

# Chapter 11

## Developing Global Literacy Skills of K–12 Pre–Service Teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) through Service–Learning

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### ABSTRACT

*One of the challenges in teacher preparation programs is providing pre-service teachers with practice teaching ELLs. Our K-12 teachers are being asked to work with growing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classrooms. Kramsch (2008) calls this the ability “to operate in a globalized space where . . . exchanges will be increasingly plurilingual and pluricultural” (p. 390). To help meet this need, a collaborative teacher training service-learning project on the global literacy development of K-12 pre-service teachers of ELLs was carried out to examine: 1) how a global literacy experience raises pre-service teachers’ awareness of their pedagogy, 2) what this experience means for their belief system and the knowledge base they hold about teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students, and 3) to prepare future teachers of ELLs to teach in a global society by gaining experience working with multicultural and multilingual learners. This chapter explores the service-learning project.*

### INTRODUCTION

Dramatically changing demographics across the United States pose a significant challenge for today’s school systems. Our K-12 content-area teachers are being called upon to work with growing numbers of culturally and linguistically

diverse students enrolled in their classrooms, or, as Kramsch (2008) notes, “. . . to operate in a globalized space where . . . exchanges will be increasingly plurilingual and pluricultural” (p. 390). Bilingual teachers and English as a second language (ESL) teachers have a vital role to play in high quality programs for English language

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learners (ELLs), but teachers of the content areas such as English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies also need to have an understanding of the linguistic, sociocultural, cognitive, and pedagogical issues surrounding these learners (Janzen, 2008). Importantly, content-area teachers need to know how to adapt instruction to make content concepts comprehensible to ELLs. Indeed, all teachers “. . . need to be aware of ways in which . . . diversity will affect how they develop their . . . teaching skills within a particular context, and what this means for the belief systems and knowledge base they hold” (Gearon, 2009, p. 199). Through service-learning, pre-service teachers can gain firsthand the knowledge and skills they need to facilitate the academic achievement of the English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in their classrooms, and, at the same time, provide critical service to this growing community.

To help meet this need, a collaborative teacher training service-learning project on the global literacy development of K-12 pre-service teachers of ELLs through service-learning was carried out to examine: 1) how a global literacy experience raises pre-service teachers’ awareness of their pedagogy, 2) what this experience means for their belief system and the knowledge base they hold about teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students, and 3) to prepare future teachers of ELLs to teach in a global society by gaining experience working with multicultural and multilingual learners. The focus of the training was to develop and expand the global literacy of the teacher candidates by having them collaboratively select multilingual and multicultural materials and design units of instruction on world languages and cultures to teach to culturally diverse learners in an after school program. Additionally, they collaboratively assisted the learners in designing their own multilingual and multicultural books through service-learning. Because of the increase in the number of linguistically and culturally diverse learners in U.S. K-12 schools, there is a

need for teacher training to develop global literacy to effectively and successfully work with these learners. Moreover, it is imperative that because of the changing legislation regarding teacher education and ELLs, work in this area be done in a timely manner. The following sections in this chapter present a discussion of a collaborative teacher training service-learning project and the global literacy development of K-12 pre-service teachers of ELLs.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Global Literacy**

In order to be successful in a global era in which multiple languages and cultures are becoming more visible, students at all educational levels should be afforded numerous opportunities to develop global literacy. Global literacy is “founded in an ability to understand and enter into other cultures. They come through the nexus of language capacities, cross-cultural awareness and sensitivities, and knowledge about nations, cultures, and peoples around the world” (Magnan, 2008, p. 628). The development of this allows students the opportunity to develop knowledge about the world and skills to collaborate across linguistic and cultural boundaries and value, respect, and understand others with differing ideas and opinions from their own (Magnan, 2008). According to Major General Peter Cosgrove, Asia Education Foundation National Summit, 2003, Our future prosperity and security will depend on our ability to understand these cultures and to build bridges to the citizens of these nations and all our immediate neighbours.” To do so, “[t]wenty-first century education needs to . . . develop in learners the knowledge, understanding and attributes necessary for successful participation and engagement within and across local, regional, and global communities . . . Education in a global

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