

Chapter 10

Linguistic Diversity in Language Teacher Education: Increased Awareness and Identity Transformations Through Fieldwork Experience

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the process of increased awareness and identity transformation of teachers who were enrolled in a graduate Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program as they worked with English language learners (ELLs) in the field. The authors analyze two different fieldwork-based projects, an ELL's language analysis and a case study, that teacher candidates completed as a requirement of two graduate courses. Drawing on culturally relevant pedagogy conceptual framework, the authors examine participant teacher candidates' identity transformation as they engage in reflective practice. Through focusing on candidates' narratives and analyzing data qualitatively, the authors discovered that most teacher candidates experienced identity transformation as a result of connecting with their students' learning experience. They developed an awareness of linguistic diversity, came to view it as a valuable resource, and defined the teachers' roles as advocates for their students and families.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter sheds light to the process of increased awareness and identity transformation of teachers who were enrolled in a graduate TESOL program as they worked with English language learning bilingual or multilingual students in the field. The authors review and analyze two different fieldwork-based projects, an English Language Learner (ELL)'s language analysis (LA) and a case study of an ELL (CS), which pre-service teachers and in-service teachers completed as a requirement of two courses in the TESOL program. Drawing on the conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011), the authors examine the array of diversity and reflections of identity transformations in the participant teacher candidates' field experience work. The chapter answers the research questions below in the following sections:

1. What is the background of ELLs in the participant teacher candidates' field experience work?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) learners?
3. Did the teachers' beliefs about teaching change through their work with culturally and linguistically diverse learners in the field? If so, how?
4. Has the teachers' personal history shaped their role as an educator of culturally and linguistically diverse learners? If so, how?

BACKGROUND

The data in this study derive from the field work projects of two graduate-level courses in a graduate TESOL program. One of the courses, titled Linguistics and Language Development, is briefly described in the graduate catalogue as follows:

This course introduces students to the essential concepts of language development and modern linguistic components that are most relevant to first and second language pedagogy. Training is given in the fundamentals of phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics. Ten hours of field work required. (Graduate Course Catalogue, 2021)

As the course description states, students taking the course need to complete a ten-hour field work study. The students are provided with guidelines about how and in what kind of school settings they can meet this requirement. The specific instructions about this course's field work study involve completing a case study of an ELL by working closely with an English language learner. The teacher candidates observe or interview the learner and analyze oral and written language, while applying their knowledge of language acquisition and development, the role of ELL's native culture in second language acquisition, the interference of the first language, and linguistics through an in-depth study of an English language learner.

The other course which has been the source of data in this study is called Theory and Practice in Bilingual Education, and a summary of its catalogue description is as follows:

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