

# STARS

## TAPESTRY

Volume 8  
Issue 1 Summer 2017

Article 2

2017

## Using Multimodal Modules to Address Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge Gap in Learning to Teach English Language Learners

Guofang Li


*University of British Columbia, guofang.li@ubc.ca*

Denisse M. Hinojosa

Lindsay Wexler

Yue Bian

Jose Manuel Matinez

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/tapestry>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in TAPESTRY by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

### Recommended Citation

Li, Guofang; Hinojosa, Denisse M.; Wexler, Lindsay; Bian, Yue; and Matinez, Jose Manuel (2017) "Using Multimodal Modules to Address Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge Gap in Learning to Teach English Language Learners," *TAPESTRY*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/tapestry/vol8/iss1/2>

### **Introduction: Teachers of ELs Need Specific Skills and Expertise**

Although English learners (ELs) now constitute 9.2% of public school students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015), their educational goals and needs are not yet well addressed. There exists a persistent achievement gap between ELs and their native English-speaking peers (Lucas & Villegas, 2013), and ELs continue to have disproportionately high dropout rates (Menken, 2010; Sheng, Sheng, & Anderson, 2011), low graduation rates (Menken, 2010), low college enrolment and completion rates (Kohler & Lazarín, 2007), and overrepresentation in special education placement (Sullivan, 2011). One factor that contributes to the status quo of ELs is teachers' ill-preparedness to teach ELs. While the majority of the country's in-service teachers have been reported to lack training in ELs (Reeves, 2006; Téllez & Waxman, 2005), more than 76% of the country's teacher preparation programs were identified to have failed in readying their pre-service teachers to teach ELs (Maxwell, 2014). According to Durgunoglu and Hughes (2010), teacher education courses fail to neither sensitize pre-service teachers to cultural and linguistic differences they can expect to encounter in their future classrooms, nor to provide them with actual tools and strategies to address these differences. Therefore, in this era of tests, standards and accountability, teachers' lack of preparation prevents them from providing support and targeted instruction for ELs (Colombo, McMakin, Jacobs, & Shestok, 2013).

Two major barriers have been cited as preventing effective preparation of teachers for teaching ELs. One is the misperception that teaching ELs requires "Just Good Teaching" (JGT) in that teachers' existing repertoire of best practices that works for native English-speaking students or students with special needs would also work for ELs (de Jong & Harper, 2005, p. 102). According to de Jong and Harper (2008), this perspective "renders invisible those educational needs that set ELs apart from U.S.-born, fluent English-speaking students", and "leads to classroom practices that, although not necessarily harmful, are not always effective in meeting the needs of ELs" (p. 129). This perspective has led to the neglect of integrating EL content into the existing teacher education courses, and hence a cyclical effect of under-preparing teachers for teaching ELs (Li, in press).

Another related major barrier is the uneven expertise of teacher education faculty who may or may not have training in teaching ELs. According to the existing few publications on teacher education faculty related to ELs backgrounds and professional development (Costa, McPhail, Smith, & Brisk, 2005; Li, Bian, & Martinez-Hinestroza, in press; Meskill, 2005; Nutta, Mokhtari, & Strebels, 2012; Roy-Campbell, 2013), faculty members' lack of background and expertise in ELs often leads to insufficient instruction and attention to EL issues in their courses because they themselves have not received this preparation. Roy-Campbell (2013) for example, surveyed literacy faculty in teacher education and found that among

the 50 respondents, more than half (61%) had been exposed to issues pertaining to EL students only at conferences or as part of professional development workshops and only 12% completed degrees in Teaching English as Second Language (TESOL) or Bilingual Education certification programs and 18% had coursework related to ELs. In Li et al.'s (in press) study on faculty's perspectives and practices on pre-service teachers' preparation, they found vast divergence in their ability and awareness of ELs issues in their own classrooms. While instructors with EL backgrounds made ELs an integral part of their courses, faculty without such backgrounds often did not feel confident in including topics related to ELs.

Empirical studies on in-service teachers have found that effective teachers of ELs have different skills and that JGT is not enough for teachers of ELs. Master, Loeb, Whitney, and Wyckoff (2012) surveyed 1221 math teachers in the New York City (NYC) public schools system, which includes a large and diverse population of ELs and asked detailed questions about teacher preparation experiences, and in-service training in their first year. Their analysis revealed that characteristics associated with more effective teachers for students in general were not necessarily associated with effective math teachers of EL students. Additionally, they found that a variety of EL-specific instructional experiences or training predicted differential effectiveness with EL students, particularly among novice teachers. They concluded that closing the EL achievement gap may benefit from greater attention to those specific EL-related instructional skills.

Efforts to integrate EL-content in teacher education have been carried out through different methods. One is faculty member volunteering to redesign and reorganize their courses to integrate EL-content which included modifying existing courses and field experiences to infuse attention to teaching ELs across the curriculum. A review of the literature showed that teacher education faculty experimented with revising existing courses to include more multicultural education (Abbate-Vaughn, 2008; Almarza, 2005; Carpenter-LaGattuta, 2002), service learning or community-based learning (Bollin, 2007; Bortolin, 2013; Hutchinson, 2011; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2013), and intentional placement in culturally and linguistically diverse schools, especially in urban contexts (Bleicher, 2011; Waxman, Téllez and Walberg, 2006; Wiggins, Follo, & Eberly, 2007). These efforts, though effective, are highly dependent upon teacher educators' awareness of and expertise in EL issues and therefore the impact is often limited to the specific course.

Adding a course in ELs is another useful practice that can potentially reach more pre-service teachers. However, reports show that very few states and institutions have separate courses that are specifically devoted to EL issues. According to Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy (2008), only four states, Arizona, California, New York and Florida, have specific certification requirements in ELs for all teachers. Therefore, the number of institutions nationwide that have

specific coursework in ELs for all teachers is very small. In a study on coursework offered by 43 teacher education programs, Franco and Hendrick (2013) found that only 10% of the 43 institutions have designated courses in EL. In some institutions, a TESOL minor endorsement (or certificate) option is available, but most states do not require teacher candidates to enroll in additional hours in TESOL and therefore it is often teacher candidates' choice whether to obtain a minor endorsement or not. Thus, it is not surprising that the majority of teacher candidates, especially those who were not in a TESOL minor or certificate program, did not feel prepared to teach ELs (Durgunoglu and Hughes, 2010; Li, in press; Li, Hinojosa, & Wexler 2016; Maxwell, 2014).

It is therefore critical for teacher education programs to overcome these barriers to provide the knowledge and experiences pre-service teachers need to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Using online space supported by multimedia materials is an excellent pathway to address these barriers. In the following sections, we describe how we supported a group of pre-service teachers in their efforts to learn to teach ELs through online learning modules in a large teacher education program in a Midwestern university in the U.S. These online modules were a product of our larger study on teacher education instructors' (Li, Bian, & Martinez-Hinestroza, in press) as well as pre-service teachers' perceptions of their preparedness for teaching ELs (Li & Jee, 2017; Li, Hinojosa, & Wexler, 2016).

### **Context**

The teacher education program was situated in a large Midwestern state university. The program offered both elementary and secondary teaching majors. Similar to many typical teacher education programs, it offered a TESOL minor endorsement option. The state required six semester hours in reading instruction for elementary teachers and three semester hours for secondary teachers. Standards for secondary content teachers required knowledge of literacy instruction theory and practice as they pertain to ELs but there was no specific requirement for addressing ELs.

In order to better understand the program's effort to prepare its pre-service teachers for ELs, we conducted a mixed methods study of both instructors' (N=57) and pre-service teachers' (N=571) perspectives on the preparation using surveys and semi-structured interviews (Li, Hinojosa, & Wexler, 2016; Li & Jee, 2017; Li, Martinez-Hinestroza, & Bian, 2016). In addition, we conducted an analysis of the 41 syllabi of the program's foundational courses (taken at the early stage of the program) and subject area courses taken at later stages of the program (social studies, mathematics, English, science, agriscience, and world languages) (Martinez-Hinestroza, Li, & Bian, 2015). Our analysis of instructors' perspectives (Li, Bian, & Martinez-Hinestroza, in press) suggested that the majority of the pre-service teachers in the program came from White, monolingual backgrounds and

lacked exposure to diversity prior to the program. Their learning to teach ELs was also constrained by a lack of consistent coverage of EL related teaching strategies and competencies and opportunities to practice teaching ELs. Instructors also noted several gaps in pre-service teachers' knowledge base in teaching ELs: 1) due to a lack of exposure to diversity prior to the program, pre-service teachers held many misconceptions about ELs; 2) for the same reason, pre-service teachers knew little about the diverse contexts, especially the home contexts that ELs were from; and 3) due to the program constraints, pre-service teachers knew very little about how to teach ELs, especially in content classrooms.

Our syllabi analysis (Martinez-Hinestroza, Li, & Bian, 2015) confirmed that few courses in the program included knowledge about language, EL policies, and social contexts. Furthermore, few courses devoted explicit class sessions to topics related to ELs, and most courses interwove topics of ELs with teacher knowledge of diversity applicable to all students. The study also found variation in time devoted to ELs topics (either explicitly or implicitly on diversity topics) ranging from 0 to 4.5 hours per course. Finally, the efforts to cover EL content appeared not to be systematically connected from foundational courses to teaching method courses, and between courses of different subject area as evidenced by either unnecessary repetition or lack of sufficient coverage of some EL content in some courses.

Instructors' views and findings from our syllabi analysis suggested a need to provide extra support for pre-service teachers to better prepare them to teach ELs. Our follow-up study that focused on pre-service teachers' perspectives of their preparation (pre-service teachers with or without TESOL minors) also confirmed these findings and the need to provide extra support. To respond to the need we identified, we began by creating online learning modules for pre-service teachers to address both their knowledge base in ELs, their understanding of contexts of learning for ELs, and key teaching strategies that focused both on content and language learning. These online modules would be made available for instructors to adapt to their own course. We saw this as the first step toward addressing the knowledge and competence that pre-service teachers need to better serve ELs in their future career.

In the spring semester of 2015, the lead author and four graduate students had the opportunity to pilot these modules as a one-credit (6 two-hour sessions) online lab course, *TESOL Minor Lab*, for a group of 22 pre-service teachers who were enrolled in a TESOL minor program. Below, we report the details of the modules for the lab and the feedback from this pilot lab course.

### **Content and Foci of the Modules**

Based on our findings in the larger study and the time we had for the lab course, we designed six multi-media modules to provide more opportunities for pre-service teachers to gain some knowledge about ELs and the sociocultural

contexts of ELs' learning and living, and acquire skills in developing scaffolding strategies to promote ELs' learning in content classrooms (see Appendix for attached syllabus). Modules 1, 2, and 3 were devoted to learning about ELs, their sociocultural contexts, and connecting with families of ELs; Modules 4 and 5 focused on some key strategies for working with ELs in content classrooms; and Module 6 was devoted to lab's learning reflections:

- Module 1: "Understanding the Challenges that Prevent ELs to Succeed"
- Module 2: "Understanding the Learning Experiences of ELs in Relation to School, Home, and Community Contexts"
- Module 3: "Communicating and Connecting with Families of ELs"
- Module 4: "Teaching Strategies for Working with ELs: Differentiating Instruction"
- Module 5: "ESL Teaching Strategies in Content Classrooms"
- Module 6: "Putting it All Together"

In each module, pre-service teachers watched videos of interviews with EL students, English as second language (ESL) specialists and mainstream classroom teachers, administrators, and parents of ELs, as well as videos of instruction. They also read practitioner-oriented journal articles, discussed in small groups, and reflected on their learning through a weekly post. Each week's assignment also contained an application component where pre-service teachers were asked to come up with action plans to engage families, visit schools, or revise lesson plans through which they applied their knowledge to specific teaching situations, and reflected on this application.

Throughout the six modules, pre-service teachers engaged in weekly online discussion posts (approximately 330 posts in total), wrote online reflection journals (approximately 154 journals in total), participated in online written evaluation of each module, and they also responded to our evaluative questions about their learning and the modules at the end of Module 6. In the following, we outline the purpose and content of each module, as well as pre-service teachers' evidence of learning and evaluation of the modules.

### **Module 1: Understanding the Challenges that Prevent ELs to Succeed**

Module one aimed to provide a big picture of the factors that prevented ELs from achieving success as their native English-speaking peers do in the U.S. schooling context. For this module, pre-service teachers were asked to interact with an EL student, a parent of an EL student, or any international student about the major challenges that this person faced as an EL. To help pre-service teachers develop a better sense of what they learned from those interactions, they read two articles related to what schools and teachers do to help ELs close the achievement gap (The role of schools in the English language learner achievement gap by Fry, 2008; and Closing the gap: Addressing vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms by Carlo et al., 2004) to gain a

basic understanding of the status of ELs in the U.S. and the factors that prevented them from achieving success. At the same time, pre-service teachers were provided eight videos of ELs' perspectives on the challenges they face in the school. Due to the large diversity of ELs, we decided to create our own videos so that pre-service teachers would have a broader perspective of the ELs they would encounter once they started working as teachers. These videos included EL students of various ages from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, with different previous schooling experiences and levels of English proficiency.

After gaining some knowledge of ELs from diverse backgrounds with different needs and challenges, pre-service teachers were asked to work in groups in order to identify and to understand the needs of those ELs on a case-by-case basis. Pre-service teachers were asked to reflect on the facts that surprised them the most about the ELs they watched in the videos and on factors that may affect ELs from diverse language proficiency from participating fully in learning activities on an equal basis as native English-speakers: those who are proficient in their first language (L1) and have limited understanding of English, those who have not yet developed literacy skills in their L1 because of limited access to schooling. Pre-service teachers engaged in group discussions to reflect on these questions, and as a group they came up with a list of challenges.

Pre-service teachers in this learning lab reported that the videos, readings, and the group discussions helped them see ELs like individuals with different needs. Most importantly, pre-service teachers argued that to some extent, this module changed their beliefs toward ELs' learning process and acknowledged the importance of having positive attitudes toward ELs and holding high expectations for them. Some pre-service teachers noted that to achieve this, they needed to reflect on their own negative beliefs or biases and change their mindsets regarding ELs. In conclusion, this module helped pre-service teachers better understand what prevented ELs to succeed in academic settings and how their beliefs may influence ELs' learning of the content and the second language. Several students agreed upon using strategies that would help ELs learn academic language and do better in mainstream classes. For example, one pre-service teacher said,

I would develop a system of open communication between the teachers of the different content areas and myself. This would allow me to talk to the teachers about the knowledge the student has learned so that their skills can be practiced within the classroom. This system would also allow content teachers to share areas of improvement with me, and allow me to share the skills the student has with the content teacher.

Similarly, another student mentioned,

As an ESL teacher I would talk to the other teachers who interact with this student every day and make sure they are giving her the opportunities to express her concerns in different ways such as writing if she felt

uncomfortable speaking with her teacher. I would also encourage her to work on developing her CALPS by encouraging her to slowly begin interacting with her professors in a communicative way.

Finally, another pre-service teacher expressed,

There are many possibilities to increase the different skills of ELs. I plan to vary the manner of instruction and to learn as much as possible about my students in order to instruct them in the most efficient way.

Understanding the challenges they face as ELs allows teachers across all disciplines to formulate their instruction, guidance, tasks, etc. accordingly.

### **Module 2: Understanding the Learning Experiences of ELs in Relation to School, Home, and Community Contexts**

Building on Module 1, Module 2 aimed to contextualize the challenges ELs face at school, specifically in the ESL program, which is supposed to support the acculturation and language development of ELs. This module also aimed to present how the home environment, specifically parents' cultural values on education and parental involvement in children's school work, as well as the community context, influenced ELs' learning experience at school and home. Through narratives from EL students in local schools, the objective of this module was to help pre-service teachers understand that ELs' achievement requires more than their personal effort, but support from all stakeholders including school, parents, and the community.

The module started with a mini research project in which pre-service teachers were asked to explore a local school focusing on the educational support provided to ELs and analyze whether the specific learning needs of ELs were adequately addressed. Pre-service teachers could check the district/school website, call a school principal, and/or visit the school and talk to teachers and students. With the information they collected through the mini project, pre-service teachers also read a government document, two book chapters, and a journal article. The first piece, *English learner education program guidelines: Program models*, (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.), was a government document that defined the prevailing ESL program models in US, and compared and contrasted pros and cons of these models. The two book chapters (Li, 2008a, 2008b) were narratives about how ELs' home and school cultures were in conflict and how the conflict influenced the ELs' learning and development. The third piece by Gándara and Orfield (2012) was a research article that discussed how the ESL program segregated ELs from the rest of the school. In addition to the readings, pre-service teachers also watched two videos that we took from local schools, in which two ELs shared their learning experiences with the ESL teachers.

After reading and video watching, pre-service teachers discussed in small groups online about their mini projects, and used two readings to discuss what



they considered as the best way to address the learning needs of ELs at school. Pre-service teachers also wrote a personal reflection journal on their learning about how family/community culture influenced the learning experiences of ELs, and how they as future teachers could help parents and students overcome the challenges that the mismatch between home and school culture brings. At the end of the module, pre-service teachers completed a short online survey including a Likert scale describing their experiences with the module, and two questions requesting their suggestions for improvement. In the Likert scale, six pre-service teachers responded to the survey and all of them agreed on the statement, “The content of this module is helpful in preparing me to work with English language learners.” Four out of the six respondents agreed on the statement, “The readings are informative and helpful.” Five out of six agreed on the statement, “The writing assignment helps me encapsulate what I have learned in the module.” In response to the two questions, one participant reported, “the readings and videos for this module were very successful.” Another participant elaborated by saying, “I really like the videos that we have been watching. I am finally getting real student feedback that I feel I haven't gotten before. I even recognized one student, so I know that we are reflecting on our own communities.”

To summarize, in this module, pre-service teachers were provided with opportunities to collect the empirical data from local schools and readings and videos to help them make sense of this experience. Discussion helped them to share what they had learned, and personal reflection kept a record for their thinking. In their comments and reflections on the modules, pre-service teachers reported that narratives and videos were “eye opening” to them and provided them first-hand information they “would not have gained from anywhere else.” They also considered the mini project very helpful for them to understand the local context.

### **Module 3: Communicating and Connecting with Families of ELs**

Interacting with families is a very important part of teaching. It can seem daunting to forge relationships with those who speak a different language. As a pre-service teacher, it is important to have the opportunity to develop relationships with the families of ELs in preparation for becoming a novice teacher. The purpose for the inclusion of this module was to introduce the importance of having a connection with the families of ELs and to provide the opportunity for pre-service teachers to learn methods and strategies for how to communicate information with the parents of their ELs.

Within this module, pre-service teachers had the opportunity to watch videos, read practitioner articles, participate in a collaborative discussion forum online, and reflect through writing on the content of the module. The first part of this module asked the pre-service teachers to view a YouTube video of a school in Chicago that worked closely with families and the local community and consider

the importance of school-family relationships. Next, pre-service teachers read three practitioner-directed articles (Brown, 2014; MAEC, n.d.; Schools.nyc.gov/40minutes, n.d.) containing practical strategies as well as challenges involved with EL parental involvement in the school setting, EL parental support to their children at home, and teachers approaches to engage with families of ELs. While reading, pre-service teachers noted approaches and challenges involved with EL parental involvement in the school setting, EL parental support to their children at home, and teachers approaches to engage with families of ELs. After reading the articles, pre-service teachers watched six videos of local parents, teachers, and administrators discussing central issues, strategies, and they heard various perspectives for engaging with families of ELs. While critically watching the videos, pre-service teachers took notes of themes, central issues, differences, and discrepancies heard from the various perspectives (i.e., parents, teachers, and administrators) when engaging EL families into the learning community and within the ELs learning process.

After watching the videos and reading the articles, pre-service teachers participated in an online group discussion forum to collaboratively discuss challenges and strategies regarding working with families of ELs from personal experience or observation. This module concluded with pre-service teachers' reflection on the content and discussions in their journals. Each pre-service teacher was asked to create an action plan for engaging a family (either one introduced through videos or one from personal experience) into the community and classroom and enhancing the ELs learning process to reach learning goals. The small group discussions in the online forum suggest the pre-service teachers responded very positively to this module, as many felt these topics were important, yet rarely discussed in teacher preparation courses. Within their discussions, pre-service teachers relied on both readings and videos within the module to engage in conversations around the pros and cons to different family outreach possibilities, reflected on challenges they had not yet thought of related to families, and shared examples of family communication from personal observations.

#### **Module 4: Teaching Strategies for Working with ELs: Differentiating Instruction**

This module aimed to inform the selection and enactment of instructional strategies to cater to ELs' learning needs. To do so, we invoked the pre-service teachers' understandings about learners, developed in Modules 1 and 2, and about their schools and their families, developed in Module 3. The focus was on principled decisions about teaching strategies. In this module, our goal was to provide pre-service teachers with a repertoire of instructional strategies that to help them meet the needs of the EL population. We acknowledged that besides readings and coursework, classroom observations and interactions with

experienced teachers inform pre-service teachers' repertoire of instructional strategies. Accordingly, in this module we sought to support pre-service teachers in: (1) establishing connections between what they might know about ELs (the students, their communities and their families), and the instructional strategies that might support those ELs; (2) extending their understanding of differentiated instruction as a strategy to support certain learners, to the use of differentiated instruction with the specific purpose of supporting ELs; and (3) applying their understanding of differentiated instruction as a strategy to support ELs in their lesson planning. The stated module objective was then to make principled decisions to differentiate instruction for ELs in a multi-ability classroom, being attentive to the challenges that it implies.

The module began by activating pre-service teachers' prior knowledge about instructional strategies to teach ELs in general, and differentiated instruction for ELs in particular. We did this by having pre-service teachers talk with an experienced teacher about his or her experiences differentiating instruction in general, as well as for ELs. Pre-service teachers shared a summary of their conversations in the online discussion forum used in all the modules. Second, pre-service teachers read practitioner-oriented articles about strategies to differentiate instruction for ELs (Field, 2010; Haynes, 2014; Short & Echevarria, 2004; Thammineni, 2013). One focal point in the readings was on process, product, readiness, and learning profile differentiation. A second focal point in the readings was on instructional strategies to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms, that is, classrooms where ELs have varying language proficiency levels. Third, in light of the strategies introduced in the readings, pre-service teachers analyzed differentiated instruction for ELs in a video from a classroom. This analysis intended for pre-service teachers to reflect on the challenges that teachers find differentiating instruction for ELs. Finally, pre-service teachers modified a lesson plan designed by a mainstream teacher to include activities and strategies to differentiate instruction for ELs.

At the end of the module, we asked pre-service teachers to share their perceptions and feedback through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire included a Likert-scale survey inquiring about pre-service teachers' perception of the content, materials, tasks, and assessment of the module. It also included open-ended questions asking about what the pre-service teachers considered the module's strengths and their suggestions for future implementations. Ten pre-service teachers responded to the survey, reporting that they found the classroom video helped them see how information from the readings looked like in a real classroom. Respondents also reported appreciation for the opportunities to think of teaching ELs with a range of English proficiency levels.

### **Module 5: ESL Teaching Strategies in Content Classrooms**

In this module, pre-service teachers went from considering instructional strategies for ELs in general, to considering instructional strategies in particular content areas. We focused on mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts, bringing attention to the particularities of each content area that may be challenging for ELs in terms of language, culture, or background knowledge. The module objective was to be able to plan teaching strategies that support ELs' learning in specific content areas.

First, pre-service teachers discussed in the online forum the challenges that ELs might face in specific content areas (mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts). Second, pre-service teachers read about the challenges that ELs face in particular content areas, and the challenges that mainstream classroom teachers face when teaching ELs content areas (Baecher, 2011; Batt, 2008; Brown, 2007; Haynes, 2005; Lee & Buxton, 2013; Murrey, 2008). Third, pre-service teachers selected a content area and read about the instructional strategies teachers use to teach that particular content area to ELs. Then, pre-service teachers analyzed a video of a teacher's enactment of different strategies to teach a particular content area to ELs. The video analysis was intended for pre-service teachers to reflect on how to face the challenges associated with teaching a content area to ELs. Finally, pre-service teachers applied what they had learned in this module by modifying a lesson plan of a specific content area to support ELs.

At the end of the module, pre-service teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire similar to the ones described in the previous modules. Eight pre-service teachers responded, reporting that they benefitted from being aware of resources they could find to support their lesson planning for ELs in particular areas. Pre-service teachers also reported benefiting from adapting a lesson plan in particular content area and that the lesson plan differentiating activity helped them bridge theory and practice regarding teaching content areas to ELs.

### **Module 6: Putting it All Together:**

In Module 6, pre-service teachers were asked to write a final paper summarizing what they learned throughout the five modules and to present the paper to the class. They had two options to choose from, (a) Reflecting on their understanding about student achievement, challenges associated with working with ELs, techniques for connecting with parents, and differentiating instruction for all learners; (b) Reflecting on an EL student from a classroom they had visited, developing a plan and providing a rationale which would help the specific student acclimate to their learning environment and involve their family within the learning processes.

In addition to the final paper and presentation, in Module 6, we asked pre-service teachers to reflect on their learning throughout the modules by responding to a series of questions online regarding their experiences with modules, their

learning of content, and their reflections for future learning. Pre-service teachers filled out a Likert scale in which they indicated whether they agreed with statements like “The content of this module is helpful in preparing me to work with English language learners,” “The discussion forum helps me better understand the content of the module,” etc. They also provided responses to questions like “What are the strengths of this module?” and “What suggestions do you have for us to improve this module? What would make it more effective?” Overall, pre-service teachers reported having had a positive experience through the modules and claimed that they gained knowledge and they solidified their prior knowledge by applying it in context. One pre-service teacher expressed that she learned the following,

On the simplest level I learned that student success depends on how well teachers can encourage student achievement regardless of the vast differences in education that ESL students face. Upon entering the classroom, each student brings with them a unique language, culture, varied proficiency in English and set of academic experiences.

Another pre-service teacher wrote,

My overall experience in this lab has been a positive one, especially being given the opportunity to apply knowledge and hear genuine voices from the community speak about their experiences in ESL.

### **Pre-service Teachers’ Feedback on their Learning from the Modules**

Through these discussions, journals, and evaluations, we were able to identify their evidence of their learning. Overall, the pre-service teachers expressed the lab was a positive learning experience. One pre-service teacher wrote in her final reflection that the modules are “a comprehensive review of the concepts [they] have been introduced to in the TESOL minor program so far.” Another pre-service teacher was “grateful to be able to view the interview videos of parents and students and learned more about the desires and needs of those individuals.” For some, the lab helped fill a gap in their knowledge base. As one pre-service teacher wrote in the summary reflection in Module 6,

Throughout the course of the TESOL minor lab I have learned a lot about educating EL students. I am still finishing up the classes for minor so I feel that the information presented in the minor lab helped me to fill in some of the gaps on EL education, as well as alter my overall perceptions as to how we should educate EL students as a whole.

Pre-service teachers also commented that they were able to activate their prior knowledge about how to teach ELs, and that they considered these learning opportunities helped them feel prepared about teaching ELs. In the following, we describe pre-service teachers’ report about their learning about ELs, supporting their families, and strategies in teaching in content classrooms, which were the main learning objectives of this course.

### **Feedback on Learning about ELs**

Pre-service teachers' reflection journals in the first two modules showed that they had a more holistic understanding of the challenges of ELs and were able to analyze those needs and importance of teachers' effort in knowing their students. As one pre-service teacher wrote in her journal in Module 1 on her analysis of the situation of a Nepalese girl who had a heavy accent and struggled in school,

Her accent may just cause the confusion. Therefore it does not give the teachers an excuse to completely disregard her, they should keep trying. I think the biggest takeaway from her situation is the lack of support and help her teachers give her.... Her parents do not speak English and she is the main speaker in the house so with no one left to engage with her progress may be slower than the first student. Additionally I believe her teacher should have been more direct with her because she clearly wants explicit instruction and feedback...

Another student wrote more explicitly how knowing her ELs might make a difference in her actions as a teacher in their reflection journal in Module 2,

If I know my students, I will know about the struggles my students are facing, then I can work to find solutions. For example, one of the Sudanese families didn't see the importance of ESL pullout programs. This left a very unsettling and dissatisfied taste in their mouth about the American school system. Knowing this struggle, I could talk with the parents to find an alternative.

### **Feedback about the Importance of Knowing and Supporting Families:**

Pre-service teachers highlighted that these modules helped them consider the importance of communicating and involving ELs' families and communities as this topic was missing in their pre-service teacher education. One pre-service teacher wrote,

Learning about the importance of involving parents and the different ways to achieve that involvement was very positive. This topic is not something that has been discussed in other courses and so it has shaped the knowledge that I have about teaching ESL. ... I will also find many different ways to get to know my students in order to understand the challenges that they face so that I can support them in the best way.

Another pre-service teacher also wrote about the impact of the modules on knowing and communicating with ELs' families on her becoming a teacher in her reflection journal at the end of Module 3:

My preconceptions and ideas about the parents have certainly changed. I feel that instead of trying to treat them as a different entity, and something that we should try to please, we should do our best to try to include them into decisions about their student's lives. We have to realize that the

family is just a unit, and the student isn't just a singular entity. By including them within the classroom and the school environment, we are sending a message that we care about them and their child.

Pre-service teachers also emphasized how instrumental the modules were in helping them think in practical applicable ways about strategies to enact when teaching ELs. Therefore, pre-service teachers gave positive feedback on the content and format of the modules. Specifically the feedback was positive on readings, videos, and assignments, because they helped them gain a first-hand perspective of the students, parents, and teachers. As one pre-service teacher wrote in her final evaluation of the course,

After constantly discussing theory, it was eye opening to view accounts of real families and students who are English Language Learners. Typically, in class there are numerous abstract concepts that we never have the opportunity to apply to real life scenarios and receive feedback.

### **Feedback on Gaining Instructional Strategies**

Pre-service teachers also presented evidence of what they had learned and planned to do as future teachers. For example, one pre-service teacher wrote in Module 6's reflection that her ideas of differentiated instruction have changed as a result of the modules:

I think that overall I will try to place more of an emphasis on differentiated instruction in terms of how I teach. After reading the articles within the different modules and reading some of the discussion posts of my classmates, it became apparent that differentiated instruction is truly important for all students.

Another pre-service teacher added, "I really like how we were able to change things according to differentiated instruction. It allowed me to think further about how I would change things according to the students in my classroom." Another student explained how she now saw many ways to accommodate ELs in Module 5 after her lesson plan revision exercise:

When I first began reading the lesson plan, I was very confused and overwhelmed with the amount of instruction and activities embedded within the lesson plan... There are many ways it can be adapted in order to accommodate all ELs. The adaptations should be based upon the students that are in the classroom, their needs, goals, proficiency level, etc. .... It could be adapted more specifically depending on the students within the classroom.

### **Reflections and Future Work**

This description of the use of multimedia modules provides an example of how teacher educators can overcome some programmatic barriers to support their efforts to prepare teachers to work with ELs. These modules represented a small step toward responding to pre-service teachers' need and desire to be well

prepared to teach all learners, including ELs. Through our engagement with the pre-service teachers with six carefully selected and designed online multimedia modules, we were able to build on their prior knowledge to expand, refine, and re-contextualize their understanding of ELs, ELs' families and communities, and instructional strategies aimed at meeting ELs' needs.

While it was evident that pre-service teachers gained much from the modules about teaching ELs, there is still much work ahead to address pre-service teachers' needs. For example, specific strategies of teaching a second language, which are critical to learners' success in the content classrooms, are lacking according to pre-service and in-service teachers in our course as well as in a number of other studies, (Baecher, 2011; Brown, 2007; Martinez-Hinestroza, Li, & Bian, 2015; Wong, Fehr, Agnello, & Crooks, 2012). Additionally, there is a question of how to attend to students' bi/multilingual resources in instruction, teacher beliefs and dispositions toward ELs, and their knowledge of policies that impact ELs, and assessment issues. Additionally, our modules were only used with students in a TESOL minor program, who represented only a small number of our pre-service teachers. More work ahead needs to be devoted to reach pre-service teachers who do not have any background in TESOL training and address their needs to be prepared for teaching ELs.

We also learned much about designing and teaching online multimedia modules for pre-service teachers. If we were to teach these modules again (and if other teacher educators were to develop these type of learning opportunities), we would take into consideration the following lessons we learned:

- **Differentiate instruction by offering choices:** It is important to consider the audience when designing the modules, and to acknowledge and respect what pre-service teachers have already learned. As pre-service teachers have different prior knowledge and experiences with ELs, it is important to provide them with choices regarding readings and assignments so that they are able to spend time on information they deem most necessary and relevant.
- **Use materials relevant to local communities.** Instead of exclusively having materials that apply to the generality of ELs, pre-service teachers' engagement may benefit from the selection of readings and videos related to the local communities. Local materials seem to highlight the relevance of the materials for pre-service teachers, and the subsequent application of ideas from these materials in their reflection and lesson planning.
- **Allow negotiation of course development.** Online learning might be less familiar for both pre-service teachers and instructors than face-to-face classes. Specifically, in a face-to-face class, a course instructor may be able to adjust a lesson plan or to respond to pre-service



teachers' engagement and concerns as the lesson unfolds. Such flexibility could be less apparent in an online setting. Therefore, it could be beneficial to have in place different ways to negotiate the development of the course.

- **Clear navigation and study guides on line.** It is important to provide a reader's map at the beginning of each module so that students will have an expectation of the objective and content of the module. As well, providing guiding questions that contextualize readings and video analysis so that pre-service teachers establish a shared ground on which to generate provocative discussions in online discussion forums.
- **Use a mixture of application and assessment activities and personal reflection.** Finally, it is critical to include a mixture of individual end of module reflections and different types of application and assessment activities so that students are better engaged in learning and reflection. These alternative activities include adapting or creating lesson plans, analyzing teaching videos, microteaching practices, designing assessment instruments, and planning home visits.

In conclusion, this online course represents a beginning step of how a teacher education program can use research-based evidence to support pre-service teachers' learning to teach ELs. In this mini-lab course, we only addressed three domains of knowledge (i.e., understanding ELs in diverse contexts, communicating and connecting with families of ELs, and ESL teaching strategies) that teachers needed to know to teach ELs. This is far from enough. Continued work must be devoted to addressing other critical domains of knowledge that teachers must have to teach ELs, including teachers' content knowledge in language development (i.e., in both L1 and L2), teachers' identity development (i.e., as advocates for ELs), and pedagogical content knowledge in ESL instruction (Li, 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2011, 2013).

While there are many programmatic and institutional constraints as well as limited availability of time and resources, teacher educators who are looking for ideas to improve the preparation of pre-service teachers to effectively reach and teach ELs in their teacher education courses can incorporate these critical domains of knowledge by creating a stand-alone course or TESOL certificate or endorsement program (the add-on approach) such as the one described in this paper or modifying existing courses to add EL-related content (the infusion approach). The infusion approach can be realized through a variety of pedagogical modifications for example, by adding systematically EL language related content (materials, texts, and assignments) to the existing courses, or adding some EL-focused components such as service learning or community engagement opportunities related to ELs. With sufficient institutional support, teacher educators can adopt a more systematic infusion model, the One Plus Model,

developed by Nutta, Mokhtari, and Strebel (2012), provides ways cover basic EL topics for mainstream teachers as well as additional EL education content for EL-qualified certificate training.

In addition to these individual efforts, teacher education programs can also adopt some “process strategies” such as fostering collaboration across institutional boundaries, and providing professional development for teacher education faculty in EL education (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008, p. 619). When faculty members have more knowledge and expertise in EL education, they are more likely to include language-related issues in their course content. Teacher education programs can implement a pull-in approach to provide professional development to teacher education faculty by having EL experts working directly in participating faculty classrooms to infuse EL issues on an on-going basis and providing follow-on support (Meskill, 2005; Nutta et al., 2012). Additionally, offering faculty EL institute or seminars that focus on studying EL education (e.g., through discussing readings, watching videos, reporting on school visits, listening to guest speakers, and analyzing content area texts and standardized tests, etc.) (Brisk, 2008; Costa, McPhail, Smith, & Brisk, 2005), and/or forming a faculty learning community (faculty coming together to learn about and experiment with infusing ELs in their courses) (Levine, Howard, & Moss, 2014) designed to foster improved teaching techniques through EL need awareness.

### References

- Abbate-Vaughn, J. (2008). Highly qualified teachers for our schools: Developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. In M. E. Brisk (Eds.), *Language, culture, and community in teacher education* (pp. 175-202). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.
- Almarza, D. J. (2005). Connecting multicultural education theories with practice: A case study of an intervention course using the realistic approach in teacher education. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29(3), 527–539. doi: 10.1080/15235882.2005.10162850.
- Baecher, L. (2011). Differentiated instruction for English language learners: Strategies for the secondary English teacher. *Wisconsin English Journal*, 53(2), 64-73.
- Ballantyne, K., Sanderman, A., & Levy, J. (2008). *Educating English learners: Building teacher capacity*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition.
- Batt, E. G. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of ell education: Potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education*, 15(3), 39-43.

- Bleicher, E. (2011). Parsing the language of racism and relief: Effects of a short-term urban field placement on teacher candidates' perceptions of culturally diverse classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(8), 1170–1178.
- Bollin, G. (2007). Preparing teachers for Hispanic immigrant children: A service learning approach. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 6(2), 177-189.
- Bortolin, K. (2013). Community-based learning in teacher education: Toward a situated understanding of ESL learners. *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation*, University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada.
- Brisk, M. E. (2008). Program and faculty transformation: enhancing teacher preparation. In M. E. Brisk (Eds.), *Language, culture, and community in teacher education* (pp. 249-266). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.
- Brown, C. L. (2007). Strategies for making social studies texts more comprehensible for English-language learners. *The Social Studies*, 98(5), 185-188.
- Brown, K. (2014). The power of family engagement for English language learners. *Curriculum in Context*. Retrieved from [http://www.wsascd.org/downloads/curriculum\\_in\\_context/Spring\\_2014\\_Articles/Spring\\_2014\\_03.pdf](http://www.wsascd.org/downloads/curriculum_in_context/Spring_2014_Articles/Spring_2014_03.pdf)
- Carlo, M.S., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C.E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D.N., Lively, T.J., White, C.E. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 39(2). 188-215.
- Carpenter-LaGattuta, A. (2002). Challenges in multicultural teacher education. *Multicultural Education*, 9(4), 27.
- Cho, G. & DeCasto-Ambrosetti, D. (2005). Is ignorance bliss? Pre-service teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education. *The High School Journal*, 89(2), 24-28.
- Colombo, M., McMakin, D., Jacobs, C., & Shestok, C. (2013). Hopefulness for teachers of ELLs in the era of NCLB. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(2), 81-87.
- Costa, J., McPhail, G., Smith, J., & Brisk, M. E. (2005). Faculty first the challenge of infusing the teacher education curriculum with scholarship on English language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(2), 104-118.
- de Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32, 101-124.
- de Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2008). ESL is good teaching "plus". In M. E. Brisk (Eds.), *Language, culture, and community in teacher education* (pp. 127-148). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

- Durgunoglu, A. Y., & Hughes, T. (2010). How prepared are the U.S. preservice teachers to teach English language learners? *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 22 (2), 32-41.
- Faez, F. (2012). Diverse teachers for diverse students: Internationally educated and Canadian-born teachers' preparedness to teach English language learners. *Canadian journal of education*, 35(3), 64-84.
- Franco, M. S., & Hendricks, M. S. (2013). Evaluating teacher preparation programs: What not to do. *New Educational Foundation*, 8, 51-58.
- Field, R. F. (2010). *Differentiating instruction and assessment for ELLs*. Retrieved February 1st, 2015 from [http://njtesol-njbe.org/handouts11/Field\\_Differentiating\\_Instruction\\_handout.pdf](http://njtesol-njbe.org/handouts11/Field_Differentiating_Instruction_handout.pdf).
- Fry, R. F. (2008). *The role of schools in the English language learner achievement gap*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved February 1st, 2015 from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502050.pdf>
- Gandara, P., & Orfield, G. (2012). Return to the "Mexican room": The segregation of Arizona's English learners. *Teachers College Record*, 114(9), 2- 20.
- Haynes, J. (2005). *Challenges for ELLs in content area learning*. Everything ESL.net. Retrieved February 1st, 2015 from [http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/challenges\\_ells\\_content\\_area\\_1\\_6\\_5322.php](http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/challenges_ells_content_area_1_6_5322.php)
- Haynes, J. (2014, June 5). *Six strategies for teaching ELLs across the content areas/TESOL Blog*. Retrieved May 19, 2016, from <http://blog.tesol.org/six-strategies-for-teaching-ells-across-the-content-areas/>
- Hutchinson, M. C. (2011). Impacting pre-service teachers sociocultural awareness, content knowledge and understanding of teaching ELLs through service-learning. *The Journal of Research in Service Learning and Teacher Education*, 1(2), 31-55.
- Kohler, A., & Lazarín, M. (2007). *Hispanic education in the United States: Statistical 87 brief*. National Council of La Raza (NCLR). Retrieved March 8, 2015, from [research.policyarchive.org/20256.pdf](http://research.policyarchive.org/20256.pdf).
- Lee, O., & Buxton, C. A. (2013). Integrating science and English proficiency for English language learners. *Theory Into Practice*, 52(1), 36-42.
- Levine, T. H., Howard, E. R., & Moss, D. M. (2014), *Preparing classroom teachers to succeed with second language learners: Lessons from a faculty learning community*. New York, Routledge.
- Li, G. (2008a). Being Vietnamese, becoming somebody. In *Culturally contested literacies: America's "rainbow underclass" and urban schools* (pp. 57-91). New York: Routledge.

- Li, G. (2008b). Being Sudanese, being Black. In *Culturally contested literacies: America's "rainbow underclass" and urban schools* (pp. 93-126). New York: Routledge.
- Li, G. (2013). Promoting teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students as change agents: A cultural approach to professional learning. *Theory Into Practice*, 52(2), 136-143.
- Li, G., Bian, Y., Martinez-Hinestroza, J., (in press). Preparing pre-service teachers for English language learners: American teacher educators' practices and perspectives. In A. E. Lopez & E. L. Olan (Eds.), *Transformative pedagogies for teacher education: Moving towards critical praxis in an era of change*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Li, G., Bian, Y., & Martinez-Hinestroza, J. (2016, April). *Learning to teach ELLs: lessons to learn from pre-service teachers with a background in language teaching*. A symposium paper presented at the annual conference of AERA Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Li, G., Hinojosa, D., & Wexler, L. (2016, April). *Beliefs and attitudes toward teaching English language learners: Voices of mainstream pre-service teachers*. A symposium paper presented at the annual conference of TESOL Annual Conference, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Li, G., & Jee, Y. (2017, April). *Pre-Service teachers perception of their reparation for teaching ELLs: Opportunities, challenges, and self-efficacy*. Paper presented at the annual conference of AERA, San Antonio.
- Lucas, T., & Grinberg, J. (2008). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd ed., pp. 606-636). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lucas, T., & Villegas, A. M. (2011). A framework for preparing linguistically responsive teachers. In T. Lucas (Ed.), *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms: A resource for teacher educators* (pp. 55-72). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lucas, T., & Villegas, A. M. (2013). Preparing linguistically responsive teachers: Laying the foundation in preservice teacher education. *Theory into Practice*, 52(2), 98-109.
- MAEC. (n.d.). *Engaging families of English learners*. Retrieved September 23, 2014, from <http://www.maec.org/equity/origin-issue2.html>.
- Martinez-Hinestroza, J., Li, G., & Bian, Y. (2015, Dec.). *What do pre-service teachers learn about ELLs from their teacher education courses? A syllabi analysis*. A round table session presented at 2015 AERA annual conference, Chicago, IL.

- Master, B., Loeb, S., Whitney, C., & Wyckoff, J. (2012). *Different skills: Identifying differentially effective teachers of English language learners*. Washington, D.C: CALDER and American Institutes for Research.
- Maxwell, L.A. (2014). New York State Sets Focus on English-Learners. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/06/04/33ellny.h33.html>
- Menken, K. (2010). NCLB and English language learners: Challenges and consequences. *Theory Into Practice*, 49(2), 121-128.
- Meskill, C. (2005). Infusing English language learner issues throughout professional educator curricula: The training all teachers project. *The Teachers College Record*, 107(4), 739-756.
- Minnesota Department of Education. (n.d.). *English learner Education program guidelines: Program models*. Retrieved October 3, 2014, from Minnesota Department of Education website (the link is no longer available now).
- Murrey, D. L. (2008). Differentiating instruction in mathematics for the English language learner. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, 14(3), 146-153.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). *English language learners*. Retrieved March 11, 2015, from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=96>
- Nutta, J., Mokhtari, & Strebel, (2012). *Preparing every teacher to reach English learners*. Boston, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Reeves, J. R. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English language learners in mainstream classrooms. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 99(3), 131-142.
- Roy-Campbell, Z. M. (2013). Who educates teacher educators about English language learners? *Reading Horizons*, 52(3), 255.
- Schools.nyc.gov/40minutes. (n.d.). 40 minutes of parent engagement. Retrieved on Oct. 20, 2014 from [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EAE229AD-6C0D-4EE7-9B9F-B01D6CA65210/0/40minutes\\_Logo\\_booklet\\_120.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EAE229AD-6C0D-4EE7-9B9F-B01D6CA65210/0/40minutes_Logo_booklet_120.pdf)
- Sheng, Z., Sheng, Y., & Anderson, C. J. (2011). Dropping out of school among ELL students: Implications to schools and teacher education. *The Clearing House*, 84(3), 98-103.
- Short, D., & Echevarria, J. (2004). Teacher skills to support English language learners. *Educational Leadership*, 62(4), 8-13.
- Sullivan, A. L. (2011). Disproportionality in special education identification and placement of English language learners. *Exceptional Children*, 77(3), 317-334.
- Téllez, K., & Waxman, H.C. (2005). Quality teachers for English language learners: A review of the research. *The Laboratory for Student Success*.

Retrieved on May 10, 2016 from:

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508447.pdf>

- Tinkler, A., & Tinkler, B. (2013). Teaching across the community: Using service-learning field experiences to develop culturally and linguistically responsive teachers. In V. M. Jagla, J. A. Erickson, & A.S. Tinkler (Eds.), *Transforming teacher education through service-learning* (pp. 99-117). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Thammineni, H. B. (2013). Teaching/learning English as a second language in mixed ability classrooms: A stimulating challenge. *International Journal of English: Literature, Language and Skills*, 2(3), 83-86.
- Waxman, H.C., Téllez, K., & Walberg, H. J. (2006). Future directions for improving teacher quality for English language learners. In K. Téllez and H. C. Waxman (Eds.), *Preparing quality educators for English language learners: Research, policies and practices* (pp. 189–195). Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Wiggins, R. A., Follo, E. J., & Eberly, M. B. (2007). The impact of a field immersion program on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(5), 653-663.
- Wong, C. Y., Fehr, M. C., Agnello, M. F., & Crooks, S. M. (2012). ESL teacher candidates' perceptions of readiness to teach English language learners. *Journal of Multiculturalism in Education*, 81, 1-22.

## Appendix: Syllabus

### TESOL Minor Lab Syllabus Course Overview

#### *Course Description*

[TESOL course] is a minor lab course in the Teacher Education department designed for students working towards a TESOL minor. This lab is intended to help [TESOL course] students in applying what they have learned in the seminar portion of the course, which focuses on teaching in the major area, to their minor certification areas. The focus in the lab is on understanding the main issues and challenges in teaching in the various subject areas that are unique to them, comparing and contrasting those with teaching in the student's major area. The goal is to equip seniors in secondary education with resources and ideas for further consideration should they find themselves teaching in their minor areas. Through our readings, discussions, and videos, use of additional resources, and writing assignments, we will explore how to better understand English Learners, their changing learning environment, the importance of family and community

engagement, and the different methods and techniques for ELs to learn the target language.

The learning experiences to be used in this course include individual study, collaborative learning, and discussions with both small groups and the class as a whole. What you learn and the overall quality of this learning is dependent on the levels of commitment that you make to each of these forms of learning experiences.

The course consists of five online sessions and one face-to-face session. The five online sessions will be administered by the four course instructors via online learning management platform. The final class meeting will be in person for presentations. There will be an on-line sign-up for this.

### ***Course Management System***

As an on-line lab course, participants in the course will need to utilize University's course management system, online learning management platform, to access the course information, content, and instructional materials.

### ***Course Objectives***

By the end of this course, students will:

- understand the characteristics of ELs as students and the cultural and linguistic assets they bring to the school
- understand how the population of students in K-12 public schools is changing
- understand the needs of ELs in learning to develop their English language proficiency and academic content knowledge
- develop an understanding of laws, policies, and standards that impact EL students' learning at school
- develop skills and strategies for designing effective ESL instruction in both ESL and content area classrooms
- understand the importance of having a connection to EL families and better understand how to effectively communicate with EL parents

### ***Course Requirements***

This consists of five fully on-line modules and one in-person presentation of the final paper. You will be expected to log onto the course website on a regular basis. Our recommendation is that you log in 3-4 times per week to determine if there are any postings that are important for you to read or to respond to. You may also elect to "subscribe" to the discussion forums that are a part of the course site, which will result in your receiving email notifications when new content is posted by other members of the course.



<p><b>Participation in online learning management platform group discussions</b> by each Friday at 11:59PM                  Active participation in group and class-wide discussion forums                  Active is defines as a <b>minimum of two postings per week</b> to either your group or class discussion forums.                  Responding constructively to others’ posts as well as helping to elaborate, articulate, and construct concepts and ideas introduced by others are also expected aspects of participation in the course.                  *You will be assigned to a group of three classmates with whom you will engage in weekly online discussions via ONLINE LEARNING MANAGEMENT PLATFORM. We reserve the right to change groups throughout the course as necessary.</p>	<p><b>25%</b>                  5% per weekly group discussion</p>
<p><b>Weekly reflection assignment</b> (500-600 word reflection) due each Sunday at 11:59PM                  In these assignments you are to critically reflect on what you have learned through readings, videos, and group discussions. Each week you will have a slightly different task to complete. Each week’s response should follow APA 6th edition guidelines and be between 500-600 words.</p>	<p><b>50%</b>                  10% per reflection</p>
<p><b>Final paper and presentation</b> due Tuesday, April 21 by 11:59PM                  In this paper you will draw upon what you have learned throughout the five modules.</p>	<p><b>25%</b></p>
	<p><b>100%</b></p>

In order to receive a *pass*, you must complete all assignments, turn them in on time, and earn a 70% overall on assignments.

**Submitting Assignments**

All graded, written assignments, will be turned in electronically through the online learning management platform website using the dropbox function.

*Grading*

This lab is graded as pass/no credit and is a component of your grade in [TESOL minor course]. If you fail this component, you fail all of [TESOL minor course] and you will not be allowed to begin your internship until you have repeated and successfully completed [TESOL minor course], including the minor area lab component. In order to receive a passing grade, you will need to participate and complete all assignments satisfactorily.

Each weekly reflection will be due by Sunday at 11:59PM. Since you have the flexibility to “attend” class whenever you want, no late assignments will be accepted. A late assignment will count as a fail for that week and a fail for the course. If you have circumstances that you feel make you unable to complete a given assignment within the seven-day window you may contact your instructor with an explanation in advance. However, you will need to demonstrate that you are not able to work at any point during the seven days of the assignment.

*Recommended textbook:*

APA. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed).

Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

### **Course Units and Assignments:**

#### **Session 1 Understanding the Challenges that Prevent ELs to Succeed**

**Initial Engagement:** Talk to any EL student, a parent of an EL student, or any international student on campus. This conversation should be informal. Ask this person what are the major challenges that this person faces as an EL student. Share your notes with the other members of your group.

**Read:**

- Fry, R. (2008). The role of schools in the English language learner achievement gap.
- Carlo, M.S., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C.E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D.N., Lively, T.J., White, C.E. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms.

*Reinforcement Reading Assignment:*

- Hang, T. & Saito, E. (2014). Challenges confronting teachers of English language learners.

**Watch:** Watch the videos of the EL students that you were assigned.

- Turkish\_Elementary School\_Basic Level.
- Chinese\_Elementary School\_Basic Level.
- Iraqi\_High School\_Basic Level.
- Nepalese\_High School\_Basic Level.
- Peruvian\_Elementary School\_Intermediate Level.
- Egyptian\_Elementary School\_Intermediate Level.
- Egyptian\_Middle School\_EL Graduate.
- Namibian\_Elementary School\_Proficient.

**Online Group Discussion.** Work with your group of three. **Discuss** about the videos of the EL students that you watched. **Answer** the following question: What are the facts that surprised you the most about those EL students? **Use** the information from the reading assignments

and **discuss** with your group the different challenges that may prevent EL students to succeed in school.

Final group discussion completed by 3/20/15 at 11:59 PM.

**Summarize and Reflect.** (individual post) **Choose** one student from the videos. **Describe** the main characteristics that you observe in that EL student. Then, **discuss** the following questions: What may prevent this student to meet state proficiency standards in mathematics and reading? How can you help this student improve both his or her basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and his or her cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)?

Completed reflection due via online learning management platform by 3/22/15 at 11:59 PM.

## **Session 2** *Understanding the Learning Experiences of ELs in Relation to School, Home, and Community Contexts*

### **Initial Engagement: Exploring the EL program at a local school**

Find a local school (within State) that offers EL program(s). You could visit the school, contact the school by phone or email, and/or search the school website to collect at least two aspects of the following information (you will need the information later in the online group discussion):

- 1) type of the program(s) for ELs
- 2) how many EL students are enrolled in the program(s)
- 3) language(s) of instruction
- 4) curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials used in the program(s)

### **Read:**

English learner Education program guidelines: Program models (Retrieved from Minnesota Department of Education website)

One of the following chapters at your choice:

- Li, G. (2008a). Being Vietnamese, becoming somebody. In *Culturally contested literacies: America's "rainbow underclass" and urban schools* (pp. 57-91). New York: Routledge. Or:
- Li, G. (2008b). Being Sudanese, being Black. In *Culturally contested literacies: America's "rainbow underclass" and urban schools* (pp. 93-126). New York: Routledge.
- Gandara, P., & Orfield, G. (2012). Return to the "Mexican Room": The segregation of Arizona's English learners. *Teachers College Record*, 114 (9), 2- 20.

### **Watch:**

- An Arabic-speaking student sharing his experience in the ESL program.
- A Nepali-speaking student sharing her experience at school.

### **Online Group Discussion: Reflecting on the EL programs**

Work in a group of three, based on the information you collected from local school and the readings, discuss with your group members about the following questions:

- Do you think the program best address the learning needs of EL students?
- Do you think the ELs are marginalized in some way if they are pulled out from the main classroom to receive ESL instruction?
- What program(s) do you think is/are more effective in helping ELs learn both the language and content, based on the context of the school you explored.

Online group discussion due by 3/27/15 at 11:59pm

**Assignment: Compare** the Vietnamese/Sudanese students depicted in the chapter with yourself in terms of (1) parents' cultural values and beliefs on education, (2) parental involvement in children's school work, and (3) schooling experience (race, gender, power dynamics). **List** the difficulties EL students and their parents may encounter in terms of the mismatch/disconnection between home and school. **Reflect** on ways in which you, as a teacher, could help them overcome the difficulties.

Assignment due by 3/29/15 at 11:59 PM.

### **Session 3** *Communicating and Connecting with Families of ELs*

**Initial Engagement: Watch** "Parents as Partners"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0mDO3IjQ-Y&feature=youtu.be&list=PLoU659hwTdDZ9CzQtrrDo01D3Fy1OeW67> (3:01 min) and **think** about the importance of school-family relationships.

**Read and note** both the approaches and challenges involved with EL parental involvement in the school setting, EL parental support to their children at home, and teachers approaches to engage with families of ELs.

- "Best practice issue #2: Engaging families of English learners"  
<http://www.maec.org/equity/origin-issue2.html><http://www.maec.org/equity/origin-issue2.html>.
- "The power of family engagement for English language learners"  
[http://www.wsasc.org/downloads/curriculum\\_in\\_context/Spring\\_2014\\_Articles/Spring\\_2014\\_03.pdf](http://www.wsasc.org/downloads/curriculum_in_context/Spring_2014_Articles/Spring_2014_03.pdf).
- "40 ideas for 40 minutes" about engaging with families with new and innovative ways (\*this is not an EL specific article, but presents many creative ideas to implement with *all* families).
- [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/EAE229AD-6C0D-4EE7-9B9F-B01D6CA65210/0/40minutes\\_Logo\\_booklet\\_120.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/EAE229AD-6C0D-4EE7-9B9F-B01D6CA65210/0/40minutes_Logo_booklet_120.pdf).

**Critically watch** videos and take notes on themes, central issues, differences, and discrepancies you hear in the various perspectives (i.e.: parents, teachers, and administrators) when engaging EL families into the learning community and within the ELs learning process.

<http://youtu.be/N7NxfJpKcPk?list=PLoU659hwTddYAmNTRRe8b16Whbo84LbFK>

- Parent of two Egyptian EL students (1:43 min; 0:45 min).
- Parent of a Peruvian EL student (1:03 min; 2:56 min).
- Elementary ESL teacher (1:59; 2:21 min).
- Elementary Principal (1:12 min).
- First grade teacher (0:51 min; 0:59 min).
- High School ESL teacher (2:55 min).

**Online Group Discussion.** In your group of three, **reflect** and **share** thoughts regarding the different challenges encountered by parents and teachers, strategies for communication, and reasons this engagement is so important.

Final group discussion completed by 4/3/15 at 11:59pm

**Summarize and reflect** (individual online learning management platform dropbox submission) what you have learned about connecting and working with families. **Choose** one family on which to focus your response. **Create** an action plan for engaging this family into the community and classroom as well as enhance the ELs learning process to reach learning goals. Explain the reasoning behind each action plan component.

Completed action plan due via online learning management platform by 4/5/15 at 11:59 PM.

#### **Session 4** *Teaching Strategies for Working with ELs: Differentiating Instruction*

##### **Initial engagement**

Talk about differentiated instruction with your mentor teacher at your field placement: what strategies does your mentor teacher use to differentiate instruction? Has your mentor teacher differentiated instruction for ELs? If so, how? Post in our forum two paragraphs summarizing your conversation.

##### **Read**

Read the following articles on strategies to differentiate instruction and assessment for ELs.

- Thammineni, H.B. (2013). Teaching/learning English as a second language in mixed ability classrooms: A stimulating challenge. *International Journal of English: Literature, Language and Skills*, 2(3), 83-87.

- Buteau, G., & True, M. (2009). Differentiating instructional strategies to support English language learners. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 44(2), 23-25.
- Freeman, R. (2010). Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for ELs. Retrieved from: [http://njtesol-njbe.org/handouts11/Field\\_Differentiating\\_Instruction\\_handout.pdf](http://njtesol-njbe.org/handouts11/Field_Differentiating_Instruction_handout.pdf).

Additional **Optional** Readings:

- Baecher, L., Artigliere, M., Patterson, D. K., & Spatzer, A. (2012). Differentiated instruction for English language learners as "variations on a theme". *Middle School Journal*, 43(3), 14-21.
- Rogers, C., & Helman, L. (2009). One size does not fit all: How assessment guides instruction in word study with English learners. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 44(2), 17-22.

**Watch**

Watch this video on differentiated instruction in an EL multi ability classroom. What strategies does the teacher use? What challenges are there for the teacher? What challenges are there for the teacher?

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/deeper-learning-for-ell-inps>.

**Online group discussion**

Think and reflect about the challenges of teaching mixed ability classrooms. How are you going to make sure advanced students do not get bored and novice students are not neglected? What strategies do you find more effective and how can you implement multiple strategies in the classroom?

**Summarize and reflect** on the needs to differentiate instruction for ELs, following these steps:

1. Read this lesson plan: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/biography-study-using-role-398.html?tab=4#tabs>.
2. In light of this week's reading, videos, and discussions, adapt the lesson plan to show how you would differentiate instruction for ELs.
3. Write a one-page reflection in which you share the rationale for the differentiated instruction strategies you chose, and the implications that the implementation of those strategies would have for both ELs and English proficient students.

Post your reflection on our weekly dropbox.

**Session 5** *ESL teaching strategies in content classrooms*

**Initial engagement**

What are the challenges for the teacher and for ELs of teaching the following subject areas in a classroom with ELs?

Mathematics, English, social studies, science

Post in our forum a paragraph per content area summarizing your ideas.

### **Read**

Read the following article on the challenges that ELs face learning content areas:

- Haynes, J. (2005). Challenges for ELs in content area learning. *Everything ESL. net*, retrieved May, 20, 2009.
- Read the following article on the challenges that teachers face when teaching ELs content areas:
- Gersten, R. (1999). Lost opportunities: Challenges confronting four teachers of English-language learners. *The Elementary School Journal*, 37-56.

Select one of the following articles to read about teaching ELs in a specific content area:

*Mathematics:*

- Murrey, D. L. (2008). Differentiating Instruction in Mathematics for the English Language Learner. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, 14(3), 146-153.

*Science:*

- Lee, O., & Buxton, C. A. (2013). Integrating science and English proficiency for English language learners. *Theory Into Practice*, 52(1), 36-42.

*Social studies:*

- Brown, C. L. (2007). Strategies for making social studies texts more comprehensible for English-language learners. *The Social Studies*, 98(5), 185-188.

*English Language Arts:*

- Baecher, L. (2011). Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners: Strategies for the Secondary English Teacher. *Wisconsin English Journal*, 53(2), 64-73.

Additional **optional** readings: Read the following book chapter with strategies on how to teach different content areas to ELs.

- Chapter 2 of Haynes, J., & Zacarian, D. (2010). Teaching English language learners across the content areas. Alexandria: ASCD.
- Read the following articles on teaching ELs across the content areas:
- Hernández, A. (2003). Making content instruction accessible for English language learners. *International Reading Association Journal*, 6, 125-149

- Pawan, F., & Craig, D. A. (2011). ESL and content area teacher responses to discussions on English language learner instruction. *TESOL Journal*, 2 (3), 293-311.

### **Watch**

Watch the following videos of teachers teaching ELs in content areas. Take personal notes on what you notice about:

- the teacher's use of language
- how information (directions and content) is presented to students
- the questions the teacher asks
- strategies the teachers use

Mathematics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2jrKRRAruc>.

Science: <https://vimeo.com/6256139>.

Social studies: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjyC-Q1kznQ>.

English Language Arts: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/middle-school-vocabulary-development>.

Hold on to those notes. You will use them in our online group discussion.

### **Online group discussion**

Work in your groups of three. Post in our weekly forum a short reflection (two paragraphs maximum) discussing the challenges that students and teachers face in terms of understanding content, and assessment.

**Summarize and reflect** on the needs to differentiate instruction for ELs, following these steps:

1. Select one of this lesson plans:
  - Mathematics: <http://lessonplanspage.com/mathssslopeandpopulationtrends912-htm/>.
  - Science: <http://lessonplanspage.com/what-is-causing-global-warming/>.
  - Social studies: <http://lessonplanspage.com/ssartlaciexperiencingtiananmensquare612-htm/>.
  - English Language Arts: <http://lessonplanspage.com/lassletterstosoldiersandthetopicofwar612-htm/>.
2. In light of this week's reading, videos, and discussions, adapt the lesson plan to show how you would differentiate instruction for ELs.
3. Write a one-page reflection in which you share the rationale for the differentiated instruction strategies you chose, and the implications that



the implementation of those strategies would have for both ELs and English proficient students.

4. Post your reflection on our weekly dropbox.

### **Session 6** *Putting it All Together: Final Paper and Presentations*

Live meeting- location and time TBD

**Choose** one of the following options for your final presentation. Be **prepared** to present this to your classmates.

- a. **Putting it all together 1:** Drawing upon the knowledge you have acquired throughout these modules, **write** a three to four page essay (size 12 font, Times New Roman, double spaced). **Reflect** on what you now understand about student achievement, challenges associated with working with ELs, techniques for connecting with parents, and differentiating instruction for all learners. The paper is, due via dropbox in online learning management platform by Tuesday, April 21 at 11:59 PM.
- b. **Putting it all together 2:** Drawing upon the knowledge you have acquired throughout these modules, **write** a three to four page essay (size 12 font, Times New Roman, double spaced). **Reflect** on an EL student from a classroom you have visited. **Develop** a plan and provide a rationale (using citations) which would help this specific student acclimate to their learning environment and involve their family within the learning processes. The paper is due via dropbox in ONLINE LEARNING MANAGEMENT PLATFORM by Tuesday, April 21 at 11:59 PM.

**Present** your final paper to the class.

**End of Course Reflection: Reflect** on the following questions and share your responses via online learning management platform.

- What was your overall experience in this lab?
- What were some of the positives you experienced in this lab?
- What were some of the challenges during lab? How did you deal with them?
- What will you change in your teaching skills or techniques as a result of this lab experience?
- What will you take away with you in terms teaching English learners? Do you feel that you have strengthened your skills in teaching ESL?
- Has your approach to English learners changed during this course? If yes how?
- Have your attitudes or perceptions about English learners changed? What were they before versus now?
- How do you feel you performed in this lab?

- What would you do differently if you had a chance to do this all over again?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the class procedures?
- What else would you like to add that we did not ask?

**Assessment Rubrics**

Grade	<b>Online Learning Management Platform Participation Rubric (Weekly)</b>
5	<p><b>Exemplary</b>  <i>At least two</i> discussion postings that actively stimulate and sustain further discussion by building on peers' responses including                      — building a focused argument around a specific issue or                      — asking a new related question or                      — making an oppositional statement supported by personal experience or related research.</p>
4	<p><b>Proficient</b>  <i>At least two</i> discussion postings that contribute to the class' ongoing conversations as evidenced by                      — affirming statements or references to relevant research or,                      — asking related questions or,                      — making an oppositional statement supported by any personal experience or related research.</p>
3	<p><b>Satisfactory</b>  <i>At least two</i> discussion postings that sometimes contribute to ongoing conversations as evidenced by                      — affirming statements or references to relevant research or,                      — asking related questions or,                      — making an oppositional statement supported by any personal experience or related research.</p>
2	<p><b>Limited</b>                      One discussion posting that sometimes contributes to ongoing conversations as evidenced by                      — affirming statements or references to relevant research or,                      — asking related questions or,                      — making an oppositional statement supported by any personal experience or related research.</p>

1	<p><b>Unsatisfactory</b> Discussion postings do not contribute to ongoing conversations or respond to peers' postings. There is no evidence of replies to questions.</p>
0	<p><b>Unsatisfactory</b> No discussion postings.</p>

<https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/discussionrubric.html>

**Weekly Reflection & Final Paper Rubric**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
Content and development	Writing is focused, accurate, and consistent throughout the paper. Ideas are clear, well supported, and positions and beliefs are readily discernible. Abundance of evidence of critical, careful thought, and analysis and/or insight is provided	Somehow lacks clarity and purpose, and strays slightly from topic. Beliefs and positions are not discernible. Writing somehow lacks critical, careful thought, and analysis and/or insight.	Lack focus, clarity, and purpose. Stays out of topic. There is no coherence in thoughts. Ideas are not well articulated.
Organization and structure	Writing is concise and logically organized, which contributes to comprehension. Ideas and concepts are well established, explained, and supported. Information is relevant and presented in a logical order.	There is some level of organization, although digressions, ambiguities, and irrelevances are too many. Difficult to follow, and there is lack of clarity. Ideas and concepts are only partially	There is no apparent organization to the paper. There is little to no clarity in writing. Ideas and concepts are not clear. Comprehension is difficult.

		developed. Rambling format.	
Structure and presentation	Writer's tone is clear, consistent and appropriate, with excellent structure, use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and appropriate use of APA style.	There are some errors in structure, use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. APA Style was not followed fully.	Many errors or mistakes are in the structure, use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. APA style was not followed.