

Learning in the Community: ESL Teacher Preparation Beyond University Classrooms

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Abstract

To meet the needs of growing numbers of English learners (ELs) in K-12 public school settings in the United States, more and more teachers have started to seek professional development opportunities to be better prepared in working with ELs and their families. While it is critical for teachers to be equipped with knowledge regarding theories on second language learning and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instructional strategies, it is equally, if not more important, for teachers to be engaged in social practices involving ELs and reflect on their roles beyond content delivery. This study described a community-based tutoring project in a graduate-level ESL teacher education course. The findings of this study indicated that the ESL tutoring project enhanced teacher cultural awareness and their development of pedagogical beliefs. Implications for extending ESL teacher education to promote teacher learning in the community also are discussed.

Keywords: service-learning, English learners, ESL teacher education

With growing numbers of English learners (ELs) in K-12 public school settings in the United States, there is an increasing demand for highly qualified teachers who not only provide academic support for ELs at school but also understand their needs and build upon their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a response to the demand for more English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) certified teachers, ESL teacher education programs and ESL certification programs also have increased in number. Most of these programs offer an ESL licensure or certificate in an “add-on” fashion (Schmidt, 2005), meaning that teachers with existing licensure can take a few pedagogy and content courses and be certified as ESL teachers. While understanding the theories of language learning and language teaching is important, without “participating in the social practices associated with teaching and learning” (Johnson, 1996, p. 767), it is hard for teachers to apply what they know and become competent in real ESL teaching contexts. Further, ELs’ unique cultural and language backgrounds require ESL teachers to serve as a link between the home and school cultures for their students. Thus, in addition to traditional university-based

courses, it is crucial that teachers seeking ESL licensure have the opportunity to work in the community to enhance their cultural awareness and reflect on their own pedagogical beliefs.

Integrating community-based service-learning projects in teacher education coursework has great potential in achieving these goals (Boyle-Baise, 1998, 2002; Fuller, 1998, Hones, 1997, Sleeter, 1996). In this study, I examined an effort to effectively incorporate a community-based tutoring project into a graduate-level ESL teacher preparation course. The purposes of this study were: 1) to describe the community-based tutoring project for teachers seeking ESL licensure; 2) to identify the challenges teachers faced during the experience; and 3) to explore the impact of the project on teachers’ reflections and their pedagogical beliefs.

Review of Related Literature

Teachers of ELs are charged with effectively teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students every day. Their challenges include communicating with students who speak varying levels of English, modifying grade-level content to make it compre-

hensible, and creating an environment that lowers anxiety and fosters language development (Gersten & Baker, 2000). Teachers of ELs need specialized knowledge sets to face these challenges (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Mullock, 2006). Fillmore and Snow (2002) recommend that teachers of ELs need knowledge in the areas of linguistics, English language, language acquisition, and the role of culture in language learning. De Jong and Harper (2005) further argue that in addition to knowledge of language, culture, and effective instructional strategies, teachers working with ELs also need to be equipped with the disposition to serve as both language teachers and cultural facilitators. In order to serve as effective cultural facilitators, ESL teachers need to be aware of and sensitive to not only the needs of ELs as a group, but also the increasingly diverse intra-group differences; first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants, and refugee students can share similar ethnic backgrounds but may have different cultural values and needs (Diaz-Rico, 2008; Rhong & Preissle, 2009).

How can teacher educators effectively prepare teachers to be effective cultural facilitators? In our ESL teacher education program, we looked to community-based service-learning as a way to connect hands-on, practical experience with course content for our teacher candidates. The community-based experiences and constant reflection of service-learning possibly could help teachers to grow in both their understanding of ESL teaching and cultural awareness.

Taylor (2002) points out that the philosophy of service-learning is rooted in the ideas of Dewey, who asserted that experience and education are inextricably linked to social and political development, making community service an integral aspect of participation in a democratic society. Dewey (1940) wrote, "When we experience something we act upon it; we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences" (p.139). From these consequences, the learner is forced to reflect upon the experiences and learn from them, thereby producing a change in his or her understanding.

Service-learning has three basic components. There must be academic content; the service must meet an identified need; and there must be a reflective component such as personal journals, portfolios, or in-class or online discussions (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Service-learning activities are designed so that

the student encounters moral dilemmas not found in the classroom and meets individuals with different personal values. Students also are challenged with moral decision making. Thus, service-learning is not just experiential learning but is a bridge between theory and practice that demands reflective thinking. Presenting participants with challenges that evoke reflections, therefore, is the key to successful service-learning projects.

There is evidence that service-learning enhances preservice teachers' self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive views of diverse others, ethic of caring, and other cultural competencies (e.g., Donahue, Bowyer, & Rosenberg, 2003; Freeman & Swick, 2000; Root, Callahan, & Sepanski, 2002; Root & Furco, 2001). Several studies suggest that service-learning fosters civic engagement (Boyle-Base, 1998; Eyster & Giles, 1999; Wang & Jackson, 2005). In a study of inservice teacher reflections during a graduate level course, Couse and Russo (2006) found that service-learning promoted a transformative learning experience and provided inservice teachers with opportunities to develop leadership skills and explore further career options. In ESL teacher education specifically, contributors to scholarship have documented the positive impact of community-based service-learning projects (Cooper, 2002; Fitzgerald, 2009) and ESL tutoring projects (Hagan, 2004). The research suggests that service-learning could benefit both preservice and inservice teachers.

Course Context

In our ESL teacher education program, we integrated the community-based service-learning component in the format of an ESL tutoring project in a graduate-level course, Teaching English as a Second Language. The course focuses on the introduction and application of effective, research-based strategies for teachers to work with ELs. Because most of the teachers seeking ESL licensure are not familiar with ELs' cultural backgrounds, one of the objectives for the course is to allow teachers to learn more about our ELs outside of the school setting and practice strategies to access ELs' prior knowledge and build background for proper instruction.

As part of the course requirements, our graduate students were placed at a tutoring center in an apartment complex, in a program initiated by the Center for New North Carolinians to assist immigrant families

through providing after-school tutoring and assistance with English. Typical students at the tutoring center included newly arrived refugees and immigrant students seeking help to improve their ability to use English language and complete their schoolwork. Located near the university where this study took place, the tutoring center provided a setting to document teachers' experience with ELs from a variety of first language backgrounds.

To fulfill the course requirement, teachers were asked to adapt materials and modify their instruction for the ELs at the tutoring center. They tutored the ELs once every week, for 10 weeks for about an hour. After each tutoring session, teachers held brief discussions guided by the teacher educator to reflect on their experiences. Teachers were also required to keep individual reflection journals. In their reflection journals, they described their tutoring experiences, reflected on the effectiveness of the strategies employed in the tutoring sessions, and examined their own learning as ESL teachers. At the end of the 10-week tutoring, teachers also provided a summary describing the students they worked with, the academic development of the students based on assessment data collected, and the effectiveness of the strategies used in their tutoring sessions. In addition, teachers wrote to share their teaching philosophies at the beginning and the end of the semester. The teachers also completed a self-assessment of teaching ELs developed by Rothenberg and Fisher (2007) (see Appendix).

Methods

Three research questions guided data collection and analysis in this study: 1) What do teachers experience during the ESL tutoring project? 2) What are the challenges they face? 3) What is the impact of this experience on teachers' reflections and their pedagogical beliefs?

Eleven teachers seeking ESL licensure were enrolled in Teaching English as a Second Language. All of the participants were in-service teachers enrolled in a degree program leading to the M.Ed. in Reading or ESL. Three of the participants served as ESL teachers at their schools; while eight participants were regular classroom teachers. Among the eight regular classroom teachers, four of them had experiences working closely with ESL students. All the participants in this study were white females. Five of

the eleven participants were fluent in Spanish, including three ESL teachers and two regular classroom teachers.

Participants' reflection journals, final reflections, self-assessments, and teaching philosophies were analyzed to address the research questions. Both vertical and horizontal analyses were conducted to examine individual teacher's growth and seek patterns of development across individuals (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, each participant's data were analyzed separately in a vertical analysis to form 11 cases. For the horizontal analysis, constant comparative analysis was conducted to seek patterns and themes across the cases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and groups of participants were formed for comparison based on their levels of ESL teaching experience. NVivo was used in managing and analyzing the data.

Findings

As stated previously, three research questions guided the data collection and analysis in this study: 1) What do teachers experience during the ESL tutoring project? 2) What are the challenges they face? 3) What is the impact of this experience on teachers' reflections and their pedagogical beliefs? Findings are presented in the sections that follow.

Community-Based Tutoring Experiences

Based on the findings of this study, all 11 participants experienced discomfort when they first interacted with the tutees in the tutoring center. Participants reported discomfort in three major aspects: the location of the tutoring center, the language barrier when teaching, and the initial interactions when trying to establish a rapport with tutees. However, the participants' comments also indicated that they were able to overcome the challenges to be able to know the tutees as individuals and provide instruction that met the students' needs.

The tutoring center was located in an apartment complex where many refugees lived. Although all of the teacher participants lived in or close to the same city where this study took place, most of them mentioned that they "have never been to that part of town." One participant wrote:

I thought it was strange that we were meeting at an apartment complex. The center was located in an area that I wasn't very familiar with so I left early in case I got lost. The apartments were

located on a side street that I would have probably never driven down.

Participants described their initial concerns for their safety and noted the demographics of the majority of the people who live in the apartments. Some of them mentioned in their initial reflections that they felt like the minority and that they did not belong. As one participant commented in her tutoring reflection:

I arrived early for the first tutoring session because I had allowed for extra time in case I did get lost. I sat in my car (doors locked) for about 30 minutes. I looked around and checked out my surroundings. I noticed that there were “People of Color” within the apartment complex. I did not see any white people. I felt “out of place”. No one bothered me; in fact, no one paid any attention to me at all. I was glad that there was daylight, but I worried about having to leave after dark.

While most of the participants had some prior tutoring experience, the apartment tutoring setting was new to them. Seven out of eleven participants reported that they felt it was “crowded”, “small”, and “noisy”, and that they were concerned about the quality of tutoring in this setting.

Since most of the tutees in the center were refugee students from different countries, various first languages were spoken and there was a wide range of English language proficiency among the tutees. Six of the eleven teachers spoke only English, while five spoke English and Spanish. None of the teacher participants could talk with the parents or tutees in their first language without a translator. Although this was an anticipated problem for the monolingual participants, for those participants who spoke Spanish and had been able to easily communicate with their students and families, the language difference seemed to be especially salient. One ESL teacher expressed her concern at the beginning of the project:

Of all the ESL students with whom I have worked thus far, all have been fluent in either oral and auditory English language skills or Spanish. As I am bilingual in English and Spanish, I therefore have had the capacity of communicating with all of them. But when I learned that most of the students with whom we would be working are from countries that do not speak Spanish or English—and that most of

them had only recently arrived in the country—my apprehension grew. I knew that I would not be able to rely on my Spanish to communicate with these students, and was also afraid that—as their arrival was so recent—they would not be fluent in English. I kept wondering how I was going to communicate with these students.

The initial interaction with individual tutees was also challenging because the teachers found it difficult to get to know the tutees. The participants strived to establish a rapport with students by talking with the students about topics other than solely the focus of the academic content. The participants reported difficulty in initiating the conversation to get to know the tutees, especially in regard to their family backgrounds.

During the 10-weeks of tutoring, most of the teacher participants (10 out of 11) had the opportunity to work with more than one tutee. Even with the challenges of communication, participants reported their efforts in getting to know the students. Participants also reported the teaching strategies they used to teach effectively. Additionally, participants could describe the social and academic English language level of the students.

Challenges and Teacher Learning

All participants commented on the challenges, especially during the first several weeks’ of the tutoring. While reflecting on those challenges, participants also reported that they benefited most from facing these difficulties. Through the process of facing the difficulties, the participants developed their understanding of working with ESL students in various areas.

The tutoring setting at the apartment complex made it challenging for participants to systematically plan for their tutoring instructions. Students attending the tutoring sessions varied in their grade levels and ages, and the consistency of their participation was not guaranteed. Attitudes among the regular classroom teachers regarding planning shifted over the tutoring experience. The regular classroom teachers were accustomed to planning specific lessons for specific students. The challenge of planning on the spot provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on the importance of flexibility in teaching and characteristics of ESL teaching. Reflecting on her tutoring experience during the eighth session, a regular classroom teacher wrote:

We all recognized that planning for the tutoring component would have to be adapted, so I just packed my bag with art supplies and graphic organizers so I would be ready with a few strategies. There was really no way to plan for the homework, but I did have a reading activity packed for an open opportunity. I also included a spelling inventory and QRI [Qualitative Reading Inventory] packet in my bag, and during one session I was able to complete it.

Working with several different students during the project, another teacher commented on the diverse needs among the students she worked with and the various strategies she used with different students:

Because of their ages and varying abilities, their needs were different. I found that my students from Liberia needed help with pronunciation. Tone and register were issues for them. On the other hand, F [tutee] (from Sudan) needed help with content-related vocabulary and terminology. E [tutee] (from Vietnam) needed instruction on decoding and “word-attack” skills.

Comparing participants’ instructional plans at the beginning of the semester and those at the end of the semester similarly showed that the participants’ plans became increasingly student-centered and specific to the immediate needs of the learner rather than language-centered and content-focused.

Participants also described their concerns regarding the effectiveness of their tutoring. Participants were frustrated when they failed to carry out the lesson plans and when most of the interactions they had with the students were one-way due to students’ lack of English language proficiency. In their final reflection, however, several participants (5 out of 11) commented on the importance of the personal conversations they had with the students, for both the students’ growth and their own growth:

As an educator, I guess I don’t always see the value in a lesson I have taught, unless I worked from a concrete plan, written out with fully supported objectives, etc. Good teaching is about relationships, however, and I am glad that I was able to forge a continuous one with G [tutee] over the course of this semester. . . . It was only after realizing how important it is to develop oral language with ESL students that I began to relax and focus on the quality of our conversa-

tions. Once G [tutee] was comfortable and safe talking to me, there were many times that I felt successful at offering her new words to expand her vocabulary, or maybe in a very smooth and respectful way, offer her a correction for an incorrect word order or usage problem she displayed.

The challenges of the tutoring also fostered broader understanding and growth on part of the participants in regard to the homework they assign students. As they worked to help the students complete homework, the participants described the importance of teachers noting the format and content of the homework assignment in relationship to student language proficiency level. Participants also stated that teachers should take into consideration the academic support students may have in their home. Participants did not advocate lowering expectations but noticed the importance of ensuring that students are prepared for homework that is assigned so that students can complete the homework independently. As one participant explained, she revised her vision of her responsibilities as a teacher after tutoring in the community:

I believe that seeing all of this makes me a more aware and cognizant teacher. It will impact my teaching by making me think twice when I receive assignments done by children who go home to similar environments as this. It cannot make me lower my expectations for these students, but rather make sure that I am understanding, and that I provide some time for them to complete, or even repeat assignments that need attention they may not have gotten when they went home to do their independent practice. It also makes me see how important it is to seek out resources of extra help for students who need them. Part of my job as a teacher, who is expecting students to be successful with homework, is to know something about what they do go home to, and the circumstances that surround them as they complete the assignments I give.

Teacher Reflection and Pedagogical Belief Development

The third research question focused upon the impact of this experience on teachers’ reflections and their pedagogical beliefs. As indicated previous-

ly, reflections took place after each tutoring session. The teachers held brief discussions guided by the teacher educator to reflect on their experiences. Teachers were also required to keep individual reflection journals. In their reflection journals, the teachers described their tutoring experiences, reflected on the effectiveness of the strategies employed in the tutoring sessions, and examined their own learning as ESL teachers. The participants also provided written documents where they reflected upon teaching before and after the 10 week span of the tutoring sessions: a pre- and post- self-assessment of teaching ELs and a pre- and post- teaching philosophy.

Changes in Teacher Reflection. Teachers' philosophy and their tutoring reflections were analyzed based on Zeichner and Liston (1987)'s definition of two levels of reflection. The first level, teacher routine action, is guided by authority without giving thought to justifications for the actions taken. For example, one ESL teacher stated that "All children can learn. It is our responsibility as teachers to provide a positive learning environment with high expectations for all of the students in our classroom." (initial philosophy, January 16, 2007). Teacher reflective action, the second level, reflects the idea of a teacher as a moral craftsperson who is concerned with the ethical issues involved in carrying out certain actions. For example, a regular classroom teacher reflected on her experience working with ESL students and her tutoring experiences and wrote:

In academic language scaffolding the teacher identifies particular academic vocabulary or language that may cause confusion for all or particular students. Then, she plans a lesson that explains the particular vocabulary or language to the students and provides time for them to practice that vocabulary or language. Several years ago I would have probably operated on the assumption that academic language used in my first grade classroom was either already understood by my students or if it was not, it would be "picked up" by students when used in meaningful contexts. I am discovering however that assuming this can leave the students who lack this vocabulary at a significant disadvantage and therefore they must be explicitly taught.

The findings related to the teachers' pre and post philosophy statements are reported in this article,

and these findings present changes in the levels of reflection on part of the teachers. The percentage of the discourse regarding routine action (which is level 1) and reflective action (which is level 2) are reported in Table 1. The percentage was a quantitative representation of the different levels of reflection participants demonstrated in their narrative.

Based on the data, all the participants in this study experienced development of reflective thinking throughout the semester even though the teachers varied in regard to levels of ESL teaching experiences. In other words, even teachers with ESL teaching experiences in school settings benefitted from the reflection of this service-learning experience. In their final reflection, several participants commented specifically on the importance of reflection in the tutoring project as did this ESL teacher, who also commented on how she would continue to use reflection in the coming school year:

After each lesson, I would return home and type up my lesson reflection. On the drive home, I would think about the lessons and how they could have been better. At my arrival, I would still be at a loss about how to improve for future lessons. Just thinking about the lesson was not enough for me. Only when I sat down to type my lesson reflections would I start to look at my implementations critically enough, allowing me to see what aspects were not successful and what to do in future implementations. The process of making myself write about my lessons has seemed to be the most effective manner for me to reflect upon my teaching. This project has allowed me to discover this about myself. Additionally, learning this about myself has allowed me to make goals for my next year of teaching. In the coming school year, I will set aside one planning period a week to keep a teaching journal. For each entry I plan to pick one lesson and reflect in writing what was successful and what is needed for future modifications. Being a reflective practitioner will allow me to become a better teacher and to better serve my students.

Table 1.

Teacher Reflection Pre Post Comparison	Routine Action		Reflective Action	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
	ESL Teacher	60%	50%	40%
Regular Teacher with ESL Experience	50%	33.33%	50%	66.67%
Regular Teacher without ESL Experience	100%	66.67%	0%	33.33%

Self-Assessment. Teachers demonstrated different patterns in their pre and post self-assessment according to their levels of ESL teaching experience (see Figure 1). Based on participants' pre self-assessment, completed at the beginning of the semester, current ESL teachers rated themselves the highest on the first 4 items of the assessment: state purpose of the lesson, access prior knowledge, build background knowledge, and examine text for challenging language and vocabulary, and they rated themselves the lowest on items 5 and 7: consider teacher language and vocabulary, and provide opportunities for student interaction. Regular classroom teachers with ESL teaching experiences rated themselves highest on item 7: provide opportunities for student interaction. Regular classroom teachers without ESL teaching experiences rated the highest on item 5: consider teacher language and vocabulary.

On their post self-assessment, both ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers with ESL teaching experiences rated themselves higher on most of the items. Both groups rated themselves higher on item 5: consider teacher language and vocabulary. Regular classroom teachers without ESL teaching experiences rated themselves higher on items 1, 2, 3, and 7: state purpose of the lesson, access prior knowledge, build background knowledge, and provide opportunities for student interaction, but they rated themselves lower on items 4-6: examine text for challenging language and vocabulary, consider teacher language and vocabulary, and use scaffolds. As stated previously the regular classroom teachers had no prior ESL teaching experiences when they entered the ESL tutoring experience through the service-learning project. The regular classroom teachers seemed to

re-evaluate their instructional expertise and note more needed areas of development.

Based on the qualitative data from the self-assessment, while most participants (6 out of 11) considered accessing prior knowledge and building background knowledge easy for them before tutoring, after the tutoring sessions, more participants (8 out of 11) reported that

they would need to be better prepared in those areas. Their self-assessments indicate that the tutoring expanded their understanding of the complexity of accessing prior knowledge and building background knowledge.

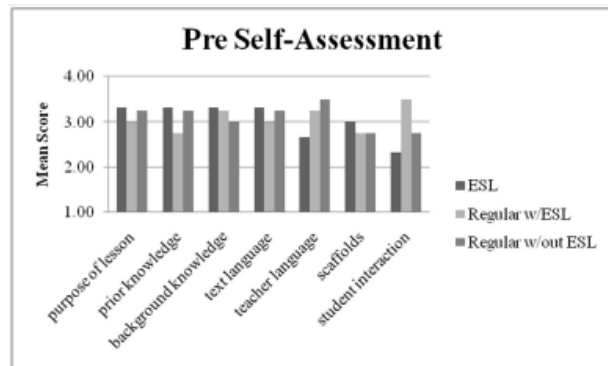


Figure 1. Teaching ELs Pre Self Assessment

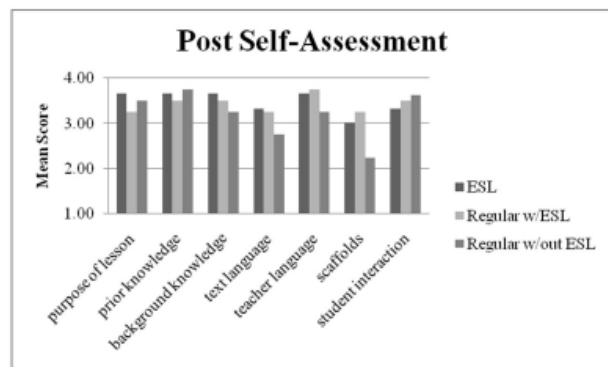


Figure 2. Teaching ELs Post Self Assessment

Experience, Reflection, and Teacher Development

The findings of this study echo previous research on the transformative nature of service-learning projects. Through the community-based service-learning, all participants were provided with a

perspective on teacher-student interaction outside of the school context and an opportunity to apply theories in real-world settings. Additionally, all participants engaged in a process of reflection-in-action to reconsider their roles and responsibilities as teachers.

Conducting the tutoring project in a community-based center allowed our participants to experience the discomfort that triggered their reflections and development as ESL teachers. Their fear for the unknown settings, frustrations with the language barrier, and apprehension for individual interaction with ESL students led to positive outcomes: empathy for ELs first entering the English-speaking classrooms, recognition of the importance to lower the affective filter, and awareness of the complexity of building background knowledge in their teaching. The 10-week tutoring experience provided teachers with invaluable opportunities to apply different strategies to overcome the language barrier and get to know the ELs and their instructional needs. Out of their initial uneasiness came new pedagogical beliefs in relation to their growing understanding of the community that suggest community-based service-learning supports ESL teachers' cultural awareness and instructional expertise development.

As an integral part of service-learning, reflection played an important role in the course. It was reflection that allowed teachers to reveal their concerns, challenges, and successes. Reflection also documented teachers' paths of individual development. The class discussions, written reflection journals, teaching philosophy, and self-assessment provided different reflective opportunities for all participants. Through ongoing reflections, especially reflections on their discomforts and challenges, participants were guided to reconsider their pedagogical beliefs, self-knowledge of instructional expertise, and school experiences from ELs' perspective.

The increase in reflective actions among participants illustrated their evolving concerns for ESL teaching beyond routine application of theory and strategies from textbooks. They started to question their own assumptions in working with ELs and valued reflection as an essential component in teaching. Further, the comparison of participants' self-assessments of ESL teaching before and after the service-learning experience allowed them to self-monitor their development as an ESL teacher. The fact that more participants reported they needed

to be better prepared in areas such as accessing prior knowledge and building background knowledge suggested the growth in their self-knowledge and awareness of ESL teaching. This community-based service-learning experience also enabled participants to look at school experiences from a different perspective through their reflections. Their comments on school homework and their reflections on the need for assessment modification further revealed their growth as reflective professionals.

Implications for ESL Teacher Education

To better serve the needs of the growing EL population, we need more qualified ESL teachers who understand ELs' backgrounds and are confident in applying instructional strategies that accommodate learning needs of students. While it is important to introduce teachers to content knowledge and content pedagogical knowledge specific to ESL teaching, mere textbook information is insufficient in preparing teachers working with ELs. The nature of ESL teaching calls for teachers to be sensitive to students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Teachers also need to be aware of their own assumptions about teaching and learning, and they should be willing to serve as cultural facilitators to bridge the potential home-school differences for their students. Both enhanced understanding of their students and themselves as teachers are critical in ESL teacher education. It is, therefore, vital that teachers seeking ESL licensure be presented with experiences for working with ELs and opportunities for reflection on their own development as ESL teachers.

The community-based tutoring project reported in this study illustrates our efforts to link the ESL tutoring experience and teacher reflection in facilitating ESL teacher development. Teacher education programs can vary in their settings, possibilities for community partners, and types of service-learning projects. However, the findings from this study do provide implications for future application of service-learning in ESL teacher education programs.

First, community site selection is fundamental in providing a safe, yet challenging experience for teacher participants. Collaborating with the Center for New North Carolinians, we were introduced to the community needs by experts who have extensive knowledge of the immigrant and refugee population in the area. These community experts also modeled

and served as guides in helping the participants negotiate cultural differences in this unfamiliar setting. The support from the experts provided a structured cultural experience where participants were challenged and faced discomforts, but still felt comfortable to share their experiences, question their assumptions, and reflect on their own growth.

Second, community context provides learning opportunities for all teachers, including more experienced teachers. In this study, all teacher participants, including ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers with ESL teaching experiences reported facing challenges in the community setting. While the three groups demonstrated different patterns in their development of self-assessment in ESL teaching, all participants enhanced their reflective actions and reevaluated their pedagogical beliefs. The diverse patterns in teacher development also suggest that it may be beneficial to let teachers with varied levels of ESL teaching experiences work in pairs in future service-learning projects. Their various experiences may allow participants to observe each other's interactions with ELs from different perspectives. This type of pairing and observation could provide more peer coaching opportunities for all teacher participants, whereby they share their understanding and observe each other's learning throughout the process.

Third, teachers need to be made aware that their conscious reflection on their experiences, especially their discomforts, dilemmas, or challenges, can lead to their own professional growth. It is important that teacher candidates are actively involved in their development and be willing to seek opportunities to challenge themselves. Teachers need to be provided formats for reflection and opportunities to make explicit connections between their experiences and their pedagogical beliefs. Other strategies, such as goal setting perhaps could encourage teachers to monitor their own experiences, reflections, and process of development. With such conscious effort, teachers could learn from the process to develop reflective mindsets, engaging in reflective actions in their daily teaching and interactions with ELs.

Integrating service-learning in ESL teacher education has potential. With proper guidance, this type of learning experience could assist teachers' growth in their understanding of teaching, their awareness of students' backgrounds, and their reflective actions in

teaching. Additionally, teachers can see that the challenges they may face in teaching ELs can be not only addressed but also a source of growth in teachers' knowledge development.

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Appendix

Teaching English Language Learners Self-Assessment (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007, p. 256)

Name _____ Date _____

Rate yourself on the following scale

Always	Sometimes		Never	
4	3	2	1	0

Make sure students know and understand the purpose of the lesson?

Access prior knowledge?

Build background knowledge when necessary?

Examine text for language and vocabulary that may present challenges?

Consider my own language and vocabulary to ensure that my students can understand?

Use a variety of scaffolds for the variety of learners in my class?

Provide opportunities for student-student interaction?

Which of these is/are easiest for you? Why?

Which of these is/are difficult for you? Why?