Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners: The Negotiation of Teaching Identities in Communities of Practice

Eleni Giatsou

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss

Part of the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation
Giatsou, Eleni, "Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners: The Negotiation of Teaching Identities in Communities of Practice" (2019). Dissertations. 3335.
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3335

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 2019 Eleni Giatsou
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my family, for their unwavering support throughout my entire life. I would have never made it to this point in my career if it was not for my parents’ continuous encouragement, visits from Greece, love, and motivation. To my mother, thank you for taking care of me always and teaching me how to pursue my goals with strong work ethic, dedication, and kindness. To my father, thank you for believing in me and my dreams, guiding me, and reminding me of your pride, admiration, and affection in any possible way. I also thank my three siblings, Adria, Katerina, and Yorgo, who have constantly given me the emotional support that I needed and who have never ceased to make me smile. Μπαμπά, Μαμά, Άντρια, Κατερίνα, Γιώργο, σας ευχαριστώ για όλα!

I thank my dissertation chair and mentor, Amy Heineke, for guiding me throughout my time at Loyola University Chicago. I am forever grateful to you for your valuable feedback, words of encouragement, and steadfast support from the day I embarked my journey as a graduate student. Thank you for serving as an exceptional model for educational scholarship and teaching, for your strong belief in me, for your continued direction, and for the numerous opportunities you have given me. I learned so much from working with you and I would not be where I am today without you.

Thank you also to Dr. Aimee Ellis, Dr. Sarah Cohen, and Dr. Sabina Neugebauer for being on my dissertation committee. Your thoughtful insights and support during this process mean so much to me. You have played an integral role in my development both
as a teacher educator and a scholar. Aimee, I have truly enjoyed getting to know you and working with you in Sequence 5 for the past three years. Thank you for helping me grow as a teacher educator. Sarah, thank you for advising me whenever I needed your guidance. Sabina, thank you for giving me the opportunity to conduct research with you, I have grown a great amount professionally as a result of your direction.

To my friends and colleagues in the Ed.D. Curriculum and Instruction program at Loyola University Chicago, thank you for teaching me so much in and outside of the classroom. You have been a wonderful support system both intellectually and emotionally. Cynthia and Jenna, thank you for checking in with me regularly, for providing feedback on my research ideas, and for meeting with me to discuss our progress. I also want to thank my boyfriend for his patience, everyday support, love, and motivation. To my friends outside of the program, thank you for the much-needed periodic distractions.

Finally, I am grateful for my former students at Loyola University Chicago, who inspired my research and work at the university. Without you this dissertation would not have been possible.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................................. iii

LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................................... viii

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................................. ix

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... x

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................... 1
   The Problem and Purpose .................................................................................................................. 1
   Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 1
   English Language Learners and Educational Inequalities ................................................................. 3
   Teacher Preparation Programs and the Role of Teacher Candidates ............................................. 6
   The Role of Teacher Identity ............................................................................................................ 7
   The Study and Research Questions .................................................................................................. 8
   Contributions to the Field ................................................................................................................ 10
   The Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................................ 12
   Researcher Positionality .................................................................................................................. 13
   Research Delimitations .................................................................................................................... 14
   Organization of the Study ................................................................................................................ 15

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW ...................................................... 16
   Theoretical Framework ................................................................................................................... 16
   Sociocultural Theory of Learning .................................................................................................. 16
   Communities of Practice ................................................................................................................ 20
   Legitimate peripheral participation ............................................................................................... 21
   Identity ............................................................................................................................................. 22
   Modes of belonging ....................................................................................................................... 24
   Identification and negotiability ...................................................................................................... 26
   Review of the Literature ................................................................................................................ 29
   Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 29
   Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners ................................................................. 29
   Instructional practices for teachers of ELLs ..................................................................................... 30
   Clinical experience and teachers of ELLs ....................................................................................... 33
   Teacher preparation for teachers of ELLs and my research .......................................................... 36
   Teacher Identity and Teaching English Language Learners ........................................................ 37
   Negotiation of teaching identities .................................................................................................. 38
   Identities-in-practice ....................................................................................................................... 41
   Teacher candidates’ identities and my research ............................................................................ 42
   Conclusion ...................................................................................................................................... 43
# III. METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Design</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Sample</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Procedures</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teacher Preparation Program</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for ELLs</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piloting the interview protocol</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Sources</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse analysis</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Verification and Trustworthiness</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Role</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# IV. FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Cases</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecelia, Graduate Teacher Candidate: “I Would Describe Myself at this</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point as a Very Novice Teacher of ELLs”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia, Graduate Teacher Candidate: “I've Just Been More and More</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convicted that I Want to Be the Type of Teacher I Want to Be, Because</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of ELLs”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe, Undergraduate Teacher Candidate: “I Actually Prefer Working in</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Classrooms Just Because I Believe they Bring so Much Value to a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie, Undergraduate Teacher Candidate: “At the Beginning, I Didn't</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Really Know What ELLs Were”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonia, Undergraduate Teacher Candidate: “I Feel a Little Bit Better</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and More Confident in Being Able to Help ELLs”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Engagement with English Language Learners* .................................. 78

Ongoing negotiation of meaning while learning new ELL content ............ 79

Assessment practices for ELLs ............................................. 80

Differentiation ................................................................. 81

Academic language .............................................................. 83

Formation of candidates’ teaching paths as teachers of ELLs through field experiences ............................................. 84

Unfolding of candidates’ stories of practice as ELL teachers ... 86
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participants</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Archival Data</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coding Scheme</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Candidates’ Field Sites (pseudonyms)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social Ecology of Identity</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. B.S.Ed. Program Phases</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. M.Ed. in Elementary Education Program Phases</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This dissertation unveils the identity formation and negotiation processes of teacher candidates, through their practice with English Language Learners (ELLs) in a field-based teacher preparation program. Identity, like learning, is socially constructed and continuously negotiated by someone's engagement in a community (Wenger, 1998). Thus, sociocultural theory and specifically the theoretical construct of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), guided the exploration of candidates’ teaching identities to reveal the processes of becoming a teacher of ELLs.

I conducted a qualitative case study to examine candidates’ teaching practices with ELLs and to delve deeper into the (re)construction of their teaching identities. I conducted individual interviews with two graduate and three undergraduate elementary candidates, and collected archival data, including candidates’ reflections and lesson plans, throughout their time in the program. My analysis involved a diligent examination of candidates’ actions, values, beliefs, and discourses on ELLs across time, to explain how candidates’ teaching identities evolved.

I discovered that interactions with ELLs, cooperating teachers, teacher educators, and other educational stakeholders, allowed candidates to negotiate their teaching identities and make a shift from being elementary classroom teachers to teachers of ELLs. Toward the end of their teacher preparation program, particularly during their internship, candidates begun to change their Discourse; from using an academic
Discourse during their first year to using a more teacher-like Discourse during their last year (Gee, 2014). My research holds implications for teacher preparation programs and ELLs and calls for promoting candidates’ teaching identity development by balancing instruction for candidates between ESL theory and fieldwork in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, and by designing university courses that promote reflective and interactive activities.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“Once upon a time there was a grown-up who loved children. One child who came to know this person was eager to find out about many things. Together they discovered the intimate secrets of time and space and nature and the way things work. They played with language. They both grew in wisdom and they learned how infinite and mysterious knowledge is…”

—Virginia Collier, Teaching Multilingual Children, 1985

The Problem and Purpose

Introduction

Situated in the contemporary era of globalization and immigration, the United States (U.S.) contains one of the most heterogeneous student populations in the world with a vast blend of cultures, languages, and traditions (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017a). Historically, immigrant students were made to feel ashamed of their home languages and cultures, urged by the belief that to be American and thus, part of the U.S. mainstream culture, means to speak only English (Banks, 2008). This was due to the assumption that assimilation was required to achieve national belonging. English-only language laws and movements, by prohibiting home-language instruction, reinforced public misconceptions that have led to what Freire (1970) called oppressive reality, as immigrant learners were and still are frequently marginalized by teaching
practices that do not speak to who they are and what they already know. Education, thus, becomes oppressive once teachers take the role of a depositor; if teachers – as depositors – adopt what Freire calls the banking concept of education and view knowledge as “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing”, an absolute ignorance and an ideology of oppression will define classrooms (Freire, 1970, p. 72).

Freire’s concept of oppression is perpetuated today in education through accountability requirements and rigorous academic standards. Accountability and testing requirements challenge schools, which are faced with the heavy task of successfully serving the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs; i.e., students whose native language is not English and are in the process of learning English) (Valdés, 1998). When teachers focus solely on ELLs’ academic skills based on early school assessments without valuing the different types of skills and prior knowledge that students bring from home, learners might dissociate from the school setting and seek to value themselves outside its parameters (Delpit, 2012). For these reasons, teacher education programs strive to prepare teachers to use pedagogy that values and affirms students’ culturally and linguistically heterogeneous backgrounds (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lucas & Villegas, 2010). The success of this pedagogy rests in how willing candidates are to accept who they are as teachers and appreciate the potential of their own identities, which impacts their classroom practices (Maye & Day, 2012). Grounded in the above issues, with this dissertation, I seek to examine how candidates learn about instructional practices for ELLs and the ways in which this learning shapes their identities as teachers.
English Language Learners and Educational Inequalities

ELLs represent the fastest growing segment of the student population in U.S. public schools (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011; NCES, 2017a). De Jong (2011) defines an ELL as “a student who speaks a language other than English and who is still in the process of acquiring English” (p. 4), meaning that ELLs require extra support throughout the process of learning and becoming proficient in a new language. Specifically, 21% of students in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home with roughly half formally labeled as ELLs due to their English proficiency levels on English language assessments as determined by state or district standards (NCES, 2012; NCES, 2015). In 2014-2015, students labeled as ELLs accounted for approximately ten percent of the total number of learners enrolled in public schools (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2015; NCES, 2017a). Those demographics highlight the reason why schools as well as teacher preparation programs will need to continue to pay attention to the unique needs of this population of students.

ELLs represent a culturally and linguistically diverse group. In other words, despite being formally classified as one sub-group of the larger student population, ELLs possess highly diverse linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds. According to NCES (2017b), Spanish was the most common home language of 3.7 million ELLs in 2014-15 (77.1% of all ELL students). Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Somali were the next most common home languages (NCES, 2017b). Including these languages, there are more than 450 languages currently spoken by ELL students in the U.S. (Roy-Campbell, 2013). In addition to the large number of languages spoken, there is a
significant range of literacy abilities in ELLs’ home languages and in English, creating further diversity within this student population (Bunch, 2013). As the ELL population continues to grow, it is essential for teachers to know the nuances of this linguistic diversity in order to properly meet the various needs of this diverse group of learners.

Concerning language, ELLs as newcomers face linguistic challenges when they are expected to use the English language in school to ensure their academic proficiency. While the relationship between language and schooling is significant for all students, it has specific implications for ELLs, since they may have not heard English spoken in their home environment prior to entering school (Lucas, 2011). Research by Collier (1987, 1995) and Cummins (1981) report estimates of up to 10 years before students are fully proficient in English; or fully competitive in the academic uses of English with their age-equivalent, native English-speaking peers. In addition to these linguistic challenges, many ELLs may not have access to rigorous instruction in academic content areas. When teachers perceive ELLs as “linguistically deficient,” they are likely to ignore or sideline them in class, providing them an unchallenging and unengaging curriculum (Lucas & Villegas, 2010, p. 303). According to de Jong and Harper (2010) and Harper and de Jong (2009), teachers must possess expertise in teaching ELLs that goes beyond just good teaching. Thus, in order for teachers to successfully balance language learning with content learning, it is necessary to develop comprehensive awareness of ELLs’ academic and language needs.

Concerning culture, teachers should use students’ cultural backgrounds as a point of affirmation and celebration in the classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students bring
background knowledge and cultural capital to school that influences the development of English language skills as well as general academic performance in class (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu explained that cultural capital can exist in the embodied state; in the form of dispositions of mind and body, in the objectified state; in the form of cultural goods, and in the institutionalized state; in the form of objectification and academic qualifications. ELLs carry different experiences, traditions, and forms of cultural capital. Specifically, according to Drucker (2003):

Classrooms across the United States have English Language Learners who are learning to speak, read, and write in their new language. These students offer a rich resource of diversity that can enhance classroom dynamics. At the same time, they present a special challenge to classroom teachers and reading specialists alike. (p. 22)

This quote suggests that it is crucial to recognize and promote the great linguistic and cultural diversity into the classrooms, keeping at the same time in mind the vital role that teachers have in supporting ELLs along with providing adequate and effective instruction. Unfortunately, the education system tends to replicate an unequal distribution of cultural capital by widening, rather than closing, the gap in the initial cultural capital with which learners begin (Kanno & Kangas, 2014, p. 854). Therefore, ELLs might learn to devalue their bilingualism and accept those limited educational opportunities, offered to them in schools, because of their perceived linguistic deficits (Kanno & Kangas, 2014). Awareness of the role that language and culture play in terms of mediating teaching and learning is key for candidates (i.e., future teachers, who are receiving formal
teacher preparation), given the challenges that ELLs face in accessing and acquiring academic content through a language they do not yet control (de Jong & Harper, 2010).

**Teacher Preparation Programs and the Role of Teacher Candidates**

One of the most important steps towards addressing educational inequalities for ELLs is successfully preparing future teachers to determine how to best meet the needs of ELLs, through planning and delivering authentic and differentiated instruction that allows students to achieve academically (Téllez & Waxman, 2006). A greater percentage of ELLs are in elementary than in secondary grades (NCES, 2017b). Thus, elementary teachers in particular are expected to master both enhanced pedagogical knowledge in multiple content areas and pedagogical skills to provide quality instruction for ELLs (Shulman, 1986; de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). Teacher educators have the responsibility and urgency to ensure that elementary candidates are prepared to teach all students, reinforcing those areas of pedagogy (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

First, teacher preparation programs can create safe spaces for candidates to clarify misunderstandings about pedagogical practices with ELLs. *Sheltered* courses that make content accessible to ELLs, for example, have been viewed for years as promising solutions; however, they require well trained teachers who know the nuances of this linguistic diversity in order to properly meet the various needs of this diverse group of learners (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Often, candidates develop the misconception that language should be taught separately from content, considering language as a content area, much like mathematics or social studies (Téllez & Waxman, 2006). If this misconception is not appropriately addressed, candidates might develop inappropriate
perceptions about their work with ELLs, leading to ineffective instruction that does not support language development along with content.

To teach in today’s dynamic classroom contexts, candidates must understand the challenges that ELLs face in adjusting to a new culture and acquiring a new language, while trying to integrate both the linguistic and cognitive demands of schooling simultaneously (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006). If teachers ignore the value of students’ linguistic and cultural skills and sacrifice ELLs’ greatest resources in the name of high-stakes testing, the results may include high drop-out rates and low educational attainment. Given that we live in a time of educational reform “dominated by the watchword of accountability and driven by educational policy that espouses raising the bar under the banners of high standards and professionalization of teaching” (Murrell, 2000, p. 338), it is not surprising that many culturally and linguistically diverse students nowadays are labeled at-risk for academic achievement (Maye & Day, 2012).

Thus, teacher education programs face the challenge of providing courses that move beyond pedagogical theories and methodologies, to providing effective and authentic opportunities for professional development, such as allowing candidates to practice teaching in diverse settings and to self-reflect on their practices. This approach may reinforce and expand candidates’ perceptions about linguistically responsive teaching (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-González, 2008).

The Role of Teacher Identity

Teachers’ perceived beliefs towards ELLs, play an essential role in effectively supporting ELLs in mainstream classrooms (Kolano & King, 2015). For teachers to
recognize and celebrate what students bring in classroom, they need to first acknowledge their personal backgrounds and beliefs, and concurrently, their identities. Candidates should be held responsible for defining their own teaching identities as shaped during coursework and field experiences, as well as through their interactions with teacher educators, classroom teachers, and peers (Martin & Strom, 2016). Given that candidates are in the process of developing and negotiating their identities as teachers, teacher preparation programs should guide their learning in terms of understanding best practices for teaching ELLs (Rodríguez, 2013). We cannot expect candidates to recognize and value ELLs’ identities, unless they are able to first acknowledge and value their own.

Teacher identity provides a framework for teachers to create their own notions of how to act, how to understand their work, and how to recognize their perspective on teaching in general (Sachs, 2005). To put simply, as Hamachek (1999) poignantly contended “consciously we teach what we know; unconsciously we teach who we are” (p. 209). Hence, teacher identity plays a crucial role in candidates’ pedagogical practices and interactions with students (Farrell, 2011; Kanno & Stuart, 2011).

**The Study and Research Questions**

In this study, I explore how candidates construct and negotiate their teaching identities through participation in a field-based teacher preparation program that prioritizes work with ELLs. The questions that guide this research are the following:

- What aspects of teaching practice in a field-based teacher education program influence the formation of teacher candidates’ identity as teachers of ELLs?
• How do teacher candidates’ teaching identities mediate their D/discourses on ELLs?

• How do teacher candidates negotiate their teaching identities as elementary teachers and teachers of ELLs?

With the study, I intend to comprehend: (a) how teacher candidates form their identity as teachers of ELLs, through their coursework and fieldwork (b) how the various facets of teacher candidates’ teaching identities mediate their D/discourses on ELLs, and (c) whether or how teacher candidates negotiate meanings that affect their teaching identities, in order to make switch from being general classroom teachers to teachers of ELLs. Definitions of the key terms used throughout my dissertation are:

• *English Language Learner (ELL)* – a student who speaks a language other than English and is in the process of acquiring the English language, as measured by standardized language proficiency assessments of reading, writing, listening and speaking (de Jong, 2011; Liquanti & Cook, 2013). I am using the term *ELL(s)* throughout my paper, because it is the formal label used by educational stakeholders in schools.

• *Teacher candidate* – a future teacher, who is enrolled in or has recently graduated from an undergraduate or graduate teacher preparation program. I am referring to *teacher candidates* as *candidates* throughout this dissertation.

• *Teaching/Teacher identity* – the various perceptions, interpretations, knowledge, discourse, and actions that have a significant influence on the
professional practice of a future teacher. (Correa, Martinez-Arbeiaiz, & Gutierrez, 2014; Gee, 2014).

- *Negotiation of teaching identity* – the shifts in teaching identity through candidates’ work with ELLs.

**Contributions to the Field**

The education of ELLs has been perceived for years as the responsibility of an English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist or bilingual teacher and not part of the responsibilities of mainstream classroom teachers (Lucas, 2011). However, given that the number of learners in standalone language programs has been reduced, all classroom teachers now have increasing responsibility for educating ELLs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). The literature on ELL teaching and learning pinpoints unique attributes of effective teachers for ELLs along with the general characteristics of good teachers (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006). A few of the attributes that effective classroom teachers should possess are the following: (a) awareness of instructional services for ELLs, (b) the ability to collaborate in teams with specialists and nonspecialists in ESL programs, (c) the ability and desire to incorporate diverse learners’ culture into the curriculum, (d) the ability to deliver instruction that includes ample opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006). Unprepared and underprepared teachers lack those essential skills and knowledge; thus, they struggle to meet the unique and varied needs of ELLs and at the same time to conceptualize their identities as teachers of ELLs.
The increasing responsibility for teaching ELLs has transformed the role of schools and simultaneously of teacher education programs (Correa, Martinez-Arbeiaiz, & Gutierrez, 2014). In the midst of an era marked by increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse student populations, teacher education programs strive to ensure candidates’ preparation to teach ELLs (Lucas, 2011). Successfully preparing teachers for diverse classrooms is an important step towards unmasking the fear and incorrect assumptions that candidates may unknowingly possess when serving ELLs (Kolano, Dávila, Lachance, & Coffey, 2014). For example, if educators do not perceive ELLs’ cultural and linguistic background as resources for learning, then they may hold lower expectations and simplify instructional practices (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). Therefore, effective teacher preparation programs should identify training in terms of incorporating coursework along with practice to support greater understanding of ELLs (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Téllez & Waxman, 2006).

Additionally, examining candidates’ identities through experiences in teacher education programs can provide significant insights into their preparation and growth (Yazan, 2017). Since the process of teaching is complicated and deep, it involves the self; thus, becoming a teacher of ELLs also means adopting an identity as such (Danielewicz, 2001). The identities candidates develop shape their beliefs and dispositions, where they place their effort, and what obligations and responsibilities they see as intrinsic to their role (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Rust, Grossmand, & Shulman, 2005). Vice versa, the desire to be a teacher of ELLs and concurrently to use the essential skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to teach those students, are essential components of a teaching
identity, indicating teachers’ motivation and later satisfaction with being a part of particular educational contexts (Correa et al., 2014). Therefore, changes in candidates’ classroom practices when they are working with ELLs, cannot be explained solely in terms of the changes in their knowledge; one needs to refer to their developing teaching identities to fully understand the changes that occur in their practice (Kanno & Stuart, 2011).

My study explored both candidates’ practices and behaviors with ELLs as well as their teaching identity construction and negotiation at a deeper level to unveil the dynamics that are at play in the intricate process of becoming a teacher of ELLs. Korthagen (2004) emphasized that teacher education should not only focus on changes in behaviors, practices, and beliefs about teaching and learning, but it should also account for the formation of a teaching identity through candidates’ professional practice, mission, and values. Thus, my study’s findings will prove useful to teacher educators and practitioners, who can turn the study into a powerful tool for future professional development.

The Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural theory acknowledges that an individual's knowledge is co-constructed through participation in social and cultural activity (Vygotsky, 1978). A commonly cited Vygotskian notion that takes into account the social aspect of learning is the zone of proximal development (ZPD) that explains “the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). As sociocultural theorists recognize that cognition is not
individually constructed but mediated through participation in culturally relevant activities (Rogoff, 2003; Wertsch, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978) and since language is a part of an individual’s cultural experience (Berry & Candis, 2013), I utilized the sociocultural framework to examine how candidates develop and negotiate their teaching identities through their participation in courses and internship related to ELLs.

Grounded in the sociocultural paradigm, I also specifically utilized the conceptual constructs of communities of practice and identity – particularly the concepts of identification and negotiability (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participation in and identification with communities of practice emphasize that candidates are members of social collectives and not isolated individuals (Wenger, 1998). Belonging to a community is negotiated in practice through participation in social interactions with participants. This negotiation is a fundamental feature of identity, involving the creation and adoption of meaning within a particular context (Wenger, 1998).

**Researcher Positionality**

Central to understanding how research about ESL teaching is shaped is an understanding of who we are as educators, researchers, and scholars (Martin & Gunten, 2002). Hence, I acknowledge that my situated identities as European/international educator, and multilingual researcher and scholar have shaped and influenced this work and the meanings that derived from it.

I was born in Volos, Greece. After taking English, Spanish, and French throughout elementary, junior high, and high school, I was eager to use my multilingualism to fuel my passion for teaching. I majored in elementary education for
my undergraduate studies. My experiences as a teacher candidate undoubtedly shaped my teaching identity. I student taught in a classroom where bilingualism was not valued. My cooperating teacher ignored the strengths and assets that students brought to the classroom. Consequently, I watched students whose first language was not Greek become disengaged from classroom instruction and not make significant academic gains.

I moved to Chicago in 2013 to pursue my studies in ESL teaching and learning. My academic pursuits along with my personal experiences as an ELL in a foreign country reinforced the value of being culturally and linguistically diverse. After immersing myself in a diverse community and learning about ELLs in US schools, I grew as a researcher and educator. During my doctoral program, I began to zealously teach candidates to successfully address the needs of ELLs by valuing and utilizing the cultural and linguistic resources that ELLs bring to schools. This dissertation study is the result of my efforts as an educator and researcher.

**Research Delimitations**

I conducted a qualitative case study research at Loyola University Chicago (LUC), a private university situated in an urban community in the Midwest. The university’s teacher preparation program, Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC), is a 4-year program at the undergraduate level and a 2-year program at the graduate level that focuses on immersing candidates in diverse classrooms across the city of Chicago. The university matched the selection criteria established for the study, which included a field-based program that responds to the complexity of teaching in the field along with an integrated preparation to support in-depth
understandings related to teaching ELLs. The population of the study consisted of elementary education undergraduate and graduate candidates at LUC, who have recently fulfilled all requirements in the program and have experience working with ELLs. My sample included three undergraduate and two graduate elementary candidates who were recent graduates. I collected data via individual interviews in May to July 2018 and archival sources, including candidates’ reflections and lesson plans from the beginning until the end of their time in the program. The study involved a diligent examination of candidates’ actions, values, beliefs, and D/discourses on ELLs across time, to explain how they negotiated their teaching identity through their practice with ELLs.

**Organization of the Study**

The remainder of the study is organized in the following manner. Chapter II begins by grounding the research study in sociocultural theory of learning and presents a review of the related literature dealing with instructional practices with ELLs and teaching identity formation and negotiation. Chapter III delineates the methodology of the study, including the case study research design, context and participants, qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, and D/discourse analysis. The findings of the research are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V contains a discussion of the findings; this final chapter offers the summary, conclusions, and implications for future research and teacher preparation for ELLs.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I begin with a comprehensive overview of the sociocultural paradigm, as well as an exploration of the conceptual constructs that frame my research, including communities of practice, legitimate peripheral participation, identity—identification and negotiability—, and modes of belonging. I then continue with a review of the literature that situates my study with respect to instructional practices for English Language Learners (ELLs), teaching identities, and identity negotiation.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory of Learning

Sociocultural theory argues that a person’s cognition is fundamentally a mediated process and organized by cultural tools, activities, and concepts (Ratner, 2002). Additionally, the sociocultural paradigm explains how participation in social interactions and culturally organized activities frame the construction of knowledge (Rogoff, 2003). In the sociocultural approach, learning has been studied as it occurs within the (a) individual plane, including cognition, behavior, values, and beliefs of a person, (b) interpersonal plane, including social interaction and collective activity, and (c) community plane, including cultural, social, and historical contexts including shared language, identities, values, practices (Monkman, MacGillivray, & Leyva, 2010; Rogoff, 1995). Hence, in the sociocultural paradigm, the interrelatedness between the many social
and cultural elements that affect the cognition of an individual is understood through the three planes.

Social theory explains how knowledge and social relations are simultaneously reflected and (re)created through participation in social activities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Habermas, 1998). However, the epistemological stance of the sociocultural turn also explains that humans develop knowledge “in light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities - which also change” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 3).

Individuals acquire knowledge through participation in the sociocultural activities of their community (Rogoff, 1995). Learning, therefore, can be seen as a socially-grounded phenomenon; as the process of multiple voices coming into contact, creating dialogue (Bahktin, 1981). Because learning is a dynamic process, it “must be understood in, and cannot be separated from, its social and cultural-historical context” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 50). Rather than considering learners as isolated agents operating on reality to discover knowledge or as passive agents controlled by the external world, sociocultural theorists explain that learning occurs as active agents participate in shared social and cultural activities with others (Rogoff, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

Sociocultural theory stands in contrast to the cognitive learning theories that define learning as an internal psychological process. In psychology, social theory of human learning traditionally focuses on human behavior and external influences on responsiveness (Bandura, 1971). In particular, Bandura highlighted the role of “reciprocal interaction between behavior and its controlling conditions” as a process that influences learning (p. 39). However, a reconsideration of learning as a collective and cultural rather
than an individual or psychological phenomenon, often replicated by teacher education programs, was described by Vygotsky (1978) and his theory on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD explains “the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Thus, it measures the distance between what learners are able to do and a proximal level that they can ultimately attain through the guidance of more capable others.

In relation to my study, candidates learn in social and cultural settings, therefore, the learning that occurs through social interactions with classmates, instructors, and cooperating teachers, shapes their development as future teachers. In other words, Warford (2011) proposed the term zone of proximal teacher development (ZPTD) as he recognized the distance between what teaching candidates can attain on their own and what they might achieve with mediated assistance from expert-others (i.e. instructors, educational practitioners).

ZPTD involves a dynamic process, where knowledge is continually reshaped to account for changes in schools and classrooms (Lempert-Shepell, 1995). Hence, a Vygotskyan approach to teacher development considers the education of teachers as situated learning. Lave (2009) explained the notion of situated learning;

Knowledgeability is routinely in a state of change rather than stasis, in the medium of socially, culturally, and historically ongoing systems of activity, involving people who are related in multiple and heterogeneous ways, whose social locations, interests, reasons, and subjective possibilities are different, and
who improvise struggles in situated ways with each other over the value of particular definitions of the situation, in both immediate and comprehensive terms, and for whom the production of failure is as much a part of routine collective activity as the production of average, ordinary knowledgeability. (p. 207)

Consequently, socially situated theory of learning unveils the problematic character of the dynamic nature of educational sites that are intended to generate learning in the world (Lave, 1993). Social participation and collaboration are essential components of situated learning, since learning is embedded within activity, context, and culture.

Drawing on a theory of participation, in which learning is recognized as the process of ongoing transformation of roles and meanings through engagement in sociocultural activities, Rogoff (1995, 1994) used the apprenticeship metaphor to explain how active individuals engage and newcomers develop mature participation in culturally organized activities. Through social interactions and collaboration with others during a culturally organized activity, apprentices become more responsible participants (Rogoff, 1995). Along these lines, university instructors and classroom teachers collaborate to apprentice candidates through engagement in professional learnings within classrooms, schools, and communities. To better situate candidates’ knowledge and identity (re)construction processes in the sociocultural framework and emphasize the interrelatedness between the individual, the social, and the cultural world, I will explain learning as it is developed through communities of practice and the processes of identification and negotiability (Lave & Wenger, 1991).
Communities of Practice

The concept of communities of practice has its roots in sociocultural theory and socially situated theory of learning (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Like Vygotsky and other sociocultural theorists, Lave and Wenger (1991) claimed that learning originates through social interaction between people rather than individual minds. “A community of practice can be viewed as a social learning system” thus, learning cannot be separated from the social situation in which it occurs (Wenger, 2010, p. 1). To put simply, communities of practice “are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1). Hence, communities of practice provide a learning process that is meaningful and relevant through social engagement.

According to Wenger (1998), communities of practice rely on three critical components. First, mutual engagement occurs when community practitioners create relationships with each other and engage in shared practice. Through mutual engagement, candidates work alongside university instructors in educational courses and expert teachers in classrooms. Second, a joint enterprise, is a community in which practitioners develop a meaningful product or practice through a collective process of negotiation. As candidates mutually engage in shared activities, through mentored field experiences supported by coursework, they negotiate meanings and reflect on their practices until they develop a sense of mutual accountability that enables them to engage productively with others in the community. Finally, a shared repertoire indicates the source of community coherence and includes the shared tools, resources, and discourse methods
used to enact practice. The repertoire of resources that candidates use to negotiate meanings and reflect on their practices and experiences are accumulated through their participation to the community as they progress through their program.

Meaning making is a dual process in communities of practice; first people engage in social life through personal participation and second people produce physical and conceptual artifacts or forms of reification that reflect shared experience and describe engagement with the world (Wenger, 2010; 1998). Thus, participation and reification are a fundamental duality for people to negotiate meaning (Wenger, 1998). Through negotiation of meaning, people experience the world and their meaningful engagement in it (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice are intrinsically linked to candidates’ everyday lives; meaning around a certain practice is constantly negotiated through mutual engagement among candidates and other community members or non-members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, communities of practice are a powerful lens through which I can uncover the dynamics that occur in the complex process of becoming a teacher of ELLs and the negotiation of teaching identity.

**Legitimate peripheral participation.** Situated learning is a useful apprenticeship model of learning for understanding how novices initially participate in their community at the periphery until finally attaining full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Rooted in the metaphor of apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1995) and the idea that newcomers in a community of practice advance their skills and understandings through participation with expert others, learning through legitimate peripheral
participation (LPP) involves both acquiring knowledge and skills and moving towards full participation in the practices of a community (Lave, 1996).

Concurrently, the notion of LPP is used by Lave and Wenger (1991) to outline the process by which newcomers become accepted and included in communities of practice. The term legitimate signifies participation in the essential activities of communities of practice; for newcomers to be approached as potential members, a sufficient amount of legitimacy needs to be granted (Wenger, 1998). The term peripheral indicates less responsibility and effort than the demands needed by full participants; “peripherality provides an approximation of full participation that gives exposure to actual practice” (p. 100). However, peripheral participation should include access to ongoing engagement with other experienced members of the community, negotiation of the practices, and opportunities to share stories, artifacts, or discourse (Wenger, 1998).

In addition, learning through LPP encompasses the processes of changing identity in and through membership in communities of practice (Lave, 1996). “Without participation with others, there may be no basis for lived identity” (p. 74). Therefore, along with the (re)production of communities of practice, LPP leads to the development of identity. As candidates engage in LPP, particularly through their teacher education courses or in K-12 classrooms, they develop their understanding about who they are and about what they know in relation to the community and its goals.

Identity

Learning is not solely about developing one’s knowledge and practice, it also incorporates a deep understanding of self and an identification with and participation in
certain communities of practice (Handley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006). Wenger (1998) asserted that “because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity” (p. 214). Therefore, creating knowledge involves a lot of identity work that may cause identification or dis-identification with a community. At the same time, as practice includes the negotiation of ways of being a person in a certain context, the emergence of communities of practice involves the negotiation of identities (Wenger, 1998).

Identity, although a key component in describing legitimate peripheral participation, was not fully explored in Lave and Wenger’s (1991) initial work. Wenger (1998) delved specifically into identity arguing that through participation in communities of practice, where individual and collective meanings are created, people experience, shape, and adopt new identities. For Lave and Wenger, an identity is not something that a person brings into practice already formed, nor something that emerges by chance after acquiring a skill or knowledge (Lave, 1996; Wenger, 1998). “Crafting identities is a social process, and becoming more knowledgeably skilled [i.e., learning] is an aspect of participation in social practice” (Lave, 1996, p. 157). Consequently, identity construction is learners’ principal task as they engage in practice.

The concept of identity is a central element in my study, acting as a “counterpart” to the construct of community of practice (Wenger, 2010, p. 3). Identities are multiple and fluid; they are often negotiated, challenged, and changed over time within various social and cultural formations in society (Gee, 2014). Members’ identities can be developed through changing forms of participation in communities of practice (Handley
et al., 2006). Therefore, as candidates participate in various communities of practice, they tend to develop and reconstruct their teaching identities. Participation within and among distinct communities of practice creates different modes of identification or belonging. So, to comprehend the processes of identity formation and negotiation, a careful consideration of the three different modes of belonging – engagement, imagination, and alignment – is necessary (Wenger, 2010; 1998).

**Modes of belonging.** First, *engagement* is closely related to practice and signifies a mutual negotiation of meaning, as members actively participate in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Thus, through engaging in individual or mutual activities, talking, or using and producing artifacts, members of communities of practice develop an identity of participation or non-participation (Wenger, 2010). According to Gee (2014), identities are situated in the sense that they are interpreted, enacted, and identified in and for specific contexts. Situated identities are multiple so, individuals can lose or reject some as well as gain new ones, through *engagement* in communities of practice.

Second, *imagination* offers a getaway through which individuals transcend time and space and create new images of the world by extrapolating from their own experiences (Dewey, 1934; Wenger, 1998). As members engage with the world, they simultaneously construct an image of the world that indicates how they belong in communities of practice or not; those images are vital to members’ interpretation of their participation in the social world (Wenger, 2010). For this reason, imagination is not just an individual process but embedded in social interactions and joint experiences (Wenger, 1998).
To expand on the idea of imagination, I use the concept of figured worlds (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Figured worlds provide “the contexts of meaning for actions, cultural productions, performances, disputes, for the understandings that people come to make of themselves, and for the capabilities that people develop to direct their own behavior in these worlds” (p. 60). Figured worlds connect with imagination in communities of practice through the development of situated meanings (Gee, 2014). According to Gee, figured worlds are simplified, often unconscious theories or stories individuals construct drawing on their experiences. As people may have various and inconsistent stories in their heads, figured worlds must be used and understood in a specific context. When individuals participate in specific communities of practice, they negotiate situated meanings in and through communicative social interactions. Therefore, figured worlds - just as the images that individuals create through the process of *imagination* - usually help members in the process of constructing situated meanings in communities of practice (Gee, 2014; Wenger, 1998).

Last, *alignment* is not restricted to mutual engagement and occurs when we are “coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises” (Wenger, 1998, p. 174). Members’ engagement in practice often requires alignment with the context to be effective, for example, “making sure that activities are coordinated, that laws are followed, or that intentions are communicated” (Wenger, 2010, p. 5). In this regard, as members become more experienced in their understanding of the practice, their identities become progressively aligned to the practice. Discourse with a capital-D (Gee, 2014) is essential in *alignment*. 
Discourse incorporates a combination of “language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity)” (p. 52).

Discourse and figured worlds are similar in that they mediate between the micro level of social interaction in a small community and the macro level of institutions (Gee, 2014).

As engagement, imagination, and alignment foster relations of belonging, candidates develop their identities through space and time in different ways (Wenger, 1998). Nevertheless, since the concept of communities of practice takes learning as its foundation, not power, I acknowledge that issues of power inherent in social life may affect the amount of participation in a community and thus, influence the development of knowledge and identity (Wenger, 2010).

Identification and negotiability. Two processes, in particular, will help me understand shifts in identity: identification and negotiation. Identification is a dynamic and socially organized process that provides “experiences and material for building identities through an investment of the self in relations of association and differentiation” (Wenger, 1998, p. 188). As candidates participate in communities of practice, the components of their social existence - roles, actions, meaning systems, artifacts, and so forth - become resources for them to understand themselves as emerging teachers or teachers of ELLs (Wenger, 1998). As Gee (2014) explained, people build identities by using Discourses or, in other words, by using language together with other stuff (i.e., symbols, tools, objects, actions). Discourses can be seen as candidates’ resources of
social existence as they participate in communities of practice. Hence, identification occurs when candidates merge these resources into their existing identities (see Figure 1).

Negotiability or negotiation “determines the degree to which we have control over the meanings in which we are invested” (Wenger, 1998, p. 188). When candidates change their teaching identities based on what they encounter and learn in their educational courses or student teaching, they negotiate the meanings that matter within a social configuration (Wenger, 1998). Consequently, identity formation requires the interaction of identification and negotiation; the process of identification is defined in regard to communities and membership in them, whereas, negotiability involves the economies of meaning (Wenger, 1998). An economy of meaning indicates that within a community “there is a competence for learners to lay claim to, something common to struggle over, meanings to define and thus appropriate” (Wenger, 2010, p. 8). As a result, communities of practice produce an economy of meaning (see Figure 1). Economies of meaning enable members of a community to position themselves amongst other members. Positioning constitutes a resource through which people involved may also negotiate new positions (Harré & Langenhove, 1999). As members negotiate their identities, they also negotiate new positions in a community. In other words, the choice of language use, including dialect, register, and genre that people utilize to enact their identities are not socially neutral but create social positionings between speaker and hearer (Holland et al., 1998).

Figure 1. Social Ecology of Identity
Review of the Literature

Introduction

In this section, I review the related literature of teacher preparation research specific to ELLs. In order to engage in dialogue, the literature review consists of two components that stem from my research questions: (a) Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners, and (b) Teacher Identity and Teaching English Language Learners. I create two sections to discuss each of the components, drawing from the extant research found through computer and library searches, teacher education journals, and bibliographies from similar studies. The scope of my literature search is limited by the following parameters: (a) empirical studies, (b) studies in the United States, (c) studies published within the past ten years, (d) studies’ participants are pre-service elementary education candidates, and (e) studies are primarily focused on linguistic diversity (ELLs), rather than culturally or ethnically diverse students (second-generation immigrant students).

Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners

Teachers hold an essential role in facilitating learning and delivering appropriate instruction for ELLs, as ELLs need modifications and scaffolded instruction appropriate for their English proficiency levels (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006). Unfortunately, there is an “inadequate number of teachers in high-needs areas such as …bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL)” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 338). When teachers of ELLs fail to motivate students to achieve the highest level of achievement, by communicating low expectations or by not providing
cognitively demanding tasks, opportunities need to be created for teachers to learn how to educate these students effectively (Daniel, 2014). As only a small number of teachers is receiving education in how to successfully teach subject content to ELLs, radical steps in teacher education need to be taken to address this issue (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Thus, teacher education programs are responsible for redesigning their programs to incorporate stronger clinical practice along with coursework around the teaching of ELLs, in hopes of educating future teachers who will address the persisting achievement gap between ELLs and native English-speaking learners (Darling-Hammond, 2009).

My study primarily focuses on candidates’ field-based teaching practice and experiences with ELLs, as “the most powerful programs require students to spend extensive time in the field throughout the entire program, examining and applying the concepts and strategies they are simultaneously learning about in their courses” (Darling-Hammond, 2010b, p. 40). Therefore, in this section, given the important role that practice holds in teacher preparation, I include literature specifically related to practice with ELLs for teachers in training. This part of the literature review is organized around the following topics: (a) Instructional practices for teachers of ELLs, (b) Clinical experience and teachers of ELLs, and (c) Teacher preparation for teachers of ELLs and my research.

**Instructional practices for teachers of ELLs.** Effective instruction for ELLs requires teachers to be able to use instructional strategies that successfully support these learners (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). An array of approaches and strategies have been studied to help candidates become more prepared to teach content to
ELLs; for example, research indicates that teachers of ELLs should provide numerous instructional tasks that encourage learners to use extensive and complex language at their own levels of English proficiency (Helfrich & Bosh, 2011; Lesaux & Harris, 2015). However, scant literature makes the connection between the efficacy of certain instructional practices with ELLs and the actual implementation of those practices in classrooms by candidates. While many view quality instruction for ELLs as just good teaching, the educational needs of ELLs are still overlooked in some schools as they are approached through a set of generic and remedial teaching practices (de Jong & Harper, 2009, 2010). It is necessary to examine empirical studies that acknowledge the challenges candidates face when implementing specific instructional approaches to improve the academic success of ELLs. I review these below.

Brown and Endo (2017) examined differentiation strategies for ELLs through an analysis of general education candidates’ lesson plans. The findings of the study indicated that the candidates struggled to differentiate instruction for ELLs, as they used no or generic accommodations. In particular, out of the 149 lesson plans sampled, only 8 lesson plans (5.3%) included accommodations for ELLs. These accommodations were non-rigorous and generic, as the types of learning conditions and environment necessary for ELLs to learn were not included. The researchers implicated the need for a more explicit instruction that teaches candidates to separate accommodations for ELLs versus learners with special needs and to effectively differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of students. While the authors focus on how candidates differentiate instruction through their lesson plans, I take the research further to add analysis on how
candidates are using multiple components of effective teaching for ELLs through an examination of lesson plans and written reflections.

Rather than focus on differentiated instruction, González (2016) studied a sheltered instructional approach to lesson planning. Five candidates were introduced to the sheltered instruction lesson plan template by the researchers (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008) in a seminar, before they were asked to use it. Findings revealed candidates heavily focused on speaking and writing informal or formal assessments, not taking into account the language domains of listening and reading. Lesson plan analysis, additionally, indicated that candidates centered their instruction around the use of content-specific, academic English vocabulary, failing to consider practice in conversational English. Also, no connection to students’ background experiences, cultures or traditions was provided and there was little evidence on how candidates would provide explicit feedback to students. González used the results to highlight the fact that “while sheltered instruction proved to be beneficial, candidates need assistance with how to use ELLs’ language proficiency data to design instruction that is comprehensible for ELLs” (González, 2016, p. 7). This requires teacher preparation programs to consider how candidates can have more exposure to and familiarity with ELLs’ language proficiency data to design effective lesson plans. This study only scratched the surface of the use of sheltered instruction by candidates, due to the limited number of actual examples deriving from lesson plans that could better support the findings. My study contributes to the literature by including the voices of candidates more frequently.
Aside from research that relies heavily on candidates’ lesson plans, there are a few studies that examine candidates’ work in action. Diaz, Whitacre, Esquierdo, and Ruiz-Escalante (2013) investigated the types of questioning strategies used by candidates with a bilingual or ESL endorsement, by collecting data through videotaped lessons in a math and a language arts class, two focus groups, and an exit interview. Data analysis indicated that candidates tended to ask lower order thinking questions. Diaz et al. discerned that while candidates “are continuing to teach at lower levels of the thinking process,” ELLs are subjected to a reality where “passive learning is the norm and questions that require higher levels of thinking are nonexistent” (pp. 172-173). Thus, after getting a better understanding of candidates’ experiences in the field, the authors stressed the need to better prepare candidates in using questioning strategies that promote high levels of thinking processes. My research builds on this study as it focuses on candidates’ reflections on their actual teaching practices.

**Clinical experience and teachers of ELLs.** The apparent division between theory and practice is a major critique of teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Findings from a longitudinal study conducted in a five-year elementary education program, revealed that general education candidates, during their fifth year of clinical practice, used many practical strategies - learned through coursework - in their teaching and less interest in why the strategies were appropriate for their ELLs (de Jong & Harper, 2010). The authors suggested that teacher preparation programs should shift from a theoretical stance that strictly focuses on methods to an inclusive classroom perspective that allows candidates to advocate for practices their using in classrooms, while
acknowledging the various needs of their diverse learners. Additionally, findings from a study conducted in LUC’s TLLSC program found that teacher preparation programs must be grounded across three instructional areas to facilitate candidate’s learning: (a) coursework, (b) field experiences, and (c) reflexivity (Nasir & Heineke, 2014).

Kennedy (1997) asserted that candidates often think, “that they already have what it takes to be a good teacher, and that therefore they have little to learn from the formal study of teaching” (p. 14). In reality, it takes courses that are coordinated with field experiences for candidates to become more aware of what it means to be a successfully prepared teacher; “a key to dramatically successful preparation of teachers is finding ever more effective ways of connecting the knowledge of the university with the knowledge of the school” (Darling-Hammond, 2010a, p. 185). Thus, since my study has a strong focus on candidates’ field experiences with ELLs, it is essential to present empirical studies that examine some of the reasons why field practice is important in preparing candidates to teach ELLs. Unfortunately, only a handful of studies document how elementary candidates reflect on their learning and practices when working in classrooms with ELLs, within their teacher education programs.

Salerno and Kibler (2013) explored how candidates describe linguistically diverse students and make recommendations for improving their own practice during student teaching. Findings suggested that candidates needed more opportunities to better understand learners’ language skills and to view families and students’ first languages as assets and educational resources. Also, the authors argued that certain candidates still maintained a stereotypical image of what it means to be an ELL therefore, their thinking
should be challenged. Drawing from their findings Salerno and Kibler recommended that candidates require training focused on working in various classrooms with ELLs in order for crucial opportunities to arise, such as personal interactions with linguistically diverse learners and gaining experience in managing diverse classrooms.

In another study, Daniel (2014) examined how and when candidates in their thirteen-month, pre-service Masters with Certification in Elementary Education program learned to educate ELLs throughout their year-long teaching internship. The author highlighted five major findings that emerged through interviews and observation with the four focal participants. During their internships, candidates’ multiple teaching and learning processes indicated that (1) they did not have opportunities to learn how to effectively educate ELLs, (2) candidates’ mentors did not model ways to support ELLs, (3) candidates’ mentors did not model collaboration, (4) candidates’ mentors did not model caring relationships, and (5) candidates learned skills to promote effective education and practice linguistically responsive pedagogy. The study’s implications for teacher practice, stress the important role that field experiences have on candidates’ learning; candidates argued that the most positive opportunities about learning to teach originated from interacting with students, especially ELLs. Thus, teacher educators should place candidates in internship sites with ELLs, as increased interactions with diverse learners in multiple settings encourage candidates to apply what they learn in coursework in their practicum settings.

In a study conducted in LUC’s teacher preparation program (TLLSC), Heineke, Kennedy, and Lees (2013) examined the preparedness of early childhood candidates to
teach in classrooms with ELLs, through their participation in the TLLSC program. The findings focused on four video vignettes that provided perspectives of childhood administrators, educators, undergraduate candidates, and teacher preparation faculty unveiling their experiences with the TLLSC program. The authors emphasized the need for well-prepared teachers who are knowledgeable about ESL education. Primarily, the study’s implications indicated that field-based teacher preparation supports effective relationships between candidates, students, and their families. Through field-based experiences, candidates start recognizing that students’ cultural backgrounds must be seen as assets that can enhance both children’s development and classroom instruction. My research adds on this study as it examines elementary education candidates and their experiences with teaching ELLs in the TLLSC program, along with the formation of their teaching identities as teachers of ELLs.

**Teacher preparation for teachers of ELLs and my research.** The present study will add to the existing literature on teacher preparation and ELLs. First, my study focuses on pre-service candidates and the instructional practices they use when teaching ELLs. The challenge of providing effective schooling for ELLs is present and noticeable thus, rather than ignoring or masking this challenge through the use of ill-fitting accommodations my research will unveil candidates’ reflections concerning their experiences with planning instruction for ELLs. Second, my study acknowledges that pre-service teacher education should promote high-quality field experiences and teaching opportunities that encourage candidates to use their theoretical knowledge in order to build on their practical and professional expertise as teachers of ELLs. Lastly, my study
investigates the teaching practices of both undergraduate and graduate elementary candidates across time, whereas most teacher education research focuses on in-service teachers.

**Teacher Identity and Teaching English Language Learners**

Given the challenges discussed in the section above and as several content teachers seek answer to the instructional dilemma of choosing practices that promote inclusion and ELLs’ academic success, there is a call for all teachers to see themselves as language teachers/teachers of ELLs (Téllez & Waxman, 2006). Identity requires inner commitment (Britzman, 1994; Kanno & Stuart, 2011); in order for change to occur, all teachers need to widen their teacher identity to include that of language teacher, since teachers of ELLs are teachers of language (Echevarría et al., 2004; Téllez & Waxman, 2006). Teacher identity primarily rests on the desire to be a teacher and the type of teacher one chooses to be; it can be constructed and reconstructed according to teachers’ experiences and satisfaction with being a part of particular educational contexts (Correa et al., 2014).

There is a rich pool of literature considering teacher identity in educational theory and research. Over the years, several scholars have framed teacher identity through different lenses. This study adopts Olsen’s (2008) sociocultural model of identity; Olsen defines teacher identity as

the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (each itself a fluid influence and all together an ever-changing construct) that became intertwined inside the flow
of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at given moments. (p. 139)

Therefore, this notion of identity focuses on teachers’ dynamic sense of self, as mediated by various interdependencies among personal and professional lived experiences.

Despite the body of research on teacher identity, two gaps in the literature are distinct: (a) the lack of examinations on identity negotiation of candidates who teach ELLs, and (b) the paucity of inquiry into candidates’ identity construction over time. My study, in addition to investigating the instructional practices that elementary candidates use over the course of their teacher preparation program, focuses on participants’ teacher identity formation and negotiation related to ESL learning. Because identity researchers must account for not only how social practices and interactions place individuals, but also how individuals seek to situate themselves in the communities in which they find themselves (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Thus, in this section I include studies that focus specifically on the identity (re)negotiations of candidates who work with ELLs. Due to the scarce literature on teacher identity and ELLs, I broadened the scope of my literature search to include ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) candidates and teacher educator identity. This section is organized around the following themes: (a) Negotiation of teaching identities, (b) Identities-in-practice, and (c) Teacher candidates’ identities and my research.

Negotiation of teaching identities. The construction of teacher identity is integral to candidates, who are still in the process of learning-to-teach (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Wenger (1998) states “learning transforms our identities” (p. 227); thus, changes
in candidates’ classroom practice can be explained not solely in terms of the changes in their knowledge but in addition to examining their evolving teacher identities (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). The formation and evolution of candidates’ teaching identities “is a process of personal maturation that begins to develop informally before professional training and continues developing progressively during the university years” (Correa et al., 2014, p. 449). This process of personal maturation incentivizes candidates to construct and reconstruct their teaching identities, based not only on the ways they perceive themselves, but also on the changing perceptions of the profession itself (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013).

When candidates are asked to shift their instructional responsibilities from that of teaching content to teaching content and language for their ELLs, they are not only required to adopt new instructional strategies, but also to renegotiate their teacher identities (Reeves, 2009). Negotiation is viewed as “a transactional interaction process, in which individuals attempt to evoke, assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others’ desired self-images” (Pavlenko & Blacklege, 2004, p. 4). Therefore, as teachers negotiate identities and reposition themselves in classrooms - for example, teachers of ELLs, or teachers for all students - they tend to change their pedagogical practices to correspond to the new identity position (Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2008). The empirical studies that investigate candidates’ identity negotiation, through their work with ELLs, are presented below.

Yazan (2017) examined how three candidates in a 13-month MATESOL program negotiated their teaching identities through teacher education coursework. Findings indicated that the candidates traveled through various forms of identity negotiation,
positioning themselves as ESOL teachers in a “micro teacher learner community” (p. 46). In addition, candidates were positioned by others during their student teaching experiences in teacher education courses. The author argued that while teacher identity is not the main focus in many teacher education courses, teacher learning and identity (re)construction are two intertwined processes that constantly influence one another. Thus, providing meaningful spaces and diverse opportunities to candidates to construct and reconstruct their teacher identities should be considered an essential goal across all teacher education programs. This study bridges instructional knowledge through coursework and teacher identity, also emphasizing the role that teacher identity negotiation holds in the development of teachers as invested and autonomous professionals in the field. My research adds to this qualitative study, as it examines the teacher identity formation of elementary education candidates and their teacher identity negotiation through their work with ELLs.

To better understand the identity (re)negotiation of teachers of ELLs, Kayi-Aydar (2015) explored how narrative positioning contributed to three candidates’ identity (re)formation with contradictory positions shaping their agency. The participants were elementary education graduate pre-service teachers pursuing their ESL endorsement at a U.S. university. Findings showed that the participant teachers’ identities were shaped mainly in relation to ELLs and their cooperating teachers. The candidates, through their narrative reflections, described incidents where they felt powerless in their interactions with ELLs, which may subsequently lead teachers to purposefully avoid teaching ELLs. Kayi-Aydar called for further investigation on teacher identity and the education of
ELLs. As this study is heavily focused on narrative discourse and does not explore how identity is negotiated in classroom conversations, my study goes beyond to include discourse that also investigates teachers’ identities as constructed and negotiated through classroom interactions.

**Identities-in-practice.** Identity and practice are deeply connected; when teachers change their practice, their identity is affected and vice versa (Wenger, 1998). Wenger succinctly emphasized the profound connection between identity and practice, defining identity as “a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other” (p. 151). Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that identity evolves through one’s practice; an identity is not something that pre-exists or incidentally appears as a result of learning a skill. In turn, my study views candidates’ identities as “personalized reflections of the landscape of practices” (Wenger, 2010, p. 6). As candidates participate in the actual practice of teaching, their identities are negotiated and reconstructed.

Kanno and Stuart (2017), drawing on the notion of identities-in-practice, began to fill gaps in literature by examining how ESL candidates learn to teach and how their identities as teachers are shaped through practice. Following two graduate students in a Masters of Arts for ESOL Teachers program for one academic year, the authors explored candidates’ identity development and changing classroom practice during their student teaching in an ESL classroom. One of the study’s first findings was the fact that it was difficult for ESL candidates to adopt the identity of a teacher; the participants’ commitment to becoming professional ESL teachers did not result in the construction and
acceptance of a teacher identity. The authors explained that “unless student teachers arrive with substantial classroom teaching experience, they typically do not take on the identity of a teacher immediately” (p. 245). However, towards the end of the year, the participants identified with aspects of the teaching practice and started to form their teacher identities. Thus, constructing and negotiating a teacher identity is not an experience that takes place overnight for candidates; it requires a prolonged process in which they gain knowledge and apply it in practice. My study also fills gaps in literature, as it focuses on identities-in-practice by examining general education candidates and their practice with ELLs.

Chang et al. (2016) conducted a collaborative self-study to examine how their experiences in the TLLSC program informed their teacher educator identities. The researchers sought to make meaning of their transformation from a faculty delivering courses using a traditional model to educators collectively putting into practice a field-based model. The findings indicated that researchers’ identities as teacher educators evolved through participation in an intensive field-based teacher preparation program, including collaborative interactions with other faculty and educational stakeholders. My research responds to researchers’ call for including voices of undergraduate and graduate candidates. Thus, this study extends this research to explore candidates’ (re)construction of their teaching identities through their participation in the TLLSC program.

**Teacher candidates’ identities and my research.** The present study will add to the existing literature on teacher identity and the teaching of ELLs. Learning to teach is a far more complex process than learning content and instructional methods. Linking the
first part of my research focus - instructional practices - with the latter – candidates’ identity formation and negotiation - my study attempts to address and close a hole in teacher preparation research. Given the complexity of identity negotiation processes, my research bridges learning through coursework and learning through classroom practice as a way to explore how candidates’ teacher identities are shaped by their roles as content teachers and language teachers/teachers of ELLs. As literature examines teacher identity negotiation from the perspectives of ESL candidates, my study addresses a gap by examining the processes of teacher identity negotiation longitudinally, from the perspectives of elementary education candidates and their experiences with teaching ELLs.

Conclusion

Identity, like learning, is socially constructed and continuously negotiated by someone's engagement in a community (Wegner, 1998). Framed in sociocultural theory and specifically, Lave’s (1991) and Wegner’s (1998) theory on communities of practice, my study contributes in many ways to the literature on teacher preparation and ELLs, with a major focus on the negotiation of teacher identity. As candidates participate in communities of practice, different identities are enacted and negotiated through learning the discourses, indicating membership in different settings (Haniford, 2010). Thus, my research aims to unveil candidates’ teaching identities in their discourse and analyze how candidates construct and negotiate their teaching identities through their practice with ELLs. In addition to filling gaps in the current literature, I bring together the two big
areas of teacher preparation: coursework and the actual experience of teaching. The following questions drive this research:

- What aspects of teaching practice in a field-based teacher education program influences the formation of teacher candidates’ identity as teachers of ELLs?
- How do teacher candidates’ teaching identities mediate their discourses on ELLs?
- How do teacher candidates negotiate their teaching identities and make a switch from being general classroom teachers to teachers of ELLs?

The next chapter describes the methodology used to collect and analyze data to answer my research questions.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the case study design and methods, used to address the study’s explanatory research questions (Yin, 2003). The case study captures the complexity of teaching identity formation and negotiation processes of an intrinsically bounded group of elementary candidates at Loyola University Chicago (LUC) (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this chapter, I describe my case study, including detailed descriptions about the context and population sample, qualitative data collection procedures, and discourse analysis. The chapter is organized in the following sections: (a) Case Study Design, (b) Population and Sample, (c) Context, (d) Data Collection, (e) Data Analysis, (f) Methods of Verification and Trustworthiness, (g) Limitations, (h) Researcher’s Role.

Case Study Design

This study was framed by sociocultural theory and situated theory of learning on the premise that learning is located in the relationship between a social person and a social world (Wenger, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). I used a case study research design to approach learning in terms of “a social phenomenon constituted in the experienced, lived-in world, through legitimate peripheral participation in ongoing social practice” (Lave, 1991, p. 64). I selected this design to examine the processes of changing teaching identity in and through membership in communities of practice (Lave, 1991).
A case study design can be defined as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). In teacher education, case studies center on societal constructs and socialization in studying educational phenomena (Merriam, 1998). Berliner (2001) highlighted the role of case studies in teacher education: “It is case knowledge that is probably the basis for positive transfer by experts in complex environments, meaning that the ability to codify and draw on case knowledge may be the essence of adaptive or fluid expertise” (p. 477). Hence, as the main focus of this study was to examine candidates’ actions, values, beliefs, and D/discourse on English Language Learners (ELLs) closely to explain how they negotiated their teaching identity through their practice with ELLs, I used an explanatory case study design (Yin, 2003).

**Population and Sample**

The target population of my study included all recent LUC undergraduate and graduate elementary education graduates with an English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. It is estimated that the population demographics were roughly 80% female candidates and 20% male, predominantly White from suburban Illinois, and 22 years old.

My sample consisted of two graduate and three undergraduate elementary candidates who had recently completed their coursework and internship requirements at LUC (see Table 1). In the following chapter (Chapter IV), I provide a brief personal and professional description of the study participants to better situate the findings.
Table 1

Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>University Level</th>
<th>Spoken Language(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cecelia</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>English, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>English, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>English, basic Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonia</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sampling Procedures

I selected candidates through purposeful sampling, according to specific inclusion criteria developed to address the purpose of the research (Patton, 1990). Specifically, I employed homogeneous sample selection, purposefully selecting a relative small and homogeneous set of cases for intensive study to gain an in-depth understanding of how senior candidates negotiate their teaching identities when they work with ELLs (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The criteria that described my specific subgroup targeted for inclusion in my research study were graduate and undergraduate elementary candidates who have: (a) successfully completed their educational courses and internship, (b) completed all of their coursework and fieldwork at LUC, (c) a certification to teach in elementary school settings, and (d) an ESL endorsement.

To initially approach potential study participants, I sent out an e-mail to all candidates who matched my criteria, informing them about my research study and their role in it. After the written presentation of information, willing candidates signed the necessary forms (i.e., consent forms and information forms for Institutional Review Board) before we set up a date for data collection (see Appendix D).
Context

The University

LUC is a private Jesuit Catholic university. Located in Chicago, Illinois, the university is in the hub of an urban ambience. The main campus is located approximately eight miles north of the downtown Chicago, situated between two of the most diverse and densely populated areas of the city – Edgewater and Rogers Park. With a fast growing and vibrant Latino – approximately 17% of the neighborhood population – and African American – approximately 27% of the neighborhood population – community respectively, both neighborhoods include a plethora of family-owned businesses, including restaurants and small boutiques of various ethnic cultures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Murals, also, decorate the streets and train stops, giving a cheerful vibe of culture throughout. Thus, LUC is located in an area, where every cultural background and language is accepted and celebrated.

The Teacher Preparation Program

Teacher education faculty of LUC’s School of Education implemented the Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) program in 2013. TLLSC engages teacher educators, classroom teachers, and candidates in integrated professional learning across classrooms, schools, and communities (Heineke, Ryan, & Tocci, 2015). The TLLSC program is designed based on a field-based apprenticeship model (Rogoff, 1995), which enables candidates to progress through three developmental phases and learn from scaffolded experiences with diverse students in urban schools, across their four years of undergraduate studies (Heineke et al., 2015).
Thus, the field-based nature of LUC’s teacher preparation program involves the immersion of candidates in diverse inclusion classrooms across the city of Chicago.

TLLSC is formed in terms of sequences and modules (courses); at the undergraduate level each TLLSC sequence consists of three- to eight-week modules (see Figure 2), which expose candidates to diverse learners, settings, and professional practitioners (Ryan, Ensminger, Heineke, Kennedy, Prasse, & Smentana, 2014). The content and assignments of the sequences tend to become more demanding and complex as they progress, both challenging and supporting candidates’ professional development (Ryan et al., 2014). During the first three semesters in the program, candidates explore the fundamentals of teaching and learning through diverse experiences across various school settings, before they hone in on areas of concentration. Finally, they engage in a yearlong internship in schools, where they are starting to assume the responsibilities of a full-time teacher (Ryan et al., 2014). At the graduate level, candidates move through the same series of field-based sequences and modules across the program, however, in a condensed period of time. Undergraduate candidates require approximately four years to finish the program, whereas graduate candidates require two years (see Figure 3).

LUC’s TLLSC program provides ample opportunities for candidates to participate in different communities of practice, as they engage in meaningful collaboration with faculty members through educational courses, school and community partners through field-based learning, and peers. In addition, candidates and faculty members collaborate through participation in professional learning communities (PLCs) (Ryan et al., 2014). Facilitated by faculty members, the PLCs bring together “candidates within specialty
areas and across developmental levels (i.e., beginning, developing, and mastering) to share and co-construct knowledge, skills, and dispositions applied to diverse classroom, school, and community contexts”, therefore serving as communities of practice (Ryan et al., 2014, p. 149).

Note. Loyola University Chicago B.S.Ed. Teacher Preparation Program Phases. BSEd program phases: Teaching, learning, and leading with schools and communities (TLLSC). Retrieved from http://www.luc.edu/education/undergrad/tllsc/bsed-program-phases/

Figure 2. B.S.Ed. Program Phases
**Note.** Loyola University Chicago M.Ed. in Elementary in Education. MEd program phases: Teaching, learning, and leading with schools and communities (TLLSC). Retrieved from https://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/course-sequence_ELEM-MED_Sum16.pdf

**Figure 3.** M.Ed. in Elementary Education Program Phases

**Preparation for ELLs**

Regardless of the certification area, candidates receive direct and intensive preparation to support the needs of ELLs through a targeted and integrated approach (Ryan et al., 2014). In other words, across the TLLSC program, ELLs are targeted as main foci of learning in particular sequences and modules and integrated across preparatory experiences to introduce candidates to authentic classroom practice (Cohen, Giatsou, Roudebush, & Heineke, 2018). Specifically, in Sequence 3, titled *Policy and Practice in Urban Schools*, sophomores from all different licensure areas engage in practice at urban schools through participation in two modules (Nasir & Heineke, 2014).
The first module – *Educational Policy for Diverse Students* – focuses on educational policy manifested within the local context and the second – *Individualized Instruction for Diverse Students* – centers on candidates’ use of authentic assessments with diverse learners (e.g., ELLs) (Heineke et al., 2013). Candidates synthesize, apply, and reflect on their learning from the two modules (i.e., policy, diverse learners) through completion of the summative assessment. Thus, candidates during this early exposure to urban schools and through their work with diverse students, start forming their identity as teachers and their role as advocates.

Additionally, in Sequence 5, titled *Literacy and Data Use*, candidates in their third year in the TLLSC program participate in three modules: Language and Literacy for Diverse Students, Using Classroom Data in a Collaborative Environment to Advance Student Achievement, and Discipline-Specific Literacy for Diverse Students. Throughout this semester-long sequence, candidates engage in professional learning at an urban school-site – according to their area of concentration – three mornings a week and are expected to participate in instruction through the teaching of at least four formal lesson plans (Heineke & Papola-Ellis, 2017). As part of their coursework, candidates differentiate their instruction to support diverse students, including ELLs.

**Data Collection**

This case study utilized qualitative methods of data collection, since the research questions and conceptual framework require an in-depth understanding of candidates’ teacher identity negotiation through their work with ELLs. In order to ensure case study validity, I also used multiple sources of evidence to enrich the data and cross-check
findings (Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). As Patton (1990) reminds us, “Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective” (p. 244). In total, the data consisted of: audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews with participants and archive data including assignments, lesson plans, and reflections across the 4-year program. The data collected reflected ways in which candidates enacted and negotiated their teaching identity through speaking or writing. The Discourses (with capital D), meaning the “language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places” candidates used to take on a certain teaching identity or role, indicated how they had to enact this teaching identity at the right time and place to make it work (Gee, 2014, p. 52).

**Interviews**

My data collection incorporated interviews to develop an in-depth understanding of candidates’ unique teaching identities. Interviewing was crucial in my study, as I could not observe candidates’ behaviors in classrooms due to the fact that my participants had already completed their student teaching requirements. Since I conducted an intensive case study of selected candidates, interviewing was one of the best techniques to use (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, my data collection started with a semi structured interview, including more open-ended and less structured questions to obtain specific insights from the participants (Merriam, 1998).

I created my interview protocol (see Appendix C) according to Talmy’s (2010a) conceptualization of interviews as social practice; interview data can be seen as mutual
construction of knowledge and negotiation of meaning between the interviewer and the interviewee, not as direct reports of facts. Hence, approaching interview as social practice gave me the opportunity to focus not only on the product of the interview but also on the process involved in the co-construction of meaning (Talmy, 2010b). Given that identity is produced and reproduced in history through discourse, the research interview as social practice orientation had significant implications for the analysis of my interview data (Gee, 2014; Talmy, 2010b). In other words, Talmy and Duff (2011) explained that within social practice specific interactional routines, use of language, or behaviors may be studied. Those interactional and linguistic processes that candidates revealed when engaging in discourse during the interview, helped me grasp the various nuances associated with their teacher identity formation and negotiation.

I used my interview protocol to foster rapport with each of the candidates and encourage them to share the most comprehensive account of their story through their experiences in the TLLSC program (Erickson, 1986). The conversations were designed specifically to get to know the candidates first, at a personal level through individual questions about their upbringing and linguistic background along with their experiences with teaching ELLs in the program, and then at a professional level to delve deeper into their teaching identities.

The interviews were scheduled at a place and time of the candidates’ convenience. To maintain confidentiality, we met outside the university. Audio files of the interviews were collected by means of a digital voice recorder and transferred to my personal computer. The audio files were transcribed verbatim, including nonlinguistic
observations, and stored and organized with the *N-Vivo* software (Kvale, 1996). I ensured confidentiality of all study data by storing the files on a password-protected computer.

**Piloting the interview protocol.** To field test and refine my interview protocol, I conducted a pilot interview in March of 2018. Yin (2003) described that the pilot of a case study may be conducted as a prelude to further study, revealing inadequacies in the initial design that can be later addressed and modified. In such a way, pilot interviews are crucial for examining which protocol questions may be confusing and require rewording, which questions may yield useless data, or which questions still need to be added after the respondents’ suggestions (Merriam, 1998). Working on my practicum course in the Spring of 2018, I decided to draft my interview protocol and reach out to senior candidates, who were completing their last semester in the TLLSC program, to engage in the interview process. Working with one candidate, I recorded the interview session using a digital voice recorder and documented my thoughts and interactions directly following the interview.

After completing the interview, I listened to the recorded discussion, reflected on the process, and refined my interview questions. As a result of the findings from the pilot interview, my final interview protocol served three main purposes: (a) to get to know the candidates at a personal and professional level through their experiences in the TLLSC program, (b) to elicit and collect information about candidates’ demographics and their practices and understandings concerning teaching ELLs, and (c) to delve deeper into the processes of negotiation and (re)construction of their teaching identities, as they occurred through their work with ELLs. In addition, findings suggested the need for (a) defined
inquiry topics, (b) the use of detailed sub-questions, and (c) anecdotal note-taking during the interview process.

Archival Sources

In addition to interviews, I collected and analyzed data from an online platform, where candidates’ assignments across sequences and modules were stored (i.e., LiveText). The assignments that I chose to analyze included data across four years for the undergraduate candidates and two years for the graduate candidates. In particular, the archive data included: (a) the summative assessment of sequence 2, (b) the summative assessment of sequence 3, and (c) the mini-unit lesson plan and summative assessment essay of sequence 5, (d) the professional practice profile of sequence 8 (see Table 2).

Summative assessments were the culminating assignments of each Sequence and provided the opportunity to candidates to reflect not only on their experiences in the particular sequence, but also on their various roles and identities as teachers across their time in the TLLSC program. Specifically, the summative assessment of sequence 2 was a culminating monologue through which candidates, during their first year in the program, expressed how their intersecting social identities impacted the development of a culturally responsive classroom environment. This assignment revealed how candidates constructed their identities as future teachers with intersecting positionalities. In their second year in the program, candidates completed the summative assessment of sequence 3; this culminating project focused on the role of candidates as teachers in the macro-level (federal, state, and local policies) and in the micro-level (understanding diverse needs and backgrounds of students). In their third year, candidates created their first mini
unit and employed instructional practices and strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners, especially ELLs. For the summative essay of the sequence, candidates reflected on the profession of teaching and the ways in which teachers collaborate effectively to meet the needs of all students, drawing on personal examples across the years. Finally, in their last year in the program, during student teaching, candidates completed a professional practice profile. The professional practice profile consisted of an essay on professionalism in service of social justice (the conceptual framework in LUC’s school of education), and a reflection on collaborative relationships in education.

The collection of different sources of evidence increased the construct validity of my case study (Yin, 2003) and provided a rich pool of data to analyze to answer the research questions.

Table 2

*Archival Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Assignment Title</th>
<th>Assignment Overview</th>
<th>Connection to Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Summative Assessment</td>
<td>Culminating monologue and reflection; candidates’ monologue and reflection capture the ways in which their intersecting social identities will affect the development of a culturally responsive and effective environment</td>
<td>Teaching identities are part of candidates’ social identities. As candidates reflected on their teaching identities in terms of developing a culturally responsive classroom, during their first year in the TLLSC program, I used this to inform my first question. Additionally, through exploration of discourses, or language-in-use in candidates’ learning and experiences, I gathered data to answer my second question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, this assignment in combination with the rest of the data informed my third research question and specifically my understanding of how candidates formed their identities in the beginning of the TLLSC program and how they negotiated their teaching identities through their work with ELLs towards the end of the program.

| 3 | Summative Assessment | Culminating reflection on the role of teachers through a macro-lens on educational policy and a micro-lens on diverse students’ learning (e.g. ELLs) | I used the data regarding the micro-level (understanding diverse needs and backgrounds of students) to inform my first question – through the teaching practices that candidates used –, my second question – through candidates’ discourse –, and my third research question in combination with the rest of the data. This was the first sequence, in which candidates officially got exposed to teaching and assessing ELLs. |
| 5 | Summative Assessment Essay | Culminating reflexive essay, focusing on candidates’ field and content experiences concerning the profession of teaching, the various ways students achieve in the classroom, the roles of schools and communities to meet the educational needs of all learners (e.g. ELLs), and the effective collaboration of educators | This assignment informed all research questions, as it was a culminating reflection of candidates’ experiences in the sequences as well as in the program; in this sequence candidates differentiated instruction for ELLs, collaborated with classroom teachers, and reflected on their practices. This was the first sequence, in which candidates designed |
Data Analysis

Data analysis in my study was led by an inductive approach. To put simply, “inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (Patton, 1980, p. 306). The themes or patterns that emerged were intrinsically linked to what I - the researcher - wanted to know and driven by how I interpreted the data according to my theoretical framework and subjective perspectives.
To avoid the danger of a premature and/or false conclusion, since identity is a deeply personal, fluid, and hard to grasp concept, I utilized the cross-case pattern model of data analysis through an iterative set of processes (Berkowitz, 1997; Eisenhardt, 1989). Iteration is a method of analytic induction that follows multiple rounds of revisiting the data, fostering the development of a deepening understanding (Berkowitz, 1997). Once the analysis of each individual case was completed a cross-case analysis began. Cross-case analysis allowed me to select pairs of cases and list the similarities and differences between them (Eisenhardt, 1989). “The juxtaposition of seemingly similar cases by a researcher looking for differences can break simplistic frames” (p. 541). As candidates were part of the same teacher preparation program, engaging in cross-case searching tactics through making comparisons, led to new categories and concepts, which I had not anticipated. Therefore, cross-case analysis forced me to go beyond my initial impressions and enhanced the probability of catching new findings that existed in the data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

I utilized N-Vivo 12 software to manage and organize both archive and interview data as well as my coding. Deciding on codes involves decisions about what notions and ideas are being developed and examined (Merriam, 1998). My coding scheme emerged through the use of thematic analysis, which involved the identification, analysis, and report of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I interpreted oral and written language and associated themes with words and phrases in the specific context of the TLLSC program (Gee, 2014). From the thematic analysis, I discovered various nuances that affected the interplay between candidates’ teaching practices and their teaching identities.
D/discourse Analysis

As data collection and analysis occurred concurrently in my study, I conducted two levels of D/discourse analysis (Gee, 2014) to answer the research questions. D/discourse analysis, in this study, examined interactive communication through the scope of socially meaningful teaching identities (Gee, 2014). In the initial discourse (small d) level, or language-in-use, I immersed myself in the recorded, transcribed, and written data, pulled out categories of keywords and phrases in the data to understand the situated meanings, and thought about the implications that those meanings had on candidates’ teaching identities as they participated in instructional practices with ELLs. This initial phase helped me answer my first and second research questions.

Additionally, I conducted a deeper level of Discourse (capital D) analysis to hone in on candidates’ negotiation of teaching identities and answer my third question of how candidates (re)constructed their identities as general classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs. Candidates used ideologies to make meaning of their daily practice. In particular, I paid closer attention to my interview notes in combination with the transcribed, recorded, and written data, in order to highlight and pull out themes with regard to stress and intonation, repetition, and other processes that go beyond just pieces of language.

After hearing and reading the data numerous times, I used N-Vivo 12 to code key words and phrases that stood out to me in the candidates’ D/discourse, looking specifically for patterns that unveiled the process of teaching identity formation and negotiation. Based on these patterns, or situated meanings (Gee, 2014), I was able to trace each candidates’ engagement in the TLLSC program and enactment of teaching
identities. My open codes were grounded in the study’s conceptual construct of communities of practice and in particular the three modes of belonging (engagement, imagination, and alignment) (Wenger, 1998) to bolster validity (see Table 3).

Table 3

Coding Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Imagination</th>
<th>Alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated ELL Content</td>
<td>Personal Experiences</td>
<td>Advocacy for ELLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment for ELLs</td>
<td>• Values, Upbringing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Differentiation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Experiences</td>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
<td>Relationships - Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructional</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students and Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions for ELLs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>ELL Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funds of Knowledge</td>
<td>• Social Interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</td>
<td>• The WIDA Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods of Verification and Trustworthiness

In order to ensure and enhance the internal validity of my case study, I included various measures. First, triangulation established validity through the multiple sources of evidence from data collection and the multiple methods to confirm the emerging themes. Second, I utilized member checks with the participants; after I transcribed and analyzed the individual interviews, I shared the data and my tentative interpretations with the candidates to receive feedback on whether the results are plausible. Finally, I engaged in
peer examination by asking other scholars or colleagues to comment on my findings as they emerged to ensure that my findings were not biased.

**Limitations**

This study has four overarching limitations. First, case study design limits generalizability of the findings. Given the unique characteristics of the TLLSC program, I recognize that readers might not be able to apply my findings in other contexts; however, the use of rich and thick descriptions with adequate evidence from participants’ interviews, notes, and documents maximized possible generalizability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Although this study focused solely on the TLLSC program, the findings can demonstrate the realities of other teacher preparation programs. Additionally, a major premise of this project was to highlight the importance of exploring candidates’ teaching identities to enhance the ESL preparation of prospective teachers. Thus, if replicated different stories and experiences may be unveiled as well as different negotiation processes of candidates’ teaching identities.

Second, my data did not include observations, which typically serve to bolster interview findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Instead, I examined in detail the process of the interview as much as the product, through note-taking.

Third, my study did not examine how teacher learning impacts student learning, which is preferred (Zeichner, 1993). My focus on candidates’ identities was not directly linked to students; however, an exploration of the ways in which candidates developed and negotiated their identities had an implicit effect on their students learning.
Finally, I faced limitations because the candidates who volunteered to take part in my study happened to have similar characteristics. All were Caucasian, female, who grew up in suburban areas. However, this demonstrates that the majority of teachers in the US and consequently candidates at LUC’s TLLSC program are this exact demographic.

**Researcher’s Role**

Entering into research with elementary candidates, my personal and professional background inherently affected my role as a researcher. As a doctoral student and graduate assistant, I was immersed in practices and theories that shaped my thinking about how to prepare candidates to teach in elementary classrooms with ELLs. Additionally, as an adjunct instructor of Sequence 5, I taught about instructional practices related to ELLs. These roles positioned me as an expert in relation to my participants and may have emphasized candidates’ feelings of being a novice. Therefore, my teaching identity could indirectly affect candidates’ discourse on their identity as general classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs.

In contrast to my relatively expert roles as a teacher educator and researcher, I lacked experience teaching in elementary schools in the U.S. While I taught for a year in Greece, before I moved to Chicago to pursue my graduate studies, I never had the chance to teach my own classroom in the U.S. and juggle the multiple roles that elementary teachers do on a daily basis. In addition, since my arrival to Chicago my primary role was that of a student thus, I was not confronted with the daily pressure of high stakes testing, planning and differentiating instruction, or communicating with parents. Although my participants had not yet fully entered into the world of elementary teaching, they have
still had more experiences with these aspects of an elementary teacher identity in Chicago than I have had. As a result, I needed to be sensitive to the possibility that my participants could make the assumption that I did not understand the challenges associated with being an elementary teacher in a classroom with ELLs in Chicago.

It is crucial to also consider my relationship with the participants and concurrently my involvement in the teacher preparation program. Although I had experience teaching courses within the TLLSC program and I had been responsible for one sequence in which some of the elementary candidates were enrolled, I was not responsible for their student teaching experiences. Candidates primarily drew on their student teaching experiences to describe their teaching identity. Thus, since I did not serve as the candidates’ university supervisor with whom they had been working in their elementary internship placements, my roles - as their instructor and a researcher - did not intersect.

Finally, given my position as a former instructor in the program for four of the candidates, my participants could have withheld information about their experiences and interactions with faculty in their individual interviews. Nevertheless, due to the nature of my research and the limited number of ESL certified elementary classroom teachers in the program, the necessity to obtain approval for research participation would be an impossible task to accomplish, if I excluded those candidates.

**Conclusion**

This case-study utilized qualitative data through individual semi-structured interviews, researchers’ notes, and archival sources. The data was analyzed inductively throughout the study, using cross-case searching tactics and iterative processes, which led
to rich and meaningful findings illuminated by D/discourses enacted by the participants.

The findings are presented in the next chapter and organized according to the conceptual
construct of communities of practice and in particular the three modes of belonging –

*engagement, imagination*, and *alignment* – (Wenger, 1998).
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

As described in Chapter I, the study reported here examined in detail the ways in which candidates construct and negotiate their teaching identities through their work with English Language Learners (ELLs). In this chapter, I answer my three research questions:

1. What aspects of teaching practice in a field-based teacher education program influence the formation of teacher candidates’ identity as teachers of ELLs?
2. How do teacher candidates’ teaching identities mediate their discourses on ELLs?
3. How do teacher candidates negotiate their teaching identities as elementary teachers and teachers of ELLs?

I use the conceptual construct of communities of practice and in particular the three modes of belonging – engagement, imagination, and alignment – (Wenger, 1998) to tie together and give coherence to candidates’ identity formation and negotiation processes.

As previously described in Chapter II, communities of practice are viewed as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1). Candidates’ identities as teachers of ELLs are affected by the ways in which they position themselves in communities of practice. The concept of practice emphasizes the
social and negotiated nature of candidates’ identities, which can be studied through the dynamic interplay between engagement, imagination, and alignment (Wenger, 1998).

To ground the study in sociocultural theory and appropriately answer the research questions, I explore candidates’ “social processes and configurations that extend beyond their direct engagement in their own practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 173). First, candidates through engagement have to make sense of various artifacts they encounter in their practice (for example; lesson plans, instructional strategies, modifications for ELLs), even though they do not yet have access to their own classroom. Second, they may need to use their imagination to make connections to the broader world of teaching and create images of how practices can be used. Last, they have to align their practices and images with purposes that extend beyond the walls of a classroom or a school to find their place as teachers of ELLs (Wenger, 1998).

Overview

The introductory section presents qualitative, narrative cases to introduce the five candidates and their experiences with ELLs, including (a) Cecelia, graduate teacher candidate, (b) Olivia, graduate teacher candidate, (c) Chloe, undergraduate teacher candidate, (d) Sophie, undergraduate teacher candidate, and (e) Antonia, undergraduate teacher candidate. After using description to provide windows into their pedagogical perspectives and interactions with ELLs throughout their time in the Teaching Learning and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) program, I close with a brief statement that foregrounds the candidates’ teaching identities, which will be explored in-depth in the following sections of the findings chapter.
The three sections of the findings chapter build on one another to describe the dual process of identification and negotiability, through which candidates form their identities of participation or non-participation as teachers of ELLs: (a) Engagement with English Language Learners, (b) Imagination in the world of teaching, and (c) Alignment of ELL practices with broader communities. First, each section commences with an analysis of the different modes of belonging reflected in candidates’ discourse in individual interviews and assignments. Second, I present the themes that correspond to each mode by connecting candidates’ coursework and experiences to examine the formation of their identity as teachers of ELLs in the TLLSC program. Last, throughout the sections I explore how candidates enact and negotiate their identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs through their participation in the TLLSC program.

Narrative Cases

Cecelia, Graduate Teacher Candidate: “I Would Describe Myself at this Point as a Very Novice Teacher of ELLs”

Cecelia moved to Chicago from upstate New York, where she received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Her first language is English; however, she grew up learning some Spanish in school and college, spending also three months in Mexico after her college graduation. As a graduate candidate at LUC, Cecelia spent two years in the TLLSC program, studying elementary education. After these two years, she recognized that the most important aspects of her teacher preparation program were the constant exposure in different school settings and the embedded English as a Second Language
(ESL) endorsement. She also emphasized that she benefited from the critical and continuous self-reflections throughout the program, which helped her grow as a teacher, especially during her student teaching.

Cecelia interned at Oakwood, a public International Baccalaureate (IB) school in urban Chicago, where she was placed in a fifth-grade general education classroom (see Table 4 for field site placements). Although her overall experiences in the classroom were positive, her relationship with her cooperating teacher was challenging. She explained that her pedagogical and philosophical views were very different from her co-teacher’s practice and ideas. However, she managed to keep an open communication and introduced new instructional approaches in the classroom, such as assigning students to small collaborative groups instead of teaching the whole class. Additionally, Cecelia worked closely with ELLs during her internship. She claimed that only one student in her classroom was identified as an ELL, however, her schooling at LUC helped her recognize at least two more students who required ESL services.

Her preparation for ELLs, revolved around her field experiences. She described the initial stages of her ESL preparation as “challenging”, “scary”, and “out of her comfort zone,” since as a White female she did not have much prior exposure (Interview, July 10, 2018). Nevertheless, she gradually revised her pedagogical perspectives, adopting practices such as incorporating students’ interests and cultures into instruction, differentiating content, prioritizing bilingual books, and focusing on academic vocabulary and disciplinary literacy. Cecelia’s time at the TLLSC program shaped her teaching practice and as a result her teaching identity; for example, in Sequence 3 she learned the
importance of building on students’ cultural assets and interests to design culturally relevant assessments and in Sequence 5 she recognized the value of incorporating ELLs’ native language into instruction. Although she still considers herself as “a very novice teacher of ELLs,” she recognizes the need to continuously search for new ways to “engage,” “assess,” and “present information” to ELLs (Interview, July 10, 2018).

Olivia, Graduate Teacher Candidate: “I've Just Been More and More Convicted that I Want to Be the Type of Teacher I Want to Be, Because of ELLs”

Olivia grew up in a southwest suburb of Chicago. Her parents speak English and Polish, however, growing up she spoke only English, as learning other languages was not highly encouraged in her community; she explained, “my parents speak polish but that wasn't taught to them and it wasn't taught to me, I grew up speaking English in a mostly all white, English speaking community in a suburb of Chicago” (Interview, July 12, 2018). Later on, she found great interest in learning Spanish, she studied it in college and became fluent. As a graduate elementary teacher candidate at LUC, Olivia stated that she benefited from the nine-month long internship and her experience of learning to create and use a pre-assessment and a post-assessment at a Catholic school during Sequence 5. Overall, she emphasized the importance of “all the hands-on experiences” in the TLLSC program (Interview, July 12, 2018).

Olivia did her internship at a public school in a nearby suburb of Chicago (see Table 4 for field site placements). She was placed at Castle Heights, in a third grade Two-Way Immersion classroom, where instruction was being provided in two languages – English and Spanish. Concerning her experience in the classroom, Olivia asserted, “I
loved my experience, it was so challenging but in a really healthy way that stretched me and helped me become a teacher” (Interview, July 12, 2018). Additionally, her relationship with her cooperating teacher was positive as she felt supported and motivated. Olivia described the classroom as a “place of love and openness” stressing the dynamic nature of her relationships with the students (Interview, July 12, 2018).

Olivia emphasized the TLLSC program’s approach on ELLs. During her first year in the program, she highlighted the importance of learning about the WIDA language proficiency standards and theories of second language acquisition. Later in the program, she described learning about certain instructional strategies beneficial to ELLs and to all students, such as Think-Pair-Share, and the significance of pre-assessments on planning and differentiating instruction. This learning may have shaped Olivia’s identity as a teacher of ELLs, nevertheless her teaching identity is also deeply entrenched in her Jesuit education and value for bilingualism.

Chloe, Undergraduate Teacher Candidate: “I Actually Prefer Working in ESL Classrooms Just Because I Believe they Bring so Much Value to a Classroom”

Chloe was born and raised in a suburb outside of Chicago. She grew up speaking English and never had the opportunity to learn a second language. Chloe described her lack of awareness of teaching diverse learners prior to her teacher preparation at LUC: “My learning however, lacked a world-view. For at the time I was graduating high school, I was ignorant...I had no knowledge of other cultures because there was simply no information provided” (Interview, May 15, 2018). Her four-year preparation at the TLLSC program changed not only her teaching practice, but also her personal values and
the way in which she viewed the world. She described her teacher preparation at LUC as “unique” and highlighted the field experiences and the embedded ESL endorsement as the “most beneficial” aspects of the program (Interview, May 15, 2018).

Her internship took place at Oakwood, a public IB school in urban Chicago (see Table 4 for field site placements). She was placed in a third grade ESL classroom, where she worked closely with ELLs at different proficiency levels, with a rich array of home languages (i.e., French, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic). She explained that her student teaching experiences, particularly her interactions with the cooperating teacher, drastically informed her pedagogical practices as an elementary classroom teacher and a teacher of ELLs: “My training for ELLs and generally the way I work with students came from my student teaching...I know that what works for ELLs works for all students and what’s good for ELLs is good for all students” (Interview, May 15, 2018). Reflecting on her ongoing practice in an ESL classroom during her one-year internship, Chloe explicated the shift in her personal approaches to teaching and learning, as the semester progressed.

Regarding her overall experiences in the program in addition to her preparation for ELLs, Chloe emphasized the importance of differentiating instruction for students: “always keep the objective the same but always change the way that students are going to be able to show you that” (Interview, May 15, 2018). In addition to her elementary education major, Chloe completed the reading teacher minor within her four-year program. She recognized the reading endorsement as “extremely helpful,” particularly in assessing students (for example, using Words Their Way and QRI); she explained, “I
used those assessments in student teaching, when our newcomer students arrived, a couple of months later we wanted to see their growth, so those assessments were very helpful” (Interview, May 15, 2018). Working with diverse students during the TLLSC program has shaped Chloe’s identity as a teacher of ELLs.

**Sophie, Undergraduate Teacher Candidate: “At the Beginning, I Didn't Even Really Know What ELLs Were”**

Sophie was born in Wisconsin and grew up speaking English. She started learning Spanish in school, but she “never spoke it fluently” (Interview, June 7, 2018). When she started the TLLSC undergraduate program, Sophie was not aware of what it meant to be a teacher of ELLs: “I knew they [ELLs] were the students that spoke different languages, but I didn't know that there were all these different techniques to use to teach them. Or the amount of ELLs that there are in every school” (Interview, June 7, 2018). She, also, described the teacher preparation program at LUC as “unique” and claimed that the most valuable experience was “being in schools since freshman year” (Interview, June 7, 2018).

Sophie did her internship at Oakwood, an IB urban public school in Chicago and was placed in a fourth grade general education classroom (see Table 4 for field site placements). During her internship she worked with her cooperating classroom teacher, a special education teacher, and a paraprofessional for students with autism. Her classroom consisted of 29 students and only one of the students received ESL pull-out services. Throughout her student teaching Sophie worked closely with a student, who was struggling with spelling and reading; she explained that the student was born in the
United States but spoke Spanish at home. After spending time with him and helping him in class, Sophie recommended that he receive additional ESL services: “He did end up needing them, so he was then pulled out during writing so that he could work on his spelling and really came to confidence” (Interview, June 7, 2018).

Concerning her ESL preparation, Sophie emphasized the importance of the embedded ESL endorsement. One of the most significant aspects in her preparation was learning to differentiate instruction: “Differentiation I feel like was a big one when we talked about ELLs and just learning what usually works for them and how to think of the whole class” (Interview, June 7, 2018). She also highlighted the use of the WIDA language proficiency standards when planning instruction, as essential components “in a teacher’s toolkit” (Interview, June 7, 2018). Additionally, she raised her concerns regarding field placements; she explained the necessity of having multiple opportunities to work in ESL and bilingual classrooms to gain practical experience. Her concerns along with practices and experiences in the TLLSC program shaped Sophie’s teaching identity, from a lack of ELL-related knowledge at the beginning of the program to a desire to becoming a more knowledgeable ESL teacher in the future.

Antonia, Undergraduate Teacher Candidate: “I Feel a Little Bit Better and More Confident in Being Able to Help ELLs”

Antonia was born and raised in a suburb outside of Chicago. Her family is from a German descent, but speaks only English; thus, Antonia grew up speaking only English. As an undergraduate elementary teacher candidate, she described that she benefited from the field-based experiences and the interaction with students and in-service teachers in
schools. However, she claimed that an element missing from her teacher preparation was the opportunity to study abroad. In particular, she explained that becoming a successful bilingual teacher should be tied to spending time in a Spanish-speaking country:

“Especially I would have loved the opportunity to go to a Spanish speaking country and get into becoming bilingual and being a better teacher for bilingual students” (Interview, June 15, 2018).

Antonia, also, did her internship at Oakwood, an IB urban public school in Chicago (see Table 4 for field site placements). She was placed in a general education fourth grade classroom. Reflecting on her student teaching experiences, Antonia emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with cooperating teachers, students, and school staff. Although her instructional decisions supported the learning of all students, such as accounting for students’ interests and background knowledge, Antonia expressed her lack of practice regarding teaching ELLs, as not only during her internship, but also throughout her fieldwork her experiences with ELLs were limited (see Table 4 for ELL percentages). She explained, “I know that it's so difficult already to place people in different spots for sequences and observations, but I wish there was a way to increase the exposure to ELL classrooms or ELL work” (Interview, June 15, 2018). Specifically, the make-up of her internship classroom along with her minimal interactions with ELLs during fieldwork in Sequence 5, contributed in those beliefs.

Her preparation for ELLs in the TLLSC program primarily revolved around theory and ELL-related coursework. Antonia recalled her experiences in Sequence 3 as her first exposure to learning about ELLs and working on assessing an ELL.
Additionally, she drew on her experiences in Sequence 5 to emphasize the importance of differentiation for all students, along with using student data to make successful instructional decisions. Even though, according to Antonia, her exposure to ELLs during field practice was narrow, her teaching identity changed as a result of her participation in the TLLSC program: “getting the tools and experiences in working with different students and ways to help them while having the end goal being helping them get where they want to be and caring for them. I think I've changed that way” (Interview, June 15, 2018). Although she might need additional practice working with ELLs in the future, Antonia described herself as a “more confident” teacher of ELLs (Interview, June 15, 2018).

Table 4

Candidates’ Field Sites (pseudonyms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Sequence 2</th>
<th>Sequence 3</th>
<th>Sequence 5</th>
<th>Sequence 6</th>
<th>Internship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cecelia</td>
<td>Griffin High Urban public school</td>
<td>Crown High Urban public school</td>
<td>St. Margaret Private Catholic school</td>
<td>Kentwood Urban public school</td>
<td>Oakwood Urban public school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.8% White</td>
<td>43.9% Hispanic</td>
<td>66% Hispanic</td>
<td>62.8% White</td>
<td>45.2% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.8% Asian</td>
<td>26.4% Black</td>
<td>16% White</td>
<td>19.4% Hispanic</td>
<td>16.4% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.2% Hispanic</td>
<td>16% Asian</td>
<td>10% Multiracial</td>
<td>9.3% Asian</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.9% ELLs</td>
<td>15% ELLs</td>
<td>N/A ELLs</td>
<td>7.3% ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olivia</th>
<th>Griffin High Urban public school</th>
<th>Crown High Urban public school</th>
<th>St. Margaret Private Catholic school</th>
<th>Kentwood Urban public school</th>
<th>Castle Heights Suburban public school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.8% White</td>
<td>43.9% Hispanic</td>
<td>66% Hispanic</td>
<td>62.8% White</td>
<td>40.7% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.8% Asian</td>
<td>26.4% Black</td>
<td>16% White</td>
<td>19.4% Hispanic</td>
<td>35.8% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.2% Hispanic</td>
<td>16% Asian</td>
<td>10% Multiracial</td>
<td>9.3% Asian</td>
<td>12.9% Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.9% ELLs</td>
<td>15% ELLs</td>
<td>N/A ELLs</td>
<td>7.3% ELLs</td>
<td>25.1% ELLs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the following section, I present the findings that emerged from individual interviews with the candidates and TLLSC coursework to examine candidates’ formation and negotiation processes as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs.

**Findings**

*Engagement with English Language Learners*

*Engagement* in communities of practice is a threefold process, therefore candidates’ *engagement* with ELLs in the TLLSC program included the conjunction of:

a) the ongoing negotiation of meaning while learning new ELL content, b) the formation of candidates’ teaching paths as teachers of ELLs through field experiences, and c) the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chloe</th>
<th>Rosewood Elementary Urban public school</th>
<th>West Hill Urban public school</th>
<th>Heather Grove Suburban public school</th>
<th>Oakwood Urban public school</th>
<th>Oakwood Urban public school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81.9% Black</td>
<td>52.9% Hispanic</td>
<td>40.8% White</td>
<td>45.2% White</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4% Hispanic</td>
<td>10.6% Black</td>
<td>13.7% Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% ELLs</td>
<td>18% ELLs</td>
<td>22% ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophie</th>
<th>Meadow Hill Suburban public school</th>
<th>West Hill Urban public school</th>
<th>Heather Grove Suburban public school</th>
<th>Oakwood Urban public school</th>
<th>Oakwood Urban public school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38% White</td>
<td>52.9% Hispanic</td>
<td>40.8% White</td>
<td>45.2% White</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.1% Black</td>
<td>24.8% White</td>
<td>31.3% Asian</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.2% Hispanic</td>
<td>10.6% Black</td>
<td>13.7% Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3% ELLs</td>
<td>18% ELLs</td>
<td>22% ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antonia</th>
<th>Rosewood Elementary Urban public school</th>
<th>Gardner Elementary Urban public school</th>
<th>St. Margaret Private Catholic school</th>
<th>Oakwood Urban public school</th>
<th>Oakwood Urban public school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81.9% Black</td>
<td>48.8% Hispanic</td>
<td>66% Hispanic</td>
<td>45.2% White</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4% Hispanic</td>
<td>28.4% Black</td>
<td>16% White</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
<td>15.9% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% ELLs</td>
<td>10.6% Asian</td>
<td>N/A ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
<td>15.1% ELLs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
unfolding of candidates’ stories of practice as ELL teachers. Through the conjunction of these processes, *engagement* in the TLLSC program became a source of identity.

**Ongoing negotiation of meaning while learning new ELL content.** Candidates’ ongoing negotiation of meaning of new ELL content stemmed from the ongoing nature of learning about ELLs in the TLLSC program. As the ESL endorsement was embedded in the program, the integrated ELL content was an aspect that all candidates recognized and continuously negotiated throughout their work at LUC. In particular Chloe, an undergraduate teacher candidate, noted the importance of learning about ELLs across the program. She explained,

> I really like that LUC has our training for ELLs woven through and not just one particular class focused on ELLs, because in reality you’re working with ELLs along with students with special needs, and along with struggling students or on grade level students so, I really like that it’s woven in because I think it feels more authentic. (Chloe Interview, May 15, 2018)

This indicated that as Chloe progressed through the TLLSC program, she did recognize the value of learning content to teach ELLs. Her use of affective statements (i.e., “I really like”), also revealed an acknowledgement of the program-embedded ESL endorsement as beneficial to her preparation.

Negotiation of meaning even occurred after candidates graduated and started to look for their future teaching positions. In interviews with candidates, three of the five interviewees acknowledged the ESL endorsement as an asset after graduating the TLLSC program. Cecelia, a bilingual graduate teacher candidate, discerned,
I don't think I've realized it as much as I was going through the program, but through the job search I think having the ESL endorsement had been a huge asset and I don't think I realized how important that would be while I was actually in school [TLLSC program]. (Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018)

The process of negotiation of meaning while learning about ELLs differed across candidates, likely because of their field placements and student teaching experiences. However, all participants highlighted the importance of integrated ELL content throughout the program.

The specific content (learning and practices) candidates identified with the most, when teaching ELLs, focused on: (a) assessment practices for ELLs, (b) differentiation, and (c) academic language. The learning and practices reflected in candidates’ discourse in their interviews and coursework are described below.

Assessment practices for ELLs. Candidates mostly relied on Sequences 3 and 5, along with their student teaching experiences to explain how they assessed their ELLs. All participants saw great value on assessing ELLs and all students to successfully plan their instruction. Some candidates particularly highlighted the risks of test bias and the measures that they should take as teachers of ELLs. Chloe reflected,

Teachers should avoid incorporating cultural or assumed knowledge in any type of assessment because this could cause confusion to an ELL student. An ELL student might actually know the content of the question but misunderstand the context, so it is important to review assessments for any type of test bias. A way test bias can be reduced is through authentic assessments. These assessments
build on students’ strengths and make real world connections. Authentic assessments are especially valuable for ELL students but are ideal for all student.

(Chloe Sequence 3 Summative Assessment, November 24, 2015)

Chloe’s discourse implied the responsibility of all teachers to administer assessments that are free of biases – something that they “should avoid”. Through the use of evaluative statements addressed to all teachers, her discourse reflected that authentic assessments were part of her teaching identity and consecutively her identity as a teacher of ELLs.

Sophie, an undergraduate teacher candidate, used a similar discourse, but she framed the statement drawing on her own student teaching practice. When asked about assessment methods for ELLs she described, “I have to give a lot of pre-assessments and I always include pictures. I think that's really important for ELLs to have a visual” (Sophie Interview, June 7, 2018). Her identity as a teacher of ELLs was evident through her practice, as she was stressing the need to accommodate for her ELLs during assessments.

**Differentiation.** Differentiation was the big idea that stood out the most, when candidates were asked to recall specific practices with ELLs in the TLLSC program. It was not until they started to work on their own lesson plans, especially during their last year of student teaching that candidates became more familiar with the process of differentiation and started to incorporate it in their own teaching. Chloe described,

The biggest thing [for ELLs] is differentiation and to always keep the objective the same but always change the way that students are going to be able to show you that [the reached objective]. The question [you pose to students] might be the
same but with ELLs they can draw you pictures and label them instead of writing in full sentence form. And that is something that I really applied to my student teaching and I felt good that I could always keep the objective the same and I always had the same standard for all students. (Chloe Interview, May 15, 2018)

Chloe’s discourse indicated her confidence in differentiating instruction for her students. During her fieldwork she set high, grade-level expectations for learning while also scaffolding based on students’ language proficiency. Thus, she managed to maintain the rigor for ELLs – by not dumbing down or simplifying the curriculum, which has long been the tradition for many teachers.

Nevertheless, it is essential to consider the given time and place (Gee, 2014); the candidate “felt good” when applying strategies to differentiate for her ELLs during “writing” instruction. However, in the same interview the candidate also shared her concerns when it came to “math” instruction. She explained,

The one thing that I feel is lacking from my teacher prep program is math instruction. I think maybe taking a look more closely to the actual curriculum or to online resources, like supplemental resources for ELLs or for students who may be struggling or overachieving students. It’s an area [math] that I don’t feel like I can differentiate for different groups of students. (Chloe Interview, May 15, 2018)

In all cases, all candidates considered differentiation for ELLs to be an integral piece of their identity as teachers, likely because it was an essential part of their lesson planning and regularly emphasized in the TLLSC program.
**Academic language.** Candidates’ discourse also pinpointed academic language as intrinsically linked to their identities as teachers. Academic language is defined as “the set of words, grammar, organizational strategies used to describe complex ideas, higher-order thinking processes and abstract concepts” (Zweirs, 2008, p. 20). One misunderstanding of academic language is that it is needed primarily for ELLs, however all students require support to develop and maneuver the academic language demands needed to access content instruction (Heineke & Neugebauer, 2018). Contrary to this misunderstanding, candidates’ discourse frequently implied that academic language is important not only to ELLs but to all students. Since academic language was a new learning for all five candidates in the TLLSC program, a negotiation of their identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs was reflected in their discourse. Cecelia asserted,

> The thing I would say that changed dramatically [through my teacher preparation] was that I hadn't really given much thought to that whole idea of disciplinary literacy and academic vocabulary and had sort of made assumptions that if someone was very proficient in a language with spoken language that they were just fine, and of course, they could learn and express themselves as well as anyone else who speaks English. (Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018)

Cecelia, unconsciously used stress in her speech, marked by an increased loudness, when saying the word “dramatically.” This indicated a shift in her teaching identity through her learning experiences in program. Before learning about the distinction between basic **interpersonal communicative skills** and cognitive academic language proficiency
(Cummins, 1981), Cecelia “assumed” that students who were proficient in conversational English “were just fine”. However, as she progressed through the TLLSC program, she recognized the importance of “disciplinary literacy” and “academic vocabulary.”

Formation of candidates’ teaching paths as teachers of ELLs through field experiences. Candidates’ field experiences were crucial to the negotiation and formation of their identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs. All candidates emphasized the great value of field practice in the TLLSC program, for example;

Cecelia: The biggest thing that really stood out to me [from my teacher preparation] is all of the exposure that we were able to get in actually being immersed in different school settings. (Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018)

Sophie: I would say the most beneficial [aspect of the TLLSC program] was being in the school since freshman year, just because a lot of other universities don't do that, it's something really unique. (Sophie Interview, June 7, 2018)

Olivia: The field-based experience, specifically the nine-month long internship, I thought was really powerful and really helpful. I could not imagine having done my student teaching experience just being thrown in, in January, with not having those four months-ish in the fall to get to know my students in their classroom before taking over more responsibility. (Olivia Interview, July 12, 2018)

Speaking in the first-person was one way in which candidates built their identities in and through language (Gee, 2014). The fact that all candidates expressed their viewpoints on field experiences in first-person and made cognitive I-statements (i.e., “I thought,” “I would say”) in addition to their dramatic choice of speech (i.e., “biggest,” “unique,”
“powerful”) indicated the strong impact of fieldwork and particularly student teaching on candidates’ teaching identities.

Specific to the negotiation and formation of candidates’ identities as teachers of ELLs was their student teaching placements, including the classroom environment, the student population, and collaboration with the classroom teacher. Four out of the five candidates shared specific examples about instructional decisions for ELLs, because they were placed in classrooms with students labeled as ELLs. Chloe, who student taught in an ESL classroom, recalled her experiences,

Being in an ESL classroom, my co-teacher and I wanted to make sure that the students had the language for everything they needed, so on their desk we put sentence stems, for example, “today I feel…” and had different kinds of faces, like if something was wrong, they could point to a face. When students are using language the same way every day, it really helps to make that part of the class procedures. (Chloe Interview, May 15, 2018)

It is clear that Chloe’s actions in the classroom were intrinsically tied to her relationship with the classroom teacher (i.e., “my co-teacher and I”) and the student population (i.e., “ESL classroom”). She spoke using a discourse that was inflected with the concrete realities of her student teaching placement and the classroom community. The strong impact of Chloe’s relationship with her co-teacher on the development of her identity as a teacher of ELLs was also evident in her following statement, “my co-teacher was the one who really informed certain procedures and totally shaped my viewpoints on how I can effectively work with ELLs in the larger classroom setting.” Her ability statement (i.e., “I
can effectively work with ELLs”) along with her dramatic choice of speech (i.e., “totally shaped”) demonstrated the importance of collaborative relationships in the formation and negotiation of candidates’ teaching identities. However, the relationship between Chloe and her cooperating teacher could have also instilled some deficit understandings on best instructional practices for ELLs, for example – in Chloe’s case – labeling the classroom with English only sentence stems.

**Unfolding of candidates’ stories of practice as ELL teachers.** When telling stories about their practice with ELLs, candidates often used the theme of culture. Culture in teaching, according to candidates’ stories, embodies the notions of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). To situate their meanings in a given time and place, candidates’ stories of practice focused on different linguistic resources to enact two different social Discourses; an academic Discourse that unfolds candidate’s future practices and a teacher Discourse that unfolds candidate’s current practices.

Before student teaching, candidates unfolded their future teaching plans to describe their engagement with ELLs in the program. Antonia, an undergraduate teacher candidate, during her first year in the program, explained the relationship between her identity and her teaching practice, “while I do not have identities that impacted my ability to learn, my students might. I am aware of these issues and will use culturally relevant pedagogy...to give students best opportunities to learn” (Antonia Sequence 2 Summative Assessment, April 4, 2016). Similarly, Olivia as a graduate freshman, described, “my plan is to improve my identity through actively welcoming students’ linguistic and
cultural funds of knowledge as a bilingual educator and advocate” (Olivia, Sequence 2 Summative Assessment, July 1, 2016). The use of academic-like lexical terms (i.e., “culturally relevant pedagogy,” “identity,” “linguistic”) was evident in the candidates’ speech, likely because at this stage in the program Antonia and Olivia were becoming familiar with new theory and academic practices, without direct engagement with students and instructional practice in a classroom. Additionally, some deficit perspectives that emerged from their speech (i.e. identities that may impact students’ ability to learn) likely reveal a process of negotiation of their teaching identities earlier in the program.

During and after student teaching, candidates started to incorporate, along with academic Discourse, their current teaching plans to situate the meanings of their words within a teacher Discourse. Chloe, during her last year in the program, explained the connection between her teaching identity and her practice with ELLs,

I love working with ELLs, I actually prefer working in ELL classrooms just because I believe they [ELLs] bring so much value to a classroom. I love to see the growth that they make, I love to see their perseverance, and it inspires me as someone who was never an ELL, for example the determination of these 8-year-olds who are here from an entirely different country, with a whole different set of values, with different experiences… I love working with ELLs, it challenges me as a teacher because often times I have to find different ways of teaching, so that I can make sure that they [ELLs] are supported in the way they are supposed to be. (Chloe Professional Practice Profile, April 15, 2018)
Chloe spoke in a way that was dramatic, personal, and directly situated in her student teaching experience. Her choice of the words (i.e., “love”) indicated her passion about teaching ELLs along with her teaching philosophy.

**Imagination in the World of Teaching**

At the level of *engagement*, candidates primarily relied on similar theories and practices for teaching ELLs. However, their learning and teaching approaches were distinct. *Imagination*, through individual experiences before, during, and after their time in the program expanded candidates’ scope of reality and identity. Through *imagination* in their unique worlds of teaching, candidates recognized their experiences and re-considered their positions as teachers of ELLs. Therefore, to interpret candidates’ identity negotiation processes as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs, it is necessary to examine: (a) images of the past and (b) images of the future, which recast (c) images of the present.

**Images of the past.** All five candidates reflected on their past experiences to explain and make connections to their teaching identities. Candidates through their discourse built different teaching identities in language and subsequently different figured worlds; as explained in Chapter III, a figured world is a story or an image of a simplified world that captures what candidates consider to be typical or normal in the world of teaching (Gee, 2014). Cecelia recalled her experiences as a language learner in a different country to empathize with ELLs and acknowledge the process of her identity formation as a teacher of ELLs. She described,
I think back to my experiences of being in Mexico for those three months and how lost I felt at first or like how powerless, when you can't even order what you want at a restaurant effectively or, you know, ask these questions let alone be thrown into a school with a bunch of peers who do fluently speak the language. So, I think that it [identity as a teacher of ELLs] has changed a little bit over time, you know. (Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018)

By making a cognitive I-statement (i.e., “I think back”), Cecelia chose to state her concerns on the schooling of ELLs as directly related to her own fears of being in a foreign country – not speaking the language. This past incident was a step (i.e., “a little bit over time”) towards the formation of her identity as a teacher of ELLs.

As opposed to Cecelia’s personal traveling experience, Chloe’s formation and negotiation of her teaching identity originated from her personal values and Catholic upbringing. She explained,

My cultural identity was shaped with a Catholic concentration and I still hold many of those values close to my heart and those will undoubtedly be brought to my teaching. My learning however, lacked a world-view. For at the time I was graduating high school, I was ignorant. (Chloe Sequence 2 Summative Assessment, March 29, 2015)

Chloe’s use of dramatic speech along with the past tense (i.e., “was ignorant”, “lacked”), indicated an acknowledgment of her concerns and an attempt to make sense of them and resolve them in the present.
Stories of the past were directly tied to the development of candidates’ teaching identity, unveiling how they transformed as teachers of ELLs through individual efforts. Since candidates’ images of the past were often linked to personal life experiences, images of the future were often linked to their teacher preparation program and future teaching position.

**Images of the future.** Candidates’ imagination was anchored in social interactions with professors, classmates, and cooperating teachers, as well as communal experiences in courses and schools. Thus, their images of future participation in the world of ESL teaching primarily emerged from their practice with ELLs in the program. Sophie asserted that one of the most useful aspects of the TLLSC program was learning about the WIDA language proficiency standards. Drawing on her student teaching experiences, in addition to making connections with her future practice she explained,

> I always made sure to include them [WIDA standards] because we had the one student who was ESL. I also knew that in the future, I might want to teach ESL, so I was really making sure that I was using them regularly. (Sophie Interview, June 7, 2018)

Sophie used language to fashion her teaching identity in a way that was closely attached to the world of ESL teaching. Imagining herself as a future teacher of ELLs (i.e., “I might want to teach ESL”), supported her learning and student teaching practices (i.e., “I made sure to always include them”).

Cecelia also reflected on her teaching practice to reveal how her identity as a teacher of ELLs may inform her future instruction. She described,
It [teaching identity] certainly informs my instruction and that I am typically, you know, I don't wanna say always but I'm constantly thinking about my ELL students and what supports they need, or how I can effectively assess them without bringing in linguistic barriers. (Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018)

Cecelia used a state and action statement (i.e., “I’m constantly thinking about my ELL students”) in combination with an ability statement (i.e., “I can effectively assess them”) to explain her instructional practice. Her statements showed the process of negotiation of her teaching identity as a teacher of ELLs, as she was starting to see everything through the lens of her students. Finally, the juxtaposition in her speech (i.e., “I don't wanna say always but I'm constantly”) likely marked a future instructional decision that may not have always been a priority. Hence, the images of ELL practice, which Cecelia and Sophie constructed through their experiences in the TLLSC program, shaped their identities as future teachers of ELLs.

Images of the present. Images of the past and the future gave meaning and form to images of the present. Interestingly, when observing the five candidates’ D/discourses on ELLs in the present, it is evident that they held a figured world quite close to the notion of bilingualism. Particularly, candidates who were either bilingual or eager to learn fluently a second language saw a strong connection between the development of their identity as teachers of ELLs and bilingualism. Olivia strongly expressed her thoughts about the value of bilingualism and its impact on her teaching philosophy. When asked to describe her present teaching practice, she claimed,
I'm bilingual, I really value bilingualism and biliteracy and diversity in our country as a whole. I specifically feel an ally of the Hispanic community considering my background with that community and my language capacities, and I want to be an advocate. First starting with my own mindset, my own teaching philosophy and the way that I experience people of different language backgrounds on the street and in my community, then that transfers directly to my classroom. (Olivia Interview, July 12, 2018)

Her speech linked images of the past (i.e., “I specifically feel an ally of the Hispanic community considering my background with that community”) with images of the present and the future (i.e., “that transfers directly to my classroom,” “I want to be an advocate”) to emphasize how her social identity as a bilingual impacted her teaching identity. Through imagination, bilingualism for Olivia translated into “value” in the classroom.

Antonia, even though she was not bilingual, asserted that becoming a bilingual is directly related to becoming a better teacher for bilingual students. When asked about the gaps in the TLLSC program she explained,

I would have loved the opportunity to go to a Spanish speaking country and get into becoming bilingual and being a better teacher for bilingual students. Being able to go abroad I think that gives so many more opportunities than just being in Chicago. (Antonia Interview, June 15, 2018)

Antonia by pointing out an experience that was missing from her teacher preparation, indirectly also identified a piece that was missing from her identity as an ESL teacher.
Antonia switched from “becoming bilingual”, which implied an essential skill in the enactment of her identity as a teacher of ELLs, to “being able to go abroad”, which implied an essential experience that would provide her with the opportunity to become a better ESL teacher.

Candidates’ imagination was distinct. However, their images originated from their identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs and were tied to their social interactions and practice throughout their teacher preparation program.

**Alignment of ELL Practices with Broader Communities**

*Imagination* does not automatically result in a plan of action. Candidates can imagine what it is like to be a teacher of ELLs, however they may not automatically adopt the Discourse of an ESL teacher. They can easily imagine the skills and practices needed by teachers to support ELLs, but they may not translate those images into action. Therefore, candidates must align their practices with the expectations of their position as teachers of ELLs to demonstrate their belonging to the broader ESL teaching community.

Since neither mutual engagement nor imagination entail alignment, it is essential to examine how candidates negotiated and formed their identities as teachers of ELLs through the effects of their actions. After an analysis of their teaching Discourse, candidates demonstrated alignment by: (a) advocating for ELLs and (b) building relationships with a broader community.

**Advocating for ELLs.** Through advocacy for ELLs, candidates became a part of something big because they actively take action to play their part in a school community. All candidates recognized the importance of advocacy and described how they were
planning to advocate for their ELLs in the future. Three out of the five candidates indicated specific ways in which they advocated for their ELLs during their student teaching.

Sophie shared her experience helping an ELL receive ESL services as a student teacher. In regard to advocating for the student, she explained,

An example of a student I was able to help throughout my student teaching experience is a student who is now receiving ESL pull out services. I believe he got these services due to my care and attention to his needs at the beginning of the school year. With a background in Spanish, I recognized his spelling errors and issues he was having in class while I was observing him. I told to my co-teacher that I think the mistakes he is making and the trouble he is having is due to his struggle to transition from Spanish at home to English in the classroom. I believe that my care for this [ELL] student helped him receive a service that he needed in order to successfully grow as a student. (Sophie Interview, June 7, 2018)

Sophie’s “background in Spanish” along with her “care” and “attention” to her students’ needs supported her commitment to help an ELL receive “pull out services.” Her instructional decisions extended the walls of the classroom as she capitalized on her ESL learning and teaching skills and negotiated perspectives to successfully advocate for her student and align her practices to the broader school services. She invested her energy in connecting the student’s “spelling errors and issues” to the services needed to help him “grow as a student.” This demonstrated a shift in her teaching identity from an elementary student teacher to an ESL teacher who is taking initiatives. Nevertheless, the
label ELL could have limited Sophie’s scope of advocacy, as she correlated student care and attention with receiving ESL pull out services.

Cecelia also drew on her student teaching experiences to highlight the importance of student advocacy. Sharing the challenges that she faced while teaching ELLs, she explained,

With some of my other ELL students, I think one of the biggest challenges was getting others [i.e., teachers, school staff] to see them as ELLs and convince that you know, trying to convince my co-teacher or even we had a special education teacher who co-taught with us as well, getting him to recognize the need for a support for some of those students, unless they were really falling far behind. That just didn't seem fair. We don't wanna wait until a student is falling behind [i.e., performing poorly academically] before they get the support that they need.

(Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018)

Cecelia constructed an identity as a teacher of ELLs by aligning her practice with the broader need to support ELLs beyond the walls of a classroom. Through state and action statements, she called ESL teachers to recognize this challenge (i.e., “we don't wanna wait”) and “convince” them to take action.

Interestingly, candidates’ discourse on advocacy for ELLs was directly related to their practice as student teachers during their last year in the TLLSC program. In earlier years, candidates relied on classroom assignments to describe their future plans as teacher advocates. In addition, candidates’ advocacy in the beginning of their teacher preparation program was often limited to the constraints of a classroom, however as candidates
progressed through the program it expanded to include the school community. Chloe, during her second year in the program, described how teachers should advocate for their students in classrooms, she wrote,

> Although policies are put in place to advocate for diverse learners, the teacher can do so much more in the classroom. Through appropriate assessments that measure growth, advocating on behalf of a student’s academic needs but also their sociocultural or social emotional needs, and understanding how to apply all levels of policy to my own future classroom, I will be teaching in line with social justice. (Chloe Sequence 3 Summative Assessment, November 24, 2015]

By using an achievement statement about a desire (i.e., “I will be teaching in line with social justice”), Chloe negotiated her teaching identity as an elementary classroom teacher and an “advocate for diverse learners”.

**Building relationships with a broader community.** Essential to alignment is the ability to coordinate ideas and actions in order to direct practices to a common purpose within a broader school community. All five candidates highlighted the significance of building relationships in schools and communities to communicate their practices and make an impact as future elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs.

Olivia reflected on her teaching identity to explain the importance of relationships between students and teachers. Drawing on Paulo Freire (1970) and the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, she discussed,

> Something I guess I have really adapted and have learned, is that being a woman, a teacher with and for others, doesn't mean to fix, or to solve, or that I have a
solution, but rather I am a partner and I can accompany a student in their learning. That student and the community also accompanies me. So again, it's all about relationship and I think being a teacher with and for others, means being a partner. I mean, it goes back to Paulo Freire, teacher/student, student/teacher, we all have something to learn from each other. That's something that I've grown in my teacher identity. (Olivia Interview, July 12, 2018)

Using an ability I-Statement (i.e., “I have really adapted and have learned”), Olivia described how her teaching identity shifted to include the notion of “teacher/student” or “student/teacher” relationships. Through her speech, it is evident that her teaching identity also affected her identity as a teacher of ELLs (i.e., “it’s all about relationships”). Additionally, Cecelia considered her student teaching experiences to demonstrate the value of building and maintaining relationships with students and parents both inside and outside a classroom. She explained, “increasing accessibility to education by being accessible to students and families both in and out of the classroom is one way I have been able to better support my students” (Cecelia Interview, July 10, 2018). Building her teaching identity in and through language, Cecelia used an action I-Statement (i.e., “I have been able to better support my students”) to indicate how her practice affected the student and parent community.

Finally, Antonia put on a macro lens to describe the essential role of community involvement, drawing on her experiences in Sequence 5. She wrote,

While one student was a possible ELL, the school did not have an ELL coordinator or other staff members who were able to provide instruction
specifically for a student learning English as a second language. This support must then come from the community or family for the student to be successful in learning English and using English in content and literacy topics. The school, family, community members, and other assisting individuals should all work together to provide the best opportunity for students to succeed. (Antonia Sequence 5 Summative Assessment, December 7, 2016)

Even though Antonia’s narrative was not directly linked to her own practice as a teacher of ELLs, her discourse emphasized teachers’ responsibility to reach out to the school and broader community (i.e., “school, family, community members, and other assisting individuals”) to ensure that ELLs were appropriately supported. Through her observations, Antonia negotiated her teaching identity as she identified the need to unite “school,” “family,” “community members” for the good of her ELLs. Finally, it is possible that the labels ELL and ESL triggered Antonia’s deficit perspectives on how to best support culturally and linguistically diverse learners, as she viewed ELLs the responsibility of “an ELL coordinator or other staff members”.

**Conclusion**

Because *engagement, imagination, and alignment* balance and complement each other, in combination they become constituents of candidates’ teaching identities (Wenger, 1998). This chapter scrutinized the individual candidates’ teaching identities that mediated Discourse on ELLs to examine their processes of teaching identity formation and negotiation. Candidates’ Discourse on ELLs illustrated the complex processes through which they negotiated and formed their identities as teachers of ELLs.
Most candidates reflected on their student teaching experiences, practices, and instructional decisions to identify how their teaching identity has been shaped during their participation in the TLLSC program. In general, candidates prioritized being teachers for all students along with accommodating for their ELLs thus, shifting between two teaching identities – an elementary classroom teacher and a teacher of ELLs. In the next and final chapter, I discuss the implications of my research on teacher identity and ELLs.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this final chapter, I reflect on and explain what the findings mean for the Teaching Learning and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) program and the education of elementary teachers who work with English Language Learners (ELLs) in the U.S. I begin the chapter with a summary of the study. After presenting the major findings drawn from the data analyzed in Chapter IV, I examine their significance by situating them in the literature. Lastly, I discuss the conclusions describing the implications for action and recommendations for further research. The chapter is organized in three sections: (a) Summary of the Study, (b) Significant Findings Related to the Literature, (c) Conclusions, and (d) Personal Reflections.

Summary of the Study

In the past four chapters, I presented my research on teacher identity and ELLs. I aimed to examine how elementary candidates form and negotiate their identities through their work with ELLs to determine the dynamics that are at play in the process of becoming a teacher of ELLs. The questions that guided my research were these:

1. What aspects of teaching practice in a field-based teacher education program influence the formation of teacher candidates’ identity as teachers of ELLs?

2. How do teacher candidates’ teaching identities mediate their D/discourses on ELLs?
3. How do teacher candidates negotiate their teaching identities as elementary teachers and teachers of ELLs?

Adopting the sociocultural perspective on learning and using the construct of communities of practice and identity—particularly the concepts of identification and negotiability (Lave & Wenger, 1991), I examined how candidates negotiated their teaching identity as teachers of ELLs in practice through participation in social interactions with peers, faculty, students, cooperating teachers, and school staff. The following section provides a review of the major findings presented in Chapter IV.

**Major Findings**

Using a qualitative case study design, I collected data via interviews and archival sources to analyze candidates’ discourse on ELLs and explain how they negotiate their teaching identity as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs. The following findings emerged as a result of this analysis. The section is organized according to the study’s research questions: (a) Teaching practice and ELLs, (b) Discourses on ELLs, and (c) Teaching identity negotiation.

**Teaching practice and ELLs.** All candidates emphasized the importance of continuous fieldwork as a key aspect of their preparation in the TLLSC program. In general, candidates highlighted the uniqueness of the program as they were immersed in culturally and linguistically diverse schools and communities from the start. Their various experiences in field sites prepared them for their future teaching position. More specific to their identities as teachers of ELLs, all candidates discussed the significance of the program-embedded English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. However, most
candidates realized its significance after graduating, while applying for future teaching jobs.

Particularly, Sequence 2 introduced candidates to the notions of funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Candidates, during their interview, discussed at least one of the two notions as directly related to their own teaching. Viewing culture as an asset in the classroom, they considered the importance of drawing on students’ funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) to inform their instructional practices.

During Sequence 3, candidates saw great value in the practice of designing and administering authentic assessments for ELLs. All candidates explained how they created and administered assessments that were authentic to ELLs, taking into consideration student interests, language, and culture. Also, two out of the five candidates, specifically talked about the dangers of test bias and ELLs.

Sequence 5 encouraged candidates to reflect on differentiating instruction, using the WIDA standards, and focusing on academic language. All candidates explained how they learned to differentiate instruction in Sequence 5 and practiced it more often during their internship. Nevertheless, one candidate expressed her concerns on differentiation and math instruction claiming that she needed extra support with math practices for ELLs.

During their internship, candidates’ practices primarily revolved around collaboration with students, cooperating teachers, and school staff, as well as student advocacy. Finally, two out of the five candidates talked about the importance of field site
placements as directly tied to their teaching practice and asserted that they were not exposed to as many opportunities to work with ELLs as some of their peers.

**D/discourses on ELLs.** When talking about their experiences with ELLs, candidates used different linguistic resources to enact two social Discourses: an academic Discourse meaning candidates’ unfolding of future practices and a teacher Discourse meaning candidates’ unfolding of current practices. Specifically, before their internship candidates were immersed in their future practices thinking about ELLs through field observations, theory, assignments, and classroom discussions. Seeing themselves as future elementary classroom teachers, early in the program, candidates primarily focused on describing their future teaching plans using an academic Discourse. Nevertheless, through student teaching and everyday interactions with students, cooperating teachers, and school staff, candidates began to also adopt a teacher Discourse to describe their instructional practices and decisions as current teachers of ELLs.

Candidates’ personal stories, values, and beliefs also shaped their teaching identities and as a result their D/discourses on ELLs. Most importantly, their value of bilingualism, Catholic upbringing, and Jesuit education had an impact on their teaching philosophies and consequently their D/discourse. For example, in regard to bilingualism three out of the five candidates highlighted the importance of being bilingual to better educate bilingual students. Therefore, candidates’ D/discourses on ELLs were not only tied to their social interactions and practice in the TLLSC program, but also to their personal values and beliefs.
Teaching identity negotiation. An examination of research questions 1 (teaching practice and ELLs) and 2 (D/discourses on ELLs) is essential to answer the study’s last research question. As described in the paragraph above, candidates’ stories, values, and beliefs revealed the process of negotiation of their teaching identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs, throughout their time in the TLLSC program. In general, candidates put emphasis on their personal experiences, values, and field practices to discuss their teaching identities.

As candidates progressed through the program their experiences, practices, and beliefs transformed, resulting in a negotiation of their teaching identities. Specifically, in the beginning of their program, candidates relied on describing how specific instructional practices and decisions for ELLs (i.e., WIDA standards, authentic assessments, differentiation, advocacy) could help their future teaching practice as elementary classroom teachers. However, during their internship most candidates started to incorporate those specific practices into their everyday instruction. Thus, fashioning their teaching identity in a way that is more closely attached to the world of ESL teaching. In the following section, I relate those major findings to the literature.

Significant Findings Related to the Literature

Candidates’ teaching identities play an essential role in their pedagogical approaches and interactions with students (Farrell, 2011; Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Given the growing number of ELLs in schools (NCELA, 2015; NCES, 2017a) and the increasing responsibility for teaching ELLs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010), exploring the ways in which candidates construct and negotiate their teaching identities is crucial for
understanding the process of becoming a teacher of ELLs. With an interest in undertaking a study involving a holistic view of elementary classroom teachers and their stories as teachers of ELLs, my research, as informed by literature, focused around the aspects of ESL teaching practice (de Jong & Harper, 2010; Harper & de Jong, 2009), teaching identity (Olsen, 2008), and the (re)construction of teaching identity (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). I, therefore, examined the process of becoming a teacher of ELLs at two levels; at the level of teaching practices with ELLs and at a deeper level that explores candidates’ processes of identity negotiation as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs. In this section, I discuss the significance of my study’s findings at the two levels by relating them to existing literature.

**Teaching Practices with ELLs**

Given the challenges that teacher education programs face in successfully preparing teachers of ELLs (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-González, 2008), my study examined candidates’ teaching practices with ELLs throughout their time in the TLLSC program. Specifically, since LUC’s teacher preparation program requires candidates to spend extensive time in the field, my findings are strongly related to candidates’ field-based teaching practice and experiences with ELLs.

My study adds to the existing pool of literature by focusing on the specific instructional approaches, which candidates find most beneficial in a field-based teacher preparation program. Instead of honing into and investigating one instructional practice, as many studies do (Brown & Endo, 2017; Diaz et al., 2013; González, 2016), my study
unveiled an array of teaching practices that candidates use when teaching ELLs (i.e., differentiation, authentic assessments). Primarily, differentiated instruction was highlighted by all candidates as the most common way of thinking about their ELLs. Brown and Endo (2017) studied candidates’ artifacts to examine how they differentiate instruction for ELLs. Their findings showed that candidates used generic accommodations for ELLs that were not specific to the needs of the students and called for a more explicit instruction on differentiation strategies. Similarly, the findings of my study suggested that candidates mostly focused on various ways of differentiating literacy content according to ELL’s needs, such as using visuals or bilingual books, along with instruction, such as using the WIDA standards, however, they struggled with differentiating content for math since they did not receive explicit instruction. Thus, the results of my study confirmed prior research, which has demonstrated that explicit instruction on how to effectively differentiate for ELLs helps candidates meet the academic needs of their students (Brown & Endo, 2017).

According to Wenger (1998), our identities provide a window through which we discover what actually becomes significant learning. My findings indicated that candidates’ learning and use of teaching practices did not occur due to individual assignments, but rather due to an array of experiences in their communities of practice. These experiences included but were not limited to interactions with students, teachers, and school staff, classroom observations, lesson planning, and discussions with faculty. Through legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) candidates managed to advance their skills and understandings, moving towards full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In
teaching, LPP correlates to the process by which candidates become accepted and included in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) or, in other words, to the practices and responsibilities that candidates adopt after they graduate (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011). As most candidates were making instructional and professional decisions, such as advocating for their ELLs, during their internship, they pushed the boundaries of the legitimate periphery expressing a need to be full participants (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011). Thus, fieldwork successfully prepared candidates to take on responsibility as full participants.

Past research on what it means to be a successfully prepared teacher of ELLs (Daniel, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Kennedy, 1997; Salerno & Kibler, 2013) has also demonstrated the powerful role that field experiences have on candidates’ learning. For example, Daniel (2014) investigated how and when graduate candidates learned to effectively teach ELLs throughout their year-long teaching internship. His findings showed that the most opportunities about learning to teach ELLs emerged through candidates’ interactions with ELLs. This was certainly the case with my participants. One common theme among all candidates was that they benefited and developed their identities as ESL teachers through interactions with ELLs and cooperating teachers. Additionally, my study added to existing literature on Loyola’s TLLSC teacher preparation program. Heineke et al. (2013) studied early childhood candidates in the TLLSC program and their preparation for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and communities, by providing perspectives on participation in the TLLSC program through video vignettes. Their findings demonstrated the benefits of candidates’ direct
engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families. My study confirmed those findings for elementary candidates in the TLLSC program and extended the benefits of direct engagement with ELLs in candidate’s preparation to include the benefits of fieldwork in candidates’ formation of their teaching identities as teachers of ELLs.

**Teaching Identity Negotiation**

Given the significant gaps in literature on teacher identity and ESL teachers, my study aims to examine how candidates who teach ELLs negotiate their teaching identities as well as the processes through which candidates construct their identities over time. Hence, the longitudinal aspect of my study was essential to explore candidates’ teaching identities alongside their learning. As trajectories, candidates’ teaching identities integrated the past and the future in the process of negotiating the present (Wenger, 1998). In other words, candidates integrated in their teaching identities their upbringing, values, and beliefs as well as their desired job placements to negotiate their present position within their communities of practice.

Creating *images* (Wenger, 1998) from the past and the future, candidates constructed and reconstructed their teaching identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs according to their learnings, field site placements, practices, and interactions with ELLs and cooperating teachers throughout the program (Correa et al., 2014). My findings confirmed prior research by Yazan (2017), which demonstrated that candidates travel through various forms of identity negotiation during their teacher preparation, and by Kayi-Adar (2015), which showed that candidates’ teaching identities
are formed mainly in relation to ELLs and their cooperating teachers. However, my study also extended this knowledge base to include candidates’ personal values and upbringings as well as their future teaching plans in the process of negotiating their teaching identities. Specifically, my study responded to Yazan’s call (2017) for an examination of teacher learning and identity (re)construction, as they are intertwined processes that continuously influence one another. Findings from this study indicated that candidates used both personal stories, values, and beliefs along with new ESL learning to negotiate their teaching identities.

Candidates’ negotiation of their teaching identities was also strongly related to the ESL endorsement; as they progressed through the program candidates’ practice shifted to include instructional decisions that support the learning of their ELLs. Since candidates typically do not adopt the identity of a teacher immediately, they undergo a process of teaching identity construction and reconstruction (Kanno & Stuart, 2017). Kanno and Stuart examined how ESL candidates’ teaching identities are shaped through teaching practice and found that it was difficult for candidates to adopt the identity of a teacher as they were committed to becoming teachers of ELLs. However, towards the end of their teaching practice, the ESL candidates started to form their identities as teachers as they identified with elements of general classroom teaching practice. Similar to the results of Kanno and Stuart’s study, my participants, during their last year in the program, identified with aspects of the ESL endorsement, thus, reconstructing their identities as elementary classroom teachers to also adopt the identity of a teacher of ELLs. The candidates recognized the importance of the endorsement after graduating.
Finally, my study built on existing literature on the TLLSC teacher preparation program. Chang et al. (2016) studied how their experiences in the TLLSC program informed their teacher educator identities. The findings documented personal and professional shifts in the researchers’ identities, as their participation in the intensive field-based TLLSC program challenged their notions of teacher educator identity. My study explored teaching identity from the undergraduate and graduate candidates’ perspectives. My findings indicated shifts in their identities as elementary classroom teachers and teachers of ELLs, primarily because of the field-based aspect of the program.

**Implications and Recommendations**

The insights stemming from this study present implications for practice and future research. The present study fills a gap in candidates’ ESL preparation and teacher identity development. Arguably, helping candidates to form and adopt an identity as teachers of ELLs is a potential means of successfully preparing teachers to teach ELLs (Martin & Strom, 2016). The implications of my study are useful to: (a) The TLLSC program, (b) Teacher educators, and (c) Teacher preparation programs.

**The TLLSC Program**

Wenger’s (1998) theory created rich possibilities for understanding the learning and identity negotiation processes of candidates in the TLLSC community. Candidates’ teaching identities shifted during the course of their time in the TLLSC program, primarily because of their interactions with ELLs and cooperating teachers. The findings suggested that candidates who were placed in ESL or culturally diverse classrooms
identified as teachers of ELLs before they started their jobs as first-year teachers.

Candidates pinpointed cultural diversity and interactions with ELLs as integral in their preparation for classroom teaching, helping them unmask the fear and prior assumptions that they may possessed (Kolano et al., 2014). Thus, efforts in placing students in schools and classrooms with a considerable number of ELLs would potentially aid in supporting the preparation of candidates as teachers of ELLs.

The ESL endorsement also heavily impacted the formation and negotiation of candidates’ teaching identities. Research showed that with limited and unclear support or guidance indicating how to teach ELLs, candidates are not certain about how to enact their teaching identities (Varghese & Stritikus, 2005). The ESL endorsement provided that necessary support, fostering candidates’ enactment of their identities as teachers of ELLs primarily during their last semester in the program. However, candidates did not recognize its value until after the TLLSC program and talked mostly about ESL practices when teaching literacy. Naturally, the endorsement was embedded in the program in the form of assignments, class discussions, and interactions with faculty. Hence, it may be helpful to provide ongoing professional development to all TLLSC faculty and adjunct professors, preparing them to design assignments, introduce instructional practices, and engage candidates in discussions that encompass aspects of the ESL endorsement. In addition, since cooperating teachers play an important role in candidates’ teaching identity (re)construction and given that candidates spend a considerable amount of time in the field, it is essential to prepare faculty to address new learning and understandings as shaped through teacher and candidate collaboration in the field.
To sum up, specific recommendations for the TLLSC program entail: first, TLLSC faculty must continue to place candidates in schools and classrooms with students labeled as ELLs. ELLs should be considered the responsibility of all teachers (Harper & de Jong, 2004). Therefore, this action will provide candidates with the opportunity to take greater and more determined instructional decisions through direct interactions to learn how to effectively teach ELLs. Second, ongoing professional development to all TLLSC teacher educators is crucial as they continue to try new ways of supporting candidates in learning to educate ELLs and discussing new field-based ESL knowledge.

**Teacher Educators**

Farrell and Lim (2005) explained that teachers' beliefs about themselves, their identities, their preparation, their professional development, as well as the context in which they work, are the basis of the construction of their professional identities. Similarly, candidates’ beliefs about themselves, their experiences, their preparation, along with the context in which they study and practice teaching, are the basis of the construction of their teaching identities. My study illustrated how candidates’ backgrounds, personal experiences, values, and beliefs affected the formation and negotiation of their teaching identities. In order for teacher educators to support the development of candidates’ identities as teachers of ELLs, it would be beneficial to encourage opportunities for discussions that facilitate candidates’ understandings of their teaching philosophies.
Incorporating reflective practice into instruction would also present candidates with an opportunity to consider past experiences and actions and to posit future possibilities. This practice could help them negotiate their teaching identities in the present. Candidates’ situated meanings are often negotiated in and through communicative social interaction (Gee, 2014). Hence, teacher educators need to support ongoing, friendly dialogue and reflection on how candidates acknowledge and develop their teaching identities in relation to their practice with ELLs. Also, through reflective dialogue candidates with various ESL field experiences are coming together, therefore providing some of the best support for new ESL teacher learning (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011). Reflective practice could help teacher educators make instructional decisions to better support candidates with new ESL learning, simultaneously encouraging the formation of their identities as teachers of ELLs. Additionally, given the influence of cooperating teachers on candidates, especially during student teaching, teacher educators must provide reflective opportunities to candidates to deconstruct new learning and practices as shaped through fieldwork and negotiate potential deficit-based perspectives.

Thus, teacher educators must first, encourage candidates to think critically about their teaching philosophies and second, foster a collaborative environment, where candidates reflect on new ESL learning through interactions with cooperating teachers and (re)construct their teaching identities. These actions will not only help candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully educate ELLs, but also encourage them to embrace their values and personal experiences and critically consider their teaching identities.
**Teacher Preparation Programs**

Consistent with the results of other studies on teacher preparation and field practice (Daniel, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010b; Salerno & Kibler, 2013), my research unveiled the importance of field experiences on candidates’ learning and consequently on the construction of their teaching identities. Candidates’ discourse on ELLs proved that the context (Gee, 2014) candidates used to share their stories was primarily their internship site. This highlights the essential role of field experiences in candidates’ ESL learning as it creates positive opportunities for practice and interactions with ELLs. Through legitimate peripheral participation (Wenger, 1998) in their field site communities, candidates receive exposure to actual ESL practice; cooperating teachers and school staff are seen as role models, who facilitate candidates’ membership in the community easing them to full participation. Teacher preparation programs, thus, should balance instruction between theory and practice, allowing candidates to spend a considerable amount of time in the field.

My findings, also, supported the need for pre-service education focusing on identity development of all teachers and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010). In pre-service teacher education, programs could provide coursework specific on ESL teaching and require candidates to student teach in a site with ELLs. Candidates’ may take years to reach full participation (Wenger, 1998) in the ESL teaching community, if they are not encouraged – through ESL specific coursework and field practice – to reveal vulnerabilities, critiques, questions, and accomplishments as they make meaning of their ESL practice and their developing teaching identities. Finally, to support the formation of
candidates’ identities as teachers of ELLs, teacher preparation courses could embed reflective exercises (such as unfolding personal stories related to cultural backgrounds and individual values) or in-class interactive activities (exchanging views on field experiences in ESL classrooms).

Consequently, teacher preparation programs need to balance instruction for candidates between ESL theory and fieldwork in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. As significant connections can be made between field experiences and coursework (Zeichner, 2010) teacher preparation programs must also increase opportunities for reflective exercises and interactive activities through which candidates can apply what they learned in school settings. These actions will provide an array of opportunities for candidates to develop their identities as teachers of ELLs.

These implications should be an integral part of teacher education across teacher preparation programs. In the following section, I will present suggested next steps for future research.

**Conclusions**

My research with the TLLSC candidates explored how future elementary classroom teachers develop their identities as teachers of ELLs. As the section above indicated, more emphasis on the process of teacher identity (re)construction and ELLs is needed to effectively educate teachers. To guide the path to meaningful change, new research must be conducted that builds on this study. This section describes: (a) Recommendations for Future Research, (b) Concluding Remarks and (c) Personal Reflections.
**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study provokes many points of departure for research on what goes into the makeup of candidates’ identities as teachers of ELLs. As mentioned earlier, the literature regarding identity formation and negotiation processes of candidates’ teaching identities related to ELLs, is limited, with the majority of the studies focusing on ESL learning and instructional practice as well as the constant flux immanent in ESL teachers’ professional identities. Missing, too, are longitudinal studies documenting anything relevant to candidates’ identity construction over time. Some next steps for this research would be to recruit more candidates from the TLLSC program, and perhaps, expand its scope to include candidates across licensure areas in various field-based teacher preparation programs, who are also culturally and linguistically diverse to explore similarities and differences in the ways in which candidates construct and negotiate their teaching identities through their work with ELLs. In doing so, the study can document findings that are more generalizable to the field of ESL teacher preparation, exploring different communities of practice. Finally, as communities of practice are temporal (Wenger, 1998), the study can also follow candidates in their first year of teaching and seek answers to the question of: What communities of practice do candidates participate in once they achieve full participation as ESL teachers?

Given that candidates’ communities of practice should not always be romanticized as universally positive (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011), future research must also probe this area. The possibility that at certain times specific communities of practice may reinforce deficit perceptions about teaching ELLs, needs to be further examined.
Although my research showed that candidates’ communities of practice (i.e. internship sites, courses) were seen as a powerful means through which they were able to negotiate their teaching identities and acquire the necessary resources to become full teachers, this should not be credited with invariably supporting candidates’ positive learning. For this reason, future research should seek to answer: How do communities of practice help improve or impair candidates’ ESL learning? The consideration of these critical recommendations and research questions is necessary to advance the field of ESL preparation and teaching identity.

**Concluding Remarks**

With the current need to successfully prepare future teachers who best meet the needs of ELLs (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Téllez & Waxman, 2006), teacher preparation programs are expected to focus on practices that have a significant influence on candidates’ ESL learning and identities. Teaching identities are not only constructed from theories and content related to the profession (Correa et al., 2014), but they are also reinforced by perceptions, experiences, and knowledge that encompass personal practice and interactions with ELLs, cooperating teachers, and school staff in the field.

I believe that the learning theory of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), is a powerful lens that allows teacher educators and researchers to uncover the dynamics that are at play in the multifaceted process of becoming an ESL teacher. As candidates participate through legitimate peripheral participation in different communities of practice, the teaching identities of the novice teachers are built through performing tasks and reflection upon new concepts and activities (Wenger, 1998).
This case study found that candidates’ field experiences, particularly their internship, helped them negotiate their teaching identities and shift from elementary classroom teachers to teachers of ELLs through their actions and ESL practice. Additionally, theory and content instruction provided candidates with the necessary skills to educate ELLs, nevertheless, without actual practice in the school sites candidates would not have been able to internalize those skills and adopt an identity as a teacher of ELLs.

**Personal Reflections**

Coming to the United States from Greece about six years ago, I did not feel confident in my abilities to write or speak academic English. The first year into my master’s program, my identity was that of an international student, followed by the assumption that international students were not capable of flourishing in the same way my native English-speaking peers were. Those fearful thoughts were slowly diminished through interactions with faculty and peers, and two and a half years later I applied to my doctoral program, where I also started working as an instructor. I immediately adopted the identity of a doctoral student, however, it took me a couple of years to fully adopt the identity of a teacher educator, as the position was relatively new. Reflecting on my time in the program and looking back at my progress, from an international master’s students to a doctoral candidate and a teacher educator, I started to realize that my professional identity shifted drastically.

My reflection and realization led me to seek out and incorporate ways to celebrate candidates’ unique teaching identities, by capitalizing and building on their personal
experiences in the program to support their learning and teacher identity development.

Educating future teachers about instructional practices during their work with ELLs, has triggered my interest in delving deeper into their teaching identity formation and negotiation processes. I believe that when candidates are asked to shift their instructional responsibilities from that of teaching content to teaching content and language for their ELLs, they are not only required to adopt new instructional strategies, but also to negotiate and (re)construct their teacher identities.

My dissertation research allowed me to work with five talented elementary classroom teachers who, even though were in the process of applying to their future jobs, voluntarily took time out of their schedules to participate in an individual face-to-face interview. The interview provided participants with the necessary social locale to unveil the processes of negotiation and (re)construction of their identities as teachers of ELLs. In this manner, the participants told their stories as candidates in the TLLSC program, through their learning and interactions, revealing the importance of teaching identity negotiation in the process of becoming teachers of ELLs. Thus, candidates opened up the door for a new reality in teacher education – to provide prospective teachers with an educational environment and various opportunities to develop and affirm their identities as teachers of ELLs. Because good teaching cannot be reduced to practice; good teaching originates from the identity of the teacher.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Interview Questions

Demographics

Tell me about your language and cultural background.
- Where were you born? Did you grow up at this location?
- Which language did you speak when you were growing up?
- If you are from a culture that speaks English as a second language, do you speak your native language? If not, why? If yes, how well do you speak it?
- What languages do you speak?
- What ethnicity do you consider yourself?

Teacher preparation program

Tell me about your teacher preparation program.
- What stands out to you from the TLLSC program?
- What did you find most beneficial?
- What curricular changes or new elements would you suggest that would have made your program more effective?

Tell me about your student teaching experience.
- Where did you do your internship?
- What barriers have you encountered in the school and how have you coped with these barriers?
- If someone were to walk into your student teaching classroom, what would it look like?
  - What would you be doing?
  - What would the students be doing?

Tell me about your preparation for ELLs.
- How would you describe the TLLSC program’s approach to ELLs?
- What do you remember learning about ELLs?
  - What were the big ideas about ELLs?
- What do you remember doing with regard to ELLs? Think about particular modules, school sites, readings, assignments, or other experiences.
- What aspects of the TLLSC program were particularly useful in helping you think about teaching content for ELLs?
- Where would you pinpoint the holes in your learning and preparation for ELLs?

Understandings about ELLs

Tell me about your understandings concerning ELLs.
- Do you think that ELLs’ needs differ from those of native English students? If so, how?
- How do you understand the role of language in learning?
  - How does that transfer into your classroom practice?
  - How did you come to that understanding?
- How do you understand the role of culture in learning?
  - How does that transfer into your classroom practice?
  - How did you come to that understanding?
- What do you conceptualize as effective instruction and/or assessment for ELLs?
  - How does that shape what you do in your classroom?
- How do you see your role with regard to advocacy for ELLs?
  - Examples?

Approach to teaching ELLs during student teaching

Tell me about your approach to teaching ELLs, drawing on your student teaching experiences.
- How did you support ELLs in your teaching?
- What challenges did you encounter when teaching ELLs?
- What resources did ELLs bring from home?
- How did you work with your cooperating teacher/others at your internship school site?

Identity

Tell me about your teaching identity.
How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
Do you think your teacher identity affects your practice?
  How?
How would you describe yourself as a teacher of ELLs?
Do you think your identity as a teacher of ELLs affects your practice?
  How?
Has your teacher identity been formed or changed over time?
  How?
  How would you say your teacher identity has been formed and changed over time through your work with ELLs?
Imagine yourself five years down the road, how would you describe the teacher you will be then?
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners: The Negotiation of Teaching Identities in Communities of Practice
Researcher: Elina Giatsou
Faculty Sponsor: Amy J. Heineke, Ph.D.

Introduction:
You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Elina Giatsou, a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction Ed.D. program at Loyola University of Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you successfully completed Loyola’s four-year, field-based elementary teacher preparation program entitled Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC), which included the requirements necessary for the Illinois English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. Please read this form carefully and pose any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose:
Loyola University Chicago’s field-based teacher education program has attempted to respond to the realities in Chicago-area schools by integrating a lens on English language learners (ELLs) into the TLLSC program. Focused on elementary education teacher candidates who have recently completed the four-year TLLSC program, the focal study will probe: (a) how candidates form their identity as teachers of ELLs, through their coursework and student teaching experiences (b) how the various facets of candidates’ teaching identities mediate their discourse on ELLs, and (c) whether or how candidates negotiate meanings that affect their teaching identities, in order to make switch from being general classroom teachers to teachers of ELLs.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be called to be a part of an interview in person and an optional follow-up interview via Skype/Zoom with the researcher, reflecting upon your experiences in the TLLSC program specific to ELLs and connecting to your teaching identity. Both interviews will be audio-recorded. The in-person interview will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length and the optional follow-up interview will be approximately 30 minutes in length.

Risks/Benefits:
Through a deep reflection on your teaching identity and your experiences with ELLs, a potential benefit is that you may develop a better understanding of your roles and identity as an elementary classroom teacher. The results will also be used to improve the ELL-specific preparation in the TLLSC program for future teacher candidates. There are no
foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. For example, the minimal risks include that you may feel uncomfortable during the interviews.

Confidentiality:
- The information that I will collect from the interviews will remain confidential. Interviews will be audio recorded with a digital voice recorder. The audio will be transferred to the researcher’s password-protected computer and subsequently deleted from the recording device. When the file is transcribed, any identifying information shared during the interview (e.g., name, school name, student names) will be omitted.
- Only the researcher, Elina Giatsou, will have access to the data. Data will be saved on a password-protected computer accessible only by the researcher. Audio data will be deleted immediately following transcription and checking the accuracy of the transcription.
- All identifying information will be blinded when sharing findings, including replacing your name and student teaching placement with pseudonyms.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have questions about this research, please feel free to contact Elina Giatsou at egiatsou@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor at aheineke@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:
Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT E-MAIL
Dear ________,

You are receiving this email because you successfully completed Loyola’s four-year, field-based elementary teacher preparation program entitled Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC), which included the requirements necessary for the Illinois English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement.

As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study to investigate elementary education teacher candidates’ professional learning for English Language Learners (ELLs) and their teaching identity formation during their four-year program of study. As a part of this study, you are invited to participate in one interview in person and an optional follow-up interview via Skype/Zoom with me, reflecting upon your experiences in the TLLSC program specific to ELLs and connecting to your teaching identity.

Should you choose to participate the interview will be approximately 45-60 minutes in length. All identifying information will be blinded. Results have implications locally to improve the TLLSC program, as well as globally to inform wider efforts to better prepare both elementary classroom teachers and teacher educators for ELLs.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please read carefully the attached consent form and contact me with your availability for the interview.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with questions.

Sincerely,

Elina Giatsou
REFERENCE LIST


VITA

Eleni (Elina) Giatsou was born and raised in Volos, Greece. She graduated from the University of Thessaly in 2012 with a Bachelor of Education in Primary Education. In 2014, she earned her Master of Education degree in English Language Teaching and Learning from Loyola University Chicago. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago.

Eleni Giatsou began her career as a vocational instructor, teaching courses in Children Literature and English in Volos, Greece. During her time at Loyola, Eleni Giatsou has been working as an adjunct professor for the School of Education instructing undergraduate and graduate teacher candidates in various courses focused on educational psychology, literacy, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, and data-based decision making. In addition, she has been regularly engaging in research with faculty during her time as a graduate assistant. Eleni Giatsou is also an active member of the Loyola community, serving on Loyola’s international committee as a graduate student representative.

These experiences all led Eleni to pursue her scholarly interests in the area of teacher education and bilingual education. She currently resides in Chicago, Illinois.
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Eleni Giatsou has been read and approved by the following committee:

Amy Heineke, Ph.D., Director
Associate Professor and Program Co-Chair, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Aimee Ellis, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Sarah Cohen, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Sabina Neugebauer, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor, College of Education
Temple University