, participants in the focus groups highlighted the silo effect that departmentalization had in students’ pursuit of teaching ELLs. One participant noted:

One of our master's degree options is an ELL/ TESOL, but my secondary English people don't generally choose that one. To me, it's—we're way behind because our community that we serve directly around our university has a huge influx of ELL students, so I would say we're inadequate.

Other comments echoed the mismatch between the practical realities of a particular institution and the preparation that beginning teachers have available to them. One participant said:

I will say, too, on our campus, there was a—I have a graduate certificate for TESOL that was available. Unfortunately, the enrollment was relatively low, and the faculty member who was responsible for spearheading that program retired a couple of years ago and sort of took that program with her. No one has really picked that up since she left, which is unfortunate because like many of you, we're right outside of Chicago. We have an

incredible amount of diversity in our field sites, and I don't—I guess don't think we're preparing our candidates as well as we could be for that.

The participant above expresses an unsure sentiment about whether the program is preparing beginning teachers for the realities of the field, and this was a theme expressed frequently in the focus groups. Another very interesting trend related to the theme of program coherence was participants' adamant use of the term “infuse” or “infusion.” Curiously, when thinking about the teaching of ELLs, many researchers, including Giambo, Szecsi, & Manning (2005), advocate a framework for teacher preparation courses that includes quality teacher preparation through the inclusion of linguistics. The understanding of the theoretical foundation of second language acquisition is indicated by research to provide sensitivity toward language issues. Experiences and activities such as field experience with ELL students, an oral language assessment project, a linguistics project, and other cultural activities all contribute to the foundational knowledge, skills and dispositions for future teachers working with ELL students. Likewise, Nagle (2013) notes that through collaboration, a teacher learning framework must operationalize knowledge of linguistics in order to prepare linguistically responsive teachers.

Through focus groups, though, comments about “infusion” of content related to the teaching of ELLs did not indicate any specificity regarding whether linguistics was addressed. Instead, the term “infusion” became a term used to indicate the idea of coverage, with little specificity about what such coverage was. To us, this suggested an absence of content—or, a lack of knowledge concerning content—as the following comment expresses:

I don't know whether this is true of other states, but in [my state], there actually is no certification for teaching English language learners. It is infused into multiple and single subject certification, but you can't be an ESL teacher in [my state]. I don't know whether that's unique to the state or whether it's just a trend that's national, but the whole idea is that you learn better if you're learning in relation to a subject matter.

The comment above places the teaching of ELLs within the teaching of content. Though perhaps not intentional, this comment reinforces that learning does not require additional teaching methods other than the ones expressed through the teaching of content. At its core, these types of comments reinforce an ideology about the teaching of ELLs that relegates the teaching of this population of students as secondary to content matter.

The Value of a Partnership Approach and a Program's Ideology

The theme that most resonated with Nagle's (2013) teacher learning framework stressed what several participants called a “partnership approach.” Such a partnership, as articulated by respondents, recognizes that, in teaching ELLs, faculty must possess knowledge beyond what might be considered “awareness”; faculty must have knowledge of linguistics, as well as the teaching of writing and reading for ELLs. One participant who endorsed a partnership approach noted that it did not remedy all issues, but it did serve as a meeting place for addressing the goal of program coherence. This participant noted:

We spend anywhere from two to four weeks, depending on the group, working specifically with readings and activities that are focused on ELL learning. I actually am able to pull over some colleagues from our writing center who have some specific expertise and training in those areas. They sometimes will come in and basically team teach with me on some issues that they see when they're working with second language writers. It does help. Again, it's not enormous preparation, but it's the best that I can do, given the constraints of the course.

A partnership approach, much like a teacher learning framework, pairs awareness and informed practice, and sits at the crux of attaining program coherence. In aiming for a partnership, respondents noted that it was a program's ideology that spoke to the core of teacher educators' and a program's commitment to pre-service teachers' understanding of teaching ELLs. Program ideology also resonated with a key component of Nagle's (2013) teacher learning framework, as it stressed an on-going commitment to professional development and new knowledge about teaching ELLs, or what, through the teacher learning framework, is noted as inquiry into practice.

When asked about the types of conversations participants had with their students about teaching ELL students and other diverse learners, one focus group participant stated: "...My focus is mainly on confronting that deficit perspective to prepare them to go into a population of students unlike themselves." This was echoed by another participant who answered: "...Most of my focus is on confronting issues of deficit perspectives and rethinking sort of blanket ideas about any populations of students."

According to the participants, a program's ideology can assist pre-service teachers in understanding students "unlike" themselves, and can confront beginning teachers' notions of ELL students as framed through a deficit perspective (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Researchers (e.g., Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Nieto, 2010) have noted that becoming a professional teacher begins with an examination of one's own cultural assumptions and/or biases. Such experiences begin from our education experiences with diverse groups, and our own student experience as part of a minority or majority population. This personal examination must accompany exposure in order to lead to shifts in ideology, leading to shifts in classroom practice. Markos (2012) states that an examination of biases is not enough if not accompanied by reflection. The author wrote:

Reflection allows pre-service teachers to begin to understand their views about diversity and cultural differences. Guided reflection, as I use in my course, provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to look at and understand the cultural and linguistic differences between themselves and language learners. (p. 43)

The methods in which pre-service teacher ideologies were challenged varied throughout the focus group participants. Guided conversation was one example used in these classrooms. One participant expressed:

We encourage them [pre-service teachers] to reflect a lot on their own experiences with education. Sometimes, unfortunately, that turns into a conversation about how I learned what not to do from my education. We do almost have to debrief those experiences and to think about how they can both use those experiences, but also sometimes work against those experiences in their own classrooms.

Providing time and space for classroom reflection after exposure also was noted as having positive effects in the changing of beliefs and attitudes of students (Markos, 2012). Directly addressing the needs of ELL students in the English methods course through team teaching was mentioned as an ideological changing strategy. A participant stated:

We spend anywhere from two to four weeks, depending on the group, working specifically with readings and activities that are focused on ELL learning. I actually am able to pull over some colleagues from our writing center who have some specific expertise and training in those areas. They sometimes will come in and basically team teach with me on some issues that they see when they're working with second language writers. It does help. Again, it's not enormous preparation, but it's the best that I can do, given the constraints of the course.

All participants agreed that there was difficulty of fitting in these experiences and conversations given the amount of material expected to be covered throughout the course; however, these experiences and conversations were acknowledged as important. Attitudes and beliefs contribute greatly to confidence and self-efficacy in the classroom. Yucesan Durgunoglu (2010) argues:

Because attitudes and behaviors are related, one can predict that more negative attitudes are related to lower levels of preparedness and self-efficacy. If pre-service teachers have low self-efficacy regarding ELL students, they may attribute the low achievement of students to factors outside of a teacher's control, particularly an unfavorable impact of parents and home environments. (p. 34)

Attitudes and beliefs are shaped by experiences, exposure, and guidance (Markos, 2012). Building empathy and understanding, along with adaptation of materials can be done by any teacher of any subject area who has had experience with the challenges ELL students face. Intentional implementation of exposure for pre-service teachers through field experience or other activities has been shown to produce lasting changes in attitudes, self-efficacy levels, empathy, and confidence levels in working with ELL students and parents (Hooks, 2008; Jimenez-Silvia et. al., 2012; Yucesan Durgunoglu, 2010).

Conclusion

As our study of teacher educators' response to the topic of learning to teach ELLs in pre-service teacher education, our findings underscore the importance of addressing this topic through a teacher learning framework (Nagle, 2013), or a partnership approach. As participants noted, a combination of external pressures (e.g., lack of licensure/certification in many states), as well as internal pressures (e.g., absence of coursework addressing the teaching of ELLs within teacher education programs) contribute to this area of pre-service teacher education as overlooked. Though the concept of "infusion" is noted as promising, findings from our study call for more articulation of concrete ways that teacher education programs address instructional method for teaching ELLs. We see, through teacher educators' comments, that acknowledging the value of a partnership approach, as well as a program's ideology, can be a building block from which teacher educators might begin to more clearly outline what knowledge is necessary for pre-service teachers. In order to provide pre-service teachers with the knowledge and practice for teaching ELLs, program ideology and instructional methods must be unified.

Recommendations from research (Batt, 2008; de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2009; Dong, 2004) provide practical solutions and recommendations that can give teacher education programs increased knowledge about how this unification might occur; such research has bolstered the promise of bilingualism and multilingualism with specific focus on empowering ELL students. Yet, as our case study of ELA teacher educators from across the United States indicates, a deeper understanding of how content fields view the topic of teaching ELLs is needed. Hutchinson (2013) notes:

[it] therefore becomes imperative that teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers by providing the kinds of knowledge and experiences that will allow them to confront the feelings and assumptions they hold about ELLs and to develop effective teaching strategies so that they feel confident in working in today's multicultural, multilingual classrooms. (p. 30)

Providing the ideological framework for teaching ELLs begins with teacher educators' willingness to learn from each other, therefore understanding how all content area pre-service teachers can be effective teachers of English language learners.

[1] This article refers to the National Survey on Preparation of English Teachers for Secondary Classrooms that was designed by Samantha Caughlan, Donna Pasternak, Heidi L. Hallman, Laura Renzi, and Leslie S. Rush. The survey was endorsed by the Conference on English Education (CEE) and was electronically-distributed by CEE during the 2012-2013 academic year.

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Appendix A

Open-ended questions from the survey

There were three open-ended questions that contained comments that were pertinent to the teaching of diverse learners and English language learners. The first question was specifically about this topic. This question was:

- What is your understanding of the relation of language diversity and methods?

The other two open-ended questions that contained responses related to teaching diverse learners and English language learners were:

- What other changes have you made in response to changes in the field or to understandings of English language arts in the 21st century not addressed here and that you think we should know about?
- What other changes have you made in response to institutional or political changes not addressed here and that you think we should know about?

Appendix B

Questions in focus group discussions on teaching ELLs and diverse learners

1. We have noticed, through our study, that the term “diverse learners” is quite broad. How do you conceptualize the term “diverse learners”?
 - a. Possible clarifying question: How do you see the areas of “teaching diverse learners” and “teaching English language learners” as both similar and different? Should English education methods courses address both of these areas? Why?
2. Do you feel equipped to incorporate the teaching of diverse learners and ELLs into the methods course? Why or why not?
3. Does your program have a separate course that addresses diverse learners or ELLs? What do you think about that?
4. Tell me a little bit about the kinds of conversations you have with your students about teaching diverse learners and teaching English language learners and how these conversations relate to their fieldwork.
5. What other conceptual or practical challenges do you face as a program director or a methods course instructor that you want to raise at this point? These may be challenges related to changing ideas of curriculum or demographics that ELA teachers face, or external challenges related to institutional and political changes.