HEARING THE VOICES OF ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN

TEXAS: NARRATIVES OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN

URBAN SECONDARY MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS

A Dissertation

by

YETUNDE MOBOLA ZANNOU

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved by:

Chair of Committee,   Norvella Carter
Committee Members,   M. Carolyn Clark
    Zohreh Eslami
    Gwendolyn Webb-Hasan
Head of Department,   Yeping Li

December 2012

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

In Texas, nearly half of all new teachers are alternatively certified (AC) whilst English language learners (ELL) are over one-third of the public school population in some districts. As this trend continues, the likelihood that AC teachers will teach ELLs increases and alters what Texas teachers must know upon entering the classroom. This research explores teacher knowledge and beliefs about teaching ELLs through constructivist and narrative lenses. Four AC science teachers in two diverse school districts participated in in-depth interviews and reflective interviews following classroom observations to answer the research questions: (1) how do AC teachers describe and interpret their acts of teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms; and (2) how do AC teachers describe and interpret their learning to teach ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic narrative methods.

This study found that participants saw ELL instruction as: (1) "just good teaching" strategies, (2) consisting primarily of cultural awareness and consideration for student comfort, and (3) less necessary in science where all students must learn the language. The most experienced teacher was the only participant to reference specific linguistic knowledge in describing ELL instruction. Many of the teachers described their work with ELL students as giving them an opportunity to improve their lives, which was consistent with their overall teaching philosophy and reason for entering the profession.

Participant narratives about learning to teach ELLs described personal experience and person-to-person discussions as primary resources of knowledge. District support was generally described as unhelpful or incomplete. Participants portrayed their AC

program as helpful in preparing them to work with ELL students, but everyone desired more relevant information from the program and more grade-appropriate strategies from the district.

Participant narratives reveal AC teachers needed a pragmatic and less theoretical understanding of diversity during pre-service training. Participant tendency to draw upon "common sense", affective, and practical strategies in teaching ELL students in lieu of the state-mandated English language proficiency standards (ELPS) suggests AC programs should have teachers articulate and discuss their beliefs about ELL instruction in order to provide training targeted towards misconceptions about language development, particularly in science.

DEDICATION

To the heroes of faith—past, present, and future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Matthew 19:26

For me, "this" is more than about finishing degree requirements; "this" is about *becoming* someone new through the process. For that lasting difference and more to come I thank my God, my Heavenly Father, my Lord. Without You, I would not be possible. You are my provider and my resource.

This is the culmination of a journey, which I have had the honor to share with so many people. I would like to thank my committee chair and advisor, Dr. Norvella Carter, for seeing more in me than I sometimes knew was there. I am proud to be your colleague. To Dr. Chance Lewis, you are such an encouragement, teaching more with your actions than could be spoken with words. To Dr. Carolyn Clark, thank you for making time for me and truly fostering my sense of scholarly competence. To Dr. Zohreh Eslami, thank you for your willingness to take a chance on me. I always valued your honest feedback on my early ideas and know I am stronger as a result. To Dr. Webb-Hasan, thank you for all of your support throughout my doctoral program. I can only recall taking one class with you but the memories of all you taught me about just being will remain with me forever. Committee, thank you for the seeds you deposited in me during this process. In time, they blossomed and saw me through to the completion of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I introduce the topic of alternatively certified (AC) teachers of

English language learners (ELL) as a unique and timely group to study within the

national education landscape in general, and the urban Texas landscape in particular. I

begin with the background of this study, providing a rationale for focusing on this group

of teachers. I follow with a discussion of two theories of teacher learning that frame the

subsequent problem of teachers of ELL students and the specific research questions

addressed in this research. Next, I introduce the basic research design, which I explicate

in greater depth in Chapter 3. Last, I define key terms and concepts and provide a layout

for the remaining chapters.

Background of the Study

Linguistic diversity has long been part of the American landscape and its

education history. From the Common School movement of the 1800s to the modern

expression of public schooling, students from various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds

have been educated—often together—in American schools (Anderson, 1988; Archuleta,

Child, & Lomawaima, 2004; Minami & Ovando, 2004; Spring, 2007). In this

increasingly interconnected global society, the goals of education have changed bringing

along with it a change in the role of language within those goals. Where early language

policy in the US centered on Americanization and at-will maintenance of a native

language, current education policy is less regulated but nonetheless accepting of the fact

that schools are responsible for educating the whole child—cultural beings with a

1

language, a past, and a perspective. Bilingualism and emergent English proficiency may not be fully accommodated in public schools, but they are no longer widely viewed as a deficiency to overcome or a threat to national security (see Wiley & Lee, 2009 for a discussion of the history of educating language minorities in the United States).

Changes in educational policy within the last half-century highlight the current complexity of teaching linguistically diverse students in a single classroom. Until the early 1970s, compulsory education required language learners to attend English-only schools where they did not have access to linguistic support to acquire proficiency in English or access to support in their native language to make the content comprehensible. The burden for acquiring the language and the content was placed squarely upon ELL students. A significant piece of legislation in the history of educating ELL students came in 1974 with the *Lau v. Nichols et al.* case where the Supreme Court ruled that it was the school's responsibility to teach English to language learners so that they could fully participate in English-only instruction. However, researchers point out the inability for significant and consistent gains to be made in this area as a result of the Supreme Court's failure to mandate the development and implementation of specific programs to achieve this end, in addition to their failure to monitor state compliance. In the absence of a clearly defined pathway for operationalizing the court ruling, individual states have done what they saw fit to accommodate ELLs (Ovando, 2003; Wiley & Lee, 2009). The advent of high-stakes testing policy significantly alters the classroom experience on the part of teachers and students, particularly ELL students. With tests functioning as a gatekeeper to post-secondary job and education opportunities for

students and as a decisive factor in federal funding opportunities for school districts, student academic achievement has never been weightier than it is today.

In this section I discuss the current state of ELLs in public schools across the nation and in Texas, followed by an overview of AC programs and teachers, who often work with language learners. In Texas, AC teachers represent a growing number of educators who possess superior content knowledge and varying amounts and types of pre-service pedagogical exposure in the form of courses and teaching experience. This research is based on the meeting of these students and teachers in urban public schools in Texas, which is becoming more prevalent.

Language Learners in Urban Schools

The United States population has experienced an increase in linguistic and cultural diversity in recent years (Passel & Cohn, 2008), having direct implications for educator preparation (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2000 nearly 47 million people spoke a language other than English at home. Between 2005 and 2009, this number increased by nearly 17% to account for nearly one-fifth of the total U.S. population.

The national school-aged demographic reflects this overall trend. Using data from the Schools and Staffing Surveys Meyer, Madden, and McGrath (2004) reported that the number of students having limited English proficiency (LEP)—students whose reading, writing, and comprehension skills in English would prevent them from reaping much benefit from English-only instruction—increased from 2.1 million to over 3 million between the 1993-94 and 1999-2000 school year survey administrations.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), nearly 63% of all

public schools reported teaching LEP students in 2003-04 compared to over 67% of all

public schools just four years later. The majority of students that speak a language other

than English at home attend public schools. During the 2007-08 school year, LEP

students in public schools numbered 4.3 million, or about 9% of all students. During that

same year LEP students accounted for slightly more than 11% of all students and were

enrolled in 55% of all schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Mainstreaming in secondary schools poses a unique challenge for students as

they learn cognitively demanding and often novel material in a language that they do not

yet command (Goldenberg, 2010; Harklau, 1994b; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Short,

2002). Recent studies have found that mainstreaming alone is unlikely to ensure

academic gains for ELL students when teachers have not been prepared to teach them or

hold negative beliefs about being held responsible for their academic success—one

result of feeling ill-prepared to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students (Hansen-

Thomas & Cavagnetto, 2010; O'Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008; Polat, 2010; Walker,

Shafer, & Iiams, 2004).

For the past four years, ELL students accounted for 17% of Texas public school

students, keeping pace with overall growth in the number of public school students.

Growth in the ELL population has not been consistent across districts and regions, where

some have experienced a larger and sustained influx of language learners. In some

metropolitan areas—consisting of major urban and major suburban school districts—the

4

percentage of ELL students not only exceeded the state average by upwards of 10 percentage points, but also gained 2-4% since the 2004-2005 academic year.

Texas public schools have an astoundingly diverse student populace and educate one of the largest ELL student populations in the United States. In 2010, 122 languages were spoken by Texas students and their families, of which 91% spoke Spanish in homes where English was not the primary language (Texas Education Agency, 2010). During the 2009-2010 school year there were 817,165 ELL students, up 16,494 from the previous school year (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Though the majority of ELL students in Texas speak Spanish, the amount of linguistic diversity cannot be denied and undoubtedly alters what Texas teachers need to know about teaching ELLs upon entering the classroom.

As teachers encounter increasingly complex CLD classrooms, they must be knowledgeable about students whose native language is not English or are unaccustomed to American school cultural norms, and have the skills to teach both ELL and native English speakers in a single classroom (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Hollins and Guzman (2005) and Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) agree that as this trend continues, teacher education must adapt to prepare educators to effectively teach every child. A national report revealed that 50% of public school teachers report working with English language learners (ELL) without the training they feel necessary to properly instruct them (Gruber, Wiley, Broughman, Strizek, & Burian-Fitzgerald, 2002). In addition to specific training in teaching English to speakers of other languages, secondary teachers

of English learners are expected to teach often abstract academic material to students in a way that they will understand.

Alternative Teacher Certification

Alternative teacher certification grew in response to a widely projected teacher shortage that would result from teacher retirement and a growing student populace. Though much literature suggests there are other causes for perceived shortages such as high teacher attrition (See Ingersoll, 2001 for a complete discussion of this perspective), states began to consider ways of increasing the pool of teachers in order to meet the student demand for teachers unmet by traditional teacher education programs. Many states broached the subject by creating emergency teacher certificates that would allow candidates to teach in areas of need while fulfilling the requirements for full licensure. The largely unmonitored practice of emergency certification opened students up to a range of teachers whose qualifications varied tremendously. In its current state, alternative certification focuses not only on supplying the classroom with much needed teachers, but ensuring that those who do teach are qualified, as measured by their performance on standardized tests of subject matter and general pedagogical knowledge. In the following paragraphs I discuss teacher quality, the present-day alternative teacher certification, and its role in the educational landscape of the United States and Texas.

In their pivotal report on the state of educational quality in the United States, *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner & Others, 1983), the National Commission of Excellence in Education concluded that the promise of education for all students and its function in

society was in jeopardy of defaulting. Gardner and his colleagues describe this fundamental goal and guarantee thusly:

> All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interest but also the progress of society itself. (p. 8)

Teacher quality focuses on the phrase "competently guided".

At the time of this report, American students performed poorly in science, reasoning, and mathematics achievement when compared to students of other industrialized nations; millions of adults were illiterate, including a disproportionate 40% within "minority youth" in comparison to 13% nationally (Gardner & Others, 1983, p. 8). They surmise, "On the personal level the student, the parent, and the caring teacher all perceive that a basic promise is not being kept" (p. 12). Though the impact of education on students is the outgrowth of a complex interaction between educational, psychological, and social factors (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993), research has found that teachers are amongst the most influential factors in student achievement (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997) bringing to bear the teacher quality aspect of the promise of "competent" guidance.

After this report was published in 1983, policies intended to subvert a teacher shortage came under scrutiny through descriptive and comparative studies on teacher

quality. Researchers attempted to determine the relative quality of educators admitted to and graduating from traditional and alternative educator certification programs by linking teacher attributes (e.g., educational attainment and prior achievement) and student achievement. Teacher credentials were highlighted as a primary indicator of quality.

Outlining the framework for teacher quality left questions of how and who best to prepare incoming teachers for their work in the classroom. Shulman (1986) described teacher knowledge as a combination of understanding and skills in three domains: pedagogical, content, and pedagogical content knowledge. Respectively, each domain describes general knowledge of teaching, learning, and student development; content knowledge including the structure of the discipline(s); and knowledge of how to teach the subject matter. Researchers began and continue to ask how best to equip teachers within these domains of understanding. Traditional teacher education programs include educational coursework on theory and instructional methods, followed by a practical experience in a classroom their final semester before entering the classroom as the teacher of record. Proponents of AC programs argue that much of what teachers actually learn happens "on the job" (Haberman, 2006). Subsequently, the fundamental approaches of both types of programs differ, as well as the entity responsible for providing teacher education. Whilst higher education institutions have exclusively provided traditional educator preparation programs, AC programs were initially administrated by educational professionals until recently when universities and colleges began offering accelerated post-baccalaureate educator programs. Similarities between

8

AC programs administrated by traditional entities and traditional teacher education

programs have led researchers to argue that many elements of AC programs render them

more traditional than alternative (Haberman, 2006; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Research contending traditional education models consistently produce teachers

of higher quality than AC programs have been met with research indicating the

contextual advantages of AC programs, namely that they attract more teachers of color

and those who will teach in high-needs subject areas such as mathematics, science, and

bilingual education (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Haberman & Post, 1998; Peterson &

Nadler, 2009). The evidence has varied in support of both types of programs in different

localities, with different program components, and different research parameters (e.g.,

subject matter and prior teaching experience of educators). In the absence of robust

theories of teacher education, critics of traditional teacher education programs maintain

that AC programs provide much needed competition and sufficiently prepare teachers

for the classroom.

The problem of program quality has been approached indirectly by comparing

teachers prepared through different certification programs on measures such as attrition,

student achievement, and perception of self-efficacy. Researchers concluded that

programs vary just as much between generic routes—traditional versus alternative—as

they do within them (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Grossman & Loeb, 2008; Grossman &

Loeb, 2008; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001) thereby shifting

the conversation away from a comparative focus and towards looking at specific

program features that promote teacher success and retention (Humphrey, Wechsler, &

Hough, 2008). In a recent study on the features of AC programs that make a difference in teacher feelings of preparedness to teach their first year, Kee (2011) found that the length of pre-service field experience was an important component of preparation, with a marked difference between having no experience and having experience of any length.

Despite the relatively inconclusive results about who should prepare America's educators, AC programs across the country continue to grow in number. The proliferation of AC programs is largely attributable to federal policy requiring states to make provisions for alternative certification routes (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). With 47 states now offering nontraditional pathways into teaching, the number of AC teachers has steadily increased in the last decade. In 2005, states reported 110 AC programs that prepared 19% of all new teachers, an increase of 40% from their numbers in 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Between 2001 and 2006, the number of AC teachers almost tripled from over 20,000 to nearly 60,000 (Peterson & Nadler, 2009).

Texas was one of the first states to begin preparing teachers through AC programs and is currently among the top five producers of AC teachers (US Department of Education, 2006). The trend of teachers choosing AC programs in Texas distinguishes the role of AC programs in this state compared to the national figures. According to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) online date, in 2000 about 15% of new teachers earned certification through an AC program compared to 35% in 2004. The following year, AC teachers were 40% of all new Texas teachers and almost one-quarter of all AC teachers nationwide (US Department of Education, 2009). In 2010, over 45% of all new Texas teachers earned their teaching certificates from one of 150 plus state-

approved AC entities (i.e., these differ from programs in that some are part of the same program but are in different localities across the state).

Alternatively certified teachers must pass content and pedagogical knowledge standardized exams before obtaining standard certification. In addition, to be eligible for a standard certificate, all state-approved programs require teachers to complete a field experience. Many AC programs treat the first year of teaching as an internship year where candidates can take on full-time teaching positions on a probationary certificate, with the understanding that they must continue enrollment in an educator preparation program and eventually pass the Pedagogical and Professional Responsibilities (PPR). Upon successful completion of the required examinations and recommendation of a state-approved teacher preparation program—which includes classroom observations, mentorship support of some kind, and support from the school—teachers can earn the standard certificate which is renewed every four years by completing continuing education hours.

The proliferation of AC programs and AC teachers nationwide and in Texas signifies a need to go beyond the prevailing literature on educator certification, preparation, and teacher quality and explore *how* AC teachers learn and develop through their educational and teaching experiences. The "on-the-job" training model adopted by AC programs necessitates greater attention be paid to the classroom teaching, learning, and meaning-making experiences of AC teachers. Although scholarship on the experiences of AC teachers has burgeoned recently, too little is known about those experiences regarding teaching ELL students in mainstream classrooms. A growing ELL

student population coupled with a swelling AC teacher population increases the likelihood that AC teachers in Texas will teach ELL students. We must understand how these teachers make sense of their experiences of teaching and learning to teach linguistically diverse students.

Before attending to the details of this research it is necessary to understand how this research came about. In the section that follows I explain the genesis of this research as it is situated within my personal narrative as a former AC mathematics teacher in New York.

Personal Story

Ladson-Billings (1995) expresses the relationship between a researcher's story and their work thusly: "I, too, share a concern for situating myself as a researcher—who I am, what I believe, what experiences I have had all impact what, how, and why I research" (p. 470). Like Ladson-Billings, this research emanates from my own experiences as a student, former AC teacher, and educator. Akin to many AC teachers, I would begin my teaching narrative in my personal disposition toward teaching at an early age. I have always been a teacher in some form or fashion, even if not formally donning the position until graduating from college, a time of discovering what I wanted to do and what I wanted to learn. The two were not easily reconciled as I discovered after more than two years in college. Eventually I began volunteering in local schools in Washington DC and really enjoyed that. I decided to take a few education courses to see if that was something I would like to pursue. However, when I realized the additional number of years it would take to earn my degree in education conflicted with my

scholarship, I decided against it. I took what I could from my education classes, which did not amount to much. Frankly I was disappointed in my formal classes in education. I opted instead to continue volunteering and study something that I did enjoy—sociology. By this time, I had enough credits in mathematics to earn a minor, which is required of all sociology majors. So that worked out well I suppose.

Eventually I began more structured volunteering at an elementary school through a community outreach center at my university. After taking on more responsibilities with that program I had an opportunity to see more of the planning aspects of teaching, such as goal-setting, curriculum alignment, and implementation, all of which excited me and led me to pursue teaching after all. In discussing my plans with our volunteer coordinator, she recommended that I apply for a teaching fellowship sponsored by the national umbrella organization. I read more on the teaching fellowship for pre-K teacher education and knew that I wanted to do something like that, but wanted to work with older students and utilize the higher-level math knowledge I gained in my undergraduate program. The most important thing was: there were programs for people like me, who wanted to teach, but could not—or would not—complete another 4-year degree to do so. Then the search for a program more appropriate for my skill-set and interests began. In no time I found that program, applied, interviewed, and got accepted into the Math Immersion program. I began my summer math education coursework within a month of graduating college. After two months in the intensive program, I became a full-time high school mathematics teacher in one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse cities in the United States—New York.

To my surprise and chagrin, though I taught mathematics exclusively in English, I was in fact an educator of both native English speakers and ELL students. It was as a doctoral student studying urban education that I came to reflect on my teaching experiences and conjecture about those of my linguistically diverse students. It was through a multicultural education class that I began to understand those experiences and develop greater interest in learning more about teachers like me who work with students like mine.

I would describe this process of understanding my experiences as increasing awareness of the interconnectedness of language, culture, and education (Brandon, Baszile, & Berry, 2009, not only for my students but for me as a teacher. It was imperative to make my positionality within the classroom visible by reflecting on my assumptions about teaching and learning based on my own educational experiences. If my beliefs remained invisible to me, I could—and often did—measure my students against a narrow standard set by my experiences, my disposition, and my expectations. In order to truly consider them, I had to get to know me.

I am a monolingual native English speaker whose parents are bilingual natives of Nigeria where English is the official language amongst more than 500 ethnic languages. Though I do not speak Yoruba, the language of my family, I was raised in a rich Nigerian culture. Throughout my formative schooling I took many foreign language classes, but never learned enough of them to be considered proficient. In college I met students from all different cultural backgrounds, but we all spoke English. As a new teacher I transferred my experiences with cultural and linguistic diversity into the

classroom. Regardless of my students' diverse Caribbean, Black, Asian, and Hispanic roots, speaking English united us. I had no idea that we had varying English proficiency levels because language proficiency is not always overt. As I discovered years later, math concepts I thought were communicated clearly were not always received because a student's ability to engage in interpersonal conversations did not mean they could understand the academic content language, which is used almost exclusively in educational settings (Cummins, 1999).

My initial exposure to ELL students came vicariously through a colleague who was assigned to teach several ESL mathematics classes without prior training or experience. She regularly complained about students' disrespectful behavior towards her and general disregard for their education, evinced by their refusal to speak in English at her persistent request. She tried everything to "control" the students and was unable to do so. As a new teacher, all I could do was commiserate. I was glad I had not received that teaching assignment. That was a Title I school that had not met the requirements for student progress and was being phased out. I had to find other employment.

When I joined the faculty at another school the following year, I taught a more diverse group of students. In addition to second-generation Caribbean and Latin American students, I taught first-generation Haitian and Bangladeshi students in addition to African-American and Hispanic students who were native English speakers. I never acknowledged how their respective basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiencies (CALP) might create different learning needs and instructional strategies to meet them (See Cummins, 1999 for a complete

explanation of each type of proficiency). I never considered myself a teacher of language learners, and thusly never pursued language-related knowledge and skills to help them succeed. I only became aware of the challenges ELL students in mainstream classes as a full-time doctoral student.

I considered my AC preparation as a valuable resource in my development as a mathematics teacher. However, you don't know what you don't know. With the increasing number of teachers choosing alternate pathways into the profession, it is my intent to bring this under-researched area to light and impact the way that AC programs prepare teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) mainstream classrooms. In the following section I discuss how learners extract meaning from their formal and informal learning experiences.

Making Meaning: A Constructivist Approach

Teacher effectiveness and quality are among the myriad contributors to student achievement and learning. Among environmental factors and student personal factors, teacher effects have been identified as paramount (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). There is a body of research on attitudes and beliefs as mediators of teacher behavior and subsequent effectiveness (Andrews, 2004; Fang, 1996; Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996; Richardson, 1996). On teacher effectiveness Andrews (2004) writes:

> Teachers have different types of personality traits, abilities, knowledge, and
> experiences as well as particular values and belief that affect their approaches to
> teaching. Teachers' approaches to teaching are somewhat dependent on their

personal backgrounds, competencies, and viewpoints. Coincidentally, it is

generally understood that teachers' competencies vary in relation to their

acquired skills and self-efficacy. Moreover, it is generally well known that the

values and beliefs of teachers influence their perceptions and judgments and also

affect their behavior in the classroom. (p. 536)

Adopting this same perspective, what teachers know and do is not a direct output from

the input of teacher education. Instead, teachers construct knowledge through an a mix

of formal and informal learning activities, reflection, and iteratively adjusting currently

held beliefs to experiences and assimilating experiences within currently held beliefs

(Bodner, 1986; Gergen, n.d.; Richardson, 1996). Teacher beliefs about themselves, their

students, subject matter, and teaching philosophy are integral to understanding how AC

teachers make sense of their learning and—subsequently and concomitantly—their

teaching experiences.

Constructivist theory (see Bodner, 1986; and Phillips, 1995 for reviews of

constructivist theory) has taken many forms and can generally be divided along the lines

of *who* constructs knowledge—the individual or society. Though theorists adopting

either extreme generally make different assumptions and have varying definitions of

knowledge, there are constructivists that consider both the cognitive and social

dimensions of knowledge construction (Salomon & Perkins, 1998). This research

follows the social cognitive approach to constructivist learning and considers the

interplay between features of the learning context and how teachers make sense of their

experiences within those spaces.

Constructivist theory maintains that knowledge is not merely acquired, but is constructed through a process of meaning-making whereby individuals or groups create structures to explain the world around them and attempt to reconcile novel experiences with existing structures or discard and develop new structures to make sense of experiences. The complexity of meaning making cannot be reduced to these two learning processes. In fact, individuals can hold disparate beliefs in a complex schematic system where they never conflict; therefore, it is not uncommon for people to hold a belief or positive attitude in one area that seemingly contradicts with their perspectives in another sphere. Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) hint at the intricacies of implementing change where positive attitudes do not always result in behavior that matches. They argue that attitudes, informed by beliefs, are just one component in understanding human behavior, and therefore represent a single avenue for education to facilitate development and change. The social milieu (Bandura, 1986), practicality (Doyle & Ponder, 1977), and efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 2001; Pajares, 1996) also influence teacher behavior (C. Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996).

Posner and colleagues describe the process by which individuals alter their beliefs thusly, "First, individuals must be dissatisfied with their existing beliefs in some way; second, they must find the alternatives both intelligible and useful in extending their understanding to new situations; third, they must figure out some way to connect the new beliefs with their earlier conceptions" (as cited in Prawat, 1992, p. 357). From this perspective learning can be defined as the process of altering, discarding, and reaffirming prior beliefs when confronted with new beliefs or experiences that challenge

18

the ability of currently held beliefs to make sense of their experiences. The active role of the learner in engaging beliefs and making decisions is central to the constructivist perspective. In this study, I use this definition of learning to frame the research problem of AC teachers of ELL students by considering the development of their beliefs, events that constituted turning points in their beliefs and triggered learning, and how they make sense of their work with ELL students. The last statement addresses awareness and relevance in the development of teacher understanding. In Posner's above description, the "useful" criterion implies that learners are aware of a gap in understanding, which can be addressed through learning and formulating beliefs that better account for their experiences.

Statement of the Problem

The current state of education in Texas is framed by two changing demographics of students and teachers. On one hand, the student population has become increasingly diverse, particularly with regard to language and culture. In some Texas cities, ELL students constitute more than 30% of all public school students (NCES, n.d.). Though no shortage of studies on alternative preparation programs exists (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Freelow, 2002; Grossman & Loeb, 2008), too little is known about the intersection of secondary level mainstream AC teachers and linguistically diverse students.

The challenge of learning to teach ELLs in mainstream classrooms is pervasive in research conducted in the last decade (Francois, 2003; Gutiérrez, 2002; Pawan, 2008; Yoon, 2008). Padrón and Waxman (1999) assert:

19

The increasing number of Latino ELLs in our schools today is of concern

because most teachers have not received training in English as a Second

Language (ESL) or bilingual education. Many ELLs find themselves in

mainstream classrooms. There, teachers with no specialized instruction in

teaching ELLs are often expected to teach reading and writing to these students.

(p. 81)

Considering that AC teachers are more than five times as likely to teach in high needs

STEM subject areas—predominantly mainstream classrooms—than their TC

counterparts (Kee, 2011), the dearth of research on the experiences of AC teachers of

language learners is staggering.

While scholarship on ESL and bilingual education programs abound, there is a

significant gap in research on the experiences of AC teachers of ELL students in

mainstream classrooms. Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) discuss some of

the barriers teacher education programs encounter when trying to add components that

focus on ELL instruction. Although literature on how best to teach language learners

exists, the Lucas and her colleagues argue that it targets language instruction specialists,

utilizes idiosyncratic language making it inaccessible for mainstream educators, or

requires an exorbitant amount of time to prepare teachers.

Perhaps most problematic, much of this literature seems to suggest the need for

an extensive body of knowledge and skills for teaching ELLs, a daunting task for teacher

educators given the tight constraints on credit hours in the professional education

sequence and the increasing demands on the preservice curriculum from state

departments of education and accrediting agencies. (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008, p. 362)

The abbreviated nature of AC programs can pose a particular challenge to integrating adequate ELL teacher preparation. At present, little is known about how AC programs currently prepare teachers for ELL instruction.

Research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986; Costigan, 2004; Gergen & Gergen, 2006) using narrative analysis to understand the classroom experiences of teachers suggests that this approach can be helpful in understanding how AC teachers are currently being prepared to teach ELL students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature on mainstream teachers of ELL students and the experiences of AC teachers by providing qualitative data on the meaning-making processes of AC teachers as they teach and learn to teach in linguistically diverse classrooms. Specifically, this study will focus on the ELL-related teaching and learning experiences of four teachers from a single AC program in Texas. Participant narratives about their classroom experiences will reveal how they describe and interpret their acts of teaching ELL students, their learning experiences related to teaching ELL students, and how they imagine effective preparation of AC teachers for linguistically diverse mainstream classrooms. This study contributes to the literature on AC teachers by focusing on their preparation to teach ELL students in mainstream classrooms, as well as adding to the literature on mainstream teachers of ELLs that considers the unique learning needs of AC teachers. Insights about how AC teachers

think about, develop, and apply their knowledge and skills to particular aspects of teaching can further the development and implementation of programs aimed at preparing AC and TC teachers who will teach ELLs in mainstream classrooms across the state.

Significance of the Study

Research undertaken to study AC teachers and programs has focused primarily on comparing them with TC teachers and programs to determine if one preparation pathway is better than another. Haberman (2006) and Walsh and Jacobs (2007) suggest that the proliferation of AC programs has become an enterprise open to all, including traditional education entities. As such, in some cases AC programs greatly resemble the requirements, structure, and length of TC programs, making them alternative in name alone (Haberman, 2006; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). The main distinction between authentic AC programs and TC programs remains: length of pre-service training. These nuances in certification name, function, and structure point to the need for greater focus on the features of individual programs, what does and does not contribute effective teacher education within the different routes (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007).

Furthermore, the persistent research focus on overall program participant characteristics neglects the important meaning making process inherent in AC teacher learning (Costigan, 2004). The ongoing learning teachers engage in on-the-job, through reflection, and as members of learning communities can be illuminated by hearing stories of their experiences and how they describe their acts of teaching ELL students. In their research with AC and TC teachers, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that the

beliefs were decisive factors in teachers' intention to stay in the classroom, relocate, or leave altogether. When teachers perceived a mismatch between their beliefs about themselves, knowledge and skills, teaching environment, and student outcomes, they reevaluated their beliefs about their teaching ability. Very little research has been conducted on this aspect of AC teacher development, no less how their teaching experiences in often high-needs areas shapes their learning and identity as competent and capable teachers.

Narratives have been used to understand the oft invisible inner life of people—how they think, what they experience, and how they make sense of it all (Gergen & Gergen, 2006; Ochberg, 1994). This research uses narrative methods to understand how four teachers from a single AC program, the Texas Teaching Fellows (TTF), experience teaching linguistically diverse students in mainstream classrooms. The changing student and teacher demographics in Texas necessitate a more nuanced understanding of this group of teachers, as they will increasingly work with ELL students. Diverging from prior research on AC programs and the teachers they produce, this research seeks to understand how participants describe and interpret their acts of teaching language learners in their classrooms with a focus on the way these narratives facilitate the development of a successful teacher identity. This study contributes to extant literature by illuminating AC teacher beliefs about teaching, and how they enact and interpret those beliefs when working with ELL students in complex CLD classrooms.

Research Questions

This research contributes to the extant literature on ELL students in mainstream classrooms by focusing specifically on the experiences of AC secondary science teachers. Unlike the existing research in this area, this study considers the emerging context in Texas where most new teachers earn their teaching certification through alternative teacher preparation programs where classroom success validates and solidifies a burgeoning teacher identity (S. M. Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Narrative methods are used to elicit stories from participants about their experiences working with ELL students in mainstream classrooms. The following research questions guide this inquiry:

1. How do TTF participants describe and interpret their acts of teaching ELL students in mainstream classrooms?

2. How do TTF participants describe and interpret their learning to teach in CLD classrooms?

I use thematic narrative analysis methods to understand the content of teacher ELL-related stories gathered through an initial orienting interview (Riessman, 2008) and interviews following a classroom observation which generated discussion about teacher experiences and the meaning they ascribe to their acts of teaching (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986).

Definitions

Alternative Certification (AC) Program

A non-traditional educator preparation program for teachers whose bachelor's degree is in a subject other than education. AC programs are those that recruit non-traditional teachers and/or offer them pre-service teacher preparation and initial and standard educator certification.

Alternatively Certified (AC) Teacher

A teacher that earns a standard teaching certificate by means other than a traditional 4- or 5-year university-based teacher education program. A fair amount of variation exists between and within alternative certification programs. In this study AC teachers are enrolled in or have completed requirements for receiving certification through an alternative certification program.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Classrooms

Ball (2009) uses the term "*culturally and linguistically complex classrooms (CLCCs)* to describe the learning environments that are created when previously segregated groups come together in the same classrooms—classrooms serving students from two or more cultural and linguistic groups" (p. 46). I use diverse instead of complex to align with other literature on ELLs in mainstream classrooms (Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Kaje, 2009; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008).

English Language Learner (ELL)

A student whose native language is not English and whose proficiency in English is enough to prevent them from sufficiently learning in an English-only classroom. For

this study, the term "English language learner" is used interchangeably with "English learner" and "limited English proficient" (LEP). In Texas, students that are eligible for supplemental language instruction (e.g., English as a second language (ESL) or sheltered content instruction) are considered LEP students.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

One form of language support classrooms where language learners are taught academic content with an emphasis on the development of English proficiency skills. Unlike mainstream classrooms (see definition below), ESL classrooms provide content instruction in a sheltered atmosphere where all students are learning English as a second language.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

A term used to describe English learners whose ability to read, write, and comprehend English would limit their opportunities to learn in an English-only learning environment. This term has fallen out of favor amongst some for its deficit language. It is used interchangeably with English Language Learner (ELL) in Texas educational policy. I use LEP when the term is used in the original publication, and "English language learner" or "language learner" as synonyms elsewhere. Texas and the US Department of Education use the term limited English proficient uses

Mainstream Classroom

A class where English is the language of instruction and the majority of students are native speakers. A teacher of mathematics, reading and language arts, science, or social studies. The content area teachers in this study have a probationary or initial

certificate in one of these subjects, as opposed to elementary education, ESL, or bilingual education.

Major Urban Districts

Texas Education Agency defines major urban districts as "The largest school districts in the state that serve the six metropolitan areas of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Austin, and El Paso. Major urban districts are the districts with the greatest membership in counties with populations of 650,000 or more, and more than 35 percent of the students are identified as economically disadvantaged. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply."

Major Suburban Districts

The definition of major suburban districts is tied that that of "major urban". TEA defines major suburban as "other school districts in and around the major urban areas. Generally speaking, major suburban districts are contiguous to major urban districts. If the suburban district is not contiguous, it must have a student population that is at least 15 percent of the size of the district designated as major urban. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply." Because my focus is on the cultural and linguistic diversity found in urban areas (see definition below), the school districts in this study are "urban" but characterized by TEA as major suburban. The student demographics in the participating school districts exhibit the diversity described in the definition I use for "urban".

University-based Educator Preparation Program

Also referred to as "traditional" preparation programs in research literature. These programs include education coursework and student teaching as part of an undergraduate degree-granting program.

Urban

The U.S. Census Bureau defines it as a city of population density of at least 1,000 individuals per square mile. Often reflective of dense populations, education in urban areas are characterized by great ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity in close proximity, overcrowded schools, and high concentrations of poverty (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004).

<div align="center">

Organization of the Study

</div>

This dissertation follows the traditional chapter format. I introduced the background of the study, important research parameters, and definitions in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 I present the conceptual framework for this research and review the extant literature in the following areas: AC teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, AC teachers' experiences in urban classrooms, and the experiences and beliefs of mainstream teachers of ELL students. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used to answer the research questions. In Chapter 4, I retell and interpret the narratives of the four teacher participants based on emerging themes from within each story. Finally, Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions and the extant literature, implications for preparing AC teachers for CLD classrooms, and directions for further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A gap in the literature exists where AC teachers meet ELL students in mainstream secondary classrooms. In Texas where nearly half of all new teachers are certified through accelerated AC programs that privilege on-the-job training, and where, in some cities, ELL students constitute more than 30% of public school students, the need to address this gap is of the utmost importance. In the previous chapter I highlighted reports on mainstream teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach linguistically diverse students (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Freelow, 2002; Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Penfield, 1987; Polat, 2010). Even when teachers had received some training in ELL instructional strategies, they felt as though more could have been done to prepare them to meet the needs of language learners in content area instruction and to incorporate them more fully into the classroom dynamics (Penfield, 1987). These studies do not address the unique learning needs of AC teachers who teach in some of the most high-needs classrooms (Kee, 2011; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007).

In this chapter, I discuss the literature in two broad areas of research: AC teachers and teaching ELL students. I begin with an explication of the preparation and classroom experiences of AC teachers in order to get a sense of how they are positioned within the larger group of mainstream teachers. To focus my discussion of the vast literature on teaching ELL students, I use de Jong and Harper's (2005) conceptual model of cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills that mainstream teachers must possess for

effective ELL instruction. This framework provides the basis for further discussion of studies on mainstream teacher knowledge, beliefs, and preparation regarding ELL instruction. This literature review will provide a strong basis for understanding how AC teachers in this study inform and enact their knowledge of working with ELL students in mainstream classrooms.

Alternatively Certified Teachers

Research on AC teachers has taken many forms since the 1980s. Descriptive studies on teacher characteristics have had mixed reviews about whether or not AC programs attract more mature, culturally diverse, and male teacher candidates than TC education programs.

In this section I discuss research on AC teacher motivation for entering the profession, teacher preparation and student achievement, and classroom experiences across the teaching career. Teacher preparation and student achievement have been problematized in a number of ways, from program components as an indicator of teacher preparation to teacher perceptions of preparedness to teach students effectively. The literature reviewed situates AC teachers as a special case of mainstream educator of whom we have limited knowledge regarding preparation for and delivery of ELL instruction. Understanding what is known about their beliefs, preparation, and classroom experiences provides a basis for additional research in AC teacher preparation for schools that are increasingly likely to serve mainstreamed ELL students.

Teacher choice of certification program helps to shape their teaching expectations and first full-time teaching experience. Researchers have broached the

subject by studying what certification program components are most beneficial for first-time teachers by teacher self-report of preparedness and efficacy, and quantitative measures of student achievement (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Costigan, 2004; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007).

Boyd (2009) and his colleagues investigated the relationship between teacher preparation in 31 elementary education programs with student mathematics and ELA achievement from teachers that completed each of the programs. Of the 31, five were AC programs including TFA and TNTP affiliates. The researchers sought to determine if there were differences in student outcomes by teacher preparation program, if different program components were associated with greater value added for students, and if teacher descriptions of their preparation could be linked to academic outcomes in the subject areas. Some key findings from this study include the differential impact of pedagogical and pedagogical content training on the first and second year of teaching, value of being required to complete a capstone assignment as part of preparation, and the value of having pre-service teaching experience that aligned with subsequent job placement (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009).

The value of content area preparation was not visible until the second year of teaching, which Boyd and his colleagues posit, "practice in the day-to-day work of teaching may facilitate teachers' transition into the classroom during their 1st year, a typically challenging time. Content knowledge is likely important for teaching but may not distinguish more or less effective teachers until the 2nd year, when teachers are more comfortable with the basic practices of teaching" (p. 434). In addition, teachers—AC

and TC—who were required to complete a final project related to their teaching experienced higher gains in student achievement than teachers whose programs did not require such an activity. Finally, pre-service teaching experience—described in both teacher reports of preparation and program descriptions—was positively associated with and student academic gains in ELA and mathematics. This last finding is corroborated in studies that suggest pre-service classroom teaching experience has disproportionate value for teachers feelings of preparedness for those who had some compared to those who had none, despite the length of classroom experience (Kee, 2011). Furthermore, this study provides more evidence that pre-service teaching congruence with job placement can support teacher effectiveness, though teacher desire to work in the particular environment (Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007) and deliberate program preparation for a particular school environment play a role (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009).

This study builds upon the recommendation by other scholars that scholarship on AC teachers and programs focus on program features instead of the blanket comparison of AC and TC programs (Humphrey, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008). The findings yield important insight into the role of program features in teacher preparation and student achievement, particularly with regard to congruence between pre-service teaching experience and eventual school placement. However, there are some limitations in relation to the present study. First, their sample of elementary school educators and educator preparation programs considers a necessarily different preparation process than that required for secondary educators, who focus more on deeper content knowledge. A

second limitation is that the research design did not disaggregate student achievement by student characteristics, such as language proficiency, in associating it with pre-service teacher preparation. Though researchers looked at teacher knowledge and experience with ELLs during pre-service training, the findings show no statistically significant differences in value added by the program element. The number of ELLs in a classroom may be too small to see the impact, if any, of teacher knowledge on their achievement when observing the class holistically.

AC teachers often have some of the most challenging teaching assignments. For many AC teachers, such placements provide them the opportunity to increase the academic achievement of low-income students and fulfill the reason they chose to enter the classroom (Costigan, 2004; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007). According to Rochkind and his colleagues, AC teachers from Troops to Teachers, Teach for America (TFA), and the New Teacher Project (TNTP) were more likely than a nationally representative sample of TC teachers to work in secondary schools and in schools where more than half of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. In addition, AC teachers were more likely to believe that good teachers could overcome factors associated with poor student achievement and ensure student achievement (Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007).

Teacher beliefs about why they teach and their actual teaching context impact how AC teachers experience their classrooms and evaluate their preparation to meet the needs of their students. Research suggests that although both AC and TC teachers express a need for better preparation to meet the needs of diverse students (Darling-

Hammond, Chung, & Freelow, 2002; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007), the quality and thoroughness of preparation might be more acute for AC teachers who participate in abbreviated training and teach in demanding environments.

Mainstream Teachers of ELLs

In this section, I build an argument for more research in the area of AC teachers of ELL students by situating them within the context of mainstream ELL teachers. I begin with a review of the literature on mainstream ELL teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. The majority of empirical research on mainstream teachers of ELL students focuses on the aspects of teaching thought to moderate their instructional practices or amenability to learning. A conceptual model based on the literature on effective ELL instruction provides a framework for what mainstream teachers should know and be able to do (de Jong & Harper, 2005). This model emphasizes the cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills mainstream teachers need in order to provide effective instruction for language learners in content area classrooms.

Several studies address the attitudes and beliefs of mainstream teachers towards ELL students. While Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) caution the use of attitudes alone as predictors of behavior, identifying and linking teacher attitudes to effective practice can inform the creation of professional development models that will provide teachers with opportunities to learn (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Teacher attitudes towards ELL students seem to have improved over time, which may be attributable to the increase in exposure to cultural diversity in the classroom and in pre-service education programs. An early study by Penfield (1987) addressed the perspectives and beliefs of mainstream

teachers with regard to ELL students, their role in teaching them, and how they perceived the role of ESL teachers in teaching them. Teachers in the study described ELL students as being "passive" and "introverted", and attributed low student achievement often to the lack of student effort or laziness (Penfield, 1987). Teachers considered ELL student participation as fixed and not something that could be altered. However, student participation can vary based on factors such as teacher beliefs about their responsibility to teach and engage language learners (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004; Yoon, 2008).

Researchers have found teacher attitudes vary by their exposure to ELL students and varying beliefs about their responsibility to teach all students. In their study of teacher factors associated with beliefs about ELL students and ELL education, Walker, Shafer, and Iiams (2004) found that ELL history and permanence in the community— low-incidence, rapid-influx, and migrant—were related to teacher attitudes. Teachers in rapid-influx and migrant-serving school had less positive attitudes towards teaching ELL students while low-incidence teachers were more amenable to their presence, just not in their personal classrooms. Furthermore, the researchers argue that as a result of having fewer ELL students, low-incidence teachers were more likely to decline training, thereby exacerbating their lack of preparation (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Yoon (2008) found that teacher perceptions of students were tied to how teachers perceived their role as a teacher of all students, regular education students, or solely content. These self-perceptions were consistent with how teachers positioned ELL students within the

mainstream classroom with regard to participation and opportunities to learn (Yoon, 2008).

Race can also factor into teacher perceptions about ELL students. In the Penfield (1987) study, teachers saw ELL students as causing disciplinary problems and detracting attention from the needs of other students in the class when they were not being overlooked. Teachers spoke negatively about their Hispanic ELLs and attributed much of the disciplinary issues they faced as resulting from somehow deficient culture and home life with respect to education, respect for adults, and abiding within structured classroom environments. On the other hand, Asian ELL students are often seen in schools as the "model minority" (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007; Teranishi, 2002) that are able to assist native English-speaking students in learning content material. AC teachers intending to work in high-needs schools with ethnically diverse students may receive some training on diversity. However, awareness of and respect for cultural differences does not substitute for deliberate instructional practice that facilitates learning based on diversity (Cochran-Smith, 1995).

Studies of mainstream teachers' instructional practice for ELL students and feelings of preparedness reveal that they are often unprepared to assess the learning needs of ELL students, and plan and implement lessons that meet those needs (Penfield, 1987; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Mainstream teachers report needing more training to manage the limited time they feel is split between those of native English speaking students and ELL students and how to differentiate instruction (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Penfield, 1987; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Teachers also

36

struggled to provide effective instruction for linguistically diverse students due to inaccurate beliefs about how students acquire a second language and whose responsibility it was to provide language instruction to support student learning academic content (Penfield, 1987; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004; Yoon, 2008). Several studies report mainstream teachers often believe teaching ELL students is not their responsibility but that of ESL teachers (Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Such beliefs limit language learners' access to the content curriculum.

Misconceptions about how students acquire a second language influence teacher beliefs about their responsibility and that of students. Though the Supreme Court deemed unconstitutional school policies holding language learners solely responsible for acquiring academic content in English-only classrooms, teacher lack of knowledge about the process of second language acquisition can lead to false assumptions about student learning ability, motivation, and engagement (Reeves, 2006). These beliefs also impact the accommodations teachers are willing to make for ELL students in the mainstream classroom. While some teachers felt as if they should not *have to* alter their practice in order to accommodate language learners, other teachers felt it was unnecessary to do so because teaching is the same for all students (Reeves, 2006). In other words, teachers did not always express negative attitudes towards accommodating the needs of language learners; some teachers demonstrate a lack of understanding about the ways in which teaching language learners had to differ from teaching native English speaking students (Clair, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005; C. Harper & de Jong, 2004). Consistent with findings from Penfield's (1987) study, some teachers believe that focusing on teaching

their academic content allows them to sufficiently instruct all students. However, this approach fails to consider how this adversely affects ELL students' learning opportunities because learning academic content at the secondary level is heavily mediated by language. By discounting the linguistic demands of content area instruction, language learners are marginalized in the mainstream classroom (Yoon, 2008).

Even with the best intentions, teachers struggle to integrate language instruction with content area instruction in order to meet the needs of ELL students, when they were aware of student needs. Providing alternatives to language-dependent assessments especially confounded teachers (Penfield, 1987). Developing and implementing ELL strategies and time management were among other challenges expressed by mainstream teachers (Clair, 1995; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) found that teachers with more preparation in ELL instruction were more likely than those with less preparation to identify the lack of instructional programs and resources as a challenge. This finding indicates greater awareness of the needs of language learner and the knowledge to distinguish between materials of varying quality. Teachers with less preparation in secondary level ELL instruction were more likely to cite low English proficiency as a barrier for students in completing the required assignments (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Preparation is often associated with self-efficacy: teachers who feel prepared to meet challenges persist in finding solutions to problems, while those who report feeling unprepared are more likely to see solutions beyond their reach (Bandura, 1992; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Freelow, 2002; Menken & Antunez, 2001). It is reasonable that teachers with greater preparation

in ELL instruction would identify challenges within the sphere of teacher influence, and most importantly, not as a fault of the students. On the other hand, teachers with less preparation to work with language learners were more likely to identify teaching challenges as resident with the student—motivation, culture, family—which might indicate low self-efficacy in the area of ELL instruction. It is possible that if teachers believe that the problem exists with the student, they will be less likely to pursue additional education in ELL instruction, or reluctant to acknowledge the need to alter their instructional practice to accommodate the needs of language learners.

Researchers found that mainstream teacher reports of their professional development experiences and needs varied by grade level and overall expectation of training for ELL instruction. In their study of ELL teacher experiences, Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) found that secondary educators were more likely to say that professional development they received was not relevant to their teaching or was something they had already heard. Also, while elementary teachers expressed a wider array of professional development needs related to ELL instruction, secondary educators in this study were consistently appreciative of cultural information that helped them to better understand their students (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). In a qualitative study on the beliefs and experiences of mainstream teachers of ELL students Clair (1995) concludes that teacher preference for instructional strategies and materials over professional development was problematic because, "Teachers tend to desire easy answers to complex educational problems, and teachers not only lack understanding of

second language acquisition but also the attitudes which would facilitate ESL student achievement" (p. 194).

The literature on mainstream teachers of ELL students reveals the power of teacher beliefs to influence their instructional practice and approach to professional development to improve their ability to integrate language learners into the content area classroom. Teacher beliefs about language learners, their personal instructional responsibility, and their ability to effectively teach ELL students are useful in understanding the experiences of mainstream teachers and how they make sense of their work with language learners in light of their preparation to teach them. The research overwhelmingly supports the notion that mainstream teachers need additional, sustained and more comprehensive support in teaching linguistically diverse students.

Persistent misconceptions about second language acquisition (SLA) teachers hold can lead to inaccurate expectations of ELL students and instructional practices that limit their opportunities to learn. In the next section I present de Jong and Harper's (2005) model, a useful tool for highlighting the specific knowledge and skills gap reflected in these misconceptions, and alluded to in mainstream teacher desire for more adequate preparation for ELL instruction. Furthermore, in its direct link to the literature on effective ELL instruction, this model serves as a basis for conceptualizing important components of effective mainstream teacher preparation for ELL instruction. If preparation to teach language learners promotes teacher efficacy, it becomes imperative to consider how often abbreviated preparation for AC teachers broaches educating teachers for CLD classrooms.

Just Good Teaching and ELL Instruction

In their review of literature on effective instructional practice and teacher dispositions regarding ELL students, de Jong and Harper (2005) empirically delineate between "just good teaching" (JGT) practices and ELL-specific teacher competencies that meet the unique linguistic and cultural needs of language learners. They argue that although traditional teacher education programs include instruction in language and culture, it is often based on several erroneous assumptions: (1) the processes of L1 and L2 language development are the same, (2) norms at home and school are consistent and match those found in the American school system, and (3) a broad understanding of multiculturalism and diversity adequately prepares teachers to teach language learners (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Going beyond JGT practices, de Jong and Harper propose a conceptual framework of ELL-specific knowledge and skill in three domains: the process of language development and acculturation; the role of language and culture as media for teaching and learning; and the integration of linguistic and cultural goals into content instruction. In the following sections I expound on each domain and its relevance to this inquiry.

Misconceptions about L2 language acquisition and its manifestation at various language proficiency levels can easily obfuscate the support teachers' think that ELL students need in order to be successful academically. Learning content at the primary and secondary levels differ dramatically as older students are exposed to more cognitively demanding and idiosyncratic language in content areas (Allison & Harklau, 2010). Language can be described as multilayered, and thusly while it is a medium for

instruction and a means for communicating shared knowledge, certain aspects of language that mediate learning can be overlooked in the process of teaching content to older students.

Most teachers, particularly in the upper grades, focus on content mastery and cognitive development without serious attention to the language through which the learning takes place. As a result, they may be unaware of linguistic demands that are particularly challenging for second-language learners. (de Jong & Harper, 2005, pp. 109-110)

One major distinction between learning a first and second language is deceptively obvious, but illustrates this point. Learning a second language means learners have a reference point in their native language for how language is constructed and a working knowledge of many concepts of how the world works. As a result, learning a second language is quite different from first language acquisition and the approach taken to develop each may differ in kind. Teachers, even if they do not know it all, must be cognizant of the similarities and differences between student L1 and L2 development in order to understand the linguistic demands in everyday academic tasks of reading, writing, listening, and speaking that may otherwise go unnoticed. Without that recognition, teachers can misinterpret the ordinary processes of L2 acquisition for academic purposes as unwillingness to learn or as indicative of delayed cognitive development.

The acculturation process is often challenging for language learners and varies from student to student based upon factors such as their unique immigration

conditions—voluntary or involuntary—familiarity with American culture, and their

ability to cope with the everyday demands of learning to live in a new land (C. Suárez-

Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). de Jong and Harper (2005) argue that

classroom participation structures and prior learning experiences are two aspects of

culture that uniquely impact ELL students and are not addressed by JGT practices.

While generally good teachers take in multicultural education concepts and try to learn

about students' backgrounds, ELL-specific skills and knowledge requires teachers to

challenge assumptions related to "normal" school culture, and how that can marginalize

language learners who have schooling experiences that differ. Also, JGT may not make

classroom processes explicit, particularly at the secondary level where students are

expected to have been acculturated over many years of formal schooling. In some

cultures competition is not an assumed reality; in contrast, collaboration may be the

norm for some students which can be perceived as insolent in the midst of an

individualized culture or at times when this is the requirement for the class activity. de

Jong and Harper (2005) highlight the internal conflict some ELL students experience as

they negotiate their new contexts and how their teachers must be sensitive to how that

maybe manifest in the classroom. They write:

> Effective teachers of ELLs understand that antisocial behavior may reflect a
>
> student's state of cultural and linguistic ambivalence or frustration because the
>
> student believes that his or her struggle to find a personal, comfortable
>
> accommodation to U.S. culture is futile. These teachers acknowledge that
>
> students' exhaustion may come from having to concentrate for extended periods

in a langue that they do not understand well and are able to place ELLs' attitudes and behaviors. (p. 115)

Effective teachers of ELLs must also resist the urge to pity their students from a deficit position. In other words, teachers must acknowledge what emergent bilingual students *bring* to their learning environment, not interacting with them exclusively from a position of exposing them to that which they are unaware in the new setting. In many cases students are able to do more than they are able to verbally express due to the length of time it takes to develop linguistic proficiency. It is important to understand the prior schooling experiences students have had as it provides the foundation for engaging cognitively in a new environment. At the same time, understanding how to do something or having a conceptual platform differs from, but related to, a student's ability to explain it in writing or discuss it orally. Even the language to think about the new concept can pose a challenge to ELL students. For example, being bilingual means students have a fund of knowledge for how their language is constructed, which may be very different from the construction of the English language. Teachers can help scaffold English language acquisition by making the similarities and differences explicit. Although students may experience frustration in verbal or written expression, teachers must be careful not to confuse this with a lack of understanding and instead help build proficiency through deliberate language instruction in the language of their subject.

Effective ELL teachers acknowledge that language and culture mediate teaching and learning in important ways that extend beyond JGT. For example, prior experiences of ELLs are intrinsically tied to student conceptual and linguistic development (de Jong

& Harper, 2005; Nieto, 2010; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004; Yoon, 2008). Teachers

can misinterpret student development when they view the dominant classroom and

school culture through an unchallenged ethnocentric lens. ELL students are subsequently

marginalized in mainstream classrooms as concepts of normalcy in schooling processes

and interpersonal dynamics (i.e., teacher-student, student-student, parent-teacher,

student-parent) are neither confronted, explained, nor acknowledged as just one

approach of many alternatives. de Jong and Harper (2005) write, "Understanding that

these values and resulting [classroom] practices are not universal will help teachers

appropriately interpret student behavior that, when taken at face value, appears to reflect

an unwillingness or reluctance to participate or a lack of comprehension" (p. 111). To

ensure full participation of ELLs in mainstream classrooms, teachers must thoughtfully

consider student prior experiences in the development and implementation of their

content instruction.

JGT and ELL-specific practices differ once more in the areas of goals set within

the content curriculum. Language and cultural goals are made explicit in the classroom

of an aware mainstream teacher. These are consistent and deliberate, not by

happenstance. "Mainstream teachers need to be able to identify language demands in

their content areas and organize their classrooms to support the development of

academic language proficiency by integrating their language and content objectives.

Cross-cultural practices and experiences must inform curriculum planning and

implementation" (de Jong & Harper, 2005, p. 116). Goal setting in these two areas

begins with awareness that it is relevant, but must also be manifested in teacher

behavior. Part of that specificity is planning for deliberate and explicit language instruction for ELLs, as outlined in the ELPS and discussed at length in literature on comprehensible input for language learners (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Teacher awareness of the expectations and standards of instruction, and knowledge of their teaching practices and beliefs serve as a precursor for teacher development.

Based on research in the field of ELL instruction, this model highlights the potential gap in language instruction and support language learners have access to in mainstream classrooms when teachers provide confuse ELL-specific instruction with "just good teaching" (JGT) strategies. In the following section, I contrast the literature on mainstream teachers of ELL students with what the knowledge base on ELL instruction supports as quality instruction. The sum of these findings will emphasize the gap in ELL-specific teacher knowledge and skills, in addition to the gap in the literature on AC teachers of ELL students. As we have seen in the literature, AC teachers work with ELL students and do not have adequate training to do so.

<div align="center">**ELL Instructional Standards**</div>

Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)

In 2007, the TEA added the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) to Texas Education Code 74 to ensure that ELL students received explicit social and academic language instruction in each class of the required curriculum (Seidlitz, 2008), thereby making the districts and campus-based instructional staff responsible for their learning. The standards are meant to guide educators by outlining the English proficiency continuum in speaking, listening, writing, and reading and suggesting some

general ways to support ELL development at each level of proficiency. While the ELPS are not grade-specific, it presents best practices based on research in L2 acquisition for language learners. Most importantly, the ELPS clearly states that ELL instruction is the responsibility of all educators charged with providing instruction to language learners, not just ESL, bilingual, or English language arts teachers (Seidlitz, 2008).

As required by state law, the ELPS must be integrated into the required curriculum for every content area alongside the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards for every lesson. The standards outline district responsibilities, cross curricular student expectations, and language proficiency level descriptors. Districts are responsible for: (1) identifying student language proficiency in each of the four components, (2) providing students with linguistically accommodated instruction that is comprehensible for them in order to acquire the TEKS, (3) providing ELL students with linguistically accommodated content-area instruction to acquire the cross-curricular second language acquisition (SLA) essential knowledge and skills outlined in the ELPS, and (4) providing "intensive and ongoing" foundational SLA instruction for beginning and intermediate proficient ELL students beyond Grade 3. Because districts are responsible for providing language learners with the instruction that they will need to develop in both their English language proficiency and academic language proficiency, it follows that they are responsible for ensuring instructional staff know and implement the ELPS. Teacher knowledge of the ELPS has been integrated into the Texas standardized test of Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility. While this reflects the role of the educator preparation program, teacher development continues throughout the

career and is supported through district-sponsored and school-based initiatives. Lastly, the English language proficiency standards describe what students are able to do based on their proficiency levels—beginner, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high—in the areas of listening and speaking (Grades K-12), and reading writing (Grades K-1 and 2-12). When teachers understand the proficiency standards, they are best equipped to prepare developmentally appropriate instructional activities for their ELL students.

The ELPS demands specificity in ELL instruction based upon knowledge of the language proficiencies of each ELL student, assessment of their development in the four domains, and skills to differentiate and scaffold instruction for students based on those proficiency needs. Though teachers are expected to differentiate instruction and facilitate acquisition of academic literacy for all learners, the ELPS suggests that teachers must deliberately plan for, implement, and assess ELL acquisition of English that may or may not overlap with the needs of native-English speaking students. Generic instructional strategies may be sufficient for helping all students acquire academic literacy to meet content-specific TEKS but may be insufficient in providing language learners "with the foundation of English language vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and English mechanics necessary to support content-based instruction and accelerated learning of English" (Texas Education Code §74.4). The ELPS also defines cross curricular objectives that students are expected to meet in the areas learning, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order for students to meet these expectations, teachers must plan for and include specific language objectives that help ELL students develop the skills outlined therein.

Research on ELL Instruction

Teaching has been described as both art and science, making it difficult at times to study and to agree upon the best way to prepare novice teachers to be successful. Ultimately the goal of teaching is to see measurable growth in student learning outcomes and development towards a desired end. Therefore, to understand how best to prepare teachers, researchers have rightly sought to associate teaching practices with positive student learning outcomes in order to develop the knowledge and skills within the teaching practice of novice educators. In most teacher preparation programs, candidates learn teaching practices through explicit instruction, modeling, and opportunities to practice (Bandura, 1986; T. Wright, 2010). As discussed in the preceding chapter, learning is complex and involves constructing knowledge based on teacher experiences, prior knowledge, and belief structures. Notwithstanding the complexity of teacher learning and development, the education component is often based on a body of knowledge of what works in particular discipline. In the following paragraphs I review two studies on the expected knowledge base for second language teachers.

Faltis, Arias, and Ramirez-Marin (2010) conducted a comprehensive literature review on content area ELL-specific knowledge from three different vantage points: knowledge needed for general teaching of ELL students, knowledge the literature deems necessary for secondary ELL educators, and knowledge considered essential by practicing secondary teachers of ELL students. Using content analysis, Faltis and his colleagues identified nine teacher competencies as being important for ELL instruction across grade levels: (1) differentiate between academic language proficiency and basic

conversational language proficiency; (2) understand second language acquisition; (3) know the role of L1 in development of second language skills and learning; (4) coordinate linguistic and cognitive proficiency standards; (5) skillful ability to organize small heterogeneous groups; (6) knowledge of linguistics; (7) advocacy and high level instruction for ELLs; (8) connect with student families and communities; and (9) use multiple assessments. They generated a slightly smaller list of recommendations from the literature on secondary educators of ELL students. Similar competencies include understanding second language acquisition, advocacy, and grouping. In addition, the researchers determined that secondary teachers of ELL students should build on students' background knowledge and prior educational experiences and incorporate theme-based content so that students have multiple opportunities to see specialized vocabulary and concepts (C. Faltis, Arias, & Ramirez-Marin, 2010).

A pivotal descriptive study conducted by Menken and Antunez (2001) used survey data from member institutions of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and website users to determine how colleges prepared bilingual and mainstream teachers for ELL instruction. In addition, researchers reviewed state requirements for teacher certification, which captures their expectations of teachers entering the classroom:

> Not only must these teachers possess the deep subject-matter knowledge required
> in order for ELLs to meet grade-level content standards, but they must also
> possess the pedagogy to enable these students to access the knowledge and skills

contained in the standards, and they must have a thorough understanding of their students' language acquisition processes. (Menken & Antunez, 2001, p. 6)

Teachers are no longer expected to only be masters of the pedagogical, content, and pedagogical content knowledge and skills; indeed, the expectations expressed here are commensurate with those outlined in the ELPS regarding ELL teachers in Texas.

Menken and Antunez (2001) identified three components of knowledge required of ELL teachers: knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of linguistics, and knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity. In addition to general education pedagogical skills, bilingual educators must be able to adapt curriculum materials and have opportunities to develop practical skills in teaching students in two languages. Linguistic knowledge should include an understanding of general linguistics—language production, comprehension, and cognition—language acquisition, and the structure of students' L1 and L2. Knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity is facilitated through multicultural and bilingual education coursework.

A key finding from the Menken and Antunez (2001) study is of the participating programs, very few require ELL-specific preparation for mainstream pre-service teachers. The data are difficult to interpret with regard to university-based bilingual and mainstream teacher preparation because survey questions were not aggregated accordingly. ELL-specific preparation was disaggregated by grade level. Of those preparing secondary teachers, 15% of programs at the baccalaureate level required a course that addressed LEP issues; 12% did so in the basic post-baccalaureate programs; and 18% did so in the advanced post-baccalaureate programs. However, as the

researchers caution, this could be more representative of the bilingual education programs included in the study, and not as reflective of the mainstream programs.

No consensus between bilingual education certification requirements across states was found (Menken & Antunez, 2001). Some state requirements were expressed in terms of teacher competencies, assessed through examination, and others in terms of coursework completed. More than 80% of states required bilingual education students take courses in language instruction methods, linguistics, and cultural and linguistic diversity to become certified. The pervasiveness of pedagogical, linguistic, and cultural aspects of learning in preparation program coursework and state requirements highlights the gap in mainstream teacher education preparation for ELL instruction, no less that of AC teachers that learn a great deal of their pedagogical knowledge and expertise on the job. Though studies on certification routes found no significant difference between teacher and student outcomes by route, there were significant differences by program. Taken in the context of what language educators need to know (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Menken & Antunez, 2001) , more research is needed to understand how individual AC programs prepare mainstream teachers of ELL students.

Summary

Based on the literature, many mainstream teachers do not enter the classroom with ELL-specific knowledge and skills, regardless of their preparation pathway (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Freelow, 2002). There is a gap between what teachers are expected to know and be able to do and what they know and are able to do upon entering linguistically diverse classrooms. As a result, mainstream teachers in Texas may not be

able to effectuate ELL student growth towards meeting social, academic, and linguistic goals set forth in the ELPS. de Jong and Harper (2005) present a compelling case for this gap that illustrates the instructional impact on students when teachers hold beliefs about ELL instruction that are unsupported in the literature. How teachers describe and interpret their teaching acts can shed light on their beliefs. Descriptions of teacher learning related to ELL instruction can reveal how they position themselves and others while retelling stories of traversing the gap in knowledge.

AC teachers learn most from programs that provide a pre-service teaching component that aligns with their future full-time teaching assignment (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Kee, 2011), therefore emphasizing the centrality of practical classroom experience in developing pedagogical knowledge. It is important to understand *what* they learn from those experiences and *how* they utilize resources in order to gain the ELL-specific knowledge and skills expected of them. To this point, few studies have focused on the intersection of mainstream AC teachers of ELL students, particularly at the secondary school level. In the next chapter I present methods for accessing teacher knowledge and skills through narratives teachers use to describe learning to teach and teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study used narrative inquiry methods to elicit, capture, and interpret stories of an emerging population of teachers, those who AC and working with ELL students in mainstream classrooms. Four secondary science teachers from the highly selective TTF program were interviewed about their experiences teaching and learning to teach ELL students. The term "narrative" is used to describe both the data (i.e., teacher stories) and the research methodology, including analysis, interpretation, and the re-telling in this written thesis (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986; Riessman, 2008). I use the terms narrative and story interchangeably in reference to the research data and use narrative analysis or inquiry in reference to methodological components.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the basic tenets of narrative inquiry, followed by an explication of the multiple contexts within which the narratives are situated. Next I discuss the research design and methods used to answer the research questions about how participants describe their acts of teaching and how they make sense of their teaching acts related to ELL instruction. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of research quality measures.

Narrative Inquiry

This research employs narrative methods to answer the research questions of how teachers describe and interpret their teaching acts related to ELL students in mainstream classrooms. Narrative inquiry focuses on the creation, telling, and retelling of stories used to convey experiences and the meaning people assign to them. In one of my

favorite examples of narrative inquiry, Ochberg (1994) describes the natural inclination of humans to narrate their lives as actors within a continuous storyline of supporting actors, settings, and motives for telling. Narratives provide a glimpse into the inner life of meanings that are not readily visible through other methods of inquiry. In order to obtain these extended accounts, narrative researchers must ask open-ended questions that encourage narration, such as "How did you become a teacher?" or "Tell me about a time when you felt successful working with ELL students."

The assumption behind narrative research is that not only do people naturally story their lives, but these stories make up the parts of a complex and ongoing life that is never really complete, though life events may have temporally passed. Narratives provide narrators an endless opportunity to reinterpret past events within the context of the continually unfolding life, particularly in pursuit of continuity in the life story (Chase, 2005; Linde, 1993). Though notions of what a complete story sounds and looks like have been debated, particularly across cultures, evidence of the storied life is present in every culture (Riessman, 1993). Connelly and Clandinin (2000) conceptualize the link between narrative and knowledge thusly:

> We think of teacher knowledge in narrative terms, describing it in terms of narrative life constructions. We do not see teacher knowledge as something fixed and static to be replaced by something else, but as something lifelike, something storied, something that flows forward in ever changing shapes. Teachers and students do not, in our view, come together as bearers of mature and immature knowledge, the immature to be replaced by the mature. Rather, we see everyone,

teachers and students, living out stories in which they figure as characters. What we or anyone else knows—what student and teacher may be said to know—are expressions of those stories. To understand what happens when teacher and student meet in teaching-learning situations, it is necessary to understand their stories. (n.p.)

Therefore, narrative as a term serve multiple purposes: they are the stories we use to express what we know; a tool for interrogating and making sense of life experiences; and the methodology researchers can use to inquire into those stories and extract meaning (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Connelly and Clandinin (1986) describe three dimensions of the narrative inquiry space: temporal, personal/existential, and place. The concepts of time and place constitute the setting of the narrative, which are important parts of the story. In this research, narratives are situated within the contexts of the TTF AC program and within the diverse school districts and schools of participants. Contexts can be physical and nonphysical spaces that shape stories, such as the actual setting of a narrative inside the classroom at a lab desk, or the powerful master narratives that provide boundaries for, what stories can and cannot be told (Riessman, 2008), what is considered acceptable and valid.

In this research, I am interested in all three dimensions of teacher narratives situated within a time and place, and located within a personal journey of learning and development. Certainly, an explication of context provides the basis for interpretation and retelling of participant stories within this research. In the section that immediately

follows, I describe the research context. Next I describe the data collection and analysis methods used to answer the research questions.

Research Context

This research was situated in the context of the AC program—TTF—and the teachers' classrooms within two CLD independent school districts (ISD)—Powell and McClain located in a metropolitan area of Texas. One teacher worked in Powell ISD, and three teachers worked in two schools in nearby McClain ISD. Both school districts have a partnership with the TTF program, so the districts were amenable to hiring TTF candidates. Although Teaching Fellows were eligible to work in any of the school districts offering positions, many of them obtained employment in the partnering districts of Powell and McClain. A description of the TTF program and the two school districts follow.

Program: Texas Teaching Fellows

TTF is one of more than six local branches of The New Teacher Project (TNTP) national education initiative in Texas. TNTP recruitment, preparation, certification, and other education initiatives operate in 17 states across the nation, primarily in urban areas though not exclusively. TNTP tailors educational initiatives to the needs of their district and state clients, therefore in those that prepare teachers, instructional and auxiliary staff members are current and former educators within those districts. Because each program is a unique expression of the TNTP mission within the specific context, it was necessary to spend time getting to know the TTF program staff, curriculum, and culture.

Teacher preparation curricula consist of the Teaching for Student Achievement (TfSA) during the summer pre-service training program, and Teaching for Results (TfR) during their first full year of teaching. The program operates on the cohort model where candidates are grouped by the following content areas: Special Education, Generalist 4-8, and secondary science, mathematics, and English/Language Arts. The 6-week summer program includes content-centered adaptations of the TfSA curriculum in the afternoon sessions and a summer school teaching experience with a cooperating teacher in the mornings for the last 4 weeks of the program. During this time, participants attend all-cohort meetings to prepare them for the workforce with administrative assistance on applying and interviewing for positions.

To assess teacher development throughout the summer sessions, candidates complete work products in three domains—content, assessment, and instruction—which focus on teacher competencies such as classroom management and flexible student grouping. During the teaching experience, candidates are paired with a cooperating teacher and gradually take over teaching responsibilities in the summer school classroom. Work products require candidates to demonstrate mastery of the TfSA curriculum by documenting their application of the strategies in their summer school experiences with supporting artifacts. Completion of work products is intended to prepare candidates to teach full-time in the fall. Upon successful completion of the summer training and state standardized test of Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR), candidates earn their probationary teaching certificate, enabling them to teach in Texas public schools for one year.

During the school year, participants teach full time and attend 16 seminars to cover the TfR curriculum. Participants continue to meet with their cohort and a seminar leader biweekly throughout the school year. The seminar leader—an experienced classroom teacher hired by TTF—guides program participants in the curriculum, leads discussions, provides participants with support on classroom instruction, and gives feedback on work products in preparation for the capstone portfolio. As first year teachers and program participants, school-based administrators and TTF program field supervisors observe candidates at least twice each semester. TTF field supervisors partner with seminar leaders and candidates to support their development as needed in order to ensure they progress towards earning their standard certification.

School Districts

Powell ISD

Last year Powell served about 36,000 students made up of almost 40% Hispanic students, 30% White, about 23% African American, and just below 7% Asian. Just two years prior, students were divided more evenly into thirds Hispanic, White, and combined African American and Asian. In 2009, more than half the students were considered economically disadvantaged. Last year the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch grew to almost 57%, which remains under the state average of almost 60%.

During the 2010-2011 AY, students received LEP services accounted for more than 22% of all students in Powell, compared to the state average of almost 17%. Powell has a record of student achievement and has been nationally recognized as one of the top

performing in the state and in the United States based on college readiness indicators. However, on standardized testing measures, secondary school ELL students continue to fall behind all other groups disaggregated by ethnicity. Amongst the academic subjects, science saw the least percentage of ELL students meet standard.

Teachers in Powell were predominantly White and female. African American and Hispanic teachers each represented 10% of the teaching population, and men represented just over 18%. Almost all teachers held at least a bachelors degree, with a quarter holding a master's degree and a few holding doctorates. Last year almost half of the teachers in Powell had less than 5 years of teaching experience, with the average being 10 years.

McClain ISD

Three of the four participants worked in McClain ISD, one of the largest and most linguistically diverse school districts in the area. More than 60 languages are represented by the more than 57,000 students taught within the district. The majority of students in McClain are Hispanic, with White students accounting for about one-quarter of the population, and African America and Asian students accounting for the remaining 25%. The percentage of Hispanic students has risen over the past three years, as the percentage of White students has declined overall. In 2008, just over half of the McClain student population was eligible for free or reduced lunches compared to in 2011 where almost 60% of students were eligible. More than 12,000 students are considered LEP accounting for 22% of the student population.

McClain teachers are more ethnically diverse than in neighboring Powell.

Though both are predominantly White and female, McClain teachers are 15% Hispanic,

12% African American, and about 3% Asian, and about 24% male. Fewer McClain

teachers are just beginning their career in comparison to Powell; half of McClain

teachers have between 6-20 years of teaching experience. Much like Powell, the

majority of teachers hold a bachelor's degree and over one-quarter of teachers hold a

master's degree.

Purposeful Sample

Narrative inquiry like other qualitative methods chooses participants

purposefully. The aim of such inquiry is not generalization to the greater population,

although Riessman (2008) notes that findings from narrative research can contribute to

theoretical generalization. In order to understand the phenomena of inquiry, narrative

and qualitative researchers carefully select participants whose experiences would yield

insight into the proposed research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this case,

sampling took place on two levels, teacher preparation program and teachers. I discuss

the sampling process for each below.

Program

I began by identifying districts that had the largest number of ELLs in Texas. I

then looked for those districts and larger metropolitan areas that had the greatest

presence of alternative certification programs. Having narrowed this pool of localities to

one area, I reviewed TEA data to identify programs that produced the greatest number of

initial certificates in science and mathematics. This tiered program sampling increased

the likelihood of finding teachers from a single AC program who taught ELLs. Finally, I narrowed down potential programs to contact using the following criteria:

- A summer program with a pre-service teacher education component including a field experience to allow for observation of the program culture,

- A 5-year history of certifying teachers in Texas which was used to indicate program longevity and to increase the pool of possible participants for this research, and

Separate content-based methods courses such as science and mathematics since research on AC teachers highlights differences in preparation and student outcomes by content area (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Kee, 2011).

To get a "feel" for the program and its culture, I did not consider programs that were offered exclusively online or those that were hybrids of face-to-face and online coursework. Of the 11 educator preparation programs meeting the first criteria, only two met the second and third. Of those two, only one—TTF—agreed to participate in the study by allowing observations and assisting with identifying teacher participants.

Teachers

I relied heavily on the snowballing approach to identify possible informants for this research. In this method, current participants or "gatekeeper" (Patton, 2002) in the research site recommends potential participants to the researcher and in some cases provides access to that person through direct introduction or providing the researcher with contact information that would be difficult to secure otherwise. In this study, I first

gained access to the site through a central administrator who introduced me to other staff members and arranged for me to observe a methods session for a 2-week period. During that time I introduced myself to other staff members that I saw frequently and began to develop relationship with them, an important component in gaining access to the research site. Without the access granted through building relationships, certain social dynamics and environmental realities remain hidden from the researcher's gaze, presenting an inaccurate image of the actual site and its operations.

Sometimes it is not until the researcher enters the site that key informants are revealed. After meeting with staff members to discuss programmatic structure and philosophy over a span of two months following the summer sessions, I reached a dead end in terms of finding teachers willing to participant in the research. This was not a function of willingness, but a function of access. Although staff members agreed to connect me with teacher participants, gatekeepers were reluctant to provide me with contact information because, as I was told, participating in the research could take away from limited teacher time to meet the demands of the classroom, program, and family. It was a chance meeting and later interview with a newer staff member that led to my first teacher participant, a staff member who was also a former Teaching Fellow. They taught in the same school. At the end of our interview I asked for any contact information for potential participants, which was customary. She suggested I talk with Jane and introduced us immediately after confirming by email that that was okay.

Jane participated in several interviews as a staff member before we decided that her role as an AC teacher would also be of value to this research. Her dual identities as

TTF staff member and former Fellow provided great insight into the program and also access to additional teachers. As a result of the benefit she gained through this research—in the form of targeted reflection on her ELL teaching practices and beliefs—Jane became a personal advocate for this study and encouraged current enrollees to participate as well. She invited me to come and speak to her seminar class to explain my research. Jane was unaware of who eventually participated in the research because they communicated directly with me. Of the seven teachers who expressed interest only two agreed to participate and set up an initial interview.

One of the participants from Jane's class encouraged Fellows at her school to get involved as well. She gave me the contact information for two former Teaching Fellows on her campus. I contacted both, but only one responded to set up an interview. Each participant was informed in writing and verbally that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could choose to discontinue the study at any time without penalty from me as the researcher or the program, as no identifiers about them would be made available to TTF. All participants and school districts were assigned pseudonyms so that participants could speak freely about their experiences.

Instrumentation

In order to understand the experiences of AC teachers of language learners, the researcher must be in close proximity to the phenomenon—dynamics within the AC program and the classroom and meaning-making processes of four mainstream teachers of ELL students. In qualitative research generally, and this narrative inquiry specifically, interviews and field observations form the basis of data collected to answer the research

questions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Riessman, 2008). Engaging participants through interviews and observing their learning and teaching contexts facilitates research by positioning the researcher as primary instrument. In fact, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) surmise, unique human perceptive and adaptive faculties make researchers the most suitable choice for gathering qualitative data in often unpredictable research environments. The skillful researcher interacts with participants during interviews, perceives verbal and nonverbal cues, perceives context, and responds by interpreting this information, adapting questions, and navigating the context to achieve research aims as they continue to be relevant. In some cases, it becomes necessary for researchers to abandon their original design upon entering the research site, analyzing the emerging themes, and identifying a phenomenon more relevant to the site (Yin, 2003). As instrument in this study, I was able to gain access to the site, identify participants, and conduct interviews in a manner that engaged participants and met research aims.

Data Collection

I found Richardson's (1996) review of literature on the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices to be useful in developing this research design. She writes:

> An understanding of a teacher's practices is enhanced by research attention to both beliefs and actions through interview and observation. Furthermore, such attention may contribute to change in beliefs and practices, particularly if the research is conducted in a collaborative manner. Yet, these understandings are quite person and context specific; therefore, the number of individual case studies has increased dramatically in the literature. (p. 104)

65

In light of the gap in research on the teaching practices and experiences of AC teachers in linguistically diverse secondary classrooms, I chose to utilize both interviews and observations to conduct this research. My intention, however, is not to validate teacher talk by observing their behavior, but to understand "the complexities of the contexts of teaching and of teachers' thinking processes and actions within those contexts" (Richardson, 1996, p. 104). In this sense, observations are used to generate further discussion and draw out narrative extensions from participants, much like the method presented by Connelly and Clandinin (1986) in their narrative work on teacher knowledge.

Data consisted primarily of interviews and secondarily, field notes generated from program and classroom observation. The field notes were instrumental in answering the second research question about teacher interpretations of their teaching acts in mainstream classrooms. As we reviewed the field notes, teachers began to reconstruct their classrooms by reenacting events from the teacher's perspective and perceived perspective of students, explaining and narrating their thinking at various moments, and narrating background stories that support their perceptions, beliefs, and thinking. Data TTF staff members and program information and documents gave me background knowledge for participant interviews. When participants described aspects of their preparation processes in TTF, I had an adequate frame of reference to understand without the need to disrupt narratives for participants to explain the details. In the following paragraphs I discuss each data source, collection methods, and relative contribution to this research.

Interviews

Of the data collection methods listed above, the interview is most useful for uncovering how participants make meaning of their experiences and choices (Merriam, 2009), a particularly salient aspect of the present study. Unlike observations, interviews allow the researcher and participant to mutually construct meaning by engaging in dialogue that includes opportunities for explanation, clarification, and idea expansion (Mishler, 1986). In case study research, interviews are an important source of data because, in addition to accessing participant perspectives about a phenomenon, interviews can be used to corroborate and clarify evidence gathered from observations, and identify other sources of data that may not have been considered previously (Yin, 2003).

Interviews provide great insight into the meaning-making process of participants, but provide insufficient data needed to understand what makes phenomena "tick" (Patton, 2002) because interviews by themselves lack informative context. When possible, researchers should observe phenomena in context to provide a backdrop for understanding, interpreting, and presenting the lot of data (Yin, 2003). Within an interview, researcher knowledge of context helps situate meaning ascribed to experiences in authentic ways that can be discussed, clarified, and exemplified. Furthermore, as Riessman (2008) notes, language can sometimes be insufficient for expressing participant experiences so researchers must be careful to observe during interviews and the context in which phenomena occur.

Participants participated in an initial interview which served as an orientation to who they are and how they got to the place of teaching, their background, (Costigan, 2004; Proweller & Mitchener, 2004), pre-service teaching experiences, and experience working with ELL students. These initial interviews provided me with the participants' orientations towards the phenomena addressed in this research. Interviews with program staff members also included questions about their understanding of the program's philosophy on teacher education and their role within preparing teachers for the classroom. Initial interviews were at least one hour in length, with some lasting closer to two hours. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to provide a very close account of the conversations we had. At times, nonverbal exchanges happened during interviews and naturally were not picked up on the digital recording. To account for these, I often recorded my impressions of interviews, exchanges, and context immediately after interviews for later review. There is an interpretive component involved in this, so that is why I write "very close" account.

Field Notes

Field notes and observations are closely tied data sources, as the former becomes the captured form of the latter, which can be revisited and analyzed if desired. The power of observations and field notes in qualitative research cannot be understated, as observations of teachers in their natural teaching setting bring a greater level of understanding of what they describe during interviews (Yin, 2003). Observations can also uncover new lines of inquiry within a qualitative study. In this study field notes were generated from my 2-week observation of the TTF summer sessions and visits to

68

participant classrooms at various pre-planned times during the spring semester. In both settings I took note of cultural aspects such as how interactions took place and things that were repeated such as phrases or routines. Program observations consisted of job placement meetings, all-cohort meetings, informal staff gatherings, and the classroom of a single content area.

Aside from their usefulness in capturing the context of the study, observations and field notes served a pivotal role in the interview process. Initial interviews informed what I looked for during classroom observations. In other words, how did teachers enact the teaching practice they described during our first meeting? Field notes represented a mixture of classroom culture and a point for continuing the dialogue with participants about their acts of teaching ELL students in mainstream classrooms. Participants received transcripts of the initial interviews and field notes prior to the follow-up interview to allow for review and maximum opportunity for discussion.

Researcher's Role

In the qualitative tradition, methodology consists not only of the research design, but also researcher positionality—an explication of the investigator's stance towards and stake in a study which shapes their perspective. While quantitative inquiry aims for researcher neutrality, qualitative inquiry assumes researchers cannot be separated from their research nor is this separation wholly desirable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), researcher positionality pervades any research design by virtue of selection of a research design from other choices; the choice is based on researcher epistemological stance. By making their positionality known to readers,

researchers establish credibility and invite readers to consider how position relates to the data presentation and interpretation of findings.

I was a non-participant observer in the classrooms. I did not interact with the students or the teacher during my observations and often took a seat in a remote part of the classroom where I recorded my observations by hand. On several occasions students did greet me and I responded, but I made sure to keep the interaction to a minimum so as not to interrupt the class flow and to get a sense of the dynamics between the teacher participants and their students.

The relationship between researcher and participant can determine the access researchers have to the data they seek (Mishler, 1986). Because the interview is the means of obtaining narrative data and the researcher as instrument, the quality of the instrument is mediated by the researcher-participant relationship and ability to co-construct the narrative. During the initial interviews, my intention was to ease participants into the interview process by encouraging them to talk about their lives and how they became teachers. We joked about our mutually shared experiences, opening the door to further sharing in follow-up interviews. Discussing classroom observations was tenuous at times due to the sensitive nature of feeling evaluated by another relatively more experienced educator. And in some ways, I did evaluate teacher classroom dynamics based on their inquiry of my thoughts (as was the case with novice teachers) and in order to highlight the tensions between the initial interview descriptions of beliefs and practices and what I observed. I was not a disinterested observer, nor

could I be at the expense of generating discussion that would illuminate the meaning participants ascribe to their teaching acts.

My role in the research changed during the course of the study with respect to control of the research. I intellectually understood the need for a flexible grip on the winding paths through which narration can happen (Riessman, 2008), but did not truly understand until I found it at odds with trying to get *my* data to finish *my* study. The desire to limit my voice during the interview demonstrated a keenly embedded stance to research that fundamentally disagreed with my research approach. A research participant desired a more personal relationship and engagement with her students outside of that which I was initially comfortable. In my follow-up notes I asked why this was problematic for me and began to release some control by considering the benefit my research could have on the participants. How I could engage participants in conversation about teaching ELLs, if that is what they found helpful. As concerns and uncertainty about my role in the interviews and research context became evident, I was initially fearful of "tainting" the data. However if I was to remain true to the purpose of this inquiry as described in my personal narrative, I could not only take from participants what was beneficial to my study. Indeed, I had to offer something of value in exchange. This offering came in the form of sharing what I learned about ELLs by presenting questions that provoked reflection on their practice. This just happened to be a natural fit with the study.

Participants

Participants for this research were four AC science teachers from three high schools in two urban school districts in Texas. Two teachers completed TTF and have been teaching in Texas public schools for three and five year, respectively. Two participants were in their first year of teaching and were in the process of earning standard certification through TTF while teaching full time. Scholars assert that the prior career experience and maturity AC teachers bring to the classroom are valuable to student learning (Grossman & Loeb, 2008; Haberman, 1987). All but one teacher had some classroom experience as a tutor or substitute teacher before enrolling in TTF. Everyone had earned post-secondary degrees in pure or applied science and worked in other fields before becoming teachers. Each participant is certified to teach secondary science and none are certified in ESL or bilingual education.

Participants vary in cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With the exception of one teacher—a native Spanish speaker who is learning English as a second language—all participants are monolingual native-English speakers. Half of the participants relocated to Texas in order to participate in the TTF program; half of the participants migrated for other reasons before entering the TTF certification program. Culturally, two participants have non-native parentage from countries where English is not the primary language. Two participants are Anglo-American, one participant is Mexican-American, and one participant is Haitian-American.

Data Analysis

Narratives can be written, spoken, or communicated visually through photos, videos, or other images (Riessman, 2008). In qualitative inquiry, analysis occurs simultaneously throughout data collection, informing future data collection on the spot during interviews as well as in later meetings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In narrative analysis, Riessman (2008) emphasizes the important role of transcription within the analytic process not solely for making analysis possible, but for facilitating specific *types* of narrative analysis such as thematic, structural, dialogic, and visual. In this study, audio-recorded interviews were initially transcribed verbatim to provide me with the most data to work with while determining the best narrative analytic method for each story.

I condensed multiple transcripts of a single participant into a single document and removed my voice as interview facilitator, while leaving behind interactions between participants and I that demonstrated shared meaning-making (Mishler, 1986). For example, throughout interviews with Maya I was actively engaged in the meaning-making process through participant queries about if what she said made sense to me, if she had answered my question, and invitations to engage in reconstructing her teaching and thinking with respect to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Unlike Nina's uninterrupted style of narration, I could not remove my voice from Maya's transcript wholly without losing the meaning of the text. Another transcript was created from the verbatim text that followed a loose structural pattern similar to the

works of Gee (1991) and Labov and Waletzky (1967) that included story headings, subtopics, and marked the beginning and end of a story.

As differences in the narrative styles emerged, I chose to use the thematic, structural, and dialogic performance methods to organize and analyze participant narratives. Thematic analysis was the primary method for identifying ways in which participants made sense of their teaching beliefs and experiences, which formed the context for understanding how they made sense of their acts of teaching and learning to teach ELL students in their mainstream classrooms.

Transcriptions

Verbatim Transcripts

I made several choices about transcribing data in this study. First, I wanted to have analytic options so I transcribed the data verbatim including my prompting questions, participant verbal and most nonverbal responses, asides, and interruptions. Transcribing this way provided the greatest amount of data to "play with" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with, offering flexibility in analysis based on what the transcripts revealed to be the teacher's narrative form. In other words, I provided the data with the greatest possibility to speak to me as an interpreter of the data. Several transcription conventions were used to indicate the conversational nature of the interview including asides in different font and parentheses; pauses indicated by (p) and long pauses, (P); laughs are shown as (L), and stressed words were underlined. These asides were some of the most common presented in excerpts from the interview transcripts. Breaks in speech and mid-sentence topic switching were marked by an ellipsis (…). I use a bracketed ellipsis […]

to indicate the removal of my input, interruptions in recording, and unrelated tangents. I removed terms of assent such as "Mhmm" and "Mmm" without marker since the utterance was meant simply to encourage participants to continue their stories by ensuring them of my undivided attention.

The process of analysis began with transcription. When questions or themes emerged frequently in the data, I inserted comments within the transcript to follow-up with participants and make note of my thoughts related to each theme. I revisited the notes with each subsequent transcription as a check for consistency analytic consistency and a record of how my interpretations changed with additional data from teacher follow-up interviews focused on making meaning. Interviews and field notes were transcribed prior to successive interviews in order to: (a) establish trustworthiness in data collection through member checking, (b) provide teachers with a running record of classroom events during a non-evaluative observation, (c) create a sense of continuity across interviews, and (d) generate discussion during follow-up interviews based upon the transcripts.

Combined and Reduced Transcript

After the final interview, I created a second transcript combining the multiple interviews from each participant into a single document. The emergent themes from the initial transcript served to organize my thoughts around the story each participant was telling throughout the interview process. In this transcript, I reduced the data by removing my contribution and turning my questions into the headings to which participants responded except in several instances: (1) participants did not respond to my

question but continued a story or began a different one. In these instances, a note was made in the document comments about the instance; (2) the question was asked in order to clarify a previous comment, in which case I continued the response as part of the preceding response. Subtopics that appeared to organize the headings were also titled in the reduced transcript. Where my responses and questions aid in making sense of the participant response, I included the dialogue identifying both of our contributions. To get around the one-word responses to clarifying questions, I add necessary linking words to the transcript in brackets to indicate something not initially said, but implied from the original verbatim transcript.

Reduced ELL Transcript

From the second interview I created another transcript that focused on teacher talk about ELL students, including direct references and those implied throughout the interviews. To create this transcript I searched the document headings and subtopics for key words and themes that teachers had used when discussing ELL students such as *ELL, LEP, ESL, ELPS, proficient, culture, language, differentiation, quiet,* and *Spanish*. These represent some of the commonly used terms, but are not exhaustive since teachers articulated idiosyncratic rationales for their teaching practices. I searched the second transcripts for those as well. I copied each heading and its content into a document if it directly referenced ELLs or contained subtopics that referenced ELLs. I then identified narratives for further analysis about how teachers describe and interpret their teaching acts related to ELLs and those related to learning to teach in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Analytic Methods

Structural Analysis

Data analysis began during the identification of emergent themes while transcribing and continued through the segmenting, organizing, and "naming" of stories within the second transcription based on Gee's (1991) structural analysis which uses hierarchical levels of strophes, stanzas, and lines to organize and analyze narrative data. I read through the transcript looking for sections that were bounded by story, topic, or theme and gave the section a heading based on the meaning in the participants' words. These headings were formatted as "Heading 1" in Microsoft Word to generate an outline of the combined narrative transcript.

Subtopics within each heading were parsed out using the same technique of identifying related units of speech that occurred naturally or through breaks in questions related to the topic. These subtopics were titled based on content of the unit, its role within the narrative chunk, or as an example of a previously described theme. I used Labov and Waletsky's (1967) approach to structural narrative analysis as a guide for organizing subtopics within categories containing extended story in order to easily identify the orientation to the story, complicating action (problem), resolution, and coda (summary). Each subtopic was formatted as "Heading 2" within the Microsoft Word document in order to generate a 2-tiered outline of the combined narrative transcript. Headings within the titles were adjusted with each additional reading of the data to ensure they accurately and succinctly reflected the theme of each category and subtopic.

The outline heading and subtopic titles reflected the dominant themes within each narrative and became the basis for presenting participant stories in Chapter 4. For the most part, each story is a chronological retelling of linked events centered on a predominant theme within participant background, educational experience, pre-teaching life, teacher training, teaching, and working with ELL students.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic narrative analysis was my primary tool for working with the data collected in interviews, and the discussions generated from observations. In comparing the commonly used qualitative analysis tool of thematic coding in the grounded theory tradition, Riessman (2008) summarizes key differences between that approach and the narrative analytic approach to thematic analysis:

> Narrative study relies on (and sometimes has to excavate) extended accounts that are preserved and treated analytically as units, rather than fragmented into thematic categories as is customary in other forms of qualitative analysis, such as grounded theory…In narrative study…attention shifts to the details—how and why a particular event is storied, perhaps, or what a narrator accomplishes by developing a story that way, and effects on the reader or listener. (pp. 12-13)

Thematic analysis within the narrative genre looks for themes in holistic chunks of data that remain "intact" (Riessman, 2008) while that used in grounded theory unitizes data into single, decontextualized ideas that can be regrouped together. The aims of narrative thematic analysis guided my treatment of the data during the transcription, analysis, and presentation stages. As discussed above, I summarized data chunks by keeping the

context and adding titles that reflect the content. In the next chapter, I extract "holistic chunks of data" from the narratives to support my interpretation of the data.

I used thematic narrative analysis in the second and third transcripts to develop the central themes that would make up my retelling of each participant's narrative, and to identify the ways in which they describe their teaching and learning to teach ELL students. Analyses from the first transcript provide a means of making sense of what teachers describe as their experiences and their interpretations. For example, as I explore in the next chapter, Naomi describes herself as a "very reflective" and deliberate person. Because these characteristics are salient within the larger manuscript, I use them to analyze her talk related to ELL instruction in a way that is consistent with how she views herself. Her emphasis on reflection as a tool for her own learning becomes apparent in her description of her pre-service teaching experiences; her belief that reflection is central to learning becomes apparent as she discusses her approach to designing classroom activities and conversations to encourage reflection within her students. In sum, the analysis of the initial transcript resulted in salient themes—presented in the background section of each participant's story in the next chapter—that were coded and used to analyze narratives in the ELL-focused transcript.

The thematic analytic process included identifying and refining a list of themes in each participant's narrative during successive readings and transcript reductions. For the narrative component, I made noted emerging themes within each transcribed interview during the initial transcription phase. These informed subsequent interview questions and, if verified by the participant in future interviews, eventually formed the

categories and subtopics in the structural outline of the interviews. As described above in the structural analysis section, categories and subtopics were revised with successive readings of the transcript to ensure fit with other themes. Stories and explanations that seemed inconsistent were noted.

Dialogic Performance

Dialogic performance analysis considers interactions between the participant and researcher, in addition to context when interpreting narratives, thereby making this analytic method both distinct from and compatible with other narrative analytic methods (Riessman, 2008). A narrative analysis utilizing this approach identifies the setting, characters, and plot of stories that emerge and seek to answer questions about the "work" the telling accomplishes for the narrator (Ochberg, 1994). Necessarily, the researcher becomes a visible and active component of the narrative construction as audience to the story and at times, as was the case in interviews with Maya, a character in the story. This analytic method is more attentiveness and art in telling the story than it is procedural, like the other narrative analytic methods. My goal then is to present a plausible explanation of the data supported by rich description. I do not purport to portray the only interpretation.

Some aspects of dialogic performance are best suited for answering the research question regarding teacher interpretations of their teaching acts. Consequently, I use this analytic tool in some measure in each participant's story in Chapter 4. However, this analytic tool was most fitting for interpreting Maya's interview for reasons addressed above. Interpretations and presentations purported to "speak for" another can be

troublesome considering iterations of interpretive decisions from the speaking to the written report (Riessman, 2008). Even the best efforts to understand face barriers of meaning lost in translation during interviews and inherent limitations in representing complex multidimensional experience in two-dimensional text. The multiple meaning of words can further complicate matters, resulting in infinite opportunities to misunderstand and misinterpret research participant words and meaning. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert, although "humans get tired [and] exhibit selective perception…there are techniques the naturalist can employ that, while they fall short of *guaranteeing* balance and fairness, can nevertheless provide a system of useful checks and balances" (p. 108). In the next section I discuss the features of this research that facilitate trustworthiness and credibility.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness and credibility refer to the quality of the research and the alignment of the interpretation and presentation of the data with the actual data. This is fundamentally an epistemological question on the nature of truth, an underlying premise of how "fit" and "alignment" are determined. In narratives, the notion of truth is quite different from how it is conceptualized in the positivist tradition. Sandelowski (1991) describes the difference thusly:

> Narrative truth is distinguished from other kinds of formal science truths by its emphasis on the life-like, intelligible and plausible story. Stories typically reflect a coherence (as opposed to correspondence) theory of truth in that the narrator strives for narrative probability – a story that makes sense; narrative fidelity – a

story consistent with past experiences or other stories; and aesthetic finality – a

story with satisfactory closure and representational appeal. (pp. 164-165)

On many levels the initial stories and the retellings that follow in the presentation of this

research are interpreted many times over (Riessman, 2008). To provide the reader with

sufficient cause to trust the findings presented here as plausible, I employed member

checking in the creation of primary transcripts and asked participants to clarify

misrepresentations or half-representations where my knowledge was incomplete.

Second, in I utilized thick description (Geertz, 2000) throughout the presentation of data

and in support of my resulting interpretations. Finally, I have transparently presented my

interest in this research through my personal narrative in Chapter 1; my role in the

research and how participants for this study were obtained earlier in an earlier discussion

of the methodology. Direct quotation and researcher transparency invite the reader to

draw their own conclusions about the data, as well as evaluate my interpretation based

on my explicated stance.

Summary

This study builds upon the extant literature by framing the research problem

within constructivism and narrative research methods, where I assume that the

experiences of others can be known to a degree by understanding the meaning they

ascribe to people, places, events, and emotions presented in their storied lives (Ochberg,

1994). Beyond asking teachers to report and explain their thinking and experiences,

narratives invite participants to "tell their story" in a familiar communicative manner.

This expression grants the audience—in this case, the researcher—access to otherwise

ineffable and often invisible aspects of life, such as identity, beliefs, and worldview. Within the constructivist framework, analyzing participant narratives of their acts of teaching and learning to teach ELL students will reveal how they make sense of working with language learners within their broader understanding of who they are, why they teach, and what it means for them and for their students. This understanding can help ground further study of AC teachers and the development of strategic experiences to support their learning and effective practice with ELL students in mainstream classrooms.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the findings from participant narratives about their learning to teach and teaching ELL students. In narrative inquiry stories are situated within a context that gives them meaning. Narratives about becoming a teacher are revelatory with regard to how teachers see the profession, their motives for changing careers, and their current role in classrooms (Costigan, 2004). Therefore, in order to understand participant narratives about teaching ELL students, I begin each participant's story with their background—a composite of salient themes from our interviews that provides information about their history, families, TTF experiences, and professional lives as teachers. This broader story frames the specific teacher narratives of teaching and learning to teach ELL students. The themes that organize each story are the salient themes across interviews within each case, resulting in variations in the content of each section across stories. Each story contains background, learning to teach, and teaching ELL students.

With regard to content, narrative analysis develops theory within a single case (Riessman, 2008), which complicates attempts to separate the retelling from analysis and interpretation (Ochberg, 1994; Riessman, 2008). Each story—consisting of delimited content and meaning from the raw interview data—represents a theoretical argument for interpreting participant narratives and is supported by contextualized narrative excerpts. Teacher descriptions and interpretations of their teaching acts and learning to teach ELLs proceed from the background story. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of

the salient themes in what I term the collective participant narrative. This section is organized by the research questions.

Jane's Story

Background

Jane has been in education since she dropped out of law school one year after graduating college. She would not be considered a typical AC teacher since she did not have much experience outside of the classroom. However, she began her first teaching job in a private school without any prior training and she worked with students once weekly on specific mathematics or science topics they needed to complete the curriculum. On taking the job she says, "The reality is I needed a job and the private school that I was at, that I ended up working at, needed teachers." She never intended to stay past two years; work there was just a way to make a living while she figured out what she wanted to do next. Seven years later, she knew she wanted to pursue education as a career.

> [W]hen I originally started that job it was only going to be maybe one or two years. It wasn't going to be long term. But as I started <u>doing</u> it, I actually think teaching in the private school made the big difference for me because as I started doing it, um, I got more interested in why people learn the things that they do. I got very interested in making sure that my students understood science and math. And then I would say it really progressed over the time that I was in the private school until by the time I was <u>done</u> at the private school I knew that education was the place I belonged.

She continues to provide greater detail about what led to her decision, although it was not a major event but more of a realization that developed over time.

> I went back and forth while I was working at the private school…honestly when I started in the private school I didn't see it as a career. I saw it as something I would do essentially to support myself during my twenties and then I would move on to like, a real career…but, what basically triggered it for me as this is the place where I belong in terms of a career and actually wanting to do it long term was, I was…I went back and forth between whether I wanted to do research science or go on into industry as a chemist, or stay in education. And um, there wasn't any really like one precipitating event that said stay in education, but I just felt very strongly the more I studied and the more I, you know, took additional classes and enlarged my understanding of science in general, I didn't want to leave the classroom […] Um, and I finally made the decision. I really like teaching, I'm good at teaching. I think this is where I want to spend…what I want to spend doing for the rest of my life. And I didn't really want to go into research science and I knew I didn't want to go back to law school. So I decided, you know what, it's time to make the move into the classroom.

These excerpts reveal that Jane made a commitment to teach over time. Her decision was not haphazard or a last resort. Her competence in teaching and understanding of science developed in tandem with her assessment that teaching fit her interests in "why people learn the things that they do" and in ensuring her students understood the subjects she

86

taught. Moreover, the latter reveals an important aspect of Jane's disposition, the desire to learn more.

Jane is a Learner at Heart

Jane's identity as a learner is interwoven throughout her narrative. She says, "I've always liked school. So, I knew that there was always going to be something I was going to do with school. I originally figured it would be college professor." So even though she has had experience in the classroom teaching science and mathematics, has taken enough chemistry courses to be a few credits shy of a bachelor's degree, and took classes through Calculus II, Jane wanted to find a program where she could learn how to teach. She reflects on her teaching qualifications while working at the private school as a matter of mutual convenience: "[T]hey were looking for someone to teach math, and I was basically qualified. Looking back, I wouldn't have hired me." So finding the right program for her meant taking into consideration her experiences while preparing her to teach in a new context: public school classrooms with many students unlike her private school individual sessions with privileged students. She wanted to find a program that would prepare her to be successful with students who "weren't being served in the public schools in the way that they needed to". She believed that the education system needed to have "public school teachers that can (p) reach all kids and are willing to have all kids in their classrooms, and willing to teach all of them, and expect not just that they're there for the grade but that they're actually there to learn and to become educated." Not only does her penchant for learning drive her to further her understanding, it shapes her philosophy about education in general. For Jane, education

is about learning—changing and improving in some lasting way—and not about earning a temporary grade.

Jane began to look for programs that fit her needs as a teacher and her philosophy about what public school students needed. She considered both traditional and alternative routes but knew she "didn't need to spend, you know, six months doing student teaching". She wanted "something that would still put me in the classroom and teach me the things that I needed to know". Jane came across TTF through a friend and, in kind with her deliberate decision-making, evaluated its "fit" with who she was becoming as a teacher and her educational philosophy.

> And when I started reading through their application materials, I was really impressed because they were very much talking about achievement and goal-setting, and, um, really looking at it from the perspective of how do we find ways to make the kids learn, how do we make…um, how do we make a difference as the teacher. Um, and I really liked that message that the teacher is the most critical component.

She enrolled in TTF 2006 and began teaching fulltime at East Powell High School, where she has been for the last six years.

The Last Six Years with the TTF Program

For the last three years she was a science Fellow Advisor and Seminar Leader. It was in this capacity that Jane and I met and I began interviewing her as a person of interest to talk about how TTF prepares Fellows for ELL instruction. As the initial interview progressed, it became clear that she also had insight about the research inquiry

as a result of her having been a Fellow that taught ELL students. The focus of subsequent interviews became her experiences teaching language learners over the years and her learning activities related to ELL instruction in her mainstream science classroom. She since recommended other participants to the study (see Participant section of Chapter 3).

After earning her teacher certification through the Fellows program, she began taking on additional responsibilities with TTF, which is not surprising considering her regard for the program as being philosophically aligned to her view of education and, as she discusses her instructional roles within the program, aligned to her understanding of the role of teachers in education and how to get them to achieve.

> So, it was a good fit. It actually was a perfect fit. It fit what I thought of myself, what I believe about myself. And then their mission statement and their…the messaging was a good fit for how I regard education.

Reflecting on her educational experiences, Jane believed that although her parents were well educated, her development as a student was largely attributable to having had good teachers. Her philosophy and TTF's philosophy of the role of teachers meshed:

I was very lucky to have very good teachers. I had excellent teachers, um for the most part. And I remember all of my excellent teachers and I don't really remember my so-so or my mediocre or even my bad teachers that much. Unless they were so really bad that they really just sort of stuck out (L). But that was…that was what drew me to Texas Teaching Fellows is that their set emphasis and focus is on just being an excellent teacher and that they really seem to be able to back it up.

An important component of Jane's ability to be successful her first year was her TTF science teaching advisor. Having been a Fellows advisor as well, Jane could appreciate the skill with which her advisor integrated the curriculum components and her practical classroom experiences. "[S]he was very good at bringing in the different things that she did and showing us different examples, um, of things that her students use. And a lot of the stuff that she did, I actually incorporated it into my first year of teaching." Jane would eventually use this same model in preparing future Fellows.

I wanted to know how, if at all, her previous teaching experience compared to what TTF espoused in order to understanding the contribution participating in the program had on her teaching. For Jane, it was difficult to parse out where she learned what because "there hasn't ever been a time where I haven't been in school in some way, shape, or form either taking classes or as a teacher." Jane is always learning be it through experience as a teacher in a private school, in a formal class at a higher education institution, in a classroom with a practitioner, or as primarily an observer during her summer school teaching experience. She seems learn in whatever context she finds herself. This posture of learning has implications for how she teaches. Because she learns through a variety of modes, there are no types of lessons that are off-limits for her if they will reach her students. She encourages her Fellows to follow her lead.

Working at East Powell High School

Jane began teaching at East Powell High School after completing TTF summer training in 2006 and has since taken on increasing levels of responsibility at her school as well. During an interview at East Powell with a TTF staff member responsible for

observing Fellows in summer sessions, I asked how Fellows' preparation and teaching compared to other teachers she had observed in her many years of experience. She cited Jane as an example of the program's effectiveness in developing strong teachers who could improve student achievement and become leaders in their schools. The staff member introduced us.

In our initial interview I asked Jane to tell me about where she worked. Since all of our interviews took place in her classroom after school hours, hearing how she saw her teaching environment was helpful in contextualizing her experience of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. In fact, diversity was the first thing she mentioned and continued to pervade descriptions of Powell ISD and her high school:

> In terms of the students, this is the largest, most diverse high school in one of the largest, most diverse districts in Texas. So, um, I mean right off, you notice our kids are honestly broken up into even quarters essentially of…you know we have a quarter white, a quarter African American, a quarter Asian-Middle Eastern, and then a quarter Hispanic. Um, so it's really the first thing you notice.

As she continued to describe the school climate, she clearly differentiated East Powell from other schools where you would expect race to be an issue. She said, "Nobody really talks about it, nor do they shy away from it." Students at East Powell are very well integrated and "have friends from all different backgrounds."

Her students come from different households, about half qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, a common indicator of low socioeconomic status as well as a predictor for low academic achievement. Some of her students were raised by single

91

parents—she mentions death and incarceration as reasons—or relatives. "So, I mean

really, it's a slice of American life. So that's…it's an interesting mix." The notion that

poverty and single parentage lead to poor academic performance is ubiquitous. Jane

seems to challenge the notion by juxtaposing student background with the "professional

attitude" that exists at East Powell High School without regard to economic status.

"Overall, I would say that when you walk into the school, it's a very, um, professional

attitude. The kids are expected to behave professionally." She summarizes the school

culture as a reflection of student expectations:

> …it's a good place to work. It's a place where we have an objective. And we
>
> expect our kids to be successful. We expect them to obey the rules. We expect
>
> them to contribute. We expect them to enjoy what's happening in our
>
> classrooms. We expect them to participate. And that is pervasive, I would say,
>
> throughout the majority of the school.

These two statements were given at different times, indicating consonance within her

perception of the school culture. Jane has taken ownership of these expectations in a way

that mirrors her education philosophy about teachers expecting students to pursuant of

more than a grade and "actually there to learn and to become educated". In our talks,

Jane does not acknowledge student poverty as a barrier to her teaching or student

learning outcomes.

In describing her work environment, Jane discussed the value of a supportive

administration. Hearing "administrative support" from a teacher often connotes

protection from students and parents that may attack the work of teachers or challenge a

grade. Jane referred to administrative support in reference to providing what was necessary to meet student learning needs, even when it appeared to conflict with teacher preference and comfort. In that respect, she and the administrator of the science department held similar beliefs in prioritizing students. As the head of the science department, her choice to focus on what students need has been met with resistance. However, Jane implies that this pushback was of little consequence in her decision-making, no doubt due in part to her "extremely supportive" administrator.

> Um, and she's very much about what's best for the kids. And that really is sort of the litmus test that she and I pretty much use for running the department, is what's best for the kids. So there's some push back from that because, um (p) there's several people in my department who think that the first question should be, how does this impact the teacher. While I think that that is an important question, that is not the primary question. So, um (p) she and I work really well together in that respect.

In many ways Jane's narratives are consistent. She regularly uses her teaching philosophy as a guide when making decisions from choosing to enroll in and eventually work for TTF to functioning as an administrator within the science department at East Powell High School. She believes that teachers are the most important factor in learning outcomes—for better or worse as discussed in the following paragraphs—and that all students can learn given high quality instruction and high expectations. In the following section I expound upon Jane's teaching philosophy made visible through her narration of events in her classroom and the meaning she ascribes to them.

93

Classroom Experiences and Meaning-Making

For Jane, there are requirements of both the teacher and the student in order for science learning to occur. As a teacher, Jane has to teach students the "language of science", intermingle life lessons with science ones, correct student mistakes so that they can communicate ideas clearly, and be willing to do what is necessary for students to understand the material. In order for this to happen, she has to create an environment where students feel safe to make mistakes and certain that she will help them learn from those mistakes. For the students' part, they must be willing to be wrong and make their thinking visible to the class in order to help everyone learn science, and they have to put in the effort to learn the science material as well as putting into practice the language lessons she provides. In this section I recount Jane's reenactment of these requirements, beginning with her view of science as a language all its own.

When I asked Jane to tell me about her work with ELL students she told me that she sees all students in her class as having limited proficiency in science because they do not know the language of science. She adopted this perspective from her Fellow Advisor back in 2006 and has continued to embed that thinking into her teaching practice. She says, "there's a lot of things that I do whether I have a child who's LEP or not, that are just there to support their language. So, that's sort of the experience that I've had." In other words, her teaching practice begins from a belief that all students need support in order to learn the content and the language through which it is mediated. This becomes a primary focus of her instruction: "And so, the things that I try to do in my classroom are

94

there to make sure that they just understand the language requirements of my subject more than anything."

Aside from activities she uses to provide students with linguistic support for making science accessible, Jane finds it necessary to teach students how to express themselves with competence and clarity. She does this by ruthlessly correcting their grammar.

> And I'll be honest, I'm brutal about correcting people's grammar. Like I will correct their grammar when they're <u>talking</u>. I will correct their grammar, um, when they're writing. And it…and sometimes it'll be like, you know that was really <u>harsh</u>; I got my paper back and it had all these corrections on it. I'm like, were they a valid correction? Yes, they were valid. Did you need to learn it? Yeah. Okay, then we're good. And so, that's just my big thing is we're not going to…I'm not going to let you out of my classroom without you being better than when you came in.

Her rationale for correcting student speaking and writing is apparent in the last sentence. She sees her role as being an access point to a better quality of life. Therefore, she holds students to a high academic standard and expects students to use the language of science in her classroom. As the excerpt indicates, sometimes students do not readily agree with her methods yet she persists from a deeply held belief that her methods are ultimately beneficial for the students.

Another area Jane and her students often disagree is in her persistence that students open themselves, or at least their thinking, up for critique. Again, Jane views

this as something that will ultimately benefit the students; however, students are reluctant in her estimation. She believes that mistakes are learning opportunities and encourages her students to say what they are thinking so that others can examine it for accuracy. She creates a safe space for students to do so by praising students that venture to offer their thoughts in spite of it being incorrect. On several occasions she mentions that she does not coddle her students when they make mistakes. She tells them "You're wrong", but emphasizes the benefit of revealing that error to the class in order for all to grow from it and identify the correct way of thinking. In the following extended excerpt, Jane demonstrates her belief that teaching students this way makes them critical thinkers.

> I mean (p)…okay so my students don't ever really get to a point where they can master explaining some kind of abstract concept in science that we've gone over, but if they can get to a point where they can clearly communicate their thoughts in writing and speaking, ultimately I, as a member of society, I'm okay with that. And I'd much rather have my students be…and I will actually say that one of the things that I look for is I'm more interested in turning my students into critical thinkers than I am necessarily into budding scientists. I think that if you have the first, the second one follows pretty easily if that's what you decide you want to do with your life down the road.

Jane sees her actions as providing students with opportunities to pursue different paths in the future at their election. It can be inferred that failing to become critical thinkers will relegate students to a limited number of options to pursue when they graduate from high

school. Jane continues by saying she has to limit herself in such a way as to force students to think on their own and refusing to provide them with all of the answers.

> I ask them to look at things from a lot of different perspectives. Um, and I really encourage my students to talk in my classroom—to each other, to me, um. There's a lot...they're always talking going on in my classroom. But most of the time, it isn't me doing most of the talking. So, I think that that's part of how I facilitate that. The other way that I facilitate that is, I don't shy away from telling them when they're wrong (L). Like, no that's not right. But at the same time I also say to my kids, one of the things that we talk about a lot in my classes is that if you don't know what it is you believe, you can't ever decide if it's right or wrong. So I encourage them to be wrong, to hold up their beliefs, so that the rest of us can look at it and decide as a group is this a correct belief, is it an incorrect belief. Is it wholly correct or partially correct?

She acknowledges that being vulnerable is a challenge for many students, but a necessary one nonetheless. Subsequently, her role is to create the kind of environment wherein students are safe to make mistakes. Students must feel free to express their burgeoning thoughts in order for Jane to assess and address misconceptions. She describes how she does that by ensuring students that "no one's going to make fun of you."

> And I mean I'll have kids that will volunteer something that's just completely wrong. And I don't shy away from saying, you know, that's wrong. Like, what you believe is wrong. And I'll have other kids that will say, oh you got it wrong.

And I'll look at the other student and I'll say, <u>he</u> tried. Like, he told me what he was thinking. He was willing to put his idea out there so that the rest of us could actually look at it and see if it's correct. <u>He</u> is more advanced than those of you who were unwilling to speak. And so that attitude of, it's bad to be wrong, is not really…it's not in my class. Like, when I say to a kid, nope that's wrong, it's not it's wrong and how dare you not know this. It's no that's wrong, so let's talk about what's right. And so we…I don't think that kids are afraid to be wrong in my class when it comes time to share ideas about different things that they have.

How Jane perceives her teaching role and impact on student success can be summed up in the line that follows, "So that right there I think makes them…makes them pretty successful over the course of the year in being able to evaluate, um, sort to f the truth and the error of the things that they believe." Taken with the preceding excerpts it is clear that Jane desires her students to improve as a result of being in her class. As discussed above, she views this improvement as extending beyond learning science and into their ability to function in life after high school.

Teaching and Learning to Teach ELL Students

Jane's experience teaching ELL students began in Texas and has varied from year to year, she guesses depending on the classes she taught. She does not mention what she taught her first year at Powell but she had the greatest number of ELL students then, almost half of her class. For the last two years she taught physics and has taught considerably fewer ELL students, having anywhere from none to two in a class. This year, she teaches physics and chemistry and has a few more language learners but not

many more. Chemistry and physics are upper level science courses. The relatively low representation of ELL students in these courses could reflect limited opportunities for language learners to access higher level science curricula at her school (Harklau, 1994b; Reeves, 2004). On the other hand, since these courses are usually associated with grade levels, the appearance of low ELL presence could be a function of fewer students continuing to receive ELL services as they progress through the school system. As Harklau (1994b) suggests, school tracking practices can systematically keep second language learners in lower level classes through a number of way including a compound effect of underdeveloped proficiency skills in the areas of L2 reading, writing, listening, and speaking that limit their ability to succeed in higher level science classes.

Throughout the years Jane has grown in her ELL teaching practices and attributes much of that to the foundation she gained through TTF and increasing competence in teaching science for all students. For Jane, science is a language all its own that renders all of her students "limited" language proficient. She adopted this perspective from her TTF Fellow Advisor during her pre-service summer training and has integrated this way of thinking into her perception of her work with ELL students as primarily one type of language learner in her class.

> Um, and I've had everything from kids who have been in the country for several years to they've just, you know, have been here for a few months. Um, so that's always required some…some different strategies. But the thing is is that one of the things that, um, my Fellow Advisor was very emphatic about that I've adopted is that English language strategies (p) are good for all kids. It doesn't

matter if…my thought process on it is, science is a different language. So it

doesn't matter, even if you have been speaking English for the last 15, 16, 17

years, when you walk into my classroom you are language um, limited, your

language is…your language proficiency is limited in here because you don't

understand the vocabulary. You don't understand the specific dialect of science.

Um, so a lot of the LEP strategies that I would be required by law to use, or that

would be good to use, were things that I already used because they're just good

teaching strategies.

Jane acknowledges that the teaching practices she uses for all of her students will

necessarily vary by student language proficiency level and previous exposure to the

culture and language, and for the most part she focuses on implementing practices in her

classroom that support the language such as cooperative learning, graphic organizers,

use of visuals to reinforce verbal language, and spending time practicing the application

of concepts together. According to the literature JGT strategies, though helpful for

making content comprehensible for language learners, fail to address specific aspects of

instructional practices for language acquisition (Clair, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005;

Reeves, 2006). In this section, I discuss how Jane describes her JGT practices through

narrating experiences with language learners and how she interprets those acts by

situating them within her larger story and beliefs about education.

ELL Students Represent More Than Diversity in Language and Culture

Having started her teaching career in California—one of the most densely ELL-

populated states in the country (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Jane's

exposure to language learners proved to be limited in comparison to what she experienced in Texas. In southern California, students that spoke a language other than English proficient in both and were also more likely to be affluent. She was surprised by the diversity in language and culture of her ELL students in Texas. More than those differences, Jane became aware of differences in student disposition and willingness to put in the effort to learn the content and the language. In the narrative that follows, Jane discusses the range of ELL students she encountered throughout her career, from a Chinese student who put in no effort under the guise of not speaking the language, to an Indian student who put in a great deal of effort and eventually met his goal:

My first year of teaching I had a student from China who, I honestly don't know (p) what he learned because he didn't do any work and we would try (L)...I would try to have conversations with him. I actually learned later on he knew a lot more English than he was letting on. He was actually using the whole "I don't speak English" thing as an excuse to not really do very much. All the way to having a student who, um, was from India, who had only been in the country for a year and he was working as hard as he could and he kept struggling to, you know, pass just his TAKS test because he really hadn't had biology. He didn't understand what a lot of the language meant. Um, but he got to the point where, he just graduated, finally passed his TAKS test. But he came back and got a 3 on his AP physics exam. So clearly he had mastered...and he'd only been in the country for 3 years when he took the test. So clearly, um, he had mastered something.

Her choice of students highlights not only her range of exposure to ELL students, but reinforces her teaching themes belief in student effort as essential to their learning science.

An Illustration of Working with ELL Students: The Story Of Ali

I went in to observe one of Jane's classes during the course of our interview. Having gone in twice, I asked her during the follow-up interview to tell me about her ELL students in that class. She counted eight, although one was unofficial, and provided a quick overview of each of them in terms of their background and how they were performing in her class (see Appendix A below this portion of the ELL transcript). Jane talks about one student, Ali at length. It is her telling of his story that I focus on in this section as it fits within her narrative about how students learn science, he embodies the characteristics she believes facilitate learning, and she goes in depth later in the transcript about teaching him to write a science lab report.

Ali is one of her favorite students. He is hardworking and unafraid of being wrong in her class. "He's the one who will always answer my questions even when he's really wrong. But he doesn't mind being wrong because he just wants to learn" (lines 46-48). Student educational history is essential knowledge for the ELL teacher (Faltis & Coulter, 2008; Short, 2002). In Ali's case, his education was disrupted by having to work to support himself and his younger brother in Turkey when their parents were still in Iraq. Jane does not know what events precipitated their move to the United States, but reasons it must have been related to being political refugees. Of his parents Jane says, "I've met his mother and his father. They're both very nice people. They're very hard-

102

working people. They have very high expectations for their children. Um, and it <u>shows</u> because he works really hard."

In some ways Ali's story troubles Jane's narrative that teaching the science language alone is sufficient for students to be successful because although he works really hard and is not afraid to hold up his ideas to scrutiny, he still struggled to pass the TAKS test after having previously failed it. Her reasoning, "that has to do more with English than it has to do with anything else" (lines 55-56). As de Jong and Harper (2005) write, "Most teachers, particularly in the upper grades, focus on content mastery and cognitive development without serious attention to the language through which the learning takes place. As a result, they may be unaware of linguistic demands that are particularly challenging for second-language learners" (pp. 109-110).

Jane describes an exciting development in Ali's progress with writing lab reports. I ask her to expound on the actual process she engaged in to get from describing his first lab report as "what you would expect from somebody who doesn't speak the language very well <u>and</u> who has been out of…who spent 3 years out of school" to "this is exactly what a college report is supposed to look like" (lines 66-67). She says it has been a long process throughout the school year getting him to this point. She utilizes a number of skills to facilitate measurable progress in Ali's writing proficiency, primarily providing him with specific feedback addressing grammar usage and allowing Ali to express himself verbally before writing his responses to each section of the lab. The latter point is of the utmost importance because in so doing Jane provided Ali with opportunities to develop his English proficiency through practicing speaking the language as well as

translating this, with support, into written language. She set goals for Ali by giving him specific things to work on in order to improve his next lab report.

Ali's eventual success in writing the report was the result of the cumulative process of individualized instruction for Ali. In this regard, Jane demonstrates how the ELPS are met through working with an individual ELL student. It also provides a window into the skills she developed while teaching students one-on-one at the private school. Her persistence in approaching instruction for the large group using JGT strategies suggest the need for additional support in transitioning her skills in teaching students in small groups into the larger classroom.

Continuing to Refine her ELL Instructional Practice

As discussed earlier, being a Teaching Fellow was influential in developing her teaching philosophy about teaching ELL students, as well as teaching the language of science. Consistent with her desire for constant self-improvement and improvement in student academic achievement, continual professional development in these areas pervades Jane's narrative. Though this yearning for more understanding seems to conflict with her statement that her classroom practices are effective for teaching language learners and native English-speakers alike, she is able to appeal to her deeply embedded belief that receiving more education will help her to better serve her students. After all, the desire to learn reflects is a functional expression of her dual belief that teachers are the most critical component in student learning and that successful teachers are those who "do what's necessary to make students successful". Not every teacher in

her school agrees with this philosophy, although linguistic diversity has had a tremendous impact on East Powell High School and within the district.

When asked to describe the impact of linguistic diversity on Powell ISD she says the numbers show "[It] is a place where we continually struggle…kids are (p) struggling to, um, (p) master the standardized…show mastery on the standardized test they're going to require them to get their high school diploma. Um, I think that that is a major concern." In the excerpt that follows Jane narrates her position and impetus for pursuing further education on teaching ELL students.

> That's part of why a lot of our…a lot of our trainings at the district level, at the school level, are focused on using LEP strategies. (p) I'm trying to think. At the district level, is basically a reflection of what's happening at the school. So there is a lot of focus on making sure that we're engaging our English language learners. We've had training on the ELPS over and over and over again and we still are struggling to get compliance with that. So I think that that is something that is definitely an issue still impacting the school.

As an area of persistent struggle in an otherwise academically recognized school, addressing the academic shortcomings of language learners elicits a very personal response from Jane as well as district and school administrators. On the focus of ELL strategies training Jane says it is extensive. And that the primary thrust from Powell ISD is that "English language strategies are just good teaching strategies. So, I would say a pretty strong amount. So…but that's the attitude of the district." Responses from other teachers have been mixed.

Um, I think it really comes back to the teacher because they're several teachers I know in my department that, um employ a lot of English language strategies for all their students. And then I have some that employ almost none. But they've all had the same training. So I mean you could…I think it's more that some teachers sort of that attitude of, well that's not how we did things when I was in school, so we shouldn't do things that way.

In spite of the number of mandatory trainings, Jane notes that it makes little impact if teacher attitude is resistant to their responsibility to provide instruction that betters the learning outcomes for ELL students. This perspective has been supported in the wealth of studies on mainstream teachers' attitudes towards teaching language learners (Clair, 1995; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Yoon, 2008). For her, this attitude represents not only a barrier to student achievement, but also the school's ability to change the learning trajectory of all students.

And I think that…a lot of it comes down to individual teachers not wanting to address some of the needs of (p)…kind of attitudes like well they're here now, they should just learn English. And it's like well you're right, they should learn English and you need to teach it to them. So that's kind of where we struggle is (p) that there's sort of this attitude like well they should just be able to do it, I shouldn't need to…but then these are also people that don't differentiate for any of their other learners.

The last line represents Jane's understanding that beliefs pervade teacher behavior. Their resistant attitudes toward teaching to the needs of learners are not isolated to their instructional practices with ELL students.

Jane has tried attending workshops on ELL teaching strategies but often finds them irrelevant for her students because they are somewhat "juvenile". Jane's belief that the strategies are inappropriate for the students she teaches provides another way of looking at how beliefs filter teacher receptivity to trainings, and create what Reeves (2006) identified as skepticism towards professional development. The following long quote demonstrates Jane's frustration at an ELL training and the resulting skepticism.

> The other thing that surprised me is (p) how (p)…this is going to sound horrible… how little there is available that I think realistically supports secondary teachers who are trying to prepare students for college or for functioning in the real world. And I'll give you a for example. There's a LEP trainer in my district and she does this thing where, and she's junior high school. Okay, so she does thing where she's like you know I'm going to have the kids say the word, I'm going to have them say the word to the ceiling, I'm going to have them say the word to the desk, I'm going to have them say the word to the left, I'm going to have them say the word to the right. And I'm just like, yeah that's never going to fly for me. Like, I just…I would get about half my kids who would do it because they want to please me and the other half of me, I would just lose them completely […] And so that was probably the biggest surprise for me is that there aren't (p)…at least not that's been provided. And I will say that this

107

is probably something I should have sought more on my own. Is that I'm teaching more often than not 16, 17, 18, 19 year olds, who are adults and really would like to be treated like adults. And so a lot of the strategies that, um (p) come up in some of the LEP trainings are very <u>childish</u>. And so that's always one of those things that's very frustrating for me is what…because I'll be sitting in a training, in a 3-hour training, where there's been a discussion of 15—20 different strategies, I might walk away with 3 that I feel like I can actually, <u>realistically</u> use in my classroom and be able to get the kids to buy-in.

And I've said that before and other teachers are like I can totally get my kids to buy-in and I'm like, I don't believe it (L). If you can, great; but I think my kids take on my personality and my personality is, don't waste my time. What do I need to get out of this? What's going to be important for me? How can I use this? What is a practical application of this? So it's impractical for me to ask my kids to like, just say the word, just say the word, just say the…that drives me…it drives me nuts and I don't think that I can <u>realistically</u>…there's no way that I can sell that because I can't make my body language say, yeah this is a good thing, I think this is going to be useful for you. So I think that's one of the things I have found most surprising is that, um, for all that my training is secondary and it is aimed at high school teachers, um, a lot of the things that I've seen (p) are juvenile.

The most troubling aspect of Jane's experience is that she has a desire to learn and to improve, but there have not been additional resources to support her learning. The

skills and knowledge Jane possesses—evinced in her nuanced understanding of her ELL students' proficiency levels in the four components of the ELPS—was largely developed through her experience over time and by "paying attention" to those subtle commonalities in error patterns amongst students of the same background. Jane has been teaching for more than a decade though she had the most ELL students during her first year at Powell. In the next story, we meet Maya who is one of two new teachers responsible for teaching science to a linguistically and culturally diverse group of students.

Maya's Story

Background

Maya grew up in a Midwest inner city environment where she dropped out of high school and began working at the age of 13. She held several low-paying jobs and when she had the opportunity to break out of that, vowed to never return. She eventually earned her GED after feeling little to no success in school environments and went to college with the support of her husband who she credits for teaching her that she could think even when she doubted it. I asked her to tell me about that process with her husband that would lead her to pursue college. She jokes, "Um, it was a step-wide process with my husband, um to where, I mean…I…after I looked like an idiot the first time he already knew I was, so I didn't have to (L) hide that anymore." Maya's personal experience with schooling is juxtaposed with the comfort she felt to learn with her husband without feeling judged.

And he was very not judging. Just said okay, you don't know this and you

should, so let's learn it. And I basically had a great, very concentrated tutor, you

know so (p) I was set up to be able to learn the way I wanted to learn. And since

he really didn't know much about education he could, you know, just go forward

with seeing whatever was positive, whatever worked and going forward with

that. Well, I mean he hadn't been trained as a teacher or trained as a tutor or

anything. He was just going on his gut. So basically it wasn't well this works for

everyone else, why don't you fit the mold. It was, well you need this and you

don't know it, so we're going to teach it to you. You know? So it was purely me

centered.

This excerpt becomes the basis for understanding how Maya's sees her role in teaching

her students. For her, it is essential for students to feel comfortable in her class and that

she teaches students based on what they need and not based on some arbitrary measure.

The former became a central theme in our talks about education, while the latter was

more of an ideal (Costigan, 2004) than practical aspect of her classroom.

     With support from her husband Maya did apply to college and earned a free ride

having only to purchase her schoolbooks. There she enrolled in a chemistry class that fit

her schedule, never suspecting it would change the course of her life. Maya describes her

chemistry teacher as "amazing" and credits her for putting her on track to eventually

earn a triple major in biology, chemistry, and mathematics. It is notable that a few

supportive persons could reengage Maya in academics when for many years she did not

believe she was capable because she had failed in high school. It is reasonable to assume

that in her telling of these stories, Maya envisions herself as the teacher that could make learning fun for students, create the environment for them to feel safe to learn, and encourage them to be more than they imagined. In her own words, she makes the connection between what she aims to do and be for her students based on her own educational experience:

> Okay, so as a kid I didn't have very positive experiences with education. I wasn't…I didn't succeed regularly, you know. I didn't perform well at school. I didn't enjoy school. And so, I didn't just, you know, come out and start blossoming because, you know, I was this great student or anything. Um, so I didn't feel any success in that area. And so I tried to purposefully and strategically give experiences to students to feel success, so that they know that they can think. That they can, um, be successful in academics. You know what I'm saying? So they will...like I didn't ever think, well college must be…I thought college must be for other people because I can't possibly do that because look at what I did in school (I see)…in middle school or high school or whatever. Whereas if in here, they feel successes no matter how small, then perhaps they will believe, yes I can go forward. And I'm constantly telling them you're all going to college because you have no choice because I told you all what to do. So (L) hopefully that and…I do that purely based on my own experience. Because I didn't feel that way.

As I discuss later in her story, Maya often revisits this goal of comfort and helping students feel successful as she makes sense of her teaching.

111

Maya continued to pursue chemistry throughout college and had an opportunity

to apply her chemistry skills in a research program where should would eventually work

before starting a family. Her transition from research chemistry in college to considering

teaching follows:

So, because I went to a smaller school I was able to quickly get into a research

program and I quickly fell in love with the lab and I knew I wanted to be a

research Chemist. So then I did a research project that took 3 years. It was

fascinating. It was with the brown recluse spider toxin. Then after that I was

hired by the company that had been part of the funders of that project. And that

company…I worked for them for a short time and then when I had children I

thought I could be a stay-at-home chemist. So I stayed at home with my kids and

I loved that. And then when the economy changed, and after 9/11, then I opened

up a business because, you know, all chemists should become photographers. (L)

And I owned businesses and sold them. And now I can afford to be a teacher.

Maya's entrepreneurial background makes appearance throughout her narrative. It was

actually her ability to market herself that earned her her first teaching position.

Maya was interested in trying out teaching because she could afford to do so now

that she sold all of her businesses and she no longer needed a flexible schedule now that

her children were older. She never graduated from high school, so teaching high school

would give her insight into her daughters' experiences there. When the opportunity to be

a substitute teacher presented itself, Maya took it. Just a few days later, while subbing at

Lovett High School she was offered a full-time position to prepare students for the TAKS test. Her entrepreneurship is demonstrated in her telling of how she got the job.

> I walked into…okay, so I went from my friend's school and then the next day I was called into another school…because a sub goes to a different school every day…and so I went to a different school. And I went up to…I had made the little business card with a picture of a sub sandwich on it…business owner always selling myself. If you're hungry for a good replacement (p) call the sub. Picture the sub on there. And so I was going to the science office to drop off my sub card. And, um, we started talking and they're like we need someone now and you exceed our need, you want the job? I said, sure. And that's what happened.

The business owner side of Maya was prevalent in our conversations as she demonstrated her competence in teaching by expounding on her acts of teaching that portray her organizational skill and ability to generate and incorporate novel ideas into her teaching practice.

Maya tended to perform narratives demonstrating her competence in the follow-up interviews to the observations, particularly when it appeared she was unsure of how to answer my questions about her thinking and decision-making or felt as though her response revealed some kind of deficiency in her teaching. Throughout our follow-up interviews I tried to assure her of my non-evaluative intentions as to assuage her fears and make her feel comfortable in sharing. The quote above came from our initial interview, but provides a basis for making sense of future enactments of competence by focusing on her strengths as a creative entrepreneur capable of selling ideas.

113

Getting into Teaching: Tale of Two Schools in Mcclain ISD

Lovett High School needed someone with Maya's qualifications in mathematics and science. Shortly after accepting the position, Maya was told she needed to be certified to teach. She recalls the process:

And um, a week after being hired and working they said, [Gasp] You have to be certified, so I said Oh, I don't know anything about that. And they said, Here go! Here's a number. So I called them and they said, Can you come to interview today. I said, okay. So, went straight there. And they said Okay, you're in the program (L). And, I didn't know anything about the program. It was just the school I was at said you have to go now because you have to be certified. And I think they called ahead and said we really like this person, we want her to be in the program. And so that's how I got into the program.

In tandem with extant literature on AC teachers, Rochkind (2007; 2008) and colleagues acknowledge the overwhelming tendency for AC teachers to be placed in high-needs schools. The fact that she was hired first and certified second reflects the policy changes in certification discussed above in Chapter 1. Her experience, unlike the other participants, did not involve an intentional decision about enrolling in TTF. That decision was made for her.

While her TAKS teaching experience did not accurately reflect all of the work behind teaching—primarily because her curriculum was just handed to her and she was told to "just teach it in a fun way"—the environment at Lovett would provide a point of

contrast for the family environment she experienced at McClain. Lovett students

glorified the ghetto lifestyle whereas McClain students

> don't really do that. They don't glorify that (p) where they probably could fit that
>
> mold easier than those kids. Does that make any sense? Um, lower economic,
>
> more diversity. Um, um, more um, cultural difficulties to deal with. Um, parents
>
> working 3 jobs, nobody at home. That kind of thing.

She continues,

> But I do believe the administration makes all the difference. This administration
>
> here…um, the principal views everyone here as her family and loves every single
>
> one of them … Because that caring exists here, um, (p) they don't pull garbage
>
> that they would pull outside their family. Does that make sense? There's more of
>
> a feeling of belonging here. And I didn't see that at the other campus. The other
>
> campus, it was more of a fear. And it didn't work.

From Maya's perspective, the difference in school culture is a direct result of differences

in the school administration.

> Regardless of fear-based culture at Lovett, Maya wanted to secure a position

there because of her relationship with the students. When asked how she came to work at

McClain she explains:

> It was weird. I didn't…see I wanted to work at the other school I was at…the
>
> first school because I really felt I connect with those kids and I had a great
>
> experience there. So with the TAKS program, I really wanted that job because I
>
> really felt like I could fit those kids. And there were a lot of tired, worn out

teachers there. And I thought, oh they <u>need</u>, you know, what…the gifts that I have.

She interviewed at McClain High School as sort of a test run to "get practice" since she never had to interview for a job before. They offered her the position, but she was waiting for the principal to call her for an interview at Lovett. She said:

I never took it [the interview at the other school] because they offered me the job and I was like this is great. Well that's not totally true. I take that back. Okay, so, they never called me, because remember that principal is all about fear. And he kind of thought he was going to hire me, but it was all about fear and he was trying to hold me…and I was like, for my family I have to take a job. So he…and then, after I took the job, he offered me the interview. And I was like, man you know I wanted your job (p). You <u>know</u> I wanted to be at your school, and <u>now</u> you're offering me an interview this late in the game.

Maya describes her process of expressing interest in the position at Lovett. Here too she narrates her businesswoman role of marketing herself, only this time to no avail.

He just thought I was going to wait. I'm telling you they run the school off of fear. So he thought he was going to keep me wanting because he <u>knew</u> I wanted that job. I went in. I, you know, laid out my resume to him every <u>week</u>. I had recommendations written from all the heads of all the departments in the school. I really worked for that job. He knew I wanted it.

Maya's experience at McClain High School stood in stark contrast to what she perceived as the teaching culture and administrative style at Lovett High School. The

support she receives at McClain sometimes pangs her because she feels that somehow she has let them down or taken the easy way out.

> Feel a little guilty in the fact that, um this administration has made sure that who they have here feel the same way. So the other school, those teachers were worn out. And I really feel like they <u>needed</u> someone that has the same common feelings here.

Maya anticipated being someone that could turn around the culture at the school, much like the ideal beliefs held by teachers in Costigan's (2004) study of first-year teachers. As the year progressed for the teachers, their idealism waned and they began to focus more on the day-to-day practices of classroom management and getting through their lessons. As this interview happened later in the school year, her reflection in the next excerpt about being at McClain HS illustrates her awareness of the toll being in a more challenging school would have taken. However, the presence of those ideals still somehow causes Maya a bit of turmoil about her decision. Her narrative about wanting the job at Lovett demonstrates her desire to be in the tougher environment where she was "needed", however everything worked out and McClain turned out to be what *she* needed.

> The fact that she did not intend to find the program or this opportunity would be a recurring theme in her making sense of being at McClain High School, portrayed by Maya as one of the "better" schools in the district.

> So I'm like, am I here because it's <u>easier</u> (p) because everybody else is like me. And should I be somewhere where it's a little bit harder? (p) This is where God

117

put me and this is why I'm here (L). Well I mean, I didn't expect this job. Um, I got it somehow. So, um, I don't think my first year I could have handled that [culture] like I thought I could have. That culture…of the indifference. Yeah. I don't think I could have handled that kind of administration either. I don't know if this is just for this year, or these couple of years. Or if this is so that I can spend more time with my kids. Because the other would take more time, away from my family. Um, but, I'm a flower that's blooming where it's planted.

Maya's narrative on getting a job at McClain High School opens a window into some of the tensions new teachers face when attempting to reconcile their intent to teach in high-needs schools and taking the job that is available, which may be less challenging. Feeling that they are neglecting some unspoken responsibility to teach in tougher environments reveals a desire to help that may rigidly impact their ability to fully engage and grow from the environments where they find themselves. Furthermore, the commitment to school cultures that demand more of teachers than they can afford can lead to burnout and stifle long-term growth in challenging schools (Bobek, 2002; Borman & Dowling, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Ng & Peter, 2010). This theme also appears in Nina's story.

Silent on her Experience in TTF

Throughout our combined interviews, Maya makes fewer than 15 total references to her TTF experience and the impact the program had upon her teaching. Her comments about the program include two statements about how great Jane was to have as a Fellow Advisor and Seminar Leader, and how she helped her to create a flexible grouping plan

118

for arranging students for group and lab work. When asked to describe her learning from the program she says,

> Um, I know I learned a lot more than, or at least I hope I did. It's the application. I think the big thing for me is trying to apply everything, um that I learn in all these different environments, conversations, or um, professional development, or um, you know, the TTF seminar leader and applying all that and getting that in the classroom. You know?

TTF holds the same amount of weight in developing her teaching practices as the other resources she accesses to become a successful teacher. Her challenge is in managing all of the resources she receives. She describes how she copes with the overwhelming amounts of information.

> So what I try to do…'cause I'm really afraid that I'm going to learn something that I'm not going to practice it and I'm not going to remember how to do it—so what I try to do is learn something and then quickly apply it, like that very next day, find a way to apply it so that I can see how it works and how I need to work with it. And then store that away for using it in the future again. Does that make sense? Because I don't want to miss out on something I could have learned, and let it just fly out.

> She also mentions TTF as introducing her to the ELPS but not in enough depth for her to utilize them. During our conversation about the ELPS Maya realizes that what she says would have been helpful in her current teaching of ELL students is exactly what is publicly available on the TEA website, causing her to reevaluate her perception of

how TTF prepared her to work with language learners. I include the extended account below to highlight the real-time re-narration of the ELPS resource she received, how she initially perceived and utilized it, and how she now views and plans to use it.

Um, I remember it's a green piece of paper and it has, you know, all the different, um, you know things that are written on there. Like I'm trying to break it down what it is. Basically it is the ELPS that you can get off the internet. It's the, you know…everybody has access to it. It's not a file that's generated by TTF. Everybody gets this stuff. And so basically it lists out, um, you know (p)…was it actually…it's not techniques, but (p)…maybe they do have what I want. I want to say it says what level they're at and then what you need to do to support them, which is what I just said I wanted. So maybe they are doing it and I haven't spent enough time with it. Maybe? (p) No, couldn't be my fault. No, I don't know. […]

Um (L) but it was this piece of paper and I'm looking and I'm going, these are good tools. How do I use this tool? This sounds like a great idea. How do I implement this idea? This sounds like, a good thing that would help everybody. What would that look like, sound like, in a classroom? What's a for instance? You know, what's an example of how I would use this, in chemistry? You know what I'm saying?

So basically it was very general and I wanted something specific for me, so I could hit the ground running with that. You know what I'm saying? And I think that's what I felt was really lacking. And I…I…I don't know, I think that'll be a

120

new goal for this summer. Is I'm going to go through that ELPS list and really

find out what it is. Find my green paper.

Most importantly, reflecting on her talk in our conversation causes Maya to "fix the

hole" in her explanation and restate her problem with the ELPS, arguably to retain

credibility despite having given the standards a cursory glance.

Her silence on the role of TTF in preparing her to teach is perhaps attributable to

the fact that she did not really choose the program, as was the case with the other

participants. She entered the program because she wanted to keep the job at Lovett. Not

knowing anything about the program could have also impacted her perception of its

effectiveness in preparing her to teach in general, and to teach ELL students in

particular. Apart from references to learning procedural and classroom management

strategies from Jane, Maya relies primarily on her personal experience and

entrepreneurial attitude to create ideas to assist her students in learning. In her day-to-

day teaching, Maya relies on resources that she gathers from her colleagues at McClain

High School or adjusting her practices based on trial and error.

Being Part of the "Mcclain Family" Narrative

During our initial interview I asked Maya to describe her school and district.

Much like Jane's response to this question, Maya begins with talking about the diversity

of the district. She does not address the racial aspects, focusing instead solely on the

economic status of students.

The district is very diverse, but we have pockets of diversity. We have 9 high

schools. And of our 9 high schools, one is alternative, you know for the whole

district. Two are affluent; well, I mean our version of affluent. And those 2 are

not quite as diverse. Then we have one that's definitely on the lower economic

scale than everybody else. And then we have the rest of us. We're at 80%

economically disadvantaged by the state standards. So that means 80% of our

students are on free lunch.

Of the superintendent she narrates her belief that having roots within the community

connects to knowing student needs and a commitment to meeting them.

Our superintendent for the district is, you know, raised here, lived here forever,

so he's very involved in the community. So I think he has a really good grasp on

what's going on. And, he is also the guy that hired our principal and they share

very common views. So I think he honestly cares about what's going on in the

school more so than what do our numbers look like. I think, from, and I've only

been here for a year, but what I can ascertain, but my kids have been educated in

this are…so from what I can ascertain as a community member, a parent, and a

teacher now, an employee, I would say that there is a good grasp on the needs of

the community and their best effort to meet those needs. Best efforts might not be

best, but it's definitely their best effort.

This idea of connectedness to the community is the predominant reason Maya only

applied to work in McClain ISD when she was encouraged to apply everywhere. Having

observed the summer institute, I can attest to the training Fellows get from the program

to make sure that they land the job. On one occasion, the coordinator for job placement

told Fellows in the mathematics cohort to be open to applying to every district, even

122

McClain. She informed them that they are looking and Fellows should remain open to applying there. She implied that the district was less desirable than other school districts such as Powell ISD. But for Maya, this district and this school were just the right fit for her because of her connectedness to the community.

> This is the high school my husband graduated from. You know, we have roots here. It's in the same school district…this is the only school district I applied to. I didn't want to work anywhere else. And I told everyone, I'm not working outside of this school district. I'm only working here because I'm part of this community, and my kids are in this school district and I want to sow seeds in the community I live in.

In the narratives that follow, she expounds on the diversity and relational aspects of her school, in what I call the McClain Family narrative. Maya just sort of inherited rights to being part of this family when she began teaching at McClain High School where the administrators and teachers really care for the students and help each other out. In fact, that caring culture was something Maya did not expect to be known to others outside of the school, so when she goes to get her shoe repaired and the cobbler hands her a bag of shoes to take to her students, she is taken aback. She recounts,

> And he just handed me 2 bags of shoes that hadn't been collected for a year. And I'm like, what's this for? You're at McClain right? I was like, yeah. He was like, those teachers take care of their kids. So I know you're going to give these to the kids. And so, I just left the bags under my table in the corner and I let the kids know there were some really nice leather shoes over there. People don't get their

shoes fixed unless they're nice. And so boys came in and they're like, hey I

heard you got some shoes. I was like yeah. And they're like do you got any guys'

shoes. And I was like, no. And they're like, oh okay, okay. And I'm like, do you

need some. And he's like, well it's okay, it's good it's all good. I'm like, do you

need some. He's like, well yeah. And I'm like, I'll call my guy. I got a guy (L). I

got a guy. And um, you know, and it's just that attitude that he wasn't one of my

students and but someone else told him, like hey somebody's got shoes, because

they knew he needed shoes. (p) You know?

She tells another story immediately after about a student who waits in her

classroom after school so that he can ride into the shelter with his mom at night. He does

not like for her to ride public transportation by herself. The teacher response supports the

salience of the family narrative and affirms her place within it.

And the teachers found out about that and helped him get hooked up with

churches that could help him out and stuff. I'm not saying everybody's like that.

I'm saying when it happens the people around here take care of it because the

administration has sown that seed of family. I think it all comes back to that.

Because we all take care of each other. Because you take care of your sister. And

I mean, I think the big shock was for me when the shoe guy knew. I was like, do

your kids go to McClain? He's like, no. So somehow people know. He has

nothing to do with our school and he knew.

Combined with the supportive and caring administration at McClain, teacher

collaboration to create the best learning opportunities for student achievement forms a

uniquely synergistic culture at her school. In her estimation, the students there outperform those in other McClain ISD schools "Because we all have that attitude of kids first and our administrative family environment, it takes what we're teaching them and helps it sink in. Does that make sense? I can't say why it isn't working as well in other schools, other than we just keep growing on it."

Maya conjectures about the meaning of her experiences, which serve to organize her choice in providing narrative examples. I believe this theoretical disposition is very much ingrained in her identity as a scientist. When speaking about the higher achievement rates than other schools in McClain, she summarily dismisses alternative hypotheses that would limit the powerful effect of the family culture upon student learning. She says, "And the schools that feed into us, um, they've been ranked unacceptable. So it's not…it's got to just be here. Because what we're getting from middle school, we have to spend a lot of time trying to make up for." The family narrative continues to shape her description of her acts of teaching in general, and those that impact ELL students.

Teaching ELL Students and Making Sense

From our initial interview through observations and the follow-up interviews, Maya's stores work in support of the dominant narrative about the McClain Family narrative. In this section I review Maya's descriptions about teaching ELL students, and the meaning Maya ascribes to her experiences. Among her talks about working with ELL students are: extreme diversity in her classroom, making meaning from prior exposure to language learners, and theories of how to incorporate ELL students into the

McClain High School family narrative. Within her efforts to incorporate language learners into the classroom, Maya focused on making ELL students feel welcomed and comfortable by giving them multiple, often unobtrusive, opportunities to feel a sense of success.

Summer School Experience

During our first conversation I ask Maya to tell me about her summer school experience. She describes her cooperating teacher as a "control freak" that often embarrassed her by correcting her in front of the students. Her learning to teach at this time was more about "pain avoidance" as she called it, than actually learning from the cooperating teacher. At the same time, she had an opportunity to work closely with an ELL student who had a very low proficiency level. Her interactions with this student would begin to shape her ideas and hypotheses about how students acquire a second language. In the class of students repeating chemistry for credit, she spent the most time with this student.

> Um, we did have a student that hardly spoke any English. And I was like, poor thing no wonder why she failed. And, um, she didn't end up passing summer school either because she didn't know the language. Poor thing.

The student's difficulty with the language is seen as a barrier and the eventual reason why she was unsuccessful, yet again, in earning credit for the chemistry class. Maya gives reason for this failure by using common sense and a science analogy to understand why this happened.

And there's no way you can teach that much content to someone who doesn't

speak the language, in 5 hours straight. You need time to metabolize that

information. Do you understand what I'm saying? Yeah, so you can't just throw

it at her, no matter how many different (p) ELPS strategies you use. It just can't,

your brain needs time to work over.

The time concentration was too great for the student to really master the content. It is

interesting to see Maya's perception of the ELPS as strategies and not as standards for

teaching practices. This misconception about its use, and therefore its limited ability to

"work" seem to encourage Maya to come up with her own solutions to the problem after

realizing that this student's case was doomed from the outset.

There is also an element of pity in Maya's talk about the student in the summer

school class, which reappears throughout her narrative with Helena described in the

coming section. She is drawn to help ELL students as best she can and through that

interaction of trying to understand what they might be experiencing, begins to develop

theory about working with language learners. The integration of the "quiet ELL" into her

extant theory of students being afraid to make mistakes is visible in the excerpt below.

I probably spent more time with her than any of the rest of them. She was very

quiet. She didn't…I think she was embarrassed to talk because she didn't like to

make mistakes. Um, so we would just ask her…she liked to write stuff and her

written English was pretty good. Because she had taken English in, um, Vietnam.

She had taken English, so she knew how to write English better than she felt like

she could speak it. Although I thought she was pretty good at speaking it, so...she just wasn't confident.

Because Maya reasons that the student was not confident in her abilities, she focuses future efforts of instruction on building student confidence. This essentially mirrors her philosophy about making students feel comfortable to make mistakes and providing them with opportunities to feel a sense of success that she did not feel as a student. While she does not reference specific "ELPS strategies" she used with this student, her discussion of L2 proficiency in this excerpt seems to contradict her earlier assertion that the reason the student failed was not due to a lack of confidence but because she "hardly spoke any English" and "didn't know the language". Maya's knowledge of the relationship between L1 and L2 development, as well as the four strands of language proficiency becomes a barrier to understanding how to specifically address ELL student needs beyond feeling sorry for them (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

Making Students Feel a Sense of Success

The sentimentality aspect reflects the family narrative that pervaded our interviews. Families take care of their own; it is the culture of McClain High School. Maya demonstrated caring for the ELL students in her classroom through emotive strategies centered on making them feel comfortable and to helping them avoid feeling discomfort. In the following example, Maya reenacts one of her lessons on the solubility of gas. She draws me into her lesson by asking me questions that she would ask her students in order to engage them in the progression of the lesson. After asking me several questions stemming from the initial "You leave your soda pop…soda…in your

car with the lid off on a warm day. What happens?", Maya makes her teaching style explicit.

M: This is how I teach.

Y: Oh, okay!

M: Do you see how it's a conversation?

Y: I do.

M: Okay, so our whole class is a conversation. So as temperature…

Y: I get a little taste of this conversation now (Yeah). Put a little pressure.

M: Was that a little scary?

Y: Just a little bit.

M: Okay. That's why people who don't want to talk don't have to. (p) Unless it's a point where I'm trying to ascertain whether or not you knew your information. So if it's an assessment, I give you another way other than verbal because I have a lot of people who don't speak the language well. So, if I…if it's an assessment, I'm going to find another way for you to show me that you're learning the material. But if it's during class, those people who want to talk get to talk. And those people who don't are going to not have to talk. Because why should I make you uncomfortable every freaking day?

Even though her teaching style is discussion-oriented, she lets students choose their level of participation in the class discussion, appealing to their comfort level. During my time in her classroom I noticed many students she along "Action Alley"—a

129

group of seats most accessible to Maya she moves about the classroom, allowing her to check on their work more often—were disengaged from the conversation. I wondered what they were getting from the discussion. In the scenario described above, Maya reasons that students should have a choice in whether or not to participate in the class discussion. This perspective can serve to limit student access to the curriculum by conflating student election with student learning needs. The literature is clear that teachers must provide meaningful opportunities for ELL students to access the curriculum in their L2 through explicit learning goals and instruction by teachers (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Verplaetse, 2000; Yoon, 2008).

When describing how she interacts with new ELL students to her class, she discusses at length how she would make them feel comfortable. Her relationship with students often appears in her narratives on family and validates the culture of the school by virtue of the students—not always hers—"hanging out" in her classroom. For her students, her ELL students, and the larger student body, Maya positions her classroom as a safe haven at various times of the day. During the class period she is careful to invite ELL students to participation through, what she refers to as "play acting":

> So then, um, you know, I try to relate things back to them. I concentrate more on them because they're newer…on my, you know, examples. Try to figure out if they're the kind that wants attention drawed to them, would I use them in a demo…because I'm constantly using the kids' bodies. So do I want to use them in a demo or do they seem too shy, because most of them are too…they feel very subconscious about the fact that they don't know what's going on. So, lots of

them don't want to do that. But if they seem like the type, then I'll bring them into a demo.

Later she describes how she continues to encourage their full integration into the family by inviting them to "hang out" in her classroom after school and check in with her if they need help:

> Um, I'll let them know that, you know, I'm here every day after school and if they need help to, this is a place where they can hang out. Or if they need help on other homework, then I can help them on other homework or whatever. Just to feel comfortable so that they have somewhere to go. And um, and then I make a point for the first 2 weeks to check on the new kids, especially the ELL kids. Check on them every day. Hey, do you need to come in today? Are you getting this today? Come in anyway and check in with me and just let me know.

Story of Helena

In several stories Maya organizes her instruction of ELL and English-speaking students around the theme of "fear of making mistakes" and "making students comfortable". These themes are consistent with Maya's central narrative of "family" discussed above. In this section I focus on her talk about experiences working with Helena, a student with low English proficiency that was in Maya's class during the first six weeks of the school year. Though Helena was not Maya's only student in this position, she dominates her narratives about ELL students. Her stories about Helena demonstrate that creating an environment where ELLs feel comfortable to open up and

speak, even if not during class time, are effective. Helena's story justifies Maya's classroom decisions related to not only ELL students, but all of her students.

Though Helena was only with Maya for a short amount of time, she was a constant reference in Maya's talk about working with ELL students. Initially, Maya believes that all ELL students are like the student in summer school and like Helena, having low proficiency skills. Much like the student during the summer, Maya homed in on Helena by empathizing with her situation and doing her best to make her feel comfortable in the class. The following provides an introduction to Helena—one of many references throughout our interviews—and to her ELL students in general.

> Most of my English language learners are extremely quiet. Um, I think they're tired of being wrong (p). Okay, most of mine have [been in the country for a long time]. Yeah. I don't have a huge amount of new kids. I mean, I have, you know. We've had kids that'll come in and they come from some other country and they've never been in America, you know and they…but not a whole lot of those. And they carry these cute little things that they push the buttons, they type in their word, and you know. […] But, so they're very…it amazes me how quickly they can type their information and then [claps] get what they need to know. Like if I say a word that they don't…I'll look and if I see Helena – that's her American name –I see Helena pushing the buttons, then I know I didn't explain it very well because she has no clue what I'm saying and she had to just go look it up. So then, I guess what it is she missed and I say whatever I think she missed a couple more times in different other words.

The school provides these machines that are sort of like dictionaries as a tool to assist low proficiency ELL students. Maya tells me a little bit more about the machine since I do not have access to one during our interview: "It's like this big and it's got a little flip screen and hers was pink. You know, so I've had 3 students who have used that. That's it." Maya's attention to when Helena might need help indicates her intention to be helpful. However, Maya also needs additional support in making the language comprehensible for her ELL students through proactive instruction as well (Allison & Harklau, 2010; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Janzen, 2008).

I asked Maya to tell me about a time when she felt successful teaching language learners in her class. She begins a narrative on how she defines success as students walking away with more than just the science, but perhaps feeling loved and cared for. She presents Helena as an example of when she felt successful as her teacher.

> Um, when Helena moved...and it was so sad. She was my little…the girl with the little machine. Um, when she moved, um they take their papers around and have them sign for all the teachers to say, yes I know this person is leaving my class. Whenever they withdraw from the school, they have to get a paper signed by all of the teachers. And she came in and wanted to take a picture with me. And so we took a picture together. And she said I will remember you always my miss. And I was like, I cried. And so, whatever it was, something hit home for her. And I was like okay, she's walking away from here with more than just grams and atoms. And that's the goal. You know? So…yeah.

This excerpt shows the salience of the affective component of teaching within Maya's thinking about her practice teaching Helena. She does not mention what hit home for her, but measures her success by Helena's affinity towards her. This is arguably another indicator of the family narrative within Maya's structure of thinking about her teaching practice.

Later in our interview Maya and I begin to discuss her preparation to teach ELLs. She reiterates the shortcomings of her preparation by TTF while acknowledging that they introduced her to concepts but did not "tell me which of the HITS, which of the Hot Qs […] work best for each [language proficiency] level. To illustrate, Maya brings up Helena's story only this time as an example of how underprepared she felt to help her, and the frustration she experienced when their "family" was disrupted by her moving.

> You can see okay, like Helena, she's the one that just sticks in my mind because we were progressing along and then she disappeared and moved off. Oh, I can use her because it doesn't even matter, right? She's just the one that I think my heart broke for her because I never got to see a resolution for her. And she just <u>left</u>, you know. And she was working so hard at punching everything into her little translator and trying to get words out and it was at the…it was…she left at the…not 2…I don't know, in the first or 2nd set of 6 weeks, maybe. And I was just starting out, and I really had no idea how to help that girl. And I really feel like a more…a teacher that had been teaching longer would have been able to help her more. And I feel as though I did her a disservice, you know? I think

<u>that's</u> why it weighs on my heart because I just…I didn't do for her what I could

have had I had more experience.

For Maya, the relationship had just begun to develop and if given more preparation or experience, she could have succeeded in creating the environment not only for ELLs to feel safe to make mistakes, but to grow and to develop. This excerpt lends insight how Maya believes teachers learn, and that is primarily through experience though not exclusively.

Learning to Teach ELL Students

The frustration she felt from Helena's experience became a catalyst for Maya to begin to do things now "that I wasn't doing when Helena was here [like] forcing them to write summaries, forcing them to draw more pictures. I hardly wasn't doing any drawing…<u>I</u> drew all the pictures at the beginning. It was all about <u>me</u>, instead of about them." The changes Maya makes as a result of recognizing the gap in her understanding illustrate how reflective practice (Schön, 1983) can be an invaluable tool for teachers who are learning on the job. Maya continues to refine her teaching practices through greater collaboration with the ELL advisor on her campus and her colleagues and as a purported last resort trial and error to figure out a way to better provide ELL instruction. These are all things, in addition to comfort and creating a sense of family, which she has tried to incorporate into her teaching practice with ELLs.

Determining if he is an "I Can't" ELL or an "I Won't"

Another struggle of Maya's is with navigating whether an ELL student who is also receiving special education services is unable to do the work or just refuses to do

the work. This challenge moves Maya to grow in her understanding of working with

ELLs all illustrates the ways in which she accesses resources to overcome the challenge.

The following excerpt captures her thinking and struggle to sort it all out.

> Um, well recently, I'm having to figure out if this student is an "I can't" or "I
> won't" because I'm having a hard time because he's coded for ELL and Special
> Ed, yet he just won't turn in his work. I don't know if he's not … so I can't
> figure out if he's <u>not</u> turning in his work because he <u>doesn't</u> know how to do it
> because of whatever road block he has for language and Special Ed, or if he
> doesn't want to turn it in because he goofed around a lot. He does goof around a
> lot (L), which could be a cover. So just the…right <u>now</u> I'm trying to really
> struggle with how to decipher what's going on and the difference between the "I
> can't do it because I...I don't have all the tools to do it mentally, or language, or
> whatever" or "I won't do it because it's just more fun than not (p) work". You
> know? So that's a struggle right now.

Maya believes that figuring out this conundrum will help her to become aware of the

assumptions she has made about her ELL students. She still has a difficult time

understanding why some students are coded as ELL and others are not.

> ...<u>one</u> student I was really surprised when I found out he was coded ELL because
> I [lower voice] don't know why he would…I mean I don't see a lot of language
> barriers that's there for him that's not there for others. You know what I'm
> saying? So what is it about his language barrier that's different? (p) But yet I'm
> seeing a lot of "won't". So I…I just…it's just this, I haven't figured out really

where I sit yet. I haven't figured out the differentiation between the "can't" and the "won't" and how I'm addressing students and what assumptions I'm making.

I ask her to tell me more about how she resolved the situation. She told me she talks to the ELL advisor and special education department to find out how to address the problems she has experienced. She has also emailed some of his teachers to find out what works for them. "And one of the answers was, 'Nothing'." So she decides that what she really needs is more experience beyond her first year that will help her ascertain what to do for this student more quickly.

Trial and Error, Learning from Experience and Reflection

Another way in which Maya learns to teach ELL students is through trying different things in the classroom and assessing if they work or not. Because her student population is so diverse, she runs into a few problems in addressing the cultural connection part of lessons for all of the students. She identifies the cultural bias within the TEKS as being problematic as well. In one story she tells me about how she tried to use an example about salting her rice, when many of her students could not relate because in her reasoning, the Mexican boys never cook and the Asian students season their rice afterwards. She had to recover from this assumption quickly in order to illustrate the chemistry point she attempted to make and not have students get hung up on how they cook their rice.

Teaching the TEKS in a culturally diverse setting has also posed problems for Maya as she struggles to meet the demands of connecting the learning to prior knowledge and student experience, while teaching students what the state requires them

to know. In one instance she describes the racial bias of having students know the chemistry behind Tums antacid medicine.

> Like today we were doing acid-base neutralization and the TEKS say that they have to know the reaction between hydrochloric acid and calcium carbonate, which is stomach acid and Tums. Which is great, I mean, that's nice. Okay. Except for hardly any of my students use Tums. Because White people use Tums. I didn't know that. I assumed everybody used Tums (L). It's a cultural thing. Milk of magnesia is more for, you know, one culture. Tea is for the Asian culture. And, um…and Pepto-Bismol, is for you know is for the Latino culture. And, and, and you keep going like this. And I only have 6 White students. (p) So yay I did all of this and they're like, what are those? Is that candy? Well because that's the only thing with calcium carbonate. Milk of magnesia is magnesium and hydroxide and some other stuff, but the TEKS call for calcium carbonate. And my students don't know calcium carbonate (p) other than it's something and this looks like candy.

Maya attributes the widespread failure of students on a particular assessment question to the cultural bias of state assessments.

> Our kids failed one question, all of them, across the board. We got the lowest mark on this question because, none (L) of our kids go camping. And so they asked about the evaporative process on the outside of a canteen. Our kids don't know what a canteen is. So they failed it. Ask them about evaporation in a beaker, and they would know because it was in the lab. Ask about it in a cup, and

they would know it because it was a demo. Ask them about, um, on the outside

of their windows when they're making out in the car, they're going to know it

because we're constantly comparing back to what they know. And they know

making out in the car. So, um, but they didn't know anything about a canteen.

Connecting to what students know is a general pedagogical principal that, when taking

Maya's learning experience into account, can be a powerful tool to validate students and

to make them feel comfortable.

Nina's Story

Background

Nina has a unique perspective on this research because she identifies as being an

English language learner. She moved from Mexico to Texas with her daughter four years

ago when she married her American husband. Our conversations were rich with detail

about the process of her learning to function in the US, as well as being able to relate in

some ways to her ELL students through her daughter's challenging experience in ESL

and mainstream classrooms. Most importantly, Nina organizes her narration around the

theme of challenges that she is either currently facing or those that she has overcome.

For this reason, I approach each section of this retelling with this theme as central.

Narrative of a Personal Challenge Faced and Overcome

These past years have challenged Nina as she becomes acclimated to her new life

in the United States. In her narrative she frequently compares life in Texas with her

former life in Mexico, from the language and how people communicate with one another

to students and how teachers are expected to instruct them. With the exception of a few

courses of English as a foreign language—of so little value to her that she almost forgets she took them—Nina spoke Spanish exclusively until she and her husband began dating:

> My husband is from here. So when we started dating he was going to Mexico and he used to speak Spanish very little, so I forced myself to learn and when I came here, I didn't have any other option so I ended up learning. And reading was my option. But I never have taken formal classes. Like, I don't have a really good background on formal English. Everything that I know I have learned on my own. Um, read magazines, read books, read everything that I have in my hand.

In addition to learning a different language, Nina had to acclimate to differences in how people used the language to communicate. These cultural differences in communication style showed up in her narratives about her marriage and her interaction with students of varying cultural backgrounds. Finally, Nina's prior teaching express in Mexico was in stark contrast to her classroom experience in Texas, which I discuss in greater detail below.

Of all the challenges Nina spoke of, the most salient were those she faced and overcame to feel like Texas was home. Though complex and varied, these narratives demonstrate how Nina uses the theme of challenge and overcoming to make sense of not only her teaching, but her personal development. To illustrate, consider an excerpt taken from our initial interview as Nina describes physiological challenges as a result of the stress of TTF summer institute sessions. I quote it at length to provide full context and support of my interpretation of Nina's narrative style.

Like I was telling you, it has been (p) really worth it. Even with all the stress […]

everything has so much worth it because all the improvement that I have done on

myself. Just, be able to function in a different country. That is…that is the…the

number one thing that I have…I think I have accomplished in all this process. If I

want to talk further, well the teaching is really cool. I like to be here. Sometimes

I get really, uh, frustrated with the kids. Just knowing that I can now, perfectly

function in a different culture, in a different country, um…this makes me feel

better. It has been a difficult process. But at the end, I feel now that this is my

home. Not like in the beginning. In the beginning I was like, okay I'm on

vacation, on a permanent vacation. Now I don't feel like that anymore. I feel like

this is home.

Nina situates everything, including teaching, *around* the narrative of overcoming

challenges to eventually make Texas her home. To understand the challenges Nina

describes, I begin with a description of her former life in Mexico.

Life in Mexico

Nina has loved chemistry since she was a little girl and steadfastly pursued it as a

teen, in college, and in her career. She recalled two childhood memories when she knew

that she wanted to be a chemist. At the age of five, she saw a volcano experiment on

television with the lava coming out and thought "wow I want to do that! But that's what

I want to do that for a living. At that moment, I got my eyes on chemistry and that's

what I want." She also ties her interest in chemistry to dreaming of a chemistry game

that her dad eventually bought for her. "And I just wanted to mix some stuff so I could

see the colors of the test tubes. And, then after that I started to get interest in chemistry. I just…I really like to work in lab." True to her dream, Nina earned her certificate as a chemistry laboratory technician attended in high school. She studied chemistry and Her time in college is largely absent from her story, barring a few lines:

> Um, I studied in Mexico … So I was…I was studying there. It was before…I have years in my life because I have so much fun, I just think that I should have done (p) better than I did. But I think…I mean, well I was young and sometimes we make mistakes. But I think I did good. It was better than high school at least (L).

Nina does not explain why she considered high school as the least of her achievements. She continues talking about her working life until I ask her about her parents.

Nina's parents held professional jobs in international trade and education. Her mother worked for an ambassador in Mexico City that dealt with trade relationships with other countries. Her father taught mechanics in a middle school. He wanted to pursue mechanical engineering at one point, but the responsibilities of a family did not allow him to finish. Her father continued teaching in the same position until he retired after more than 45 years.

Nina continues her narrative with her working life. She describes herself as a workaholic. Though she focused on ultimately pursuing chemistry, she explains that over the years, she has "done a lot of things (L) trying to look for a way of living". Teaching physics in Mexico was one of those things that she did for a few years before

landing her dream job as a chemical engineer at a cosmetics company in Mexico City. She describes choosing to teach thusly:

> …that was [sigh] more a need than really a I want to become a teacher. I had my daughter. She was little. I thought this is getting me the time to be with her and do some other things and not have a really full-time job because where I used to live I didn't have family so I needed to manage my time and everything, work and everything, by myself. So I thought it was a good idea, meanwhile she was little. And then I just kept doing it.

At this point, teaching was a job of convenience, allowing her greater flexibility to manage life as a single parent, in the absence of a greater support network. During this time, Nina was also in the process of immigrating to the US for marriage.

Nina taught physics, which was one of her majors in college—in addition to chemistry. She was not enthused about teaching physics: "That was the first thing that they offered. And when they told me you're going to teach physics I was like, oh my god, I don't want physics. I don't like physics (L)." However, Nina is an overcomer, so she finds strength in being able to face a challenge and learn about it in order to become better.

> So, I guess trying to overcome that…that I don't like physics was uh, the key to take me to really like physics because I had to study a lot, I had to go over the books again, I had to go back and (p) you know refresh everything. And when you start studying, you start understanding things better; you start liking the subject. So that's how I started.

Her ability to transform a challenge into a success comes through a process of learning. Just as she learned to live in this country, she learned to like physics by engaging in a process of personal development—learning the language and *re*learning the subject matter. Nina returns to this approach throughout the narrative, particularly as she describes how she wants to improve her experience next year by engaging in some self-directed and formal education opportunities.

After teaching for a few years and waiting on the "nightmare" of an immigration process to finish, Nina moved back to Mexico City and began working her "dream job" as a chemical engineer at a cosmetics company. She worked there until they got the call from the consulate and she moved to the US. Having finally attained her dream, Nina was conflicted about having to give it up in order to be married.

> Basically I had to…there was a moment where I was thinking, okay do I have to choose between my marriage and my career. And I guess my marriage won (L). So that's what I did. I had to leave that career because I love…I just loved to death that work that I had before.

While working as a chemical engineer, Nina also taught gymnastics, Pilates, and cycling at the gym.

> I'm still a workaholic. I used to work from the very early morning until later in the evening. I used to teach Pilates and, um, indoor cycling. I combine all those things. I was coming back from ---- and I was going to teach at the gym and I was just going and coming and doing everything at the same time.

Nina continued to work as much as she could when she moved to the US. However,

things were different because Nina also had to learn English. She fell back on her

experience as a gymnastics instructor.

A New Way of Life

The first challenged that Nina faced was figuring out what to do with herself now

that she was in the US. She was still a workaholic, but found her job options limited

because of her English proficiency. For a long time, she felt really uncomfortable about

her speaking ability and feared people would make fun of her. She took a job teaching

gymnastics which she had done back in Mexico as she worked to improve her English

proficiency.

> I started teaching gymnastics and I started improving with my English skills, but
>
> I still had a lot of problems. And I struggled so much that I didn't really want to
>
> try a formal job because I felt I was so weak on my English that I just didn't want
>
> to.

Nina took up the challenge to become bilingual by teaching herself English. Though this

posed additional difficulties for her, she pressed through it to develop her proficiency to

where she felt comfortable taking on a "formal" job. She describes the process in the

familiar terms of challenge and overcoming.

> And reading was my option. But I never have taken formal classes. Like, I don't
>
> have a really good background on formal English. Everything that I know I have
>
> learned on my own. Um, read magazines, read books, read everything that I have
>
> in my hand. In the very beginning it was very difficult. It was very tiring. I was

like 2 months with a headache because I couldn't…my brain was really tired

trying to understand things and trying to read signs and trying to understand how

things work. So it was very difficult. But I think it got better after a time of

reading and reading…I used to read everything. Everything. Even the (p) the

ingredient list on the products in the restroom. I mean everywhere.

Her persistence in learning English, despite its difficulties, became an example Nina

used to encourage her ELL students to overcome as well.

Before long Nina and her husband had their first child. Although she wanted to

work, she thought it was not the best time and decided to stay home with the baby for his

first year. Almost to the month—exactly one year and two months—Nina says, "I think

it's time to start looking for something else instead of just staying in the house." She put

together a resume and started looking for jobs, when she came across the TTF program.

She thought it would be great to be teaching in by the fall of that same year and decided

to apply. Like some teachers, Nina thought teaching would allow her the flexibility in

her schedule to spend time with him. She was surprised to find that teaching and

preparing to teach were so demanding her mother came to stay with them to help Nina

manage it all. Of the time she thought she would have Nina says, "I don't have time for

anything, not even to sleep." Nevertheless, the struggle has been worth it because of all

the ways in which Nina has grown. She reflects:

But it has been so rewarding. Because I think I have grown so much from

January last year until now on my English skills that I think, I don't regret, it has

been really stressful and really demanding and many hours of work in front of a

146

computer I stopped working out. I used to work out 3 hours a day. Now I'm not doing one. But I mean I think it's worth it and I'm going to get to the time when things are not going to be as stressful and a full load of work as they are right now. And I'm going to do my work out again. But as of right now, I think…I think it has been so much worth it.

Working at Parker Heights HS

Nina's first job interview was at Parker Heights in McClain ISD. "And I just stayed here (L). They just liked me and okay, sign the contract right now (L). So I stayed." At the time Nina interviewed at the school, she did not know that the school culture would be more of a challenge than she feels she handle sometimes. It is not uncommon for AC teachers to be hired in high-needs schools and subject areas where they eventually burn out within the first three years (Borman & Dowling, 2001; Jorissen, 2003). Early in our interview Nina says she was happy to get the job there because it is convenient to where she lives—unlike the job in Mexico where she had a 2-hour commute—but unhappy too because of the school culture. She says, "things are not as tight as they should be. Um, sometimes I think, oh my god I really need to go look for a job in a different school because here is just really difficult." Nina describes how the culture at Parker Heights conflicts with who she is, thereby creating the struggle that at times threatens to overtake her.

> And for my temper…for, I don't know, just the way I am…I'm calm. I'm sweet. I'm not the angry, really mad, mean type of woman. Um, many of these kids (p) I guess it's just the way they have (p) been in their lives. That if they don't see

147

somebody that is really strict, they don't respect you. So I have problems right

now trying to manage my classes.

Her students in Mexico were not that way. "They were very well behaved. Kids were

really awesome." Even though the resources they had in Mexico at the private school did

not compare to what she has access to now, she feels sorry for both sets of students.

Sorry for the students at Parker Heights that do not take advantage of what they have;

sorry for her students back in Mexico where we just "didn't have the resources".

Trying to balance the classroom management aspect of teaching with planning

lessons is one of the greater challenges Nina faces working at Parker Heights. Though

she has more growing to go, she says

I have come to a better position. But I have…I have had to work so much.

I'm trying to find out the way…like a middle term for me to feel that I'm not

mad all the time when I'm working and for them to have a good environment to

learn.

With everything that she has to juggle as a first year teacher in a difficult

environment—for reasons expressed in the sections that follow—Nina says she in "in

the limit" where she cannot do any better. "Or maybe I can do better; I just don't have

the time to (p) do better because I'm trying to fit everything in my skin." Her experience

is common for many first-year teachers (Costigan, 2004; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr,

Doble, & Johnson, 2007).

An Ugly Place with Ugly People

I asked Nina to tell me more about what she knew of Parker Heights and McClain ISD before interviewing and accepting the position.

Uhhh, well I had <u>some</u>, like a few, very few comments. People think that McClain is an ugly district. They think that McClain High School is a really ugly school. Uh, it's almost like you are going <u>there</u>? You know. Um, they think that really ugly people go there and (p) the culture is very difficult. Uh, they think that the school (p) does not help to enforce the rules, and I don't want to sound bad, but somehow it is true.

Nina was very transparent in everything we discussed, including her struggles with the school, her students, her family, and in TTF. The school struggle was more than just in her classroom, it was the overall culture of the school that did not require much of the students. So when Nina tries to discipline students, they take it as an opportunity to leave the class and chat with the administration or go home for a mini-vacation. They just come right back. Their lack of enforcement and support for teachers "doesn't give you a lot of options to make your classroom work well." On several occasions Nina wonders if others are having the same experience at their school. Her students:

[have] drug addiction problems , um teenager moms, kids that were in jail and they are around the school with bracelets on the ankles because they are, you know, monitored all the time, um…we have a lot of things.

Nina had to get used to this because she had no expectation that students would be this way. Her students in Mexico were not, and her daughter certainly is not this way.

149

Sometimes it is just a struggle to understand her students' lives, though she eventually learned that establishing relationships with students was the most important way for her to really be able to help them. In our conversation about what she has learned so far about working with her predominantly Hispanic students, she talks about the importance of trust and developing a good relationship.

The Importance of Developing a Good Relationship

The theme of relationship began to emerge during our initial interview as Nina spoke about the recommendations she would make to a new teacher in her same position. When she began teaching in Texas, her focus was on the content and the management of administrative tasks such as making the presentation slides, preparing the document that she would give to students, and the like. Over time she began to realize that the students that really worked for her were those who trusted her; whereas those who seemed to resist her help and advice were those with whom she had not developed a relationship. She lamented her misplaced focus and hoped to get it right the next year. I cite her reflection at length because it captures the importance she places on relationship building in her classroom and how she attempts to harness that in order to work effectively in her tough teaching environment.

> I think the first one is develop a good relationship with them. That has been the strongest one because in the beginning when…if you don't do that…and I experience kids that I have developed a really good relationship with them. And some of the kids that don't and I just see the difference I mean, the kids that are…that I have developed a good relationship with, they are more willing to

work, they are more willing to do things for me. Yes miss, whatever you tell me. I trust you. I know that whatever decision you are taking is in my best (p) um…how do you say that? [Best] Interest. And the other kids are not. There are a few of them. They don't really feel like I'm working in their favor. Somehow they feel like, but why miss. Why are you saying that to me? Why are you singling me out? But it's not. I want you to be a better person. I want you to like, be successful. But since we don't have that trust built upon us (p), it doesn't really work. So I think developing a relationship with them is like crucial. Crucial. And there are a lot of things that I think right now (p), and (p) I think (p)…there are a lot of things that I want to change and do better, and maybe not do (p) next year. Um, the one of them is instead of…I guess paying more attention from the very beginning when trying to develop that relationship instead of just being concentrated on work, work, work, numbers, work, work, work, numbers. Because I think I have realized how fundamental that should be, just like at the end of the last semester. But I think in some of the cases, it's a little late because it has been very difficult for me to build on something that is kind of hard. Some kids that are failing, they think that like…they think that like, they can't. Like, they are not going to be able to pass the class and trying to bring them up from a first semester completely fail, I think it's…it's just basically impossible. I mean I try and I try and I try and they…there are a few kids that are like, trying to make a better work in this second semester and they are passing. But I think I should have done that from the very beginning. But I didn't realize

151

really because I was so concerned about, oh my god information, oh my god

presentation, oh my god lab, oh my god equipment. And that is one of the things

that I would like to...to change.

This excerpt is revelatory in that it highlights Nina's intent in working with her students.

Though she teaches physics, she wants to help them to be better people and to be

successful. In light of the challenges that she has faced and overcome, Nina wants her

students to learn from her experience. However, the everyday challenges of teaching

were a barrier for her in the beginning and she neglected to see that students would only

perceive her intentions correctly if they felt able to trust her. Trust and the lack thereof

became central themes in Nina's meaning making related to teaching ELL students and

in making sense of her own experiences learning the language and learning to teach.

Facilitators of Personal Change

Nina has changed in so many ways this past year, particularly as an English-

speaker and a teacher. These were two of the biggest challenges she spoke about during

the interview. TTF has been one of the major supports in facilitating her development of

English proficiency, as well as a catalyst for improving her instruction.

Learning to teach has been a process of altering the way she approached teaching

students in Mexico, where everything was different in terms of resources and

expectations, to adopting the principles espoused by TTF. She traces the beginning of

this change in thinking from being excited about having an abundance of resources to

being overwhelmed by them and reverting to her old teaching style. To put the change

she describes into context, Fellows attend summer sessions on the TfSA curriculum for

two weeks prior to receiving a summer school field placement. They are expected to gradually take over teaching responsibilities from the cooperating teacher. Each Fellow is observed at least twice during the summer placement and provided with feedback for improvement from the field observer.

> So when I came here and I find this program, and I find all this bunch of things that you could do and that you should do, it was really overwhelming. It was really overwhelming. In the beginning it was really cool to say, okay I'm going to be able to teach, I'm going to have my own computer, my own projector. I'm going to be able to do all these labs, I have all this equipment.

This stands in contrast with Nina's primarily chalkboard and lecture instruction in Mexico, where student engagement consisted of taking notes and working in teams to practice the concepts she presented. She comes to realize that a great deal of responsibility and expectation comes along with having access to so many teaching resources.

> Yeah, and how? I mean, where's the document? Where's the (p) written lab that you're going to give them? Okay, what is the worksheet? This is what they're accustomed to. And this is what you have to…the expectation that you have to fulfill and (p) you're kind of far away from that. So on my first observation…the first observation that they did on the summer institute, I was…I had a very bad review because my idea of teaching was completely different of what they were expecting me (p) to do. But I didn't really know. I mean, I had a few hints, (p) but that was about it.

When Fellows receive a "bad review", they are sometimes put on an action plan for improvement. Failure to make measureable progress results in a series of escalating measures that can lead to dismissal from the program. I witnessed an action plan follow-up, and heard of a dismissal during my time observing the program. Observations continue throughout their first year of teaching in much the same manner, in order to provide feedback on their implementation of the TfR curriculum and design elements. Nina has improved since her first observation, which is an outgrowth of a change in mind about what teaching can be.

> So I have been modifying my idea of teaching as the time has gone by. And right now my idea is completely different to the idea that I had in the beginning. And (p) I think right now I can use…I have a better use of the resources, I feel more comfortable, I feel confident. Um, it was…it has been just really like a (p) 360 and maybe more degrees of change. Was so, so different. And um, I was thinking okay I feel bad for all those kids that I was teaching there because I didn't do more, like what I'm doing here. But I didn't have all of the resources. So, I guess I did as much as I could. That was it.

Nina has significantly overcome her initial difficulties with utilizing the resources. She tried to make the most of her TTF experience by trying everything they told her to do. At the time of our interviews, Nina entered another process of selecting the resources she had been given and adapting them to fit her needs within her context. One example of this was the use of a class participation technique referred to as "Calling Strategies". There were some that she tried and others she did not due to the dynamic

between her and the students. She explains her reasoning for discarding one calling strategy from her arsenal of tools:

> my class are still at the point where they can come out of the order very easily of excitement. I mean, using a ball in the class to call people, I don't think that's going to…I mean I like it a lot because I think it's fun but I don't know if it's going to be that good or it's gonna make us just like waste more time than we're really using. Because I don't feel like I'm still (p) at a point where I can just say stop it, or say okay guys let's go back to work and everybody's going to do it immediately.

Time is a real concern for Nina. She filters the feasibility of a strategy through the lens of "how much time will this take" and is it worth it. Nina's reasoning reflects the active engagement of teachers as decision-makers in their classrooms, not just implementers of standardized curriculum (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Elbaz, 1983; Freeman, 1989). Summarizing her approach to the myriad of strategies she gathered through the curricula she says,

> And all those strategies are so good, but I mean, you need more time. Really, you need more time. And I'm just discovering and trying to think, okay how can I bring all this strategies that are so, um, valuable in (p) my full cycle and say, I can do this one to learn math. Okay the next time I can do this to learn to make questions. Okay I need this other one…basically I need to have all this information in my head, I guess, so I can access it faster. Because right now it

155

takes me a long time. But I think everything…everything they have told me to

do, I have done it. And everything has been pretty good.

This last excerpt demonstrates Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning.

Nina goes through a process of moving from an apprentice within the teaching

community—taking resources and applying them as best she could—to increasing levels

of full participation as she evaluates how well the resources fit into her teaching

environment.

TTF helped to transition Nina and other participants by teaching them how to

reflect on their teaching and make changes, an example of what Schön's (1983) concept

of reflection-in-action. She describes the skill she learned and how she uses it to make

adaptations.

Well that is something that I learned on the TTF. Every time we do the strategy,

first we plan the strategy like with everything basically scripted. Like, what I'm

going to do, how I'm going to do it, and what is the purpose and how am I

connecting. And everything, everything. And then when we do that strategy, we

have to write a reflection. What went right, what went wrong, what would have

changed. And I don't every time I do it on the paper. But, I guess I follow the

same pattern: What went right? What went wrong? Was the time the right time?

Should I give more time? Should I give less time? Um, what…how can I make it

work better? Umm, just right after…right after I finish the, the…or even from

one class to the next class. In one class it went okay but I could have changed

something. So for the next class I <u>do</u> the adaptation. So every time that I have to

156

repeat the same material, I'm modifying it a little bit so I can get to a <u>better</u> thing.

So I have 6 um, 6 opportunities.

Though Nina has experienced "360 and maybe more degrees of change", classroom and time management remain a challenge for her, thereby disrupting the impact of her development on her students' learning. However, possibility remains that at some point or in some place, her personal changes will impact student learning because she thinks about teaching differently. Teacher education seeks to change teacher practice by adding to and confronting prospective educators' beliefs, knowledge, and skills (J. Richardson, 1997; V. Richardson, 1996; V. Richardson, 1997; Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997). Nina's story demonstrates the active role of past experiences and beliefs in incorporating the knowledge and skills she received from TTF and classroom experiences, and how she constructed new knowledge.

Nina also attributes TTF with developing confidence in her ability to speak English. This is significant because Nina draws upon her learning experience to teach her ELL students, a topic I broach in the following section. For Nina, TTF was a major contributor to her personal development as well as her professional development. Her cohort provided a safe space for her to overcome her public speaking challenges, which became a resource in relating to her ELL students and a source of increased confidence to stand in front of her students daily without being crippled by fear.

Well for me, it was everything. I mean it was her [Jane] and it was all the people in our science cohort. Because when I started there, I was in a point…and I say that the English skills have made a big, big, big change because in the very

157

beginning I was afraid of talking, like speaking in front of them. I was feeling

like I was going to be judged and like you don't know how to speak. You're not

speaking correctly. And I still feel sometimes like that. But it's like, okay, I do

my best and I don't care I'm trying to get better every day and that's it. But in the

very beginning I was so nervous, so nervous. As time went by, they starting to

knowing me, they were so supportive and correcting me and I would have the

confidence and the trust to just go ahead and say, hey I just don't know how this

word is or help me with the pronunciation. And that was the very beginning on

the support of TTF.

Teaching ELL Students

For the most part, Nina relies solely on her experience to teach ELL students.

With the exception of a curriculum section on diversity during the TTF summer

sessions, she does not recall there being any tools presented to her specifically for use

with ELL students. To teach ELLs, she draws upon her personal experience learning the

language, her daughter's experience as an ELL in McClain ISD, and her ability to

communicate and relate to her students—an expression of her theme of building

relationship with her students.

I Teach how I Learn

Nina's experience learning English and her experience supporting her daughter

who was learning English in a local school were the most prominent sources identified

in her stories about teaching ELL students. She gets a headache from reading too much

text on a screen, so she imagines her students will feel the same way and modifies her lessons and presentations around that. She describes her lesson planning process to me.

> I basically…I do my lessons based on (p) what I learned. And I do a little bit of research, let's say. So I get a book and I get the basic information that I'm a…I'm a very visual learner. So I think if…I think it's very useful for my students because they can…they get to see a lot of pictures. That's the way I learn, and I don't know, I just feel that one slide full of information doesn't work for me. Because in addition I'm still a little slow to read. So if you present to me a lot of information in one slide, I just feel like I don't want to read it. I like better to see pictures and information very well distributed. So that's what I do for my classes. I think that works for my kids. Because I have this one class that is…I think that they are 18 and I have 15 Hispanic kids. And 3 American kids. So it has worked very good for…for that purpose.

This excerpt demonstrates one way she draws upon her experience as an ELL to prepare lessons for her class. In many ways, her experience develops empathy for her students while holding a standard that they can do it because she did it and is doing it. The above quote also illustrates that Nina confounds the meaning of ELL with Hispanic, as of understanding the former as an indicator of English proficiency.

Many of her teaching practices that are based on how she learned English are generally considered good teaching practices. As discussed above, Nina engages her students in reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities in the L2 (Harklau, 2002; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008) despite their protests because she believes

it is the only way that they can learn the language. Her attempts to build L2 fluency reflect the emphases of the ELPS, although she never mentions the standards in her narrative. As an aside, it is interesting that Nina and Maya were in the same cohort, yet one of them recognizes the resource and the other one never references it. This reflects the reality of constructivism in learning. Just because something is presented, does not ensure it is learned or even how it is learned. Nina's demonstration of aligned thinking with the ELPS seems to support Ellis's (2004) argument that multilingualism makes teachers better language instructors as a result of gaining fluency in a second language.

On the other hand, Nina's reliance on her experience has its limitations, primarily in her inability to target her instruction to specific English proficiency levels as required by the ELPS. As I discuss in the next section, Nina sets a standard for her students that makes assumptions about what ELL students can do based on her experience as a highly competent adult, and her daughter's experience as "the smartest girl". Her general practice may support some development in student English proficiency, but may not always be appropriate due to the complexity of SLA across the four dimensions of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as the specific needs of language learners at each level.

The following illustrates how Nina's primary goal for her students is to accomplish what she has accomplished—the ability to function completely in a new environment. This goal drives her interaction with students and patterns itself on Jane's interaction with Nina as she learned to speak English with increasing confidence.

My goal is for them to feel completely comfortable functioning in a country that

might not be their (p) country. Just feel comfortable and be able to have success.

Um, every time I…I tell them, it's not like I want you to be a teacher, but I want

you to look at me and see how things can be done. I mean it doesn't matter what

is your background, where you're coming from. It doesn't matter that you don't

really know how to speak English right now. You're going to learn. But it

depends on you. So just be open to the possibilities. Be open to talk to the people.

She role plays a student response and her rebuttal followed by an interpretation of her

teaching acts that facilitate the goal of getting students comfortable.

But Miss, I feel that I don't want to speak because people make fun of me.

Well, you have to get over that fear and just learn that if you don't speak, you're

not going to learn. And I…I push a little bit on those kids. Not picking on them,

but every now and then I make them participate because that's what my seminar

leader did to me. All the seminars…over the summer institute, she never asked

me to read anything in front of anybody. And I understood that that was in my

best interest to not…not making me feel embarrassed. But right now she asks me,

not frequently, but every now and then and I think, okay…I realize that that's

something that needs to happen.

Nina understands the value of Jane's ability to balance sensitivity towards her comfort

level with speaking in the beginning and the need to gradually require her to talk. When

teachers pity ELL students and lower their requirements, students become marginalized

from having access to a quality and challenging curriculum (Verplaetse, 2000).

161

As mentioned above, trust is a central theme in Nina's narrative of teaching and learning to teach. For her ELL students, this is particularly salient because they have to know that you are there to support them and want what is best for them, even when that is uncomfortable.

> You can't leave kids just to be in their comfortable situation for a long time. They can be, and then you have to push them and push them to keep going. So now, this specific girl I ask her to read a prompt on the screen every now and then, not every class because I don't want…I don't want her to feel that (p) I'm being mean to her, but I want her to understand that she just needs to, like try. Go ahead and try. That's the only way.

I asked Nina to tell me about the challenges she faced in teaching language learners in her class. One challenge was linked to her expectation of students' English proficiency level. She found this particularly difficult to understand because she overcame challenges to learn English in such a short time; she could not fathom why her ELLs that had been here much longer continued to struggle.

> So, it has been difficult because I really didn't understand at what point and at what level they were. So we were not meeting, you know? So it has been very difficult for me. I have to invest a long time trying to find at what point they are, and trying to catch them up from that point in my language, in my, um…there are some moments where it's really…it's really weird, because I feel, okay, guys it's supposed to…okay I understand some of you are in the better or not that good

English level, but everybody should understand better than me because you have

been here for a longer time than me. And sometimes it's not like that.

She began trying to make sense of why students continued to struggle with the language

and concluded it must be because she is well educated and has a wider vocabulary than

they do. Giving reason shows sensitivity to ELL difficulties, but only temporarily. As de

Jong and Harper (2005) note, mainstream teacher misconceptions about SLA can lead

them to draw false conclusions about students, such as a lack of effort or desire to learn

the language. While effort is a reasonable component of learning in general, it is not the

axis upon which language acquisition occurs. Nina, like many other educators that do

not understand how fluency develops in L1 and L2, do not have the basis for evaluating

or addressing specific language barriers, if they exist. This lack of depth in

understanding the process leaves rooms for misconceptions to reemerge in explaining

why ELL students do not learn English.

Understanding challenges faced by secondary ELL students and not

understanding why students struggle to overcome reveals a complex dynamic in Nina's

narrative. While she identifies her ELL experience one of her strengths in teaching her

students, it is also a weakness of sorts because she cannot fully relate to their persistent

struggle. The telling of her daughter's experience overcoming the language barrier

supports the notion that experience may not be enough to teach language learners.

I Would Like My Students to be Like My Daughter

When Nina's daughter first arrived to Texas was tested and placed in just a few

ESL classes, spending the majority of the day in mainstream classes. The only English

she really had in Mexico was conversations she would have with her step-father. However, she was placed in the ESL advanced program because she was able to listen to the ESL coordinator and respond to his questions in English. She has always been a high achiever, but she struggled to learn in her some of her classes because she just did not understand what the teacher was saying. Nina described it as a "struggling, bad, ugly year":

> Um, it was…she was a 'A' girl. She's the smartest girl in the world. I mean, brilliant. It's not like [I'm saying that because] it's my daughter. But, she is very smart. And, when she got here she was around the 80s and I was thinking, well I'm just not going to push. And she found such a great support from the teachers and I just live every day the struggle of, mom I don't understand this. Mom, it's just that the teacher says, and I just don't know what he's saying. And I was telling her, okay, (p) your dad…which she calls him dad now…your dad is going to help you with history 'cause, I mean, he knows history (L), hopefully. And I'm going to help you with science and math. And whatever science and math that you have problems with, come to me; whatever history and English and everything else, straight to him. So we were working together to help her. But, the teachers made a big, big difference. Big, big difference. So, since we were all that year…and she was not failing or anything, like I told you. She was an 'A' girl, but getting 80s or 75 was like a shock for her. Like mom, I can't get any better.

So when her daughter's grades "just bumped up to the sky" the following year Nina makes the same conclusion that with enough effort, students should be able to overcome challenges just like she and her daughter had done. She says, "I would like all my students to be like her because she never stopped to think, okay, I can't…this is just a different language…I can't. She just kept going and going and going." Later in the transcript she narrates further success her daughter experienced and makes the connection to effort even stronger.

> Since then, my daughter has been commended in every single TAKS for everything… everything. I don't know how she can retain so much information. I just think she's really smart. That's just how she is. I don't know if I did something or what. I mean, I remember that I…she was in early stimulation programs, and gymnastic programs, and swimming lessons. I don't know if that maybe have helped somehow. But she's…she's just really smart, like really smart. Sometimes I'm thinking about my students, and I remember about her grades. Her grades are never under 90…never. And she's sometimes on 97, 98, 97, um 100. And I'm thinking…I look at the grades and I'm saying Wahoo this is so good, but I don't really…I haven't seen how much work is behind all those grades until now (p) when I see my students. And I see students that are working really hard, completing their work and they're at an 80, 83 (p). And then I think, okay my daughter has a 97. She's doing a really good job, doing everything that teacher is requiring of her to have that grade. So I'm appreciating more what she does. Um, I'm just turning the conversation to a different side, but…I'm

just…I'm comparing…comparing. Um… (P) I don't know maybe…I guess I just

have good expectations of kids. I don't I'm…sometimes I think I ask too much

work. But I don't think that I'm wrong. You know, because that's why they are

there. That's why they go to school. They go to school to learn, and they go to

school to work. And they need to work hard. And just that…that's just how it is.

This excerpt demonstrates the limitations of her ability to commiserate with her

struggling ELLs. She sees all of the work her daughter puts in and admires her, but does

not challenge her beliefs that effort is the primary component in SLA. As such, Nina

may not perceive the impetus to alter her instructional practice to scaffold learning for

ELL students. Without awareness of her role, indemnified by her silence on the ELPS,

she may consider to deem her personal experience as a sufficient source of information

about how best to instruct language learners.

Making a Cultural Connection

The role of shared culture and language with her Hispanic students was a major

strength in her being able to communicate her empathy towards and SLA expertise to

ELL students. The class she selected for me to observe was chosen based on her belief

that trust creates an environment for learning to take place. She wanted me to see the

dynamics of one of her favorite classes, where almost all of the students were bilingual

and emergent bilingual Hispanics. Bilingualism and shared culture were two of her other

strengths in working with ELL students.

Mmm, just the fact that I'm bilingual. I think that is one (p). That our (p)…our

culture is so similar. Even when they…sometimes they are not Mexican. They

are, um, Columbian. They are from some other places. But since our cultures are

so similar, we talk about many things that are in common. Like, oh, um, I don't

know, in the holidays, in the end of the year, oh you guys do this? Yes, we do

this. Oh yes, that is so much fun [claps]. Yes, let's go and break a piñata and

things like that. And it's like connection. I guess that…that is important.

In order to understand her thinking on the extent to which her strength may be

contextualized, I ask her to tell me how teachers in her position who are not bilingual

may cope with linguistically diverse classrooms. She attempts to put herself in their

position by saying:

But I don't have any other kind of English language learners. It would be

completely different if I have a Vietnamese kid, or Japanese kid. That would be

like, what is happening. What should I do here because I don't know Japanese.

Basically now, I'm basing all the…all the building on that relationship and things

that we have in common. Things that we miss from our countries, things that we

used to do, or things that our parents used to do with us, or music, or…there are

some other things that we have in common that we use to connect. So, that's

what I use. And that is one of my strongest points I think.

It is challenging for Nina to imagine what she would do in this case even though she has

experience learning English as a second language. This knowledge does not transfer in

her mind to principles or practices of L2 instruction. Her knowledge is situated within

her current context, highlighting her need for explicit instruction on language acquisition

in addition to her wealth of personal experience.

I asked each participant to consider what they would have found helpful in their educator preparation program to facilitate ELL instruction. I also asked them what challenges they experienced in this area. Nina had a reflective disposition and often offered thoughts on how she could improve her own practice. So I did not have to probe for this, though I do infer from her offerings those things that were challenges. As she discusses her ideal program for preparing teachers for ELL instruction, she says that TTF provided her cohort a strong foundation to begin teaching, however not only was ELL instruction not the focus—not surprising—but she does not recall more than devoting a single chapter to the broad category of diversity. For her, the chapter on diversity was helpful but much too vague. It provided information on student achievement and comparative performances by student race and ethnicity—consistent with the idea that Fellows focus on measurable results as indicated in the curriculum titles "Teaching for Student Achievement" and "Teaching for Results". Nina would keep this part of the program, and add sections that addressed specific knowledge about cultures teachers might encounter in their full time placements. Nina's desire for more specific knowledge of diverse cultures is consistent with her belief that building relationships facilitates being able to teach ELL students.

Subject Matter

Nina does not make specific references to science as a subject when discussing her work with ELLs. She does talk about general ways to develop their language proficiency, but largely modeled on her own experience learning English. She does not reference ELL standards or tools for defining or identifying students with their language

168

proficiency levels either. This could be a function of the disorder she mentions in the beginning of the narrative when she considers going to a different school, no visible ELL coordinator, or her perceived expertise on ELL matters.

Nina also encourages writing in her class, but has not figured out a way to get students to develop original thoughts, which no doubt reflects a struggle she identified as their inability to read and comprehend material that they have read. As an ELL she sympathizes with her students, but does not retreat from this goal because she wants them to be successful and completely comfortable functioning in this environment, just as she and her daughter have become over time. She modifies reading assignments for all of her students, not just the ELLs, by reducing the amount of text for which they are responsible to provide some work product demonstrating their understanding. She likes to use Thinking Maps for this because it encourages reading, comprehension, listening, and written expression. It is her practice to have student groups present their Thinking Maps to the class at the end of the activity so that they can practice speaking—an opportunity to develop successful life practices—and it affords students multiple opportunities to hear the material and "digest it".

Naomi's Story

Background

Naomi moved to Texas from New York where she was surrounded by a family of medical practitioners and scientists. Her father, who relocated to Mexico and remarried, was a doctor; Naomi's mother was a nurse. Though she had always shown aptitude for science, she never wanted to practice medicine. Instead, she considered

becoming a scientist or a teacher someday. The thought of teaching was particularly

salient because of her natural disposition: "with my personality (p) and you know, my

patience and…I just thought teaching, for a long time, was a way that I would go, but

um, life, school, stuff took me kind of away from that idea." Before moving to Texas for

the TTF program, she worked as an operations manager for a small internet-based

company. While there, others always seemed to come to her for answers and direction.

> So um (p) that kind of thing, like it always followed me. And then other people
>
> would be like, you should just be a teacher. Like my colleagues, you should just
>
> teach. Well, I'm doing this now so let's not worry about that (L).

However, when her company began to downsize due to the slowed economy, saw that as

an opportunity to try teaching. She says, "You know, so, but then when the opportunity

arose and I said, you know what, my personality I think, does fit into the profession."

Her natural disposition for teaching, or so she reasoned in the beginning, became a

recurrent theme throughout our interviews as she described her acts of teaching by

reenacting her patience with teaching her freshmen, as well as her patience with the

process of learning to teach.

Naomi has always recognized her aptitude for teaching and very early on

considered becoming a teacher as she observed her science teachers in high school. Over

the course of actually becoming an educator Naomi realized that while she may have

some natural qualities that make her suitable for the profession such as patience and

being able to explain concepts, she was unaware of just how much students of today

differ from what she was accustomed to as a high school student. Naomi juxtaposes her

thoughts as a teenager about becoming a high school science teacher with her reality now that her thoughts have been actualized. In the following excerpt she qualifies her earlier assessment of her natural fit for teaching.

> I think honestly more so what the profession was like a few years <u>back</u> than it is now 'cause it's changed quite a bit. But I'm tryna see if, you know, my personality can fit and I can mold into like, what it's becoming. Very, um (p) much more like, (p) active and proactive and very like, you know, always very energetic and always ehhhh, hyped up. And I'm like okay I have a more laid back personality, but I'm <u>trying</u>. You know, 'cause you…because kids learn different.

What she initially evaluated as a perfect fit between her personality as patient and laidback, and her natural disposition for teaching and science before entering the classroom had to be reevaluated and revamped during her years as a teacher because times have changed. How she learned differs from how her students learn. She had to learn how to align herself as a teacher with the way that students learn. This has been an ongoing process of learning for Naomi, which is the central theme of her story.

The process of learning reflects her desire to constantly change, grow, and develop. The theme of change and development pervades her narratives about her work environment, her interactions with her students, and her rationale for instructional decisions. To no surprise, the value Naomi places on personal development is transferred into the expectations she has of her students. Her naturally reflective personality facilitates her ability to change, grow, and develop.

Change, Learning, and Growing through TTF

The theme of change was apparent in how she viewed her life through narratives of becoming a teacher, developing as a teacher, and influencing the lives of her students. Having had no formal teacher education, Naomi was poised to learn from her AC program, whatever that would be. As she looked through different options in New York and in Texas, TTF stood out to her.

> And then when, um, TTF popped up, like you know when I was going down through my search and I saw <u>that</u> and I said okay, well let's see what's different about this one, you know, versus some others. Because the others were like, you know, oh we're associated you know with universities. But the programs would be longer. And I just thought it was just very textbook. I didn't know (p) like how much I was really gonna get. It was just kind of like…I felt like it was gonna be a swarm of us coming in. You know? It's with other programs, a swarm of people…yeah yeah yeah, come in, come in, come in, come in. And then, you're fine, you're fine, you're fine. And, yeah. We throw some textbooks at you and you do your student teaching stuff and go. And then I thought, okay well that's not really going to work for me. You know? Because even though I'm a classroom oriented type of person, I can learn well in the classroom. but I need other experiences. I needed something else to draw me.

Unlike some programs she felt would just take her money and not really prepare her, TTF seemed like one that would really prepare her for the classroom through relevant experiences, not just filling her head with "textbook" knowledge. The rigorous

172

application and selection process also impressed Naomi. Looking at the application requirements she reasoned,

> Interview, statement, initial statement, and…and all this other…and I was just like, you know what (p) it sounds like a lot (p) but if it sounds like a lot it's probably for a reason. Right? And so I thought, alright if it's meant to be and, you know, I think I have what it takes to be a good teacher. You know, and what they're asking is pretty rigorous even for the, like the qualifying parts of the program. It seemed very rigorous and very, you know, on point. This by now [hits table], this by now [hits table]. You know (L)? So I thought, okay this is legit […]But I was just like, this is…if they're that serious about the people…the candidates that they <u>choose</u>, then I know that this is a program that's going to make me better and teach me something for real. Instead of just, like you know, taking my money and (L) letting me go. You know? So that was one thing.

This excerpt from our initial interview illustrates two aspects of Naomi's personality— her reflective disposition and her desire for personal development. Even though the program would be challenging for her "because I don't know if I'm that caliber of person just yet", she wanted to try knowing that the rigor of the program would help her to develop and make her better. The reader can see her reflective tendency by her frequent use of the internal dialogue-indicating phrase, "I thought".

Her thoughts about and expectations of the program were validated upon joining the 2009 science cohort. The program was rigorous, but it was worth it. The demanding summer schedule allowed her to make the connection she desired between an actual

173

classroom teaching experience and what she referred to as "classroom" and textbook learning experiences.

> I knew it was going to be rigorous […] And that I knew was a good thing because what happened in class you can go talk about it in the afternoon, you know, and see what could be better, and what happened in that classroom setting right then, and you get [snaps] almost like immediate feedback, a lot of times when it's that way. Um, so it wasn't just…I think there were probably, if I can remember correctly, only a couple of weeks before summer school started that we were just doing classes. You know what I mean? So then, and then for a month or so while summer school…I was doing summer school and my classes. So all of it was like, okay, you know…I saw…I did something in class (p) I talked about it, I learned from it, we reflected…blah, blah, blah, and we learned something new to build on it (p) in your own classes, in the evening. So, um, I didn't think it was going to be as rigorous as it was, but it was good kind of (L) rigorous. It was just like, keep it going, keep it going.

In fact, the pacing of the summer institute experience had a tacit benefit of preparing her for the fast-paced work of full-time teaching. Through the program, Naomi learns the behind-the-scenes activity of teachers that she did not understand as a child.

> And you wonder, growing up, [whispers] why are these teachers always running somewhere. You know? And I'm like, oh this is why. So they were preparing you from early that you can't just walk around really slow and lackadaisical because…I'll be there in a second (L), that's not happening. You're a teacher.

174

They got you from Day 1: this is what it's going to be like (p) everyday that you're in the classroom.

Another opportunity for growth and change was precipitated by Jane, the science seminar leader for all of the participants in this study. Naomi describes her as "amazing" and believes "if I could be even (p) an iota as good as her in the classroom, I would…I'd be okay." One thing she admired about Jane was her "very focused and direct" disposition, which stood in contrast to Naomi's milder disposition. Naomi appreciated the fact that although their personalities differed, Jane gave the Fellows practical lessons in teaching.

She said, okay, this is what the book says, this is what's going on with the book, you know, and this is what we have to cover, <u>but</u> this is how this will translate for you in the classroom. You know? And she would talk to us about what, you know, different (p), um, situations and scenarios that came up with <u>her</u>. And we were like, [lowers voice] that's impossible, kids don't do <u>that</u>. You know (L)? […]And then it…it's not always a…there's a framework that must be followed for that, but she showed us that it doesn't have to be like so, so textbook and I thought that was (p)…that was excellent.

Jane provided the kind of instruction on teaching that Naomi found valuable—it was practical and not overly "textbook".

Jane continues to influence Naomi's teaching three years on. In the following excerpt, the verb tense Naomi uses implies an ever-present approach to learning by imagining herself as Jane when making disciplinary decisions:

175

Um, and again because (p) of (p) her just leadership style…like although, like

our personalities are completely different, and I'm sure our style of approach in

discipline is completely different, I try and think about how she would handle

stuff when I am trying to discipline, or you know, handle situations in the

classroom. But I also don't want it to be fake (L). So I try and, you know, (p) say

okay what's the…the…the median (p) for that…for handling any situation in the

classroom.

Naomi demonstrates one way in which she learns vicariously through Jane's modeling.

In social cognitive theory, Bandura (2000) describes the vicarious capability as a tool for

gaining knowledge and skills beyond personal experience of enactment and

consequence. The ability to imagine disciplinary outcomes based upon the lived

experiences of others, in this case Jane, demonstrates the centrality of reflection in

Naomi's learning process. This description of her learning also appears to validate Jane's

belief in the power of a good teacher. Though Jane did not explicitly mention this in

reference to her role as a teacher of teachers, the participants' collective reflection on the

TTF program was how great of an example she has been for them.

A conversation between Jane and Naomi has lingered in her mind since the

summer session three years prior:

she told me…she was like okay, you understand and you know all this stuff but

your personality is way laid back, you're very soft spoken. You're gonna have to

bring it. You just have to. [Whispers] And I thought I don't have to do that.

Really? They'll understand me (L). But, um, I realize, nope you have to almost

176

(p) have that alter ego when you're in the classroom just to show, um, the students that, yeah, this is you know, in this situation or in this setting, this is educational. You know. It doesn't always follow the way I would like it to because again, I'm still in…I'm still learning (p) how to be very (p), um (p) what's the word…as…like, as "A" personality (L) … Like people who, you know…those people who walk in the room and all the attention is just like, okay this person means business. Like from…they step in and it's just like, we're on this mission here and this is our only mission. If anyone else is straying from that, you cannot be here (L).

At some point after she entered the classroom Naomi realized that Jane was right. Naomi acknowledges that she had to become a more aggressive person in order to achieve the results she wanted, or her mission.

Developing an Aggressive Personality

Various aspects of transitioning into teaching required Naomi to develop a more aggressive personality, not just Jane's earlier admonition. Naomi worked for the same company for years. She was unaccustomed to the requirements of securing a full-time teaching position. She had to present herself as a competitive applicant. She had to be aggressive in her search and following up with school administrators.

And then, it was...I've never…I've not gone to as many…like I visited schools. I, you know…like…and that was coming out of my comfort zone too. Like you know, you're used to people like calling you and not me walking in like does principal so-and-so have a moment (L). You know, may I speak with them. Is

that allowed (L) even? So, you know, going to schools…actual schools…going to ISD buildings, you know, and dropping off a resume here and there. Like, it was a lot […] So even though, my job search was pretty extensive and I did a lot for it and I put together so much information and keeping…making sure all of that stuff stays up to date, it does (p)…again, going through that process makes me…helps me…has helped me grow, you know. Um, yeah, because it just makes you aggressive, you know. And if you're aggressive to do that, you'll be aggressive in other ways, you know, that you need to be aggressive.

In the classroom, Naomi realizes how she has to continue developing an aggressive personality in order to meet her classroom goals and career goals. Naturally, she wants to believe that all of her students can improve because that is so central to her beliefs about her own life trajectory. However, over time and through experience, she is forced to acknowledge that within her classroom "there are ones that are just not here for that. They're here because the law makes them. You know. Why are you in the classroom? Because if I don't I'll have to go to court." In light of the value Naomi places on learning and development, this kind of response is somewhat reprehensible.

that's not a goal. That's not a reason for doing anything: because if you don't you're gonna get in trouble. You know? It's not for the positive experiences. It's not for the growth experiences. It's not for education. It's for…because I don't wanna have to pay a fine (L). You know?

In keeping with her belief in change and growth, Naomi does try to get some of those students on board with mixed success.

And so, sometimes when I'm trying to get through…I mean, I <u>have</u> and I can see

I have gotten through…a couple of students that would go down that path and be

that way, but they're not because they're like this isn't so bad if I just pay

attention. This is not so bad, Miss. And I'm like, okay, good let's keep it going,

keep it going. And I still have them. I still have them caught. And then there are

the others that (p)…[I'm] trying.

This is precisely where Naomi begins to see the cost of keeping her personality versus

adopting a more aggressive personality. Her choice to keep trying to win over students

that "are not here for that" can impact her ability to meet the needs of the many other

students in her class that "<u>want</u> to be here". As a result, Naomi considers just cutting

students know. This is not easy for her, so she struggles to find her limit for the sake of

the majority of students, as well as for herself. Of the internal conflict and costs Naomi

says:

So, where that cut off point is, you know…to say, uh uh because you are, um,

inhibiting their education, you know, with <u>your</u> actions (L) and we can't have

that. And so that will in turn show that I'm an advocate for the majority of the

students who really want to be here to learn and get something out of it. You

know? Um, so that's (p)…that, I'm…honestly I still struggle with a little bit.

Like I know it here [points to head], you know, and I know it here [points to

heart]. But I…I have a problem with like saying, okay how do I express it to

where it's [dusting hands], you know….to them, that they know it. Because I

don't think I always have that personality where I'm very…you know, walk in

179

the room, [lowers voice] oh she's mean, she means business right now. You

know, it's just kind of like, okay you gushy (p)…you know, this is…may I have

your attention. Okay, I have to say it too many times. You know? Maybe because

they're used to me now. Um, or what it is. But I need to change or get that (p) for

myself, like, you know 'cause it'll…it'll mean a longer career, and more success

in the classroom, really.

Naomi is in the process of learning how to reconcile a core belief that people can change

and develop, with the reality that overly investing in students who do not desire to

change could cost her the development of her many other students, as well as her ability

to remain in the classroom for years to come and not experience premature burnout.

Summarizing this narrative of needing to become more aggressive, Naomi returns to the

overarching theme of change, growth, and development:

So I'm…that…I'm still learning. I'm better than I was in the beginning, but I'm

still getting better. You know, and I still have a ways to go. You know. And I'm

thinking, always thinking, and jotting down [lowers voice] okay, this is what

changes, this is…this is how it changes, this is what changes, this is how (p) I

make the change. This is what changes, this is how (L)…you know, you're

always revamping and, like you know, redoing (p) some of the ideas that you

thought about, that in the classroom so I can make it better (p) for my kids.

In the next section I discuss Naomi's process of learning and pursuit of growth at

Metro City Academy during her first two years as a teacher, and at McClain High

School.

Working at Metro City Academy and McClain High School

Entering the teaching profession has been a journey of constant growth and development for Naomi in transitioning from a corporate environment into the education system, adjusting her personality to "fit" what students require today, and growing in her ability ensure her various missions—job hunting and getting students on board—are successful. Ever in pursuit of learning, Naomi describes the experiences and reflections that led her away from Metro City Academy her second year and into McClain High School during her third year.

Stunted Growth at Metro City Academy

She spent her first two years at an alternative high school in the city center, where she taught science in a credit recovery program. Her very small classes—essentially the overflow from another science teacher's roster—allowed her to be adventurous in her lessons and gain the approval of her then principal.

> I…like, she would come and observe <u>all</u> the time; she was always in my class watching and see. And my classes were really small because I was just taking overload…overflow from another, um, teacher, the other 11th grade teacher in the school. So I was taking <u>her</u> overflow, so my classes were really small. So I had time to like, you know, really do some cool stuff with the kids, you know. We actually…we had some pretty in-depth conversations about the subjects, you know. We had time to finish things [L]. And it was really nice. So she would come in and she was just like [lowers voice] every time I leave I learn something. This is awesome, you know.

Metro City had experienced a great deal of administrative turnover. The principal that hired her had only been there for a year when another principal replaced her. This principal instituted a school-wide reform that emphasized reading for understanding across all content areas. She tried everything to meet the principal's standard but continued to fall short despite her best effort.

Like, so we had to take time to go and make fresh and new ones, all the time, you know, for the students, as well as plan our other lessons, as well as grade and blah, blah, blah. And that was an on top of. And that was kind of stressful. It was so micro-managed. Um, it was hard. It was like it had to be done this way, introductory passage with this [hits the table], the details were this. It was so, so specific. You had to ask, the higher order thinking questions, which is fine. But for someone who…with that…who was fresh to the different levels of rigor with questions. So just making up the questions for these things was difficult. And that, just to plan something that initially which would really in the classroom, doing it would take 30 minutes, I was there for like hours putting it together. And I'm like, this (p) is insane. And then, I just didn't think that (p), um, like…the way that I would do the delivery was fine, the kids understood. And they were like the new words that I'm getting, this is great, this is fine or whatever. Where I would fall short, I think was, alright, the reflection part for them, like summary writing because the kids would get lazy, I'm just going to take a sentence from here, a sentence from here, and there's your paragraph. Instead of put this together originally and in an original way to say this is something I'm getting.

After getting feedback from the principal on her efforts she realized that this was not going to work.

> And so (p) with that principal there was nothing that I could do that was good enough, when it came to that. I would change it up, alright let's do, you know, some initial vocabulary. No, you're not supposed to do it that way, everything's supposed to be in context. Okay, so we'll just do it in context. No, you're not supposed to do it…It was just like all this constantly changing, changing, changing. And I said, I don't know what you want and you're not happy with the way I'm doing it. So you know. It happened that way.

Meanwhile, Naomi had begun the TfR sessions of which learning styles and differentiated instruction are key components. In addition, TTF introduced a capstone portfolio into the content seminar requirement, requiring Fellows to document their application of the strategies and results in their classrooms. What Naomi was learning in TTF seemed incompatible with the rigidity of the reading reform initiative in her school.

> And I think my frustration was that, I felt like, this was…this…it is a good way to um (p) increase, like student fluency of the science language, you know. I thought, you know this is a good way to do it. But, this is not the only way that students should learn about it, by reading about it. That's not…that's just one level. And not…and knowing, and learning about all the different aspects about the different ways that students learn, they're not just auditory learners. You got the visual ones, you got the kinesthetic ones, you know what I mean? You got the ones that…that need to move around. And sitting there [hits table] just there and

reading, you know, is not…doesn't reach everybody. So…especially in science

where there's so much you can do. But, you're limited in budget and facilities

and stuff like that. You make the best with what you got, kind of thing. But I

don't think he thought I had enough (L). You know.

Naomi believes in the possibility of perpetual self-improvement, so she looked forward

to having another year to try again and get it right. Looking back on her first year, she

was hopeful that she would continue growing at Metro City in her third year. However,

when that no longer seemed possible, Naomi left in pursuit of an environment where she

could grow.

My first year there was pretty good. And I was excited about coming back the

next year, even under the new principal. But then when it became so much about

that [hits table] aspect of the curriculum, I was like uuhh…yeah I started to

flounder, you know. I started to doubt my abilities, you know. Where I was

confident before, I started to be like, uhhh (L). You know, I'm not advancing,

you know. I wasn't advancing and I wasn't learning (p) more. So it was just hard.

I was always sick (L) because I was always stressed. I had pink eye like 5 times.

Like I was always…and my students saw it, like Miss (p) what are they doing to

you? (L). Like I don't know. I'm trying to make I there for you guys, you know.

So it was difficult, you know. So, but then I thought, if I can get through this

year, If I…if I can come back another year, it'll be better because I was thinking

ahead and thinking positive. But then…and then…but towards the end of the

year, I thought, yeah I don't think he's going to give me that opportunity, the

184

chance to do that. And because it's an alternative school, you know, it's a…it's one, it's like at...at-will employment. So they can say, okay we don't need you, you know. So they can just let you go, just like they would at any, um, corporation. As opposed to like...Yeah, but then when I left I was kind of like sad, because I was like maybe what I learned this year, let me see if I can reapply it and get it better. But I was like, well, I'm not going to have that opportunity. But I need to be somewhere that's going to make me better. That probably wasn't the place that was going to do it.

This extended quote reveals Naomi's commitment to pursuing growth. When one pathway appeared to block her pursuit of growth, she chose another path. Growth is so strong in her personal narrative; it arguably filters her interaction and expectations of students as shown in her talk about students that are not in her classroom to learn. Naomi is tenacious and does not give up on learning for herself or her students without a fight.

Facilitating Growth in her Students at Mcclain High School

McClain High School has proven to be a place where Naomi feels she can develop, especially in her new assignment teaching biology to freshmen. The students at her other school were older and more mature.

Here, I think that this is a place where they…I'm hoping…like because this is an opportunity to learn and grow, you know. So, although I've never taught freshmen before. And that's a whole new experience, like these new kids (p) they're…they're new. They…they're [exhales]…they're something else. And it's a whole…it's another learning experience for me.

185

There are limits to Naomi's joy of learning. She wants to move forward. Teaching freshmen was frustrating because, unlike teaching at Metro City, she has to start over again with an entirely different context. She describes the difference between the types of learning thusly:

> And I'm kind of like, you know, you get a little bit frustrated because I'm like, I'm always in this learning but I'm always at the less…at level 1 of learning, and not the [lowers voice] you know I can reflect now and I can grow. I'm just like, you're learning how to understand freshmen. And I'm still learning how to understand freshmen.

Teaching freshmen affords Naomi additional opportunities to facilitate growth in her students. She teaches a diverse group of students, predominantly Hispanic. At times her students try to categorize her and limit her based on what they believe about African Americans. At first, it upset her when she would describe her background and diverse experiences and the students would respond, "Miss, but you're black!" She began to change the way she saw herself in relation to her students. She became less of an object of their misinformation, more a change agent in their process of development as people. She would encourage them to expand their horizons.

> But I realized that they just don't know. So it's nothing to be upset at. It's just something that they have to learn…and you show them. And that's why I push them, in class…when we have time for that kind of conversation. And they'll ask me, um, about where I'm from. Or we'll talk about places that they want to go and I'll say please make sure that you travel. Go somewhere else. See different

things. Don't just stay here. So I think a lot of students get pigeonholed and caught in…in their specific environment and their comfort zone. And they so don't want to change. And it's, man.

During one of my observations of a class she selected for me to visit, I saw Naomi actively taking notes in front of the class using a document camera. Much like an overhead projector, a document camera projects images onto a screen for students to see. Her class was unexpectedly calm during this time, not because I had any knowledge of what to expect but based purely on her description of her students as having immature "freshmen tendencies". Nina sat at the edge of her desk guiding the class in whole group responses as she took notes for them to see. During our follow-up interview, I asked Naomi to tell me about her practice, which she does in each of her four freshmen classes. She says she does it this way "because they're freshmen and everybody keeps telling me, well freshmen don't know how to take notes and they know…they need to learn how to take notes." Naomi reenacts a conversation she would have with her students and a rationale for this practice:

I do it along with them because again [hits table with palm], it's repetition. What are we doing? Cornell style. Okay, let's go. Question [hits table with palm] on one side, answer on the other. Why do we do it like this? You know? Why do we do it this way? Because it's easier to read our notes. And you're like, okay so (L). Instead of the jumbled mess [hits table with palm] that they come in with. So…

187

Teaching students how to take notes while teaching them biology has implications for their future. Naomi says factually, "that's what they're going to see in college." She sees her role as preparing them for the world beyond McClain High School.

Naomi consistently integrates science with life lessons. It is important that students become self-sufficient, so when they ask her questions about the notes they have just written or do not seem to recall information, Naomi takes it as an opportunity to remind them to access the resources they have been given to find the information they want. Other times, she refreshes their memory by asking leading questions that help them to recall the learning activity that was meant to "flesh out" the notes they took. At one point in the observation, students work together on an activity about the Energy Cycle. In the narrative, she demonstrates how she empowers students to pursue their own learning:

> You guys have to…and I'm telling him, you have to remember it's a cycle.
> Things go back around and around, right? And the point of the decomposers is to break it up into specific way, right…break it up into smaller parts, right…because it's not just bones that <u>grow</u> into (p) trees (L). You know, so we're trying to say…they're like, oh. And then it gets captured again by the organisms that <u>need</u> it. So, where does it start again? They're like, oh the sun. <u>And</u>? The producers. So just trying to (p) make him understand. And try to make the…empower them, like you have the information. Where are you going to get it from (L)? Because they need to be self-sufficient. They need to <u>understand</u> that they're advocates for their education too instead of just sitting back and waiting

for somebody to give them the answer, you know. It's like okay I'm here to give you the tools so that you can…and break up the complex stuff. But, when you need to go back…you need to know where to go back and get it, you know, and how to piece it again…piece it together again for yourself. Like we'll do in class one time, but now when you go back and look at it, you have to do it for yourself. So it's just…especially with the freshmen, I'm realizing they don't come with those kinds of skills, right, so we have to teach them (p) that, um, that this is all for a purpose. You're not just sitting and writing notes.

It is clear that Naomi does not believe that students learn by sitting and getting. Instead they have to actively participate in rehearsing the notes and making the connections. Notes serve several purposes in her class: they provide a model for organizing ideas, serve as a reference for biology content, and facilitate student empowerment.

To be sure, Naomi's use of notes represents only one aspect of her instructional practice. Even within note-taking she is cognizant of the need to ensure learning happens and they are not passive. She draws upon her knowledge of how memory works and uses colors because "it helps, you know, activate different parts of the brain. And they can like, oh, it comes alive so they'll remember better." She tries to incorporate a variety of activities that will help them to make a connection they will remember.

I'm like, we're writing notes to have a basis for information, but then we're going to get up and do something where, you know, it…it expands on the information that you just wrote down or, you know, it does…it shows exactly [hits table with palm], right…in a different, um, format what you took down [hits

189

table with palm]. You know, so to make it all link. So to make them understand, this is not all in isolation either. This is not notes time and now it's activity time. And they're two completely different things. They're <u>not</u> (L). So it's to make the kids understand that these things…you know, especially in science…it's not…you can't learn it in isolation. Each topic doesn't…it's not isolated to the next. It's our job to link it, but you guys have to put in the effort to, you know, for yourselves. So yeah.

Naomi has grown in her practice as a science educator as she consistently changes and adapts her ways of teaching to reflect what her students need now. Her freshmen are not able to sit for long periods of time, so she teaches them through activities in addition to notes. They do not know how to take notes, so she teaches them how to do it. Her persistence in pursuing growth on her part and that of her students is evident. She strives to become a good science teacher, and sometimes does not consider how her teaching practices impact her ELLs, though in teaching as she does she believes everyone learns. In the next section I discuss how Naomi teaches and learns to teach ELL students in her biology classroom.

Teaching and Learning to Teach ELL Students

Naomi would describe her teaching ELLs as primarily "just good teaching" and cultural awareness within the classroom. She regularly incorporates activities to help students learn and retain information by making a connection through their bodies, differentiate instruction through flexible grouping and teaching to multiple learning modalities, and checking for understanding. When asked to tell me about her everyday

190

interactions with ELL students, she mentions what she does as "just good teaching" that helps everyone.

> Um, so, what makes it easier…and I'm sure it makes it easier for a lot of teachers is that, they're not just saying (p) okay, I'm…I'm implementing ELL strategies for my ELL students. I'm implementing strategies in the classroom for everyone, right. And, you know it is, an ELL strategy, or it is…whatever kind of strategy it is, but it's for all the kids (L). You know, because they all need this. So I kind of started thinking of it that way.

Naomi uses strategies that will help the majority of her students, and often finds it difficult to provide instruction specifically for her ELLs. Pairing them with bilingual students frees up some time to focus on the needs of the entire class. She acknowledges how this may not always be the best way for her ELL students:

> Day-to-day, it's very…let's see, um, some of them I…like, you know, I try to like do my best like, to be like do you get this. Did you understand what I said? Do you want me to say it different? I do the whole...I kind of…I give them a little bit more attention but that's when I make myself very cognizant that this might be something that they're…this is totally foreign to them. But, there are days where I honestly go through my lessons, and I go through and it's, you know (p) writing the notes, let's do it this way, you know, doing an activity, you know, guys work together, um, to finish this up. And I say, well, the (p) the most…the most focused I am on, you know, their achievement might be the fact that I make sure that when I pair them, I pair them with somebody who…who's,

um bilingual with (L) their language. You know, and so, knows Spanish or knows whatever when I pair them together so that they can do some explaining (p) um, sometimes or making sure that just the student is a…a good student (L) that I pair them with so that they can say, yeah this is how you do this. Or this is what she means by that, so go ahead and do that. Yeah, but with the time and with the…all the other students I really think that, you know…I've said this in the past, I think I do them a disservice sometimes because I'm not as focused as I can probably be (p) with them. And I don't know all the strategies that I maybe should know, that will help them. I don't always use thinking maps in the classroom. I do sometimes, you know. I don't always have them write, you know, um…'cause sometimes there's no con…time…there's a time constraint. I have them answer questions, like exit tickets and stuff like that. But actually write more than, you know, a sentence or two of a summary…I don't always [hits table], you know, remember that or have time to fit in. I'll have it up on the agenda sometimes, but then I'm like [lowers voice] dang, we didn't get to that (L). You know? So it's just kind of like, uh. So my day to day interaction, to me, is just kind of like, I…if I can make myself more aware, you know, of their needs (p) um…I do do some things to help them. But I don't think everything I do is, um, always to…as beneficial for them, you know, as it should be or as it could be, you know?

For Naomi, awareness is perhaps a first step in accessing more resources to help meet the learning needs of language learners without, what she fears will be, sacrificing

192

the learning of the other students. Research (Clair, 1995; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, &

Driscoll, 2005; Penfield, 1987) indicates that time to address the needs of language

learners is of major concern for many mainstream teachers. In this respect, teachers need

not only be given strategies or techniques to utilize for ELL instruction, but support for

incorporating them into the classroom in a way that maximizes the time they have for

class instruction.

Making a Necessary Change in Thinking about ELLs

When Naomi describes her process of learning to teach ELLs, she recalls a time

when she did not understand how a student could continue to receive ELL services

though they were born in the US or had been here for a long while. She needed to

undergo a change in perspective. Initially, her ideas about ELL students were solely

based on the textbook representation of them all as newcomers. This notion was

complicated by her classroom experience with students that were long-term ELLs, as

identified on her roster, and did not "appear" to need services. In her own words Naomi

describes the contrast thusly:

> Um, like the way they make it seem in text…like in the text and in the classroom
>
> are that it's…the ELL learners are really just…are the ones that have just come
>
> from Mexico or wherever [hits table], here…you know, first time here. But,
>
> it…but then looking at it, and looking at, you know, the roster and looking at,
>
> you know, the grades. These are kids that are still considered ELL and they've
>
> been here for years. Like, well why is that? (L) You know. So, you know, it's
>
> like the whole gradual process. So I thought, you know, I thought they would be

one way. But they are all new to the country, but that's not the case. You know, very much of the time, it's not…it's not the case at all. Now their parents might, you know, be…new here. But they grew up here. They spent quite a few years here, but they're still considered ELL.

This quote identifies the gap in understanding she had regarding ELLs as a result of the one-dimensional representation in which they were presented in her pre-service training. This also demonstrates the relationship between teacher education and the development of beliefs discussed in the literature (Richardson, 1996; Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997). When her understanding of the way ELLs are was disrupted by her teaching reality, Naomi could modify her thinking in a way that allowed her to cope with her experiences. In the next paragraph I illustrate how miseducation about ELLs prevented Naomi initially from understanding her struggling language learners and thereby provide scaffolds for them to succeed in her class.

Naomi's beliefs about what ELL students would be like prevented her from making room in her thinking for other possibilities in understanding her students' struggles. Her frustration with students who did not fit the mold she had resulted initially in explanations of reluctance to justify their struggles as legitimate or to provide support as described below.

Ummm, sometimes, I mean, it probably (p)…you know, not for…I don't know, not…to not use. I can't think of the exact words. But it almost makes you (P) like, unnecessarily prejudiced against the type of, you know…what they put into educate…you know, this education system. Like, you know the opportunities that

194

they've been given. It's like, it's not your first year here, it's not even your second year here. You've been here for a while. But, what is it about, you know, just the general language that you're not…that you're…you're falling short with. And then on top of that, it's making you fall even shorter on, you know, the science part of it. So, I almost, in some instances, when I'm just like, okay, your accent is almost gone, you know, but you're just saying there's certain words out there that you don't understand but you're not making it…making an attempt to get it. So I almost feel like, you know...you almost want to point a finger. But it's like I'm the adult in this room. I can't do that. You know.

Naomi's hesitancy to declare her initial "prejudice" against students that had "been here for a while" illustrates not only that teacher perspectives about students influences their teaching (Clair, 1995; Reeves, 2006; V. Richardson, 1996), but how those beliefs are constructed by teacher interpretation of pre-service training. The conflict Naomi feels about her attitude towards the students reaches a head towards the end of this narrative when she states that it would be, in some way, wrong for her to wholly act on this belief by "pointing the finger" at the student. She implies that she bears responsibility for student learning as the adult. This conflict served as a catalyst for Naomi to learn a better way, much like what Mezirow (1991) describes as the turning point in the learning process that leads to transformation. For Naomi, that transformation began taking shape when she sought one-on-one conversations with struggling ELL students to understand what was happening. Not all teachers experience this conflict as exhibited in the research

195

on teacher attitudes towards ELL students that abdicate responsibility for teaching ELLs and blame the student for not learning.

Naomi learns that her students do not always understand despite how proficient they "look" to her. She had to change her perspective in order to find out what was happening with this student. In conversing with the student in a more personal setting after school, Naomi was able to gain a more refined understanding of the nuances of language proficiency.

> It's really…you have to go around and try to think about it different. And I only…and the times when I get a chance to think about it differently is like when…if and when that same student will come to like a tutorial session with me. And then, you know, we'll sit down and then they'll go through something that they're…an assignment that they're missing. And they'll say, miss, you know, because we don't speak like this at home or whatever. Or they'll have misconceptions that they've had for a long time about a certain word, what that means or a certain…certain topic…what that went over. You know. And then when I can sit with them in the different setting, you know, still in the classroom, but not during class time, [lowers voice] then I'm just like [whispers] ohhh, oops, sorry, you know (L). You know, I'm like, okay, okay, okay. It's not…it is a language barrier, but it's not to the…it's not how I was thinking about it, as a language barrier. It's not them, always that they just refuse to get it.

She learned that ELLs were not what she thought and that it wasn't always about being lazy. She begins to make sense of what her students experienced, whereas before she

could not understand: "It's just that they grew up (L) with…just, you know, this…words meaning slightly different things or they just thought they meant something else that they don't, and you know...confusing it. And you're just like, oh, okay, okay."

For Naomi, the way forward is teaching ELLs is to provide them with clarifications so that they can move forward.

> So if we can get through that, you know, maybe we'll be…it'll be better and then, so that'll give them more confidence, you know, when they get the clarification that they needed, that they just didn't know they needed. Then when they get it, they're like, ohhh okay. And then, those are the times when, then the next time you see them in class, that they can go back and like, when we said this. Like, yeah (L).

Clarification became the focus of her ELL instruction. She groups students in such a way that she can easily access those with ELL students and individually conference with them to provide any clarifications they needed.

The Need for Clarification: Making a Connection

Clarification comes by way of checking for student understanding and spending one-on-one time with students. For Naomi, obtaining clarification is essential to both her learning and that of her language learners. She believes that good instruction provides this for students of all ages. For her, clarification can be summed as: students have what they need, but sometimes there are just gaps that teachers have to assess and build a bridge for students to move forward.

As described above Naomi had an interesting first year of teaching with a small class size, extreme support from her principal, but no input from TTF. Her second year was quite challenging as she tried to reconcile the conflicting demands of TTF and the new curriculum and principal at her school. Somewhat overwhelmed, Naomi fell behind on completing her assignments for TTF and essentially dug her head in the sand until she was confronted by TTF staff members about her unacceptable behavior. Having had the opportunity to discuss her challenges, she found support to move forward and improve in her ability to meet the demands of both. Her Seminar Leader Lynette was instrumental in this process because she helped to provide the clarification Naomi needed to meet the demands, whereas on her own she was unable to see the way forward. Naomi's reflective personality plays a role in this section by highlighting how she makes sense of her own learning process and sees the connection and applicability to her students' learning processes.

This way of reflecting upon her own learning and then applying the principles she learns to interactions with students is achieved both explicitly and implicitly through narratives about her teaching philosophy in general and her interactions with ELL students in particular. In other words, Naomi is clear about the connection between her response to being overwhelmed by conflicting demands and how her students who struggle with competing interests—of which school is only one—can overcome them with support from her. On the other hand, her belief that all ELL students need is "clarification" in order to move forward pervades her reenactment of conversations with ELLs, yet she never makes the explicit connection between this way of understanding

198

language learners' needs to her own experience as a teacher-learner and how Lynette provided her with the clarification she needed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how AC teachers from one AC program in Texas learn to teach ELL students in mainstream classrooms, and how they describe and interpret their acts of teaching through narratives. The value of this narrative inquiry was more than the findings it generated, but the process with which teachers engaged the study and how it impacted them. Particularly, all participants made reference to how participating in the study helped them to reflect on their teaching ELL students through having a running record of their classroom activities including the time spent on each one, and being able to talk about their thinking at particular moments in the less based on its potential impact on ELL students. For many of them, this opportunity for pointed reflection assisted them in seeing what had become invisible and subsumed in their JGT approach to teaching ELL students. They felt adept at addressing language learners' need to feel comfortable, which they felt supports learning. However, teachers were not always aware of the "other things" they did in their classrooms serve to disconnect language learners from active learning or move the content beyond their reach.

One of the most important things that the findings demonstrate is the influence of prior experience and teacher education program shape teacher beliefs about working with ELL students in their classroom. While this is not new knowledge, this study makes the contribution by examining how AC teachers in this program describe and interpret

their acts of teaching, which can be insightful for addressing misconceptions about teaching linguistically diverse students in a single classroom. Like other mainstream teachers, participants in this study held inaccurate views about second language acquisition and felt unprepared to address them. However, unlike findings from other studies, narrative analysis allowed me to explore the meaning-making process teachers engaged in as they described their teaching practices with ELL students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Discussion

In this section I discuss the emergent themes across participant narratives by linking the findings back to constructivist theory of teacher learning (V. Richardson, 1997) and de Jong and Harper's (2005) cultural and linguistic framework for mainstream teachers of ELLs, homing in on the unique experiences of AC teachers. This is organized in accord with the research question topics of teaching ELL students, making sense of their work, and learning to teach ELL students in mainstream classrooms.

For many of the study participants, teaching ELL students was about making them feel comfortable in the classroom. Teachers did this in several ways, inviting them to come to tutoring, helping them feel autonomous in their learning, checking for understanding more frequently than native English speaking students, and providing clarification in one-on-one settings. Rarely did participants in this study appeal to specific understanding of linguistics or the ELPS to inform their teaching ELL students. Not only did they rely on creating the environment for students to feel part of the classroom, their approach to teaching was primarily based on general teaching tools and not explicit instruction. For example, teachers consistently used visuals to teach vocabulary but the act of creating a visual does not necessarily facilitate learning concepts though it may help with recalling the vocabulary word. Another way to scaffold language learning would be to preview vocabulary with students in advance of

the lesson that utilizes the terms (Allison & Harklau, 2010; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008). When asked if she does this, Naomi said she did by testing student knowledge and understanding of vocabulary words prior to instruction on the concept. However, previewing vocabulary and assessing prior knowledge address different aspects of the learning process—the former represents instruction to develop student knowledge, and the latter represents determining what students know *in order to* plan instruction. Participant tendency to conflate explicit instruction with instructional strategies could be a function TTF's emphasis on promoting teaching strategies and evaluating participant use of the strategies through their capstone project.

Strategies most cited by participants further illustrate teacher confusion between instructional models and tools to support learning. For example, when asked about their ELL teaching practices every teacher highlighted their use of flexible grouping as an instructional strategy. Flexible grouping seeks to facilitate student learning through collaborative pairing. Teachers paired ELL students with students that they felt could best help them. This practice facilitates learning but does not necessarily reflect deliberate instruction for language learners to develop proficiency in English or in the subject of science. Pairing students strategically may promote opportunities to practice speaking, but without clear instruction and parameters for engagement mainstream teachers leave ELL learning of the language and content mainly to chance. Harper and de Jong (2004) identify several common misconceptions about ELL instruction that are exhibited in the practices of the AC teacher participants: (1) Role of language exposure and interaction in English-language learning; (2) Universality of the second language

education method; (3) Propriety of applying the teaching method for native English speakers to second-language learners; (4) Regard of ESL as a menu of pedagogical learning tools. Participant narratives most often exhibited the third and fourth misconceptions as described above.

The identification of ELL teaching as being synonymous with "Just good teaching" was pervasive. AC teachers sought to help every student achieve and saw JGT as a way to achieve what was best for most students. Teachers were less likely to make language specific accommodations for ELL students during class than they were to allow students more time to complete an assignment, which supports the finding that mainstream teachers may be willing to make modifications for language learners but not in ways they feel lessen the integrity of the curriculum(Reeves, 2006). Participants believed that their role was to be an access point for future learning opportunities, which is consistent with a desire to maintain academic rigor as evinced in Jane's narrative. However, failure to identify and address specific student needs limited teacher ability to truly differentiate instruction based on student linguistic proficiency level. Teacher primary use of pairing demonstrates the general best practice of collaborative learning, which amounts to leaving what ELL students learn at the mercy of their learning partner.

It is clear from participant narratives that TTF focuses on educating pre-service teachers on the cultural aspects of teaching, which appears to have sensitized participants in a similar way. Even though teachers had a basis for understanding the importance of culture in learning (Nieto, 2010), participants struggle to make use of this knowledge in their teaching. Maya acknowledged the impact of cultural diversity on her teaching, but

that was the extent of it. AC participants generally agreed that their introduction to student diversity was general and not altogether helpful in developing specific teaching practices to help ELL students achieve in science. Teachers were aware of the need to *know* their students and their families, though it is unclear from our interviews of the extent to which they engaged in interacting with families. For the newest teachers—Maya and Nina—knowing student backgrounds was an integral part of their teaching ELL students and was a way for them to connect with their students in general.

Participants also espoused the belief that science was a language on its own and therefore all students were learning English. This represents what Harper and de Jong (2004) refer to as the misconception of applying teaching methods for native English speakers to second language learners. For all of the teachers, there was no distinction in instructional practice for ELL students. The practices they felt were helpful for ELL students were also considered helpful for their native English speaking students. The ELPS has not been sufficiently incorporated into their sphere of awareness or active thought processes, no less their teaching practices.

What teachers do and how they describe their teaching acts was found to be closely related to their beliefs about their role in teaching ELL students, and indeed their group of students. For all of the participants, this connection between belief and action was evident in their narratives about personal teaching or development philosophy or the program ideology of being the difference in student achievement outcomes. Jane, Maya, and Nina position their work with ELLs within a framework of understanding that some students come to this country with their families in pursuit of a better life. Naomi's

silence in this metanarrative could be attributed to the fact that she was not a part of this cohort and did not have Jane as a seminar leader during her teaching year. It speaks to the input of the leader in influencing teacher perspectives, and the power of personal practical knowledge in that each teacher began to adopt these beliefs as their own and integrate it into their personal stories. Naomi, on the other hand, did not have the typical Fellows experience because during her first year, she figured out how to teach on her own because there was no support from the Fellows program.

Almost all of the AC teachers make some reference to how their knowledge of another language could improve their ability to teach ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. Ellis (2004) argues for the centrality of prior language learning experience in language teaching based on evidence that the more exposure teachers had to multilingualism, the better able they were to be a resource for their language learning students. These findings were supported by research exploring the relationship between teachers prepared through various pathways and their knowledge, skills, and needs related to the instruction of ELL students (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Menken & Antunez, 2001). The literature seems to support that multilingual ELL teachers not only were more aware than monolingual counterparts of the explicit linguistic components needed to scaffold SLA, they were more also better able to evaluate learning resources and articulate the professional development needs (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

As the only bilingual participant in this study, Nina explicitly identified her fluency in Spanish as her primary strength in working with ELL students, along with her

experience in learning the same language that her students were learning. This lead Nina to rely heavily upon teaching her students the way that she learned English, by forcing them to read, speak, and write. She acknowledged that the school culture in many ways served to limit her ability to really push her students to learn the language and use every opportunity to master physics. Her expectations of her students were filtered through her experience and that of her high achieving daughter, so she struggled throughout the year to understand how best to harness the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) where students are sufficiently challenged but within their limits to reach the goals with support.

Maya also drew upon her experiences learning sign language to inform her beliefs about teaching ELL students, though these did not translate specifically into a teaching practice. She reasoned that the difference in student development of interpersonal communication and academic language resulted from student interest and motivation to learn academic language in much the same way that her desire to communicate with a deaf friend motivated her to put forth the effort to learn sign language for things she wanted to talk about. Consistent with her performance of her belief in generating hypotheses to test, Maya has not found the case that challenges her beliefs about SLA causing her to attribute differences in the development of BICS and CALP to student interest. This misconception demonstrates a way of thinking about language learners as being reluctant to acquire the new language, when BICS develops more quickly than CALP in part due to opportunities to utilize each type (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

The teachers in this study address their need for additional training in ELL instruction much like participants of other studies (Penfield, 1987; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007). AC teachers in this study further this conversation by expounding on several specific areas in which they needed more pre-service training: (1) knowing the range of possibilities with ELL students, (2) exposure to knowledge on cultures of students instead of broad statements about diversity, and (3) workshops on handling ELL paperwork. In describing their ideal ELL preparation program, participants stated that they had been given strategies for grouping and teaching, but that they had not been given specifics instances of when or how to utilize the strategy within their subject area. Naomi and Nina discuss the district push for students to use Thinking Maps, yet in Naomi's case it stopped as a great idea that she needed further support for implementing regularly in her classroom. Nina bought into the use of Thinking Maps and uses three of them regularly, however she struggles to teach students about the various maps and their uses so that they can maximize it as a thinking tool. Nina's students do the "minimum" number of nodes based on the model diagram unless she requires more. Perhaps as an AC teacher additional scaffolding is needed to incorporate good instructional tools into an instructionally sound base. She had many great ideas but struggled to execute them, particularly in her challenging work environment. AC teachers need a great deal of support and instructional coaching to enhance the melding of their previous experiences with teaching.

Conclusion

The AC teachers in this study participated in a program that aimed to make them aware of issues related to cultural and linguistic diversity as supported in the following recommendation by Youngs and Youngs (2001):

> If the goal is to promote positive attitudes toward ESL students on the part of mainstream teachers, exposure to cultural diversity appears likely to enhance appreciation for cultural diversity. The more preservice and in-service teachers are exposed to diversity through foreign language courses, courses in multicultural education, ESL training, and work with culturally diverse ESL students, the more positive teachers are likely to be about working with ESL students. (C. S. Youngs & Youngs, 2001, p. 117)

Teacher narratives were instructive on their generally positive beliefs about teaching ELLs, though for many the concept of diversity remained too vague to operationalize.

Indeed, as teachers spoke about pre-service instruction on diversity, their narratives reveal a disconnection between the textbook meaning of diversity and its relevance to their instruction, resulting in a level of surprise when their expectations of linguistic and cultural diversity was confronted by their actually classroom experiences. Maya and Nina describe the extent of their instruction on "diversity" as being shallow, giving no real definition of what it meant or how it would impact them. Being in one of the most diverse districts in the metropolitan area, she was shocked to find out that not only did students differ in their languages and cultures from home, they also differed in their proficiency in areas such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Naomi

mentioned that she had no idea what to do with the paperwork or how to interpret the students' IEP information and translate it into classroom practice. With such requirements for student success, she wished someone would have taught her what to expect.

While teacher narratives reveal great attention paid to the affective aspects of L2 development, they also show pervasive cultural and linguistic gaps in AC teacher knowledge of teaching language learners in mainstream classrooms. Teacher participants adopted the pedagogical belief that ELL instruction was essentially "just good teaching" practices for all students, leading them to overlook the specific language knowledge and skills teachers must possess in order to meet learning objectives for ELL students. This study also illustrates to power of narrative analysis to identify nuances in teacher understanding and development by finding context for their reasoning within their personal stories.

Recommendations

AC teachers narrate stories of success and challenge in teaching language learners. Predominant in their success stories is the personal relationships they build with students, while challenges centered mainly on the lack of training they had to address the learning needs—as they perceived them—of ELL students. Teachers' reliance on vague notions of differentiated instruction becomes subverted by common sense teaching ideas from their own learning experiences. Teachers also learned from discussions with their colleagues about what they do and how they think about their practice. Therefore, AC programs should harness this knowledge to create pre-service ELL preparatory

procedures that allow teachers to become aware of their teaching philosophy in a discussion-rich environment, prior to explicit instruction on specific ELL strategies.

This recommendation for increased targeted reflection on ELL instruction during AC programs is supported by participant feedback on the role of this research in helping them to explore their beliefs and practices related to ELLs, when previously they remained veiled by the "just good teaching" ideology. Participants shared how this research and classroom observation feedback became tools for them to reflect and commit to move forward. Both Jane and Maya found the reflection powerful enough to share with others who would also agree to participate in the study.

My second recommendation follows from the first. Once teachers engage in explicit reflective activities that force them to identify their beliefs about ELLs and how best to teach them, programs should explicitly provide corrective instruction aimed at dispelling misconceptions using the ELPS and a combination of theoretical and practical instructional materials. In this study, the AC program arguably erred too far on the side of practical application that teachers missed the theory behind their work and consequently misapplied their knowledge or used it indiscriminately. Furthermore, by delaying the presentation of the ELPS and instructional strategies until after specific L2 misconceptions are identified, teachers will have a much better opportunity to slot its significance within their instructional practice.

Teachers suggested ways their preparation programs could have better prepared them to work with ELL students. Generally these recommendations could be described as more of what they had already gotten such as more time spent learning about the

ELPS; greater specificity of what they received such as instructional strategies that were age-appropriate, relevant to their subject area, and examples of how to apply it; and suggestions that were different altogether from what they received, but they felt would be helpful such as talking to students that represented the range of language proficiency levels in the four areas or a panel discussion of teachers addressing the variety of ELLs they might encounter. The teachers offered valuable recommendations for how their preparation programs could have provided greater support for them to work with ELL students. One recommendation was to have AC teachers listen to a panel discussion of experienced teachers talk about their experiences with ELL students, again to help them understand the range of language learners they could encounter in mainstream classrooms.

Implications for Future Research

AC teachers from this program experienced the same kind of misunderstanding about teaching ELL students identified extensively in the literature (Clair, 1995; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Harklau, 1994a; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Penfield, 1987; Verplaetse, 2000). However, further research on the comparative gains in ELL student achievement by subject areas and teacher certification program could be instructive in finding discovering what aspects of each program contribute to teacher development in ELL instruction during their first year of teaching. Furthermore, this study did not focus on the availability and usage of ELL resources on school campuses. That might prove advantageous for advancing research to determine how teachers utilize the resources that are provided. If teachers are unaware of the resources or how best to use them, then they

are not much good to their instructional practice, and ultimately to their development in providing quality instruction for language learners. It also appears that participants in this study relied heavily on their colleagues for support. Further research is needed to understand the learning communities of AC teachers within their school settings and how those may contribute to development of instructional practices that prove beneficial for language learners.

A lingering question is how much knowledge of linguistics are mainstream teachers expected to have in order to effectively teach ELL students within CLD classrooms. Perhaps the ELPS was a start in redefining the role of the mainstream teacher, which I imagine will reflect itself in teacher education programs. At present, the PPR exam in Texas does require knowledge of the ELPS. Perhaps this AC program has not caught on in practice, as much as in theory. Understanding how AC teachers are prepared by their programs to teach ELL students can be conceptualized in a number of ways. However researchers choose, this research will have implications for providing teachers with what they need in order to be successful, and in kind improve the learning opportunities of mainstreamed ELL students.

REFERENCES

Allison, H., & Harklau, L. (2010). Teaching academic literacies in secondary school. In

   G. Li, & P. A. Edwards (Eds.), *Best practices in ELL instruction* (pp. 129-150). New

   York, NY: Guilford.

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the south: 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill,

   NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Andrews, J. J. (2004). Teaching effectiveness. In C. Spielberger (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of*

   applied psychology (pp. 535-539). Oxford: Academic Press.

Archuleta, M. L., Child, B. J., & Lomawaima, K. T. (Eds.). (2004). *Away from home:*

   American Indian boarding school experiences (2nd ed.). Phoenix, AZ: Heard

   Museum.

Ball, A. F. (2009). Toward a theory of generative change in culturally and linguistically

   complex classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal, 46*(1), 45-72.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change.

   Psychological Review, 84(2), 191.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*.

   Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1992). Exercise of personal agency through the self-efficacy mechanism.

   In R. Schwarzer (Ed.), *Self-efficacy: Thought control of action* (pp. 3-38).

   Washington, DC: Hemisphere Publishing Corp.

Bandura, A. (2000). Social-cognitive theory. In A. E. Kazdin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of*

   psychology (pp. 329-332). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 1-26.

Bobek, B. L. (2002). Teacher resiliency: A key to career longevity. *Clearing House, 75*(4), 202.

Bodner, G. M. (1986). Constructivism: A theory of knowledge. *Journal of Chemical Education, 63*(10), 873-878.

Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2001). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 367-409.

Boyd, D. J., Grossman, P. L., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2009). Teacher preparation and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 31*(4), 416-440.

Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 651-679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Clair, N. (1995). Mainstream classroom teachers and ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(1), pp. 189-196.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1995). Color blindness and basket making are not the answers: Confronting the dilemmas of race, culture, and language diversity in teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 493-522.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1986). On narrative method, personal philosophy, and narrative unities in the story of teaching. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 23*(4), 293-310.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2000). Narrative understandings of teacher knowledge. *Journal of Curriculum & Supervision, 15*(4), 315-331.

Costigan, A. (2004). Finding a name for what they want: A study of New York City's teaching fellows. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(2), 129-143.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Chung, R., & Freelow, F. (2002). Variation in teacher education: How well do different pathways prepare teachers to teach? *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(4), 286-302.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Teaching and knowledge: Policy issues posed by alternate certification for teachers. *Peabody Journal of Education, 67*(3), 123-154.

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*(2), 101-124.

Doyle, W., & Ponder, G. A. (1977). The practicality ethic in teacher decision-making. *Interchange, 8*(3), 1-12.

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn Bacon.

Elbaz, F. (1983). *Teacher thinking: A study of practical knowledge*. New York: Nichols Publishing Company.

Ellis, E. M. (2004). The invisible multilingual teacher: The contribution of language background to Australian ESL teachers' professional knowledge and beliefs. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 1*(2), 90-108.

Faltis, C. J., & Coulter, C. A. (2008). *Teaching English learners and immigrant students in secondary schools*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Faltis, C., Arias, M. B., & Ramirez-Marin, F. (2010). Identifying relevant competencies for secondary teachers of English learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 33*(3), 307-328.

Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational Research, 38*(1), 47.

Feistritzer, C. E., & Haar, C. (2008). *Alternate routes to teaching*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Francois, A. (2003). *A case study of secondary school general education language arts teachers' attitudes concerning teaching mainstreamed English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) students.* (Ph.D., Lynn University), 205. Retrieved from http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=766009941&Fmt=7&clientId=70226&RQT=309&VName=PQD. (3133627).

Freeman, D. (1989). Teacher training, development, and decision making: A model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*(1), pp. 27-45.

Gándara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). *Listening to teachers of English language learners: A survey of California teachers' challenges, experiences, and professional development needs.* UC Berkeley: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Gardner, D. P., & Others, A. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. an open letter to the American people. A report to the nation and the secretary of education.* Washington DC: Government Printing Office.

Gee, J. P. (1991). A linguistic approach to narrative. *Journal of Narrative and Life History, 1*(1), 15-39.

Geertz, C. (2000). *The interpretation of cultures* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gergen, K. J. (n.d.). *Social construction and pedagogical practice.* Unpublished manuscript.

Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2006). Narratives in action. *Narrative Inquiry, 16*(1), 112-121.

Goldenberg, C. (2010). Improving achievement for English learners: Conclusions from recent reviews and emerging research. In G. Li, & P. A. Edwards (Eds.), *Best practices in ELL instruction* (pp. 15-43). New York, NY: Guilford.

Grossman, P., & Loeb, S. (Eds.). (2008). *Alternative routes to teaching: Mapping the new landscape of teacher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Gruber, K. J., Wiley, S. D., Broughman, S. P., Strizek, G. A., & Burian-Fitzgerald, M. (2002). *Schools and staffing survey, 1999-2000: Overview of the data for public, private, public charter, and bureau of Indian affairs elementary and secondary schools.* (NCES No. 2002-313). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Gutiérrez, R. (2002). Beyond essentialism: The complexity of language in teaching mathematics to Latina/o students. *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(4), 1047-1088.

Haberman, M. (1987). *Recruiting and selecting teachers for urban schools*. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Haberman, M. (2006). What makes a program "alternative certification?" an operational definition. *NAAC Online Journal, 1*(1), 5-11.

Haberman, M., & Post, L. (1998). Teachers for multicultural schools: The power of selection. *Theory into Practice, 37*(2, Preparing Teachers for Cultural Diversity), 96-104.

Hansen-Thomas, H., & Cavagnetto, A. (2010). What do mainstream middle school teachers think about their English language learners? A tri-state case study. *Bilingual Research Journal, 33*(2), 249-266.

Harklau, L. (1994a). ESL versus mainstream classes: Contrasting L2 learning environments. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(2), 241-272.

Harklau, L. (1994b). Tracking and linguistic minority students: Consequences of ability grouping for second language learners. *Linguistics and Education, 6*(3), 217-244.

Harklau, L. (2002). The role of writing in classroom second language acquisition. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 11*(4), 329-350.

Harper, C., & de Jong, E. (2004). Misconceptions about teaching English-language learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48*(2), 152-162.

Hollins, E., & Guzman, M. (2005). Research on preparing teachers for diverse populations. In M. Cochran-Smith, & K. M. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (pp. 477-548). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Humphrey, D. C., & Wechsler, M. E. (2007). Insights into alternative certification: Initial findings from a national study. *Teachers College Record, 109*(3), 483-530.

Humphrey, D. C., Wechsler, M. E., & Hough, H. J. (2008). Characteristics of effective alternative certification programs. *Teachers College Record, 110*(1), 1-63.

Hutchinson, M., & Hadjioannou, X. (2011). Better serving the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students in the mainstream classroom: Examining the impact of an inquiry-based hybrid professional development program. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 17*(1), 91-113.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(3), pp. 499-534.

Janzen, J. (2008). Teaching english language learners in the content areas. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(4), 1010-1038.

Johnson, S. M., & Birkeland, S. E. (2003). Pursuing a "sense of success": New teachers explain their career decisions. *American Educational Research Journal, 40*(3), 581-617.

Jorissen, K. T. (2003). Successful career transitions: Lessons from urban alternate route teachers who stayed. *High School Journal, 86*(3), 41.

Kaje, E. (2009). *More than just good teaching: Teachers engaging culturally and linguistically diverse learners with content and language in mainstream classrooms.* (Ph.D., University of Washington), 191. (3377326). Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

Kee, A. N. (2011). Feelings of preparedness among alternatively certified teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education, 63*(1), 23-38.

Kennedy, C., & Kennedy, J. (1996). Teacher attitudes and change implementation. *System, 24*(3), 351-360.

Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Essays on the verbal and visual arts* (pp. 12-44). Seattle, WA: American Ethnological Society/University of Washington Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Linde, C. (1993). *Life stories: The creation of coherence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M., & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(4), 361-373.

Menken, K., & Antunez, B. (2001). *An overview of the preparation and certification of teachers working with limited English proficient (LEP) students.* Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to methods and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, D., Madden, D., & McGrath, D. (2004). *English language learner students in U.S. public schools: 1994 and 2000.* Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Minami, M., & Ovando, C. (2004). Language issues in multicultural contexts. In J. Banks A., & C. Banks A. M. (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 567-588). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ng, J. C., Lee, S. S., & Pak, Y. K. (2007). Contesting the model minority and perpetual foreigner stereotypes: A critical review of literature on Asian Americans in education. *Review of Research in Education, 31*(1), 95-130.

Ng, J. C., & Peter, L. (2010). Should I stay or should I go? Examining the career choices of alternatively licensed teachers in urban schools. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 42*(2), 123-142.

Nieto, S. (2010). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Ochberg, R. L. (1994). Life stories and storied lives. In A. Lieblich, & R. Josselson (Eds.), *Exploring identity and gender: The narrative study of lives* (pp. 113-145). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

O'Hara, S., & Pritchard, R. H. (2008). Meeting the challenge of diversity: Professional development for teacher educators. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 35*(1), 43-61.

O'Neal, D. D., Ringler, M., & Rodriguez, D. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of their preparation for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse learners in rural eastern North Carolina. *Rural Educator, 30*(1), 5-13.

Ovando, C. J. (2003). Bilingual education in the United States: Historical development and current issues 1. *Bilingual Research Journal, 27*(1), 1.

Padrón, Y., & Waxman, H. (1999). Classroom observations of the five standards of effective teaching in urban classrooms with English language learners. *Teaching and Change, 7*(1), 79-100.

Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research, 66*(4), 543-578.

Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2008). *U.S. population projections: 2005-2050.* Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluative methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pawan, F. (2008). Content-area teachers and scaffolded instruction for English language learners. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(6), 1450-1462.

Penfield, J. (1987). ESL: The regular classroom teacher's perspective. *TESOL Quarterly, 21*(1), 21-39.

Peterson, P. E., & Nadler, D. (2009). What happens when states have genuine alternative certification? *Education Next, 9*(1), 70-74.

Phillips, D. C. (1995). The good, the bad, and the ugly: The many faces of constructivism. *Educational Researcher, 24*(7), 5-12.

Polat, N. (2010). A comparative analysis of pre-and in-service teacher beliefs about readiness and self-competency: Revisiting teacher education for ELLs. *System, 38*(2), 228-244.

Prawat, R. S. (1992). Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning: A constructivist perspective. *American Journal of Education, 100*(3), 354-395.

Proweller, A., & Mitchener, C. P. (2004). Building teacher identity with urban youth: Voices of beginning middle school science teachers in an alternative certification program. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 41*(10), 1044-1062.

Reeves, J. R. (2004). "Like everybody else": Equalizing educational opportunity for English language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(1), 43-66.

Reeves, J. R. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-language learners in mainstream classrooms. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(3), 131-142.

Richardson, J. (1997). Teacher knowledge and skill: The most important influences on teaching. *Schools in the Middle, 6*(5), 20-22.

Richardson, V. (1996). The role of attitudes and beliefs in learning to teach. In J. Sikula, T. J. Buttery & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: A project of the association of teacher educators* (pp. 102-119). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Richardson, V. (1997). Constructivist teaching and teacher education: Theory and practice. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Constructivist teacher education: Building a world of new understanding* (pp. 1-14). Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Rochkind, J., Ott, A., Immerwahr, J., Doble, J., & Johnson, J. (2007). *Lessons learned: New teachers talk about their jobs, challenges and long-range plans. Issue no. 2. Working without a net: How new teachers from three prominent alternate route programs describe their first year on the job.* New York, NY: Public Agenda.

Rochkind, J., Ott, A., Immerwahr, J., Doble, J., & Johnson, J. (2008). *Lessons learned: New teachers talk about their jobs, challenges and long-range plans. Issue no. 3. Teaching in changing times.* New York, NY: Public Agenda.

Salomon, G., & Perkins, D. N. (1998). Chapter 1: Individual and social aspects of learning. *Review of Research in Education, 23*(1), 1-24.

Sandelowski, M. (1991). Telling stories: Narrative approaches in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 23*(3), 161-166.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

The secretary's fifth annual report on teacher quality: A highly qualified teacher in every classroom. (2006). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

The secretary's sixth annual report on teacher quality. A highly qualified teacher in every classroom. (2009). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Seidlitz, J. (2008). *Navigating the ELPS: Using the new standards to improve instruction for English learners* (2nd ed.). San Antonio, TX: Canter Press.

Short, D. J. (2002). Newcomer programs: An educational alternative for secondary immigrant students. *Education and Urban Society, 34*(2), 173-198. doi: 10.1177/0013124502034002004

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4-14.

Spring, J. (2007). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the united states* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Steinberg, S., & Kincheloe, J., L. (Eds.). (2004). *19 urban questions: Teaching in the city*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning in a new land: Immigrant students in American society*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Teranishi, R. T. (2002). Asian Pacific Americans and critical race theory: An examination of school racial climate. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 35*(2), 144-154.

Texas Education Agency. (2010). *2010 comprehensive annual report on Texas public schools.* Austin, TX: Author.

U.S. Department of Education. (2009). *Characteristics of public, private, and Bureau of Indian Education elementary and secondary schools in the United States.* Washington, DC: Author.

Verplaetse, L. S. (2000). How content teachers allocate turns to limited English proficient students. *Journal of Education, 182*(3), 19.

Vygotsky, L.,S. (1978). In Cole M., John-Steiner V., Scribner S. and Souberman E. (Eds.), *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (A. Luria R., M. Lopez-Morillas, M. Cole & J. Wertsch Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walker, A., Shafer, J., & Iiams, M. (2004). "Not in my classroom": Teacher attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 2*(1), 6/21/12-130-160.

Walsh, K., & Jacobs, S. (2007). *Alternative certification isn't alternative*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

Wang, M. C., Haertel, G. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1993). Toward a knowledge base for school learning. *Review of Educational Research, 63*(3), 249-294.

Wiley, T. G., & Lee, J. S. (2009). Introduction. In T. G. Wiley, J. L. Lee & R. Rumberger (Eds.), *The education of language minority immigrants in the United States* (pp. 1-34). Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Winitzky, N., & Kauchak, D. (1997). Constructivism in teacher education: Applying cognitive theory to teacher learning. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Constructivist teacher education: Building a world of new understanding* (pp. 57-82). Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Wright, S. P., Horn, S. P., & Sanders, W. L. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects on student achievement: Implications for teacher evaluation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 11*(1), 57-67.

Wright, T. (2010). Second language teacher education: Review of recent research on practice. *Language Teaching, 43*(03), 259.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yoon, B. (2008). Uninvited guests: The influence of teachers' roles and pedagogies on the positioning of English language learners in the regular classroom. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(2), 495-522.

Youngs, C. S., & Youngs, G. A.,Jr. (2001). Predictors of mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(1), 97-120.

Zeichner, K. M., & Schulte, A. K. (2001). What we know and don't know from peer-

reviewed research about alternative teacher certification programs. *Journal of*

Teacher Education, 52(4), 266-282.

ELLs in Jane's 2nd Period Class Observation

Melinda: Should Have Been Identified as ELL

1 Um, okay, we have who should have be identified as ELL, but as far as I can see
2 from her records, never was. Um, she is…I want to say she's Columbian. Um, she
3 has not been in the country for more than 3 years. She speaks with a very thick
4 accent. She's very quiet. Um, but she is…um, she's very bright. Didn't…actually I
5 was…she failed my class last 6 weeks because she did not do a project. Um, but
6 then she came back and got one of the highest grades on that test that I gave. So
7 she (p) is able to do well when she puts her mind to it, but I think sometimes she
8 just decides that there are other priorities, or there may just be other things going
9 on that I'm not aware of.

10   **Shafiq: Middle Eastern Student who Fakes English Well**

11 Um, then I have Shafiq, who is (p), um from (p)…I'm trying to think, somewhere
12 in the Middle East but right now it escapes me. Um, I knew this yesterday. Um
13 anyway, he's only been in the country for 2-1/2 years and he was recently
14 diagnosed as a diabetic, Type 1. Um, so he's been dealing with that over the last
15 several months. And that's made for some interesting…he's…he's had some
16 interesting physiological changes. Um, and I know that that's been a struggle. His
17 English is (p) not very good. Um, I would say that he's…he's somewhere between
18 an intermediate and advanced level. Um, but he can fake advanced really well if
19 you're not paying attention.

20   **Shafiq Mimics Others**

21 Um, he (p) is very good at mimicking other people. So he doesn't have to…so he
22 can tell you what he just heard someone else say. And if you're not paying
23 attention, then you're completely fooled by it. Like oh, this kid knows it.
24 I'll look at him and say, and what will happen if…or asks an additional question.
25 And in that case figure out if he actually knows what's going on.
26 Um, but he…and he's the kind of kid who he works, um…he stresses out about a
27 third of the time and the other third of the time he could kind of care less. He's got
28 friends. He's got a very strong support network of friends I've noticed because
29 they all come with him to tutoring. Um, but it's not an academic network by any
30 stretch of the imagination. So he uh…(p) we kind of struggle with that [exhales].
31 He gets stressed about his grades every so often but not frequently enough. He will
32 <u>probably</u> be repeating his junior year. But, I would much rather him repeat that
33 then flunk out of college or, you know, get fired from a job because he just never
34 learned that lesson.

Ali: Iraqi who Immigrated to US with His Brother and Parents as Political Refugees

36 Then I have Ali who is, um (p)…he is also Middle Eastern. He is actually from
37 Iraq (p) via Turkey, I want to say. He actually…his parents, um sent him and his
38 younger brother to Turkey when he was 11. So he was pulled out of school at 11
39 years old. Um, and he went to work as an auto mechanic for the next 3 years
40 because he was responsible for supporting him and his younger brother while he
41 was in Turkey because his parents stayed in Iraq. Then his parents moved from
42 Iraq…they went to Turkey, picked up the kids, and came here. I think they're here
43 as political refugees; he's never actually explained <u>that</u> part of the story to me.
44 Um, I've met his mother and his father. They're both very nice people. They're
45 very <u>hard</u>-working people. They have very high expectations for their children.
46 Um, and it <u>shows</u> because he works really hard. He's the one who will always
47 answer my questions even when he's really wrong. But he doesn't mind being
48 wrong because he just wants to learn.

Motivated by Grades and Honor

50 Um, he's very motivated to have good grades <u>all</u> of the time. Um, he's in ROTC so
51 he's very motivated by honor. He's very much like, I'm an American. I, you know,
52 I love America. Like, he's going to be joining the military so he can get his US
53 citizenship more easily. Um, so…and he's just a really good kid. Um, I don't have
54 any problems with him. He's the one who just <u>barely</u> passed his TAKS test on the
55 last re-test. But that has to do more with English than it has to do with anything
56 else.

Teaching Ali to Write Lab Reports

58 And it's…it was really great because at the beginning of the year I have them…
59 well I have them do lab reports throughout the year. And they have to write a
60 conclusion for every one of their lab reports and his…um, his first lab report was
61 what you would expect from somebody who doesn't speak the language very well
62 <u>and</u> who has been out of…who spent 3 years out of school. And he just…he didn't
63 really understand what the point of it was; he didn't understand what he was doing.
64 And so we've been working on that as the year's gone by. And I just finished
65 reading a lab report that he did for his last lab. And I read it 2 weeks ago and I was
66 just like...like I wrote him a note, like this is awesome, this is exactly what a
67 college report is supposed to look like. You've addressed <u>everything</u> that I asked
68 you for. Like (p)…this…there…you know….go back and look at your first lab and
69 compare how much you've grown from the beginning of the year to the end of the
70 year.
71 So, um…he is…he's actually probably my favorite kid in that class.

Lee: A Long-term Asian ELL

73 Um, I have one Asian kid, Lee. He's in the 12th grade. Um, he (p)…he's an
74 English language learner. He actually still (p)…[lowers voice to a whisper] I
75 actually think he's been in the school district for like 8 or 9 years, but he still
76 makes, um, language mistakes that are very common to like 3rd or 4th year ELLs.
77 Um, and I think that's because at home there's no English spoken.

78   **Doesn't Talk Much and Not Much Practice at Home: Errors in**
                               Conjugation

79 So he only….he only hears…like, he hears English throughout the day in school,
80 but he's a very quiet kid so he doesn't talk all that often. So when he does talk, he
81 makes those…he'll…he'll um…conjugate a verb incorrectly. Or he'll uh
82 (p)…he'll mix up the order of…of words in a sentence. Yeah. And it's not
83 unintelligible by any stretch of the imagination but you have to, you know, be on
84 your toes and figure out what's going on with him. Um, so he's…that's…that's
85 been the case with him.
86 He understands the material. He understands…his speaking. His listening is (p) off
87 the charts. But his speaking is remarkably still…I would still classify it like… it's
88 at advanced-high. I mean it's still at a point where I would even ask that question
89 though, what is your speaking ability. Um, even though at this time he should be at
90 the native English speaker level.

91   **Mei: Korean ELL who Just had a Baby**

92 Mei is one of my Asian girls. Um, also makes those second language error
93 acquisitions. I think she's been here for 8 years. Um, (p) maybe not quite that long.
94 She just had a baby. That's been an interesting thing because she is Asian. She's
95 Vietnamese (p)…I think. I'm sorry, she's Korean. And that did [lowers voice] not
96 go well when her mom found out she was pregnant. She came up to the school
97 threatening to beat her. Um, but they've since adjusted to that. And so she's (p)
98 working a lot harder because she knows…now knows that the stakes are higher.
99 Um, but she still (p)…it is interesting to listen to her…her listening is off the
100 charts. Her listening is on-level with the native English speaker. But her
101 speaking… even, interestingly enough, even in casual conversation when I've
102 observed her…is still (p) chockfull of second language acquisition errors. It's…it's
103 very odd. So it's almost like there's a disconnect that's going on there.

104   **Angel: Advanced-High Hispanic ELL**

105 Angel is one of my Hispanic boys. Um, he's advanced-high in everything. He's
106 just a really, really quiet kid.

Santos: Advanced-High Listener, Hispanic ELL Student

108 Um, and then also I have Santos, who he's, um…again sitting at advanced- high
109 for listening. I think there might actually be some special ed issues there. Um,
110 which frustrates me because when I've talked to the special ed department about,
111 um, ELL students who I think might need special ed services, I'm told, well no
112 they don't need special ed services because they're ELL. And I'm like, um, you
113 can be both of those things. They're like, well we don't really have a way to assess
114 that. And I'm like (P), um (p) yeah you do. There are tests that will allow you to
115 assess cognition independent of language acquisition. Um, puzzles. Um (p)
116 ordering, patterns, that kind of thing. you can do this. But, we're told nope, that's
117 not going to happen. So I think he has some special ed issues that need to be dealt
118 with and are probably not going to be addressed, which is unfortunate. Um, but
119 we…we do the best that we can.

How I Work for Santos: Pairing Him with Angel

121 Um, and I try to scaffold him and then…he is almost always paired with Angel
122 because Angel is fluent in English and Spanish. Angel does not have special ed
123 issues. Angel can be a little lazy, but…so when Santos requires a translation,
124 Angel will give him the translation into Spanish.

They Can Have a Discussion in Spanish and English: Helps with Acquisition

126 Um, they can have a discussion about it both in Spanish and English. Angel will
127 flip back and forth with Santos like explaining what's going on. And, uh (p), he…
128 usually that helps with Santos's acquisition. Not tons, but it helps some. Um
129 because a lot of times when I talk Santos will just sort of stare and me and nod and
130 I'm like tell me what I just said. And he's like, umm. And he'll say something
131 really quietly and it's just drawing it out. And that's when you kind of wish that
132 there were, you know, classes of 5 or 6 where you had more time to like, I need to
133 have this conversation with you. You're going to talk and I'm going to just sit here
134 and stare at you until you talk. But when you've got 32 kids the time is just not
135 there.

Bo: Chinese Newcomer, Advanced-High Except Speaking

137 I think the last one is on there is Bo. He is Chinese. I think he's been in the country
138 for a year, maybe 18 months. Um, in terms of writing he's at an advanced- high
139 level. Advanced? Advanced, advanced-high. I can't remember what I actually
140 wrote to you. In terms of…it's gotten better as the year's gone by though, so. In
141 terms of listening, he's at an advanced to advanced-high level. In terms of
142 speaking, he's still sitting at an intermediate, bordering on advanced. Um, again,

143   doesn't talk that much.

144   **Quiet Classroom Culture: Male Dominance**

145   And you noticed with my breakdown I've got 20 boys in here. There's not
146   (p)…and the ones that talk just won't shut up. And the ones that don't talk like
147   <u>will</u> not talk. And so I've got a lot of kids who just don't talk.

148   **Quiet Bo**

149   So I have to (p) come over to him. I have to talk to him. And he is placed with
150   people who will force him to talk because they'll ask him direct questions. The
151   <u>good</u> news is, is that conceptually understands the material. Um, he's <u>definitely</u> in
152   the top third of the class. So the kids who <u>know</u> that about him want to talk to him
153   because they want him to explain things to them. So they're willing to overlook
154   those language acquisition errors in his speech because he will digest the
155   information for them. And it helps them.