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Pre-service general education teachers' attitudes on the education of English language learners

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PRE-SERVICE GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES ON THE EDUCATION OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors with Distinction
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Learners

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Abstract

Although increasing numbers of English Language Learners (ELLs) are joining native English speaking peers in general education classrooms, little research has been conducted to investigate general education teachers' preparation to work with ELLs in a classroom setting or their attitudes toward teaching ELLs. This research surveyed 260 pre-service general education teachers at a mid-sized university in the Midwest to explore their perceptions in the following areas: (1) their level of training and perceived preparedness to work with ELLs, (2) accommodations they would make for ELLs, (3) their expectations for ELLs, and (4) their attitudes toward including ELLs in general education classes. The findings of this research indicate a perceived lack of training to work with ELLs among pre-service general education and a desire for more preparation to work with ELLs, as well a high level of interest toward including ELLs in general education classes.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Research

The population of students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), students defined as “active learner[s] of the English language who may benefit from various types of language support programs” (National Council of Teachers of English, 2011, p. 2), has risen dramatically in recent years. As of 2005, these students accounted for around 10 percent of total student enrollment in U.S. public schools (McKeon, 2005). As their population grows in the U.S., ever-increasing numbers of general education teachers encounter these students in their classrooms (McKeon, 2005). Many of these teachers lack appropriate training for instructing ELLs (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll, 2005; Shreve, 2005). Research on ELLs enrolled in U.S. public schools has found that, on the whole, such students are struggling academically, with many failing to meet reading comprehension standards and an overall drop-out rate up to four times higher than their native-English speaking peers (McKeon, 2005). Given the social, economic, and societal costs of academic failure and dropping out, having a large student population at such a heightened risk of leaving school is an issue of pressing concern.

Research on inclusion of ELLs in general education classes suggests that teacher training to work with ELLs, pre-service coursework regarding ELLs and inclusion, and prior experiences with ELLs all improve outcomes for these students (Gandara et al., 2005; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2005). For this reason, the topic of how current pre-service teachers are being prepared to work with this important population is one essential to understanding how to improve ELLs’ academic success in U.S. public schools. This research examined the attitudes and preparation of pre-service general education teachers regarding teaching ELLs in general education classes through a survey given to

pre-service teachers nearing the end of their college careers. The primary findings of this research are as follows:

1. A large majority of the respondents have had little training to work with ELLs, question their ability to teach ELLs effectively, and express interest in having more preparation to work with ELLs.
2. Respondents were of mixed opinions on what accommodations they would be willing to make for ELLs, but overall were willing to give ELLs materials in their native languages and allow ELLs to have more time to complete assigned classwork.
3. Generally speaking, respondents did not believe several commonly held misconceptions about ELLs; however, they did believe ELLs could acquire English for classroom purposes within two years, a belief unsupported by existing literature (Harper & de Jong, 2004).
4. Respondents wanted to include ELLs in their general education classrooms and felt that inclusion of ELLs would be positive academically and socially for ELLs and general education students.

Review of Literature

A review of existing literature found that little research has been done in regard to ELL students being included in general education classes in U.S. public schools. This literature review looked at the changing demographics of U.S. public schools and the U.S. population as a whole, and found that the number of U.S. residents who speak a language other than English at home along with the number of ELLs enrolled in U.S. public schools has increased dramatically in recent years (Shin, 2003; McKeon 2005). The review also discussed research into misconceptions general education teachers have about

ELLs, the preparations general education teachers have had to work with ELLs, and the overall lack of academic success among ELL students. Finally, the literature review considered research on the inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms, as this has been more thoroughly researched than the inclusion of ELLs and might provide insight into successful support of non-native English speakers.

Purpose

The issue of teaching English Language Learners has become a matter of growing interest as ever increasing populations of English Language Learners (ELLs) are joining native English speakers in general education classrooms, changing the makeup of general education classes, as well as the demands placed on general education teachers (Clair, 1995). This research investigated the perceived preparedness of pre-service teachers at a mid-sized Midwestern university regarding their work with ELLs. Pre-service teachers were surveyed about their preparation to work with ELLs and their attitudes and expectations for ELLs. This research sought to provide a better understanding of the experiences of pre-service general education teachers who will likely work with ELLs and the quality of the preparation they report receiving. In turn, this understanding can be used to better prepare teachers, potentially leading to better instruction for ELLs.

Methodology

Data was gathered through a paper-and-pencil survey adapted from Reeves' (2006) study of general education teachers perceptions of ELLs. Although not identical to Reeves' survey, this survey (attached in Appendix A) featured many of the same questions and a similar structure. Section A of the survey instrument had 27 Likert-scale questions that aimed to answer the following four research

questions:

1. What training have teachers had to prepare them to work with ELLs and how to they rate themselves on their preparedness?
2. How do general education teachers accommodate ELLs?
3. What expectations do teachers have for what ELLs can do in the classroom?
4. What are general education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of ELLs in general education classrooms?

Section B of the survey collected basic demographic information on respondents, such as their sex, subject area, previous experiences with ELLs, and training to work with such students. The survey was administered to five sections of two different education classes. These two classes were selected because they are required for education majors in all content areas at the participating university and are typically taken in the year before student teaching, after education majors have taken most or all of any other required teaching courses. The results of the survey were analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2007 software.

Overview of Thesis

The following chapter will take a more in-depth look into the existing literature on ELLs in general education classes, the academic needs of ELLs, common misconceptions about educating ELLs, and research regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. Because little research has been done to investigate the attitudes of general education teachers toward including ELLs in general education classes, looking into the much more thoroughly-researched area of the inclusion of students with disabilities provided a clearer understanding of the issues surrounding

inclusion. Chapter Three will describe the methods used to collect data for this research. Chapter Four will analyze the data collected. Chapter Five will discuss the implications of the data collected, limitations of this research, and possible topics for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to a 2005 report from the National Education Association, English Language

Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing group of students in the United States (McKeon, 2005). This statistic has important implications for education. Regardless of grade level or content area taught, today's public school teachers are likely to have ELLs in their classrooms. As of 2005, 41 percent of teachers nationwide had ELLs in their classrooms (National Center for Education Statistics, as cited in McKeon, 2005), a percentage that will rise alongside growing numbers of ELLs. This research surveyed pre-service teachers to learn more about their attitudes toward and expectations for ELLs. Specifically, the research investigated how prepared pre-service teachers feel they are to work with ELLs, the accommodations they make for ELLs, their expectations for ELLs, and their attitudes toward including ELLs in general education classrooms. A better understanding of the level of preparedness of general education teachers working with these students will help inform public school administrators, ELL support staff, and teacher education faculty of what additional training and resources could improve general education teachers' ability to work with this population.

This literature review will discuss the United States' increasing population of ELLs, teachers' preparedness to accommodate such students in United States public schools, and the academic achievement of ELL students. Following this, the review will look into the research on the inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms (like ELL students, special education students are being increasingly included in general education classrooms), the benefits and problems encountered with including special education students in general education classes, and whether or not these same benefits and problems might exist for ELLs in general education.

Changing demographics

The national demographics of the United States are changing, and more and more people speak a language other than English at home. The 2000 U.S. Census found that 18 percent of U.S. residents regularly speak a language other than English at home, up from 14 percent in 1990 (Shin, 2003). By 2007, the number of U.S. residents indicating they spoke a language other than English at home rose to 20 percent and is on track to continue increasing for the foreseeable future (Shin & Kominski, 2010). In the Midwestern state where this research was conducted, the percentage of residents who regularly speak a language other than English at home is 6.4, lower than the national average. However, this number represents 180,000 individuals and is on the rise, mirroring an overall national trend (Shin, 2003). These changing demographics have resulted in a much larger population of K-12 students needing ELL services (Clair, 1995; McKeon, 2005). As of 2005, five million ELLs were enrolled in American public schools, a figure that doubled in just 15 years and is expected to double again by 2015 (McKeon, 2005). ELLs spend the majority of their day in general education classrooms (Harper & de Jong, 2004) and account for about 10 percent of total U.S. public school enrollment (McKeon, 2005).

The unique needs of ELLs and ways to meet them

ELLs are an incredibly diverse group of students (Batalova et al. as cited in Harper & de Jong, 2004), and their needs as students often differ from their native English-speaking peers. One of the problems ELLs encounter in U.S. schools is the false assumption that a second language can be learned simply by immersing a student in an environment where that language is spoken. This assumption is true for first language acquisition; barring cognitive disabilities, nearly all humans are able to successfully acquire their first language through exposure and interaction with the language (Lightbrown & Spada,

2006). However, second language learners, including ELLs, generally need more support to become proficient in their second language (Spada & Lightbrown, as cited in Harper & de Jong, 2004). To gain grade-level proficiency in English, ELLs need additional language supports beyond immersion, such as simplified language, visualizations of language, and explicit attention to and explanations of grammatical, morphological, and phonological aspects of English (VanPatten, as cited in Harper & de Jong, 2004).

A second problem that ELLs face is that teachers may assume ELLs who are able to speak with their classmates in relatively fluent English are literate in English (Grant & Wong, 2003). Making a distinction between social language and academic language is important for those who work with ELLs. Social language, the language we use in our day-to-day interactions, is primarily oral, usually deals with concrete concepts, and has naturally built-in redundancies that make it more easily comprehensible. In contrast, academic language is typically written, frequently discusses abstract concepts, and does not have built-in redundancies (Roessingh, 2006). An ELL may be proficient in one of these areas without being proficient in the other, and without an understanding of this distinction, teachers may have unrealistic and unfair expectations for ELLs in their classes.

A third problem for ELLs is that their teachers may incorrectly believe that ELLs speaking their native language at school or at home will cause ELLs to confuse their first and second languages, compromising their ability to acquire English. However, existing literature on the subject suggests the opposite is true. Research has consistently found that developing greater proficiency in one's first language aids second language acquisition (Ovando et al., 2005). Despite these findings, some states, including some with particularly large ELL populations like California and Arizona, have gone so far as to ban bilingual immersion programs because "because a majority of voters don't think children can

learn proper English and hold on to a foreign language and culture at the same time” (Sanchez, 2011, p. 1).

Providing ELLs with the linguistic supports they need to comprehend material, while simultaneously engaging their native English-speaking peers, can seem an overwhelming challenge. However, multiple teaching models have been developed to help teachers do this, one of the most prominent of these being sheltered instruction. This model involves teachers making accommodations for ELLs such as the following: connecting concepts to prior experiences, embedding definitions and explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary into instruction, including language and content objectives into lessons, frequently summarizing what has been discussed during class, and using accommodating assessments. This model has been found to be effective in teaching content and language for ELLs (Short, 1994).

In research into general education teachers’ willingness to make accommodations for ELLs in their classes, Reeves’ (2006) survey of 279 general education teachers found mixed results. Most significantly, results of the study indicated many teachers thought they should not make accommodations for ELLs in subject-area courses. In the study, 65.6 percent of respondents thought teachers should modify assignments for ESL students enrolled in subject-area classes. A majority of respondents thought giving ELLs more time to complete coursework was good practice, while a sizable minority thought simplifying coursework for ELLs was good practice (44.1 percent agreed) and that lessening coursework for ELLs was good practice (44 percent agreed).

How successful are ELLs in U.S. public schools?

Although the academic success of ELLs in U.S. public schools varies widely, as a whole, ELLs are struggling to meet educational standards. In 2000, only 18.7 percent of ELLs in states that tested their reading comprehension were found to be at or above the norm for reading comprehension and nearly 10 percent of seventh through twelfth grade ELLs nationwide were retained a grade (McKeon, 2005), a practice that may lead to higher drop-out rates among ELLs (Trueba, Spindler, & Spindler, as cited in Ovando et al., 2005). In California, a state where about 25 percent of public school students are classified as ELLs, only 10 percent of these students passed the English Language Arts section of the California Standards Test in 2004 (Gandara et al., 2005).

Of even greater concern are exceptionally high dropout rates among ELLs. According to the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, only 29 percent of ELLs who enter Los Angeles high schools as ninth graders remain in school for four years (Gandara et al., 2005). Nationwide, ELLs have dropout rates as much as four times higher than their native-speaking classmates (McKeon, 2005). These statistics suggest a pressing need to look into what teachers, schools, and teacher education programs can do to better meet the unique needs of ELLs (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

How prepared are American schools to teach ELLs?

Given the increases in ELLs enrolled in American public schools and the limited academic success of ELLs, the need to have general education teachers who are well prepared to work with ELLs is clear (de Jong & Harper, 2005), especially because ELLs spend the majority of their school day in general education classrooms (Clair, 1995; Gandara et al., 2005; McKeon, 2005). Goodwin

(2002) noted that all teachers should be prepared to have an ELL student in their classroom. She wrote, "Today, non-ESL teachers can no longer assume that second-language-learning programs will be readily available or handled by someone else" (Goodwin, 2002, p. 168). Despite demand for teachers trained to work with ELLs, U.S. public schools are in need of more teachers who are prepared to work with them. A 2002 report from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for English Language Acquisition found that the ratio of ESL-certified teachers to ELLs was 1:44 (Office of English Language Acquisition, as cited in Shreve, 2005). A 2005 study in California found that 43 percent of teachers whose classes were majority-ELL students received one or fewer in-service trainings on how to teach ELLs in the five years before the survey was conducted (Gandara et al, 2005). According to a 2002 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, 41 percent of teachers nationwide have ELLs in their classrooms. However, of these teachers, only 12.5 percent had more than eight hours of professional development on working with ELLs in the three years before the survey was conducted (National Center for Education Statistics, as cited in McKeon, 2005). At the same time, many teacher education programs do not require pre-service teachers to receive training to work with ELLs. A survey of institutions of higher education conducted by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education found that fewer than one-sixth of teacher education programs nationwide require pre-service teachers going into general education to have preparation to work with ELLs (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

One solution: The inclusion model

Most ELLs spend the majority of their school day in general education classes (McKeon, 2005). The practice of placing students with differing needs, such as ELLs or special education

students, in general education classrooms is known as inclusion and is becoming increasingly common in public education. Along with ELLs, special education students are frequently included in general education classrooms. The 1975 Education of All Handicapped Children Act requires students with disabilities to be placed in general education classrooms unless general education teachers and supplementary aids are unable to adequately address the severity of the disability (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011). Many educators argue that inclusive classrooms benefit students with special needs by raising the standards for these students while simultaneously reducing the stigma often associated with special education classes and helping general education students become more empathetic to classmates with special needs (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011). The research done on the inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms provides a starting point for researching teacher attitudes' toward the inclusion of ELLs in general education classes.

An important point to consider in discussing inclusion is that a majority of teachers consistently favor inclusion, according to a 1996 meta-analysis of 28 studies conducted by Scruggs and Mastropieri. Furthermore, in a survey of general education teachers in British schools, Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden (2000) found that teachers who have worked with students with disabilities are more supportive of inclusive classrooms than teachers who have not. Both Avramidis et al. and Elhoweris & Alsheikh (2004) found that the higher a teacher's level of training in special education, the more positive the teacher's attitudes toward inclusion were.

Another factor in teachers' attitudes toward inclusion is their pre-service coursework. Research indicates that pre-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusion can be positively influenced in their coursework (Shade & Stewart, 2001; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). These positive attitudes

toward inclusion are critical because the success of inclusion programs relies on teachers' attitudes toward these programs (Avramidis et al., 2000).

Although educators generally support the idea of inclusion, teachers have encountered multiple problems in the implementation of inclusion. In a qualitative study of teachers and principals in a Canadian metropolitan school system, Valeo (2008) found general education teachers may experience a lack of support from their administration and special education staff when including special education students in general education classes, and that general education teachers need more assistance and communication from their administrators and special education teachers to feel confident in teaching inclusive classes. Lack of time was another major concern for teachers in inclusive classrooms. In a 1989 study, Myles and Simpson (as cited in Avramidis et al., 2000) found that 87 percent of teachers said they need more than one hour of preparation time for teaching classes that included students in special education. Teachers also reported concerns that working with special needs students in general education classes would take away class time from the rest of the class.

In a literature review of existing inclusion research, Sze (2009) found that general education teachers often are not knowledgeable about the needs of special education students. Among general education teachers, there is a broad desire for more specialized training to work with special education students. In Avramidis et al.'s (2000) study, half of teachers thought "systematic, intensive training" for inclusion was needed (p. 205). The teachers who received training to work with special education students in inclusive classrooms report benefiting from it. Avramidis et al. came to the following conclusion:

participants who had received training of high quality appeared to feel competent in their

teaching skills and found the concept of inclusion easy to deal with. This carries major implications about the level and depth of teacher training courses, if we are to promote practices that are truly inclusive.” (p. 208)

Applying inclusion to ELLs

Although less research has been done on teachers’ perceptions of the inclusion of ELLs in their classrooms than on the inclusion of special education students (Reeves, 2006), existing research suggests that much of what general education teachers believe about including special education students in their classrooms also applies to the inclusion of ELLs in general education classrooms. As with the inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms, general education teachers are in favor of including ELLs in general education classes. In a survey of 279 secondary general education teachers, 72 percent of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I would welcome the inclusion of ESL students in my class” (Reeves, 2006, p. 136).

Gandara et al. (2005) used a survey in conjunction with focus groups to investigate the attitudes of 5,300 educators in 22 school districts in California, the state with the largest ELL population in the U.S. These educators worked with ELLs, primarily in general education settings. The study found that teachers’ levels of confidence in working with ELLs were positively correlated with their levels of training for working with ELLs. Additionally, the more ELLs teachers worked with, the more confident they were in their ability to effectively teach them (Gandara et al., 2005). As with special education students, teachers’ confidence level and level of training has an impact on the success of ELLs in general education classrooms. A 2001 study in the Los Angeles Unified School District found that ELLs with teachers who had specialized training had greater academic gains than those who had teachers without

these specific preparations (Hayes & Salazar, 2001).

Although teachers in Gandara et al.'s (2005) study expressed a desire to better meet the needs of ELLs in their classes, they also expressed similar frustrations as general education teachers in classrooms where special education students were included, such as a lack of time, training, and support to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. The teachers in Gandara's study had a wide variety of students, including students who were just beginning to learn English, students who had strong oral English skills but lacked literacy skills, and native English speakers. These teachers struggled to make appropriate accommodations for their ELLs while still engaging the rest of the class. Many worried that taking extra time to help ELLs individually would lose the attention of the rest of the class (Gandara et al., 2005). Additionally, teachers often had little or no formal training of how to effectively teach ELLs in general education settings. In the five years before Gandara's study, 43 percent of 5,300 California teachers with classrooms of over half ELLs had only one in-service training or no in-service trainings focused on the needs of ELLs. The teachers surveyed expressed a strong desire for more training on working with ELLs.

Another significant challenge for general education teachers working with ELLs is finding time to collaborate with colleagues to get ideas and assistance. Both Penfield (1987) in a survey of New Jersey general education teachers and Gandara et al. (2005) found that teachers thought having more time to prepare materials and work with colleagues would greatly enhance their ability to effectively teach all students in ELL-inclusive general education classes.

Conclusion

As national demographics in the United States shift and change to include growing populations of people who do not speak English as a native language, there is a significant need for specialized services for the five million ELLs enrolled in American public schools. Educational paradigms in the U.S. and internationally have also shifted and changed in favor of policies of inclusion, for both special education students and ELLs. ELLs in American schools are in dire need of effective inclusive classrooms as they are struggling academically, with dropout rates up to four times higher than their native English-speaking peers. Research on general education teachers has found that teachers want more time, training, and support to better prepare them to work with ELLs.

The university where this research was conducted is a mid-sized Midwestern institution with a sizable and influential teacher education program with an important role in preparing future teachers to work with ELLs in addition to providing outreach and support to in-service teachers currently working with ELLs. Gandara et al.'s (2005) study found that teachers who received professional development provided by college or university faculty were significantly more likely to rate themselves as more able to teach ELL students. To better understand the strengths and possible needs in the participating university's teacher education program in regard to working with ELLs, it is critical to investigate how prepared teachers think they are to work with ELLs and how able they are to understand and accommodate the unique needs of these students in public schools. This research could offer a clearer idea of pre-service teachers' perceptions toward ELLs in general education classes and gives insight into how the participating university, along with other universities and schools, can better prepare teachers to work in the changing world of public education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

To gain better insight into how pre-service general education teachers feel about including English Language Learners in their classes and their expectations of what ELLs can do in a general education classroom, the survey instrument had questions addressing four different areas under the broader idea of attitudes toward ELL inclusion. This research sought to investigate the following research questions:

1. What training have teachers had to prepare them to work with ELLs and how to they rate themselves on their preparedness?
2. How do general education teachers accommodate ELLs?
3. What expectations do teachers have for what ELLs can do in the classroom?
4. What are general education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of ELLs in general education classrooms?

Development of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (included in Appendix A) was based on Reeves' (2006) survey of 279 general education teachers. The researcher contacted Reeves via email to ask for permission to use a modified version of her survey in the current research, which she granted to the researcher. Some questions from Reeves' original survey were edited for purposes of clarity for pre-service teachers and to reflect the changing vocabulary of the education field (e.g. changing "mainstream" to "general education?"). Additionally, some of Reeves' original questions were removed and others added new questions to better address research questions of this thesis. Other survey questions were based on questions that arose in the research discussed in the literature review. The survey instrument included

questions addressing demographic information (sex, training for working with ELLs, content area, etc.) and questions using a Likert-type scale, as well as a space at the end for additional comments and thoughts on the topic of including ELLs in general education classes. This final question allowed for the collection of qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data provided by the rest of the survey instrument.

As in Reeves' survey, a four-point Likert scale was used in the survey instrument, with 1 being "strongly disagree," 2 "disagree," 3 "agree," and 4 "strongly agree." A "neutral" option was intentionally left out for two reasons. First, since Reeves did not use a neutral option in her survey, the same scale was used in this survey so that the data from this study could be more readily compared to hers. Second, using a forced choice between agreement and disagreement provided clearer results that could be more easily interpreted. Before administering the survey to the targeted population, two professors specializing in educational psychology and one Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) professor reviewed it to assess the clarity and the validity of the survey questions. Based on feedback and conversations with these professors, several changes were made to the survey instrument to increase the clarity of questions and to change wording that could be perceived as leading respondents to a particular answer (for example, the prompt "I would welcome an ELL in my classroom" was changed to "I would be comfortable including an ELL in my classroom")

The survey instrument and accompanying research proposal were then submitted for Institutional Review Board approval and Honors approval. Both the IRB and the Honors program approved the research proposal. Following this, five education majors at the university where the research was conducted were asked to look over the survey and to suggest any necessary changes.

They did not suggest any changes to the survey, so none were made.

Demographic Information

A total of 260 pre-service teachers, 197 females and 61 males, completed the survey. Sixteen communication disorders majors also completed the survey; however, their responses were eliminated from data collection since their major is not preparing them to teach in general education classrooms. Many of these respondents had already had experience working with ELLs; over one-third (34.1 percent) reported having taught a lesson for a class that included one or more ELL students. All but one of the respondents were native English speakers. Just under half (48.8 percent) of the respondents said they spoke a second language, and of those respondents, only 32.1 percent said they had attained an intermediate or advanced level in their second language.

Current education majors at the participating university are not required to take a class that deals specifically accommodating ELLs in the classroom, with the exception of students with a TESOL major or minor. Presently, there is no true “typical” preparation for working with ELLs for pre-service general education teachers. One class in the professional teaching sequence focused on human development deals with broad ideas on language acquisition and other classes may discuss ELLs depending on the professor or instructor leading the class. However, survey data showed that only 26.9 percent of students have taken a class that dealt, at least in part, with working with ELLs.

Administration of the Survey Instrument

This research surveyed students in the participating university’s teacher education program. A paper-and-pencil version of the survey was administered to students in all sections of two education classes at the participating university. These classes are required for students from all content areas and

grade levels of the education preparation program, minimizing concerns of certain content areas being overrepresented or underrepresented. Additionally, students typically take these classes in the year prior to student teaching, after they have completed most or all of their education classes that might have addressed working with ELLs.

In all but one case, the survey was administered at the beginning of class. In the one exception, the survey was administered close to the end of class because of scheduling conflicts. Each time the survey was administered, the researcher was first briefly introduced by the professor or instructor leading the class, and then the students there were informed by the researcher about their right not to participate in the research. The researcher also told students that their responses would be anonymous, that neither their decision on whether or not to participate nor their responses on the survey could affect their grade in the course in any way, and that there were not any right or wrong answers to the survey. Students were then given a consent form also informed them of their rights as participants and gave them contact information for the researcher, her adviser, and the IRB at the participating university. Instead of signing the consent form, students were asked to give consent by completing the survey to protect their anonymity. All students were asked to place their survey form, completed or blank, facedown in a manila envelope in the front of the classroom, so no one else would be able to see if a student had chosen to complete the survey or not. These measures were taken in the hope that by having the surveys be anonymous, participants would feel comfortable enough to give honest responses in their surveys.

Analysis of Data Collected

Data from the surveys was entered and analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2007 software. Each survey was given a numerical code and entered into a spreadsheet. Any comments made at the end of the survey were typed verbatim on a separate Microsoft Word 2007 document and were not given a code to indicate which survey they came from. All comments and questions written on survey responses are included in Appendix B.

Data analysis looked at the overall averages, standard deviations, and frequencies of responses to each option for each survey item. The mean responses for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) majors were compared to the overall means, and although (with the exception of survey item 19) the sample of TESOL majors ($n=5$) was too small to demonstrate any true statistical differences, their responses indicated the possibility of some differences between TESOL majors and other education majors. There were no statistically significant differences between respondents who indicated having had some training to work with ELLs in classroom settings to those who indicated having no training to work with ELLs, for possible reasons that will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter will present the data collected from the survey, and the following chapter will discuss the significance and implications of these findings. Refer to Figure 1 for a chart showing the statistical means and frequencies of each survey item. Respondents were asked to check one of four boxes for each Likert-scale prompt: “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “agree,” and “strongly agree.” In analyzing this data, the same scale as Reeves’ 2006 survey was used where “strongly disagree” was entered as a value of 1, “disagree” as 2, “agree” as 3, and “strongly agree” as 4. Please note that survey items are grouped under the research question they aligned to, rather than the order they appeared in the survey, to make finding patterns and trends in the results easier.

Figure 1: Results of Data Collection

<i>Beliefs Statement</i>	<i>Number (%)¹</i>			
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>Training and perceived preparedness</i>				
Feel confident in ability to teach ELLs	30 (11.6)	134 (51.9)	86 (33.3)	8 (3.1)
Learned to accommodate ELLs in education classes	49 (19.3)	122 (48.0)	70 (27.6)	13 (5.1)
Interested in more training to work with ELLs	1 (0.3)	7.8 (8.1)	133 (51.8)	103 (40.1)
<i>Accommodations for ELLs</i>				
Willing to give ELLs materials in their native language	3 (1.2)	34 (13.2)	165 (63.7)	57 (22.0)
Would consider effort by ELL when determining their course grade	6 (2.3)	42 (16.2)	187 (72.2)	24 (9.3)
Would consider ELL’s language errors when determining course grade	16 (6.3)	99 (38.7)	126 (49.2)	15 (5.9)
Would be willing to simplify coursework for ELLs	5 (2.0)	101 (39.6)	139 (54.5)	10 (3.9)

¹ Number of respondents varied because of missing cases.

Note: ELLs: English Language Learners

<i>Beliefs Statement</i>	<i>Number (%)</i>			
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Would be willing to give ELLs less coursework than other students	39 (15.3)	188 (73.7)	27 (10.6)	1 (0.4)
Would give ELLs more time to complete their coursework	1 (0.4)	51 (19.8)	189 (73.5)	16 (6.2)
<i>Academic expectations for ELLs</i>				
ELLs can acquire English for classroom purposes within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools	4 (1.6)	81 (31.9)	158 (62.2)	11 (4.3)
Exposure to English-speaking peers motivates ELLs to speak English	0 (0)	24 (9.5)	177 (70.0)	52 (20.6)
ELLs learn English best by spending most or all of their school day in general education classes	8 (3.1)	92 (35.7)	145 (56.2)	13 (5.0)
Conversing fluently with peers indicates that an ELL is completely proficient in English	38 (14.8)	184 (71.6)	33 (12.8)	2 (0.8)
ELLs can learn English exclusively through immersion in English-speaking general education classes	21 (8.2)	167 (65.0)	64 (24.9)	5 (1.9)
Exposure to two languages at school confuses students and slows their English language acquisition	34 (13.2)	195 (75.9)	27 (10.5)	1 (0.4)
<i>Attitudes toward including ELLs in general education classes</i>				
Including ELLs in general education classrooms benefits ELLs socially	1 (0.4)	5 (1.9)	142 (54.8)	111 (42.9)
General education teachers do not have enough time to work with ELLs	25 (9.9)	144 (57.1)	78 (31.0)	5 (2.0)
Placing ELLs in separate classes has a detrimental effect on their social and emotional development	4 (1.6)	78 (30.5)	147 (57.4)	27 (10.5)
Including ELLs in general education classes benefits general education students academically	2 (0.8)	53 (20.7)	177 (69.1)	24 (9.4)
Would be comfortable including ELLs in their classroom	3 (1.2)	37 (14.3)	166 (64.1)	53 (20.5)
General education teachers do not have enough preparation time to work with ELLs	19 (7.4)	136 (52.9)	92 (35.8)	10 (3.9)

<i>Beliefs Statement</i>	<i>Number (%)</i>			
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
ELLs can be fully included in general education classroom activities	1 (0.4)	24 (9.3)	174 (67.7)	58 (22.6)
Including ELLs in general education classes benefits ELLs academically	0 (0)	15 (5.8)	201 (77.9)	42 (16.3)
Modifying coursework for ELLs would be difficult to justify to other students	16 (6.3)	120 (47.2)	100 (39.4)	18 (7.1)
Including ELLs in general education classes benefits general education students socially	0 (0)	16 (6.2)	198 (76.7)	44 (17.1)
Teaching English to ELLs is not the responsibility of general education teachers	33 (13.2)	146 (58.4)	63 (25.2)	8 (3.2)

Research Question 1: Training to work with ELLs and self-rated preparedness to work with ELLs

A large majority of respondents (73.1 percent) indicated that they have had no training to work with ELLs in the classroom. Of those who reported having any training to work with ELLs, a large majority (82.4 percent) said their only training was part of a class that focused on working with ELLs. Most of the respondents who had additional training to work with ELLs were either TESOL majors or minors. Only 32.3 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I learned how to accommodate ELLs through my education classes and/or professional development.” An overwhelming number of survey respondents also reported an interest in receiving more training to work with ELLs; 91.9 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I would be interested in receiving more training about working with ELL students.”

Research Question 2: Accommodations for ELLs

Survey items focused on accommodations respondents would be willing to make for ELLs had mixed results. A large majority of respondents said they would be willing to give ELLs materials in their native language (85.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed) and to give ELLs more time to complete coursework (79.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed). Over 80 percent of respondents were also willing to include effort as a factor of an ELL's final course grade. However, respondents were less willing to simplify coursework for students (58.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed), and by a large majority were unwilling to give ELLs less coursework than other students (89.0 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed). Over half of respondents (55.9 percent) said they would take an ELL student's language errors into account when determining their course grade.

Research Question 3: Academic expectations of general education teachers for ELLs

As was the case with the second research question, this area of the survey revealed mixed trends among respondents. About two-thirds of respondents agreed that ELLs can learn English for classroom purposes within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools, and over 90 percent thought that being exposed to English-speaking peers motivates ELLs to learn English. A smaller majority (60.1 percent) felt that ELLs should spend most or all of their school day in general education classes.

A majority of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following ideas: that being able to converse fluently with peers indicates complete proficiency in English, that English could be learned exclusively through immersion in English-speaking general education classes, and that exposure to two or more languages at school slows English-language acquisition.

Research Question 4: General education teachers' attitudes toward including ELLs in general education classes

Results from survey items dealing with the inclusion of ELLs in general education classes indicate a generally positive attitude toward inclusion. Almost 98 percent of respondents felt including ELLs was beneficial socially to ELLs, and 94.2 percent thought it was academically beneficial to ELLs. 93.8 percent of respondents thought including ELLs in general education classes was socially beneficial to general education students, and 78.5 percent thought it was beneficial to general education students academically. Other questions revealed that a majority of respondents felt that the inclusion created a positive classroom atmosphere, that they would be comfortable including ELLs in their classrooms, and that they believed ELLs could be fully included in classroom activities. Respondents also indicated a sense of responsibility toward teaching ELLs in general education classes throughout their responses, the implications of which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This research sought to gain insight into the expectations and attitudes of pre-service general education teachers. The survey of 260 pre-service general teachers at a mid-sized Midwestern university offered several main findings in this matter. First, the survey showed that pre-service general education teachers have had little training to work with ELLs and feel inadequately prepared to work with these students. Second, respondents were of mixed opinions on a variety of different accommodations they would be willing to make for ELLs in their classes. Third, respondents held fewer misconceptions about ELLs than respondents to similar research with in-service teachers. However, many still had misconceptions about ELLs, in particular that they can be expected to acquire English for classroom purposes within two years of enrolling in U.S. public schools. Finally, respondents were overwhelmingly in favor of including ELLs in general education classes and overall felt that including ELLs in general education classes is beneficial academically and socially both to ELLs and to general education students.

Research Question 1: Training to work with ELLs and self-rated preparedness to work with ELLs

As discussed in Chapter Four, most respondents (73.1 percent) said they had no training to work with ELLs in the classroom. Respondents also reported a lack of confidence in working with ELLs; only 32.3 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I learned how to accommodate ELLs through my education classes and/or professional development.” Most respondents wanted more training for working with these students in general education classrooms; 91.9 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I would be interested in

receiving more training about working with ELL students.” This percentage was significantly larger than that found in Reeves’ (2006) study, where only 53 percent of respondents indicated an interest in more training to work with ELLs.

Responses to survey questions revealed that many of the respondents felt a lack of confidence and preparedness to work with ELLs in general education classrooms. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63.5) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “I feel confident in my ability to teach ELLs effectively in a classroom setting.” TESOL majors surveyed reported having had more training and feeling more confident in their ability to teach ELLs; however, because the small sample of TESOL majors (n=5), only one prompt on the survey—“I have learned how to accommodate ELLs through my education classes and/or professional development”—showed a statistically significant difference between TESOL majors and non-TESOL majors. Survey data also found no statistically significant differences in responses between respondents who reported having training to work with ELLs and those who did not report such training. However, for 82.4 percent of those who reported receiving training for ELLs, the only training they had was part of a college class where part of the class focused on teaching ELLs. This relatively minimal training may not have been extensive enough to give teachers a sense of efficacy in working with ELLs. Because of this, this data likely does not show a true contradiction to the findings of Gandara et al. (2005) that training to work with ELLs has a positive correlation with teacher efficacy toward working with ELLs.

The qualitative data from this survey backed these quantitative results. Of the 56 individual comments left on the survey responses, 31 comments (55.4 percent) dealt with the topic of training to work with ELLs and all expressed a need for more preparation and training for working with ELLs

and/or a feeling of unpreparedness to work with ELLs in general education classrooms. (None of the respondents wrote comments indicating that they felt prepared to work with ELLs in general education classes or that they felt they had already had enough training to work with ELLs.) Several respondents indicated that they would like a class, or part of a class, in their professional education classes to focus on strategies to help ELLs academically. Others noted that they felt working with ELLs should be a treated as a more relevant topic in education classes. One respondent wrote, “In my opinion, teaching ELL students in the classroom is the least addressed topic in any of my classes and is something that will be the most prevalent in our future classrooms.”

Although respondents frequently reported a lack of training to work with ELLs, they still expressed a desire to include them in general education classes. Another respondent noted, “None of my classes or field experiences have talked about ELL students in-depth, so I am not sure I’m adequately prepared to teach such students. However, I do embrace the idea of including ELL students in general education classrooms because I feel it can benefit all students academically and socially.”

Research Question 2: Accommodations for ELLs

Questions relating to accommodations for ELLs found mixed results. A large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would be willing to give students materials in their native language (85.7 percent), give ELLs more time to complete coursework (79.7 percent), and take effort into account when determining course grades (81.5 percent). However, respondents were more mixed on the idea of simplifying coursework (58.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would be willing to do this). Finally, respondents were overwhelmingly opposed to reducing the amount of coursework for ELLs (only 11.0 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would be willing to do

this.)

The most important implication of these findings is the pre-service general education teachers overall seem to understand that the needs of ELLs are not identical to those of general education students and that ELLs may need extra supports to be successful academically. In their willingness to give ELLs materials in their native languages and allow ELLs extra time to complete assignments, these respondents demonstrate their understanding that ELLs have different needs than other students. A willingness to accommodate is essential for the success of ELL students (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

Research Question 3: Academic expectations of general education teachers for ELLs

In this area, survey data showed that respondents held some misconceptions, to varying degrees, about ELLs in general education classes. Survey data concerning the degree to which pre-service general education teachers hold misconceptions about ELLs offers promising results. This survey asked respondents about four major misconceptions, identified based on a review of literature on teacher attitudes toward ELLs. These misconceptions are listed as follows:

1. That the ability to converse fluently with peers indicates that an ELL is completely proficient. (In fact, classroom language, often referred to as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, and social language, often referred to as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, are very different and may be acquired at different rates) (Roessingh, 2006).
2. That ELLs can learn English exclusively through immersion in English-speaking general education classes. (With the exception of ELLs who placed in English-speaking classes in their very early childhood, most ELLs need additional supports beyond immersion to learn English) (Spada & Lightbrown, as cited in Harper & de Jong, 2004).

3. That exposure to two languages at school confuses students and slows their English language acquisition. (Research has consistently supported the idea that developing full proficiency in a first language leads to better acquisition of a second language) (Ovando et al., 2005).
4. That ELLs can acquire English for classroom purposes within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools. (Although estimates vary, research has shown that acquiring English takes longer than two years, and in many cases, may take five or more years) (Ovando et al., 2005.)

Of the four misconceptions the survey asked about, a majority of respondents only agreed with one (that ELLs could acquire English for classroom purposes within four years of enrolling in U.S. public schools). About two-thirds of respondents agreed with this idea, even though it is largely by research (Ovando et al., 2005). This could lead teachers to have unrealistic expectations for ELLs in their classes and to provide inadequate supports for ELLs. However, a majority of respondents disagreed with the idea that English could be learned only by immersion in English-speaking general education classes (73.2 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed), that exposure to two or more languages at school would slow English-language acquisition (89.1 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed), and that the ability to converse fluently with English-speaking peers indicates complete English language proficiency (86.4 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed). These beliefs are supported by research, but were somewhat unexpected because previous research has indicated that all three of these are commonly held misconceptions among general education teachers (Harper & de Jong, 2004).

Still, it bears mentioning that between 10 and 25 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the other three misconceptions were true, a percentage of people sizable enough to make it

worthwhile to address all four of these misconceptions in an education class(es). Having these misconceptions may cause general education teachers to think that ELLs are being lazy when in fact they may be struggling to keep up with their classmates. Educating pre-service teachers on these misconceptions may help these teachers make more informed and productive decisions if and when they work with ELLs in their classrooms.

Research Question 4: General education teachers' attitudes toward including ELLs in general education classes

Results from survey items dealing with the inclusion of ELLs in general education classes indicate a generally positive attitude toward inclusion. As was the case in Reeves' (2006) study and Gandara et al.'s (2005) study, a majority of respondents in this study thought that including ELLs benefits ELLs and general education students both academically and socially. Other questions revealed that a majority of respondents thought the inclusion created a positive classroom atmosphere, that they would be comfortable including ELLs in their classrooms, and that ELLs could be fully included in classroom activities. These responses are significant because research has found that teachers who are more open to inclusion are more likely to have academically successful students (Hayes & Salazar, 2001). However, some respondents indicated some discomfort with the fairness of modifying coursework for ELLs; 46.5 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The modification of coursework for ELLs would be difficult to justify to other students." Qualitative data from survey comments backed participants' conflicting feelings on the issue of making modifications for ELLs. One respondent wrote, "I have a hard time justifying [sic] treating an ELL student with the modifications as if they were disabled. I don't believe it is a disability. However, I would be willing to

work with him or her as best I know how.” This student’s comment is accurate in the sense that being classified as an ELL does not mean that student has a disability, in the same way that a native-English speaker’s inability to speak Arabic would not indicate a disability. However, as was discussed in Chapter Two, ELLs do need accommodations to learn English and be academically successful in English-speaking classrooms. However, other respondents expressed an interest in making accommodations for ELLs. One respondent commented, “I am a Spanish major so I personally know how these students feel. I would accommodate them as much as possible.” Several comments centered on a desire to have ELL-accommodation strategies included in education classes. One respondent, in a comment similar to others left on the survey, wrote, “I think, in the education field, we need much much more exposure to ELL students and strategies to help them.”

Unlike in previous research (Penfield, 1987), respondents indicated that they believed general education teachers should help teach English to ELL students. Nearly three-fourths of respondents (71.6 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Teaching English to ELLs is not the responsibility of general education teachers.” This is a promising result, given that ELLs spend the majority of their school day in general education classes (McKeon, 2005). Should general education teachers fail to help ELLs learn English, these students may spend most or all of their school day without learning English or content material since content would be rendered inaccessible by linguistic barriers (Penfield, 1987).

Another difference prior research and this study (Gandara et al, 2005; Reeves, 2006) was that in this survey respondents did not feel that general education teachers do not have time to deal with the instructional needs of ELLs. Only 33 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the

statement “General education teachers do not have enough class time to deal with the educational needs of ELLs,” and similarly only 39 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “General education teachers do not have enough preparation time to deal with the instructional needs of ELLs.” However, one wonders if these attitudes might change once respondents are employed as full-time teachers.

Limitations of Research

This research has several limitations. The first is that the data was self-reported, so respondents may have tried to make themselves sound more open to inclusion than they may actually feel. However, making the surveys anonymous and reminding respondents that the researcher was not looking for a particular answer helped to reduce the likelihood of this happening. A second limitation is that this research only looked at pre-service teachers from one participating university. This means that pre-service teachers at other universities may have differing opinions based on different coursework, field experiences, and demographics. A third limitation is that the survey format may not have fully allowed respondents to express their opinions, attitudes, and concerns fully because of its forced answers and close-ended questions. Adding an open-ended question at the end of the survey for students to express any other thoughts, comments, or concerns served as a way to reduce the problems that may have been caused by this limitation.

Further Study

This research opens a variety of areas for future research, listed as follows:

1. Are there statistically significant differences on survey responses between those with TESOL majors and minors and those who have not had such preparation to work with ELLs in the classroom? The results of this research pointed toward such a trend, but because of a small

sample of TESOL majors/minors, there were no statistically significant differences.

2. Would pre-service general education teachers at other universities give similar responses and have similar attitudes toward/expectations for ELL students? Would the results of this survey be replicable, or would differences among teacher education programs or the populations within those programs change the responses?
3. Would these results be the same for in-service teachers? In particular, would they be the same for teachers who are working with or who have worked with ELLs?

Conclusion

This research demonstrated that although pre-service general education teachers at the participating university are largely open to the idea of including ELLs, they want more training and more preparation for working with this special population. The findings indicate that the participating university and other universities with teacher education programs may want to consider the effectiveness of their teacher education coursework with regard to preparing general education teachers to work with ELLs. At this university, the vast majority of respondents expressed a desire for more training to work with ELLs along with a lack of confidence in working with such students. Given that nearly half of teachers nationwide currently have ELLs in their classroom and that this percentage is expected to rise dramatically in coming years (National Center for Education Statistics, as cited in McKeon, 2005), ensuring that all general education teachers have at least some knowledge of how to work with ELLs would be a prudent decision. This is especially worth considering because pre-service teachers, both in this research and in other surveys (Gandara et al., 2005; Reeves, 2006), have indicated a desire for more training and a lack of confidence in their ability to effectively teach ELLs. Training to work with

ELLs has been found to contribute to a greater sense of teacher efficacy (Gandara et al., 2005), which in turn can lead to increased academic success among ELLs (Menken & Antunez, 2001). As is the case for the majority of teacher education programs nationwide (Menken & Antunez, 2001), there is currently no class in the professional education sequence at the participating university that requires instructors to spend part or all of a semester covering material about how to best teach ELL students. Survey data showed that 67.3 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “I learned how to accommodate ELLs through my through my education classes and/or professional development,” indicating that perhaps including information about accommodating ELLs would be a useful addition to classes that deal with topics like classroom assessment or working with diverse learners. Teaching methods for ELLs, especially sheltered instruction, which have been shown to improve learning both for ELLs in general education settings (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008), may be worthwhile additions to classes focused on pedagogy and teaching methodology.

Additionally, instructors of university classes for pre-service teachers may want to consider addressing common misconceptions about ELLs in their classes. Although only a minority of students agreed or strongly agreed with several of the misconceptions addressed in the survey, they still made up a sizable part of the respondents. Pre-service teachers should have accurate information about ELLs and how they learn before they graduate and work with ELLs in their own classrooms. If pre-service teachers enter the world of professional teaching with such misconceptions about these students, they may fail to provide them with adequate supports and may impair the learning of ELL students in their classes. Fortunately for instructors of teacher education courses, pre-service teachers have expressed a strong desire to receive more training to work with ELLs and to make ELL students a contributing,

included part of their general education classrooms.

As the numbers of ELLs continue to swell both in the state where this research took place and nationally, the urgent need to prepare teachers to work with these students also grows. Pre-service teachers are looking to their teacher education programs to prepare them to deal with the changing paradigms of U.S. public education. These teachers have expressed an overwhelming willingness to include ELLs in their classes and a desire to be given the tools they need to teach ELLs effectively. The question now is whether these institutions will rise to meet the challenge.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

English Language Learners (ELLs) in General Education Classrooms

Survey for Pre-Service Teachers

<i>Section A</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>Please read each statement and place a check in the box that best describes your opinion.</i>				
1. English Language Learners (ELLs) can acquire English for classroom purposes within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.	o	o	o	o
2. I would be willing to give ELLs materials in their native language in my classroom.	o	o	o	o
3. Including ELLs in general education classrooms benefits ELLs socially.	o	o	o	o
4. I feel confident in my ability to teach ELLs effectively in a classroom setting.	o	o	o	o
5. Exposure to English-speaking peers motivates ELLs to speak English.	o	o	o	o
6. General education teachers do not have enough class time to deal with the educational needs of ELLs.	o	o	o	o
7. I would consider the amount of effort put forth by ELLs when determining their course grades.	o	o	o	o
8. ELLs learn English best by spending most or all of their school day in general education classes.	o	o	o	o
9. Placing ELLs in separate classes has a detrimental effect on their social and emotional development.	o	o	o	o
10. Including ELLs in general education classes benefits general education students academically.	o	o	o	o

11. I would consider an ELL's language errors when determining that student's course grade in content area classes.	o	o	o	o
12. I would be comfortable including ELLs in my classroom.	o	o	o	o
13. If ELLs can converse fluently with their peers, it is evidence that they are completely proficient in English.	o	o	o	o
14. I would be willing to simplify coursework for ELLs.	o	o	o	o
15. General education teachers do not have enough preparation time to deal with the instructional needs of ELLs.	o	o	o	o
16. I would accommodate ELLs by giving them less coursework than other students.	o	o	o	o
17. It is possible for ELLs to be fully included in classroom activities in general education classes.	o	o	o	o
18. Including ELLs in general education classes benefits ELLs academically.	o	o	o	o
19. I learned how to accommodate ELLs through my education classes and/or professional development.	o	o	o	o
20. I would accommodate ELLs by giving them more time to complete their coursework.	o	o	o	o
21. Including ELLs in general education classes creates a positive classroom atmosphere.	o	o	o	o
22. ELLs can learn English exclusively through immersion in English-speaking general education classes.	o	o	o	o
23. The modification of coursework for ELLs would be difficult to justify to other students.	o	o	o	o
24. Exposure to two languages at school confuses students and slows their English language acquisition.	o	o	o	o
25. Including ELLs in general education classes benefits general education students socially.	o	o	o	o

26. Teaching English to ELLs is not the responsibility of general education teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I would be interested in receiving more training about working with ELL students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section B

1. Have you ever taught a lesson in a class that had one or more ELL students?

Yes No

2. Please indicate what grade level(s) you intend to teach (check all that apply).

Elementary (PK-5) Middle (6-8) High (9-12)

3. Please place a check next to your major field (check all that apply).

- Art
- Business
- Early childhood education
- Elementary education
- English
- Foreign Language
- Math
- Middle level education
- Music
- Physical education
- Science education
- Social studies/history
- Special education
- Technology education
- TESOL
- Theatre
- Other (please explain) _____

4. Please indicate your sex. Male Female

5. Is English your native language? Yes No

6. Do you speak a second language? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please estimate your highest ability level attained.

___ Beginner ___ Intermediate ___ Advanced

7. Have you received training in teaching language-minority/ELL students? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please indicate the type of training you received (check all that apply).

___ College class where part of the class focused on teaching ELLs

___ College major in teaching ELLs

___ College class where entire class focused on teaching ELLs

___ In-service workshop

___ College certificate/minor in teaching ELLs

___ Conference session on working with ELLs

___ Other (please explain) _____

8. Please share any additional comments or thoughts you may have concerning the inclusion of ELLs in general education classes.

Appendix B: Survey Comments

Note: All survey comments have been typed verbatim with two exceptions: 1) where words were illegible, and 2) where participants named the participating university. All references to the participating university have been deleted to preserve participant anonymity.

The prompt given to students read as follows: "Please share any additional comments or thoughts you may have concerning the inclusion of ELLs in general education classes."

1. I feel it would be very positive for the ELL student and students in the classroom.
2. It's great! And we could use more training in our classes for it, even and especially for non-TESOL majors/minors.
3. ELL students are left out of most education classes at [this university].
4. I think, in the education field, we need much much more exposure to ELL students and strategies to help them.
5. Do they have IDPs?
6. 10 and 18 are the same!
7. I wish we would be more prepared.
8. I feel like there should be more teacher prep. for teaching ELL's because I don't believe I am fully ready to take on the task yet and am student teaching next semester.
9. I think it's important to make accommodations for ELL learners, but not the responsibility of the teachers to teach English to the student.
10. General education teachers need help w/ ELL students.
11. I feel that somehow ELL students need to learn a lot of English before class or it will burden themselves [sic] on the learning process.
12. I will do whatever I need to help my student succeed but the thought of not knowing how to help is intimidating.
13. I believe we should include ELL students in general education classes, but I do not feel all of skills in order to teach ELL students (not enough in my education here at [this university]).
14. I believe that ELL's deserve every opportunity afforded to other students. However, accommodations must be maintained in order to assure that students (ELL's) comprehend and learn the

material. How? I'm not sure.

15. While I think than [sic] inclusion is a good idea, I think that it's necessary for the students to have a basic knowledge of academic English before they are placed in GE classes.

16. I think we need to learn how to teach ELL in our classrooms. At some point we will probably run into this.

17. It's ridiculous to think that in this day and age that our classrooms wouldn't have ELL students. We need to learn to accommodate.

18. I think including ELLs in general education classrooms is a good thing and also think they should have the opportunity to work with an ESL teacher at their school. Students who can speak to the peers doesn't mean they're 100% proficient in English and as a teacher I'll recognize that.

19. I am a Spanish major so I personally know how these students feel. I would accommodate them as much as possible.

20. I think it would be beneficial to ELLs students to be included in general education classes.

21. I have a hard time justifying [sic] treating an ELL student with the modifications as if they were disabled. I don't believe it is a disability. However, I would be willing to work with him or her as best I know how.

22. As an instrumental music teacher, the ability to speak and read English [sic] is not essential as music sight reading of rattsian [?], which essentially is a different language.

23. I feel I could teach ELLs but I feel it was inadequately taught to us in the COE.

24. I think they should be in the general classroom, but many teachers don't know how/what to do with them, so they sit like rocks and aren't engaged.

25. I think we need more in our university classes to help us teach ELLs. We've talked about it briefly.

26. I would love to see more practical training on this matter in the teacher ed curriculum of [this university], perhaps in a course like Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners.

27. This is a problem in classrooms around the United States today. We need to learn as teachers for ways to help ELL students in our general education courses.

28. We need to know more about it.

29. As educators, we need more training in this. More mandatory workshops would be beneficial. In

this day and age we will all face an ELL student sometime in our careers.

30. I think it would benefit the ELL students being exposed to English in the classroom.

31. A lot of these questions also depend on the individual students.

32. I feel unprepared to deal with ELLs.

33. I don't think I have received much [illegible word] specialized training to teach ELLs.

34. The ELL students I worked with in high school were much more comfortable speaking when the environment was low pressure and relaxed. It also helped that they had Spanish speaking peers and English speakers around them.

35. We should have to take a class in our development in the education program that had to do with this topic. I feel like I have no experience with this.

36. We should have to take a class on inclusion of ELLs and how to teach them effectively.

37. Schools are becoming more diverse and more ELL students are coming into the school. They need qualified teachers to instruct them so that they can be successful. Everybody has the right to an education, ELL students included.

38. I really wish I would have been exposed more to strategies that focused on working with ELLs.

39. This is very situational. If you throw a kindergartner who is an ELL student then it would be much easier for them to learn English than an 8th grader who is an ELL student and thrown into a class and [sic] trying to learn English.

40. I don't really have experience working with ELL so I feel like my responses to this aren't very fair in all respects due mostly to ignorance.

41. I feel it is great! But we are not educated on how to teach these students well enough at all!

42. In my opinion, teaching ELL students in the classroom is the least addressed topic in any of my classes and is something that will be the most prevalent in our future classrooms.

43. I don't think enough time is devoted to learning about how to handle ELLs in class.

44. Pre-service teachers need a lot more guidance on how to best benefit ELLs.

45. None of my classes or field experiences have talked about ELL students in-depth, so I am not sure I'm adequately prepared to teach such students. However, I do embrace the idea of including ELL students in general education classrooms because I feel it can benefit all students academically and

socially.

46. I haven't received any training regarding [sic] ELL.

47. Inclusion can be a great experience for everyone but if the teacher is not educated in ways to teach and include ELL students, the situation can quickly become negative for everyone.

48. I have very little training and exposure to ELL students. I would really like to see this change at [this university]. I would feel more comfortable teaching these students if I had some sort of training or course work in doing so.

49. I believe that the inclusion of ELLs is beneficial to both the ELLs and Native English speaking students. However, a general education teacher most likely doesn't know how to properly handle these students due to lack of training.

50. I feel classroom teachers cannot be the only ones helping these students but they also need to do their part to help educate and include them in the classroom.

51. The more the merrier. ELLs gain better mastery of both languages, and can be used in pairing with students who have mastered content or need to improve their own skills.

52. While I feel that teaching ELL students in the main classrooms is highly beneficial I am uncertain of how to do that and afraid it won't go well.

53. I think all teachers need to go through classes to be able to teach ELLs before getting into their professions.

54. feel I need more training.

55. I think training would be VERY beneficial for future teachers exposed to ELL students.

56. I don't feel prepared at all for an ELL student to be in my class. I would rely heavily on assistance from the ELL teacher. I don't believe we've been trained well to accommodate an ELL student.