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### Recommended Citation

Tinker Sachs, G., Carr, K., Limb, P., Choi, J., & Odo, D. M. (2014). An award-winning ESOL endorsement program: A case for ethnographic approaches in teacher education. *GATEways to Teacher Education: A Journal of the Georgia Association of Teacher Educators*, 15(1), 2-12.

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# **An Award-Winning ESOL Endorsement Program: A Case for Ethnographic Approaches in Teacher Education**

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English language learners (ELLs) represent one of Georgia's fastest growing population groups, one which already has a significant social and economic impact upon the community. Serving the learning needs of these students in the schools and community is a complex challenge for teachers, and one which requires extensive training, deep cultural understanding, and ongoing professional support. Georgia State University's English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Endorsement Program, with its PK-12 focus, technological integration, and emphasis on advocacy and collaboration, is uniquely positioned to meet the growing need for knowledgeable, committed teachers. Graduates of the ESOL Endorsement Program, who are working as teachers in the field, recognize the tremendous value of its contributions to the community and in shaping their lives and the lives of their students. In light of this reality, the ESOL Endorsement Program was nominated for and subsequently won the Georgia Association for Teacher Educators' award as the 2013 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education.

The ESOL Endorsement program at Georgia State University is a unique one, designed to meet the needs of previously certified teachers as they seek additional training to work with bilingual students who are learning English as an additional language. Students seeking admission into the program must apply and be accepted into the Graduate School of Education at the university. Only students who hold teaching certification are admitted for the ESOL Endorsement, and the instruction and

field experiences are designed to build upon and refine already-developed teaching practices as well as transfer the skills of teaching ESOL.

The program of study consists of 12 semester hours of coursework, completed over four courses that include a supervised practicum experience teaching ESOL, and the completion of a professional portfolio reflecting experiences and growth in five key areas. Throughout the course of study, students engage in reflective practice, collaborate with each other to build a supportive professional network, and practice community-based teaching. They learn the critical skills and strategies required to teach ELLs in a variety of settings ranging from early childhood through high school. Because this endorsement is PK-12, students focus on a broad range of ages and settings throughout their time in the program, resulting in greater flexibility and the ability to serve a wider range of diversity in the school community.

Classes are scheduled for evenings and during the summer, to fit into working teachers' schedules. Candidates enroll in a teaching methods course, a practicum seminar, and applied linguistics and culture courses. The courses are graduate-level courses, with rigorous standards for the quality of work and research that students perform. Students are expected to draw upon their current teaching experience, apply new skills, and work collaboratively throughout the program.

The coursework requires multi-modal and technology-based projects and technology-integrated teaching, resulting in teachers with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill set. This focus reflects the

belief that the ELLs deserve teachers who can offer them full access to the curriculum and thus prepare them to contribute to and enjoy the benefits of full integration into society.

Critical to the program's success is its extraordinary, non-traditional teaching practicum (Tinker Sachs et al., 2008). Endorsement candidates are matched with refugee families through the program's partnership with the Refugee Family Services agency in Clarkston. The candidate goes into the home of the refugee family and works closely with the mother to teach English literacy skills. Working with the mothers supports the fundamental belief that by strengthening her skills and increasing her connection with the community, the whole family will benefit. The teachers conduct a needs assessment and create learners' goals-driven lesson plans, and show pre-and post-testing data on the mother's learning progress.

Working in the home of the refugee family is a powerful experience. Teachers learn first-hand of the range of cultural resources available in the home: the family's "funds of knowledge" (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). ESOL teaching is centered on the mother's needs and desires for language, literacy, and increased autonomy. It positions the teacher in the role of facilitator and cultural broker, as well that of language instructor. The practicum seminar's class time is structured to support and enrich this teaching experience; students present their lessons as cases and offer feedback to each other. Readings for the course focus on inclusive pedagogy, the refugee experience, and ethnographic research, as well as the integration of teaching behaviors introduced in the program's methods course. This opportunity for the integration of theory and practice provides an invaluable experience for its participants.

The exit criteria for the program is the successful completion of an online portfolio, showcasing artifacts which demonstrate the teacher's growth and understanding in the program's standards of language acquisition theory, planning and instruction, the role of culture in language acquisition, advocacy, and professional development. Teacher candidates are also required to document their PK-12 ESOL

experiences in traditional school settings. Teachers work on the portfolio throughout their time in the program; thus, it represents true evidence of their work and understanding of the standards. The portfolio also serves as an important way for department faculty to evaluate the success of the program in meeting its goals.

### **Program Description**

The ESOL Endorsement program at Georgia State University leads to a professional add-on certificate in ESOL. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates earn a certificate as endorsed ESOL teachers for grades PK-12. Individual components of the endorsement program, including courses, the practicum experience and portfolio are detailed in this section.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The following program standards are based on the 2010 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, now Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation [CAEP]) Program Standards.

1. Candidates demonstrate understanding of language as a system and demonstrate a high level of competence in helping ESOL students acquire and use English in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for social and academic purposes. (Standard 1.a. Describing Language)
2. Candidates understand and apply concepts, theories, research, and practice to facilitate the acquisition of a primary and a new language in a variety of classroom settings. (Standard 1.b. Language Acquisition and Development)
3. Candidates understand various issues of assessment (e.g., cultural and linguistic bias; political, social, and psychological factors) in assessment, IQ, and special education testing (including gifted and talented); the importance of standards;

and the difference between language proficiency and other types of assessments (e.g., standardized achievement tests of overall mastery), as they affect ESOL student learning. (Standard 4.a. Issues of Assessment for ESL)

4. Candidates know and use a variety of standards-based language proficiency instruments to inform their instruction and understand their uses for identification, placement, and demonstration of language growth of ESOL students. (Standard 4.b. Language Proficiency Assessment)
5. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of history, research, and current practice in the field of ESOL teaching and apply this knowledge to improve teaching and learning. (Standard 5.1.ESOL Research and History)
6. Candidates serve as professional resources, advocate for ESOL students, and build partnerships with students' families. (Standard 5.b. Partnerships and Advocacy)

### **Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

Courses taught in the Department of Middle and Secondary Education rest upon the assumption that all learners bring a variety of linguistic and cognitive strengths from their families and communities into the classroom, and these strengths are to be appreciated and utilized rather than ignored or dismissed. Multicultural education is not simply “about” certain subjects nor does it merely offer “perspectives” on issues; rather, it is an orientation to purposes in education and life. Emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity in literacy scholars' professional development, these courses provide graduate students with opportunities to examine their potential manuscripts so that topics addressed in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and literacy are considered in light of multicultural perspectives.

### **Course Requirements**

Following is a detailed description of the courses included in the ESOL Endorsement Program curriculum at Georgia State University.

#### **TSLE 7440 Methods and Materials for the Bilingual/English as a Second Language Teacher**

**Course description.** TSLE 7440 is a foundation course in the endorsement program. Successful learning can often be attributed to effective English language instruction in the classroom. A desire to teach well and overall classroom are also determining characteristics in student achievement organization (Akbari and Allvar, 2010). This course aims to accomplish these goals by familiarizing the ESOL teacher candidates with current second language research and how best practices, sound teaching methods, and appropriate materials are adapted to specific classroom settings. The course content is driven by the National Board for Professional Teaching (NBPT), TESOL, and CAEP standards. The expectation, upon completion, is that students will be able to create curriculum that allows for diverse learner needs and creates channels for access to the core academic program at every level. The reading and resource materials for the course are broad and chosen both to provide a thorough introduction to the research and practice in second language instruction as well as to function as a useful resource for the program graduate in the field.

**Learning opportunities and course requirements.** Throughout the semester-long course, both individual effort and collaborative cooperation are emphasized as students engage in microteaching to familiarize themselves and classmates with different strategies for language development. Students learn the importance of scaffolding for instruction and questioning behaviors in the classroom through reading and responding to authentic written and video case studies. The instructor utilizes a variety of teaching strategies including lecturing, providing formative feedback, leading discussions, guiding and facilitating cooperative learning group activities, having individual meetings, and modeling. Technology

is integral to this course through the use of information technologies, videos, and PowerPoint slides in course presentations. The ethical and appropriate use of information technology is integral to course lectures, presentations, and assignments. Students are expected to use technology as a vital tool for teaching and learning and incorporate its use in their assignments and learning. A team project of a month-long integrated teaching unit, showcased on a Weebly site, is a culminating activity for the course.

### **EDCI 7660 Practicum for ESOL Endorsement**

**Course description.** EDCI 7660 is the aspect of the program that sets it apart from other teacher preparation programs in the area. Through a strategic and supportive relationship with the Refugee Family Services agency in Clarkston, GA, each student in the ESOL endorsement program is partnered with a refugee family in the area. The student performs a needs assessment, collects data, and plans and teaches a literacy and English curriculum with the mother of the family in the family's home.

**Learning opportunities and course requirements.** Through readings, discussions, and applications to the work with the refugee mothers, the teachers in the program gain valuable experience in curriculum design. They develop an understanding of what it means to be a change agent working for social justice and learn more about the experiences of refugees and immigrants in America.

A *funds of knowledge* approach is the theoretical foundation for the teaching part of the practicum (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). This approach, along with strengths-based, ecological, resilient and anthropological orientations (Fong, 2004), attempts to counter the deficit model of viewing language learners and economically disadvantaged homes as places with no resources and provides additional support for the school-aged children who live there. In a funds of knowledge approach, the teacher visits the home and, using an ethnographic lens, works to acknowledge the cultural linguistic resources and strengths that exist within the family structure.

Elements that enrich family life, build resilience, and support children's participation in school and society are classified as funds of knowledge. Such resources may be cultural practices, skills and habits that support successful adaptation and learning, religious faith, a family garden, the existence of books, or music in the home. Students working with the refugee mothers collect assessment data on the mother's reading and literacy practices, as well as her functioning in English. They interview her, with an interpreter if necessary, about her learning goals and desires for herself as they relate to learning English. The student then designs a 10-week unit of lessons to be conducted in the family's home, based upon the mother's current functioning in English, with the aim of helping her to move forward in some area of her life, usually one that benefits the entire family.

Some past themes to come out of this instruction have been reading to children, using English at the doctor's office, taking a driver's license test, writing checks and planning finances, and writing letters to a family member in the home country. Key to the success of the curriculum is that the unit be connected to the mother's interests and personal goals.

At the end of the practicum, post-instructional data is collected in order to demonstrate learning. Data is a critical factor in the practicum, as the collection and use of data is a fundamental skill in teacher planning and instruction today. Whatever instruction is chosen, it must benefit the student; the teacher must be able to demonstrate, through the use of data, that the student has learned from the instruction. In many cases, the teacher-student relationship continues after the practicum course ends, resulting in extended learning opportunities for the mother, which benefits the family (Tinker Sachs et al., 2008).

### **TSLE 7250: Applied Linguistics for the Bilingual/English as a Second Language Teacher**

**Course description.** Students receive an overview of the principles of language structure, the processes of first and second language acquisition, and the issues involved in assessing language proficiency with special attention paid

to the application of linguistic knowledge to the multilingual and multicultural school setting.

**Learning opportunities and course requirements.** Two of the main assessments for this course are interviewing an English language learner and the final multimodal project. Through these assessments, students are afforded valuable learning opportunities with regards to applied linguistics for ESOL students.

**Interviewing an ELL.** The student conducts one 20-30 minute interview with an ELL (K-12 students preferred) with respect to a topic of their choice. Possible topics include asking a student about his or her motivation to learn English, experience in an American school, challenges for language learning, unique needs in language learning, perceptions of academic literacy practice and development, and so forth. After finishing the interview, the student transcribes it and submits a brief report (1-2 pages) about the interview. The report will include (1) the context of the interview, (2) a description of the interviewee, including language background and proficiency, (3) major findings from the interview, and (4) what was learned from interviewing and transcribing an interview.

**Final project: Multimodal/multimedia representation of the key concepts learned.** In the final project, the students demonstrate (1) understanding of some key concepts, terminology, or theories in the teaching and learning of language(s), (2) application of selected concepts to actual teaching, and (3) report how ESOL students take up these concepts/theories. In addition, by designing a lesson plan that centers on this approach and actually teaching it, the student's understanding of the concept is greatly enhanced. This also gives students an opportunity to reinforce their growing awareness of the affordances of integrating multimodal approaches to information sharing in their professional practice. Some of the concepts chosen for the final project are tested in an actual PK-12 ESOL classroom setting or with an ELL.

### **TSLE 7260: Cultural Issues for the Bilingual/ESL Teacher**

**Course description.** This course familiarizes students with key cultural theories and concepts with the goal of helping teachers to become more critically reflexive intercultural educators.

**Learning opportunities and course requirements.** Three of the main assessments for this course are the reading in the park engagements, submitting creative products made from the children at Seven Courts, and the "Who Am I" reflections. Through these assessments, students are afforded valuable learning opportunities with regards to cultural issues for the Bilingual/ESOL teacher.

**Reflections on reading in the park engagements.** Who are the people that we pass every day in the park? To answer this question, students work in pairs to speak with people in Woodruff Park. One person makes notes and the other conducts the conversation, which may be recorded if the participant agrees. Students inquire about the participant's reading habits and his or her viewpoints. Students also draw on the class readings and share an excerpt with the participant for five minutes and ask for his or her response. Students record a 5-minute audio response after the first visit and submit a typed, one-page response for the second visit to the park. Students incorporate the comments made by the respondents and draw on the course readings to strengthen his or her observations in response to the question, "Who are the people in the park?"

**Fun time with the kids – reading, sharing and creating engagements.** Students are expected to be prepared to engage with the children at the Seven Courts Residence. Being punctual, prepared, and engaged are included in the grades for this section as are responses and quality of interactions. Students submit three creative products made by the children in their group. The three submissions must be accompanied by reflections on the process, what the student learned, and applications to teaching and learning

**Who am I, parts 1 and 2.** From the activities stemming from the first lesson, telling and reporting on culture and body biography,



students write their response to these activities (Part 1). From all the activities in this course, including class readings and class engagements at Seven Courts and in the park, students develop Part 2. Each student addresses his or her past, present, and future self as an intercultural educator and elaborates on what all of this has to do with teaching and learning.

### Program Evaluation

An accurate evaluation of the success of any program relies upon multiple measures. A survey of program graduates, letters of support and endorsement for the program, as well as the formal portfolio rubric and scores are the ways in which the ESOL Endorsement program has been evaluated.

### ESOL Endorsement Program Survey

A survey was sent to fifteen of the past participants in the Georgia State University Endorsement Program. However, it was difficult to obtain responses because of defunct student e-mail accounts. Fortunately, five of the past participants were able to answer the survey. They were asked to choose one answer (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to the following five questions:

1. The information that I learned in this program helped me provide better instruction for my ESOL students.
2. The instructors modeled the same skills, techniques, and strategies that I should use in the classroom.
3. I implemented new strategies as a result of this program.
4. This program helped me reflect upon my teaching practices.
5. I believe that completing this program has made an impact on the achievement of my students.

Survey participants were also asked, "Please elaborate and provide examples as to why you chose a particular answer choice for one of the questions above."

### Quotes from ESOL program participants.

Below are some of the responses to the open-ended survey question.

**Respondent 4.** "This program helped me reflect upon my teaching practices. I definitely

am more reflective as a result of the program. I find that I include the students' interests and cultural experiences as much as possible. When possible I have students translate for others to aid in vocabulary understanding to promote the positive nature of their first language."

**Respondent 2.** "The ESOL endorsement program at GSU is challenging and transformative. It provided me with many opportunities for reflection and active learning. The practicum experience I had was truly life changing and offered me an opportunity to work with learners I never would have otherwise met. In that experience I learned a great deal about teaching literacy to learners often labeled as "illiterate." I learned so much from them, from my classes, and from the other students in the practicum class with me. It was an amazing opportunity for me and challenged me, my thinking, and helped me imagine new and better ways of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. I grew tremendously as a teacher and have become more critical and more reflective as a teacher."

**Respondent 5.** "As a result of readings in my practicum class, I revisited my writing program for my 4<sup>th</sup> graders. I am now providing a great deal more scaffolding within my writing workshop for my ELL students, particularly for research, and informational writing."

**Respondent 3.** "While my classes that were specifically ESOL related were of a high quality, I felt like some of the other classes in the program were not quite as helpful, especially considering that many of the classes were designed for students who were entering education as a second career (having no classroom experience). At times, things felt a little redundant or very basic. As I stated, though, I very much enjoyed the ESOL classes and felt like I got a lot out of them. I currently teach in an International School in Central America and feel like I was well prepared for the challenge."

**Respondent 1.** "As a graduate of the program, I felt more confident in looking for a new job; I was able to speak from personal experience about the real issues affecting children and their families, well as sell my teaching skills and experience. I see myself now

as much more of a community advocate. I was able to find a teaching job that gives me opportunities to lead parent education, support fellow teachers and teach ESOL to students. I feel the program has prepared me very well to enter this new role.”

**Letters of support.** In addition to the survey, past graduates were invited to submit letters of support, detailing their personal experience, and how the program affected their professional lives. Following is an excerpt from a letter from one graduate:

Dear Readers,

I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to work on the ESOL Endorsement while completing my doctoral degree in language and literacy at GSU. In fact, the ESOL Endorsement program influenced and shaped my doctoral studies and the research that has followed. My dissertation has grown directly out of my ESOL studies and practicum experiences in the program. Through this refugee family literacy work, it became clear to me that working with refugee women was something I wanted to do. So, I began seeking out other places where I could tutor or teach. I wound up with an English teaching position at the Global Village Project in Decatur, teaching refugee young women from around the world. I taught English for two years there. I am still a tutor and mentor for those past students and am now the newly hired Head of School for GVP – one of the only schools entirely dedicated to refugee young women’s education. I am still also working on my dissertation that focuses much needed attention on refugee women’s lives and literacy practices. I am so excited by my work and by the amazing women I have come to know. I am dedicated to adding to the limited and much needed research on refugee literacy and learning.

Amy E. Pelissero, M.Ed.

Doctoral Candidate, Language and Literacy

### Portfolios

Each teacher in the endorsement program completes an online portfolio, hosted through LiveText. The portfolio documents the candidate’s understanding and application of the program’s learning outcomes. Successful completion of the portfolio is a requirement of the program.

Teachers must address five standards within the portfolio, through the inclusion of narrative essays describing their understanding of the standard, citing appropriate references for course material and outside reading, as well as through the inclusion of artifacts such as student work, which are uploaded as documents. Also included in the portfolio is a documentation and description of the candidate’s teaching and observation experiences in grades PK-12. Because the endorsement granted is a PK-12 endorsement, students must participate in several experiences including observations to document their teaching experiences in primary, upper elementary, middle and high school settings. The range of grade levels addressed in the teaching methods class, TSLE 7440, supports this requirement as well. The student’s personal teaching philosophy and résumé round out the requirements for the exit portfolio. The online portfolio serves three purposes:

1. It is a summary of the student’s understanding of the standards and goals of the program, and documents how they have integrated the theory and practice of the program into their own teaching.
2. It serves as a means for the program faculty to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher education and the success in meeting the program’s goals.
3. It is an important professional tool for graduates to use in job interviews and presentations to showcase their accomplishments during the program.

Following is a summary of the program’s recent student portfolio scores, with a brief analysis and discussion of the data patterns and their implications for instructional improvement. This data covers program participation for three years. A score of 5 represents full marks on the portfolio.



Table 1  
*Portfolio Scores*

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Number of Candidates	3	6	4
Language Acquisition and Learning	4.3	3.83	4.5
The Role of Culture in Learning and Teaching	4.3	3.83	4.5
Language, Literacy, and Content Area Instruction	4.3	4	4.25
Evaluating Impact on Student Learning	4.3	4	4.25
Professional Development	4.6	4.33	4.5
Advocacy and Collaboration	4.3	4.67	5

As shown in Table 1, student performance on both the language and culture standards is consistently strong across the three years. It appears that the larger the cohort, the greater the distribution and hence the lower average scores. Generally most students indicate proficiency in the two standards with neither language nor culture being stronger than the other. While there is a slight fall in the second year scores (2009-2010) attributed to the larger cohort, the third year shows some gains with an average score of 4.5 on both language and culture standards. Clearly, every year's performance is also indicative of how hard-working students are, but it could also be that smaller cohorts get more attention from the instructors. Nevertheless, students are demonstrating consistent strengths in these standards across the years.

The students' performance on the content area instruction standard shows a strong and consistent performance across the three years. There is little variance in the performance over the three years but the lower performance in the second year (2009- 2010) is noted and may be attributed to the larger size of the cohort with a greater spread of the scores. However, students are attaining averages that demonstrate "proficiency" for the majority.

The students consistently demonstrate a strong performance evaluating impact on student learning. There is no great difference in the scores attained across the three years, but small differences can be observed with no demonstrated growth or large gains over the assessment period. Because there is no clear pattern of improvement, this is an area that can be worked on so that large scale improvements can be demonstrated more clearly.

Students' performance on the professionalism and advocacy standards is usually very strong. The individual advocacy averages show progressive improvement across the first three years: 4.3, 4.67, and 5, respectively). Because of the wonderful service that students perform when they work with the refugee families, they demonstrate on a large scale how proactive they are in going the extra mile for their families as well as the students in their classes. It is not surprising, therefore, that students show very strong performance in these areas.

It is clear from the data presented that the small size of the program supports deep learning and strong student ability in the portfolio, and that the experience of teaching in the home of a refugee family is a pivotal experience which affects students' sense of themselves as advocates for their students, and that this identity is reflected in the portfolio piece and its supporting artifacts.

In March 2013, the program was reviewed as a part of the entire Georgia State University's Professional Education Unit's recent NCATE visit and evaluation. Students in the program participated with department faculty in presenting posters from the different programs in the department at the beginning of the event. They were able to speak to the NCATE

reviewers regarding their experiences about the program as well as its strengths and effectiveness in preparing them as PK-12 ESOL endorsed teachers. The program, along with all other programs at Georgia State, passed the NCATE evaluation on all levels. This speaks for the program's overall effectiveness.

### **Ethnographic Approaches in Teacher Education**

Three of the four endorsement courses are also part of Georgia State University's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) ESOL, Language and Literacy program. The endorsement practicum course is not taken by these preservice students because they have extensive practicum experiences in PK-12 classrooms across the span of their certification program. The endorsement inservice teachers are also required to have PK-12 ESOL experiences in order to complete the endorsement. PK-12 experiences are built into the program and documented in the portfolio in addition to the work in the homes of refugee families. Though there are some differences between the certification and endorsement programs, there is great cross-fertilization of ideas across the coursework and multiple opportunities for sharing insights.

A core feature of the program that makes it exceptional in terms of teacher preparation is the integration of inservice and preservice teacher reflections guided by an ethnographic lens. In essence, teachers engage in ethnography when they "spend some time in schools studying various aspects of classrooms, curriculum, and teacher-pupil interactions, with varying degrees of guidance provided by teacher educators" (Zeichner, 1987, p. 569). The purpose of ethnography is to "capture the essence or spirit of what is going on during the observers presence, it is especially useful when the observer wants to capture a broad picture in a lesson rather than focus on a particular aspect of it" (Day, 1990, p. 44). The teacher educators in our program have primarily used ethnography as a tool to problematize inservice and preservice teachers' assumptions about schools and push them to "explore the ideological nature of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation and the interrelationships between these socially constructed practices within the school and the

social, economic and political contexts in which they are embedded" (Zeichner, 1987, p. 569).

Scholars have identified a number of benefits of using ethnographic techniques in teacher education such as the ability of ethnographic explorations to serve as the basis of teacher inquiry which supports teacher professional development (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008; Frank, 1999; Zeichner, 2003) and the continued development and expansion of teachers' knowledge base (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Additionally, involving teachers in the inquiry process engages them as in their own professional growth and helps them develop a sense of agency (Darling-Hammond, 1994) that has been ignored by traditional forms of teacher education (Britzman, 2003).

In terms of specific skill development, ethnographies can be useful within second language teacher education programs because they enable preservice and inservice teachers to recognize just how complex and multifaceted the second language classroom is. As Day (1990) points out, "student teachers are often not aware of what complex environments their future classrooms are until they attempt to describe what actually happens in one" (p. 44). Likewise, ethnographic work enables student teachers to begin to see the multiple roles they will be expected to assume as second language teachers. A final advantage of teachers' use of ethnography is that "relative to other observation of techniques, it provides more information about the social context of the classroom, which may be useful in interpreting behavior" (Day, 1990, p. 45). Thus, it helps new teachers to view the class from a more holistic and ecological perspective on student learning. Providing for exchanges between our preservice and inservice teachers in the MAT and endorsement programs strengthens these teachers' ethnographic gaze.

The advantages of teachers' use of ethnography are also balanced against a number of potential pitfalls of which teacher educators need to be cognizant. For instance, some teachers may lack the requisite extensive training in observation techniques that make ethnographic description such a powerful technique. Therefore, "an untrained observer may be overwhelmed by the complexity of what goes on

and not be able to focus on important events as they unfold in the classroom” (Day, 1990, p. 44). Similarly, in the continuous buzz of activity that characterizes a typical second language classroom, the teacher may struggle to maintain the stamina required to accurately record important classroom events across time. As well, the anecdotal record may be affected by the biases of the teacher so that important dynamics fail to be observed or reported. Lastly, ethnographic observations usually do not address specific questions and field notes often do not yield information that would allow the teacher to address specific classroom issues (Day, 1990). These shortcomings point to the need for deep and rich scaffolding of all ethnographic activities in the teacher educator classroom. Without this scaffolding, there a possibility of reinforcement of stereotypic views and negative associations. For the ESOL endorsement students it is the close reading and extensive discussion of the entire funds of knowledge book by González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) as well as the other texts that facilitate deep reflection on attitudes and dispositions. Class discussions also directly address applications in the PK-12 classroom. This is a feature of the program for which teachers have expressed a particular appreciation.

## Summary and Closing

We introduce our award winning ESOL Endorsement Program at Georgia State to support our contention that adopting an ethnographic approach to teacher education into the program produces ESOL teachers who have a solid knowledge base and feel well prepared for the inevitable challenges they will face. It is one thing for an academic program to deliver theory and professional knowledge to its students; it is quite another for it to demand that those students integrate such theory into their professional practice and for the program to provide the means and support for them to do so. As experienced teachers, having the opportunity to refine their practice and immediately apply it to their classrooms, while at the same time teaching and learning with non-traditional students in a family setting, is a rich and rewarding experience. They leave the program as stronger teachers who feel a new commitment

to the profession as a whole and to their students and their families in particular. These teachers have grown in their understanding of what it means to work in their community for justice and equal access to language and literacy. Their time as students may have come to a close, but their connection to the department and its ongoing mission continues as they continue to grow as ESOL professionals in new roles as teachers, researchers, and educational leaders.

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Kimberly Carr is a graduate from Georgia State University's ESOL Endorsement Program and is an ESOL teacher at Cary Reynolds Elementary School. She works closely with parents and new teachers where she stresses the importance of funds of knowledge. Her first and second graders are mostly immigrant students from Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. Ms. Carr is a member of the school's STEM team and serves as a voice for ESOL and the importance of language development in the content areas.

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