Dialogues across Disciplines: Preparing English-as-a-Second-Language Teachers for Interdisciplinary Collaboration

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This study examines interdisciplinary collaboration between mainstream-English and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) in-service and pre-service teachers enrolled in graduate methods courses in their respective fields. During the semester, TESOL and secondary English Education teacher candidates collaborated to develop young adult literature based thematic units that supported the curricular needs of the secondary English education curriculum in the ESL classroom and the provided for the linguistic, second-language-literacy, and cultural needs of English language learners (ELLs) in the mainstream English classroom through interdisciplinary teacher collaboration.

Classrooms in the United States are rapidly becoming more diverse places. For example, between the 1989-1990 and 2004-2005 school years, enrollment by students who must receive English language education services (English Language Learners/ELLs) has more than doubled, from 2,030,451 to 5,119,56 (NCELA, 2006). ELL enrollment in the nation's public schools between the years 1990 and 2000 grew by 105 percent, compared to a 12 percent overall growth rate among the general school population (Kindler, 2002). This increasing diversity makes it critical that English as a second language (ESL) and mainstream teachers are able to collaborate with the goals of increased and enhanced academic success for students who are learning English as an additional language while simultaneously acquiring content knowledge in English. This paper reports on the results of an interdisciplinary collaboration between mainstream and ESL teachers enrolled in a graduate level teacher certification program. The results highlight the need for structured opportunities for pre-service teachers to collaborate across the disciplines to enhance educational outcomes for students learning English as an additional language.

ESL and Mainstream Teacher Collaboration: A 21st Century Necessity

While ESL and /or Bilingual Education services are mandated by the United States Federal Government as a result of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (and its reauthorizations in subsequent years) and Lau vs. Nichols[1], most students who are learning English as a second or additional language spend most of their school day in mainstream classrooms with teachers who often have had no professional preparation in effective instructional practices for linguistically diverse learners. In some ways, mainstream teachers of ELLs are in the same position as many ELLs in mainstream classrooms: sink or swim. On the other side of this issue is the level of preparation that ESL teachers receive in teaching content material. While ESL services are mandated in the United States, the type of program that states and individual schools implement is not. The United States Federal Government has refrained from defining program type and has rather set forth guidelines that programs must adhere to. The

following appears on the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights informational site entitled: *The Provision of an Equal Education Opportunity to Limited-English Proficient (LEP) Students* (Revised August 2000):

> The following procedures should be used by school districts to ensure that their programs are serving LEP students effectively. Districts should:
> - identify students who need assistance;
> - develop a program which, in the view of experts in the field, has a reasonable chance for success;
> - ensure that necessary staff, curricular materials, and facilities are in place and used properly;
> - develop appropriate evaluation standards, including program exit criteria, for measuring the progress of students; and
> - assess the success of the program and modify it where needed.(available at: http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/eeolep/index.html)

These broad guidelines have created a situation where programs can vary a great deal. Two prevalent program types that have emerged, usually occurring at the elementary level (K-6), are *ESL pull-out* and *ESL push-in*. Pull-out ESL programs are those where students leave their mainstream classroom and spend time in an ESL classroom for a determined number of instructional units, depending on proficiency level. Push-in models are those where ESL teachers enter the mainstream classroom and, under the best circumstances, collaboratively plan and teach with the mainstream teacher. This relationship can either be viewed as the ESL teacher being in a supportive role, where he or she works with individual or groups of students, but the subject area teacher is responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum, or as a partnership, similar to canonical models of teaching partnerships between special and general education teachers. In such a model, both teachers are equally responsible for planning and implementing curriculum and students are frequently unaware of which teacher is the special educator and which is the general educator. While the true partnership model has been emphasized in delivering effective educational services to ELLs in a variety of countries (Bourne, 1989; Coelho, 1998; Creese, 2002; Lee, 1997; Mohan, Leung, & Davison, 2001), many of these intended partnerships result in the ESL teacher being in a supportive role rather than an equal one.

At the secondary level, the most prevalent program type in the United States is one that treats ESL as a separate subject and students attend a specified number of ESL periods each day or week, depending on individual state guidelines. For example, in New York State, students are first determined to be ELL's through the use of a *Home Language Questionnaire*, then proficiency level is assessed using the *Language Assessment Battery-Revised* (LAB-R). Finally, yearly progress is monitored using the *New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test* (NYSESLAT). Depending on proficiency level, secondary students spend one (36 minutes) to three (108 minutes) periods per day in the ESL classroom. In many locations, this secondary level instruction takes the form of Content Based Instruction (CBI), or Sheltered Instruction, where language is taught and supported using academic subjects as the platform for learning. CBI refers to the integration of language and content instruction, with the goal being the simultaneous acquisition of both. While content usually refers to academic subjects, Genesee (1994) has argued that content "...need not be academic; it can include any topic, theme or non-language issue of interest or importance to the learners" (p. 3). Met (1999) has proposed that "…'content' in content-based programs represents material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the target language or target culture" (p. 150). Currently, in most schools in the United States, the content in question is intended to be academic subject matter. The nature of this academic subject matter is important to the success of ELLs in US schools.

The demand of teaching language through meaningful academic content can be a challenge for ESL teachers. In many TESOL certification programs at the graduate level, the candidate's undergraduate degree can be in any area, and general subject area knowledge is ensured by a certification exam that assesses minimal knowledge of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the areas of Mathematics, Science, and US History. Some certification programs and states place an additional requirement that candidates have successfully completed specified numbers of credit hours each in what they consider core academic subjects. Requiring some degree of core academic subject knowledge is better than requiring no prior knowledge in subject areas. However, ESL teachers who are required to teach language through academic subjects can be at a disadvantage in terms of their actual level of preparation with those subjects. In addition, the academic content knowledge that ESL teachers have can range from expert (a graduate TESOL candidate with a bachelor's degree in History or Mathematics) to non-existent (a graduate TESOL candidate with an bachelor's degree in Interior Design, which, while requiring general and specific

knowledge as it relates to that field, does not necessarily present that knowledge in a way that is aligned with traditional primary and secondary educational content in US schools). If required to engage in CBI, which, as stated earlier is the currently accepted model of ESL in academic settings, ESL teachers can be left wondering what to teach and how to teach the content that is selected.

One way to ameliorate the negative impact such a situation has on both teachers and students is to develop true interdisciplinary teaching partnerships. In such partnerships ESL teachers and mainstream content teachers work together to plan and design instruction, both in the ESL and mainstream classroom. This planning would take into account the curricular needs of the subject being taught and the linguistic needs of the ELLs. Content teachers would act as the specialists in the academic field and share their expertise in the area of both curriculum and instruction of core academic material. The ESL teacher would contribute his or her expertise in terms of language acquisition and pedagogy. Such a model would be similar to those that exist in inclusion classrooms. In fact, much of the extant research on teacher collaboration comes from the field of teaching students with learning disabilities. From this field, there are five models of co-teaching or teacher collaboration which were described by Vaughn, Schumm, and Arguelles (1997):

- A lead teacher (who takes the lead in instructional delivery) and assistant teacher (who works with individual or small groups within the larger integrated group;
- Station teaching, where the teachers each take responsibility for teaching different components of the material to small groups of students in a learning center or learning station type of setting within the classroom;
- Parallel teaching, which involves co-planning then dividing the class into smaller groups to deliver instruction in classroom;
- Alternative teaching, where one of the teachers scaffolds, shelters, or reinforces learning that was delivered to the large group as a whole;
- True team teaching or co-teaching, where both teachers teach all of the students all of the time.

The literature on co-teaching documents a variety of benefits that include the combined expertise of two knowledgeable teachers, more complex and complete curricula provided to students with learning disabilities, fuller participation of all students in the classroom, and increased and improved outcomes for all students and enhanced feelings of self-efficacy for the educators involved (Cole & McLeskey, 1997; Dieker & Barnett, 1996; Gately & Gately, 2001; Rice & Zigmond, 2000). However, discussing and understanding the benefits of collaboration is not the equivalent of actually collaborating. In 1996, Kaufman and Grennon-Brooks made the following statement:

"Collaboration between ESOL (*English to speakers of other languages*) teachers and teachers of other subject areas is imperative. Teacher education programs must reevaluate current pedagogical orientations and reorganize to prepare teacher candidates of all disciplines for coordinated interdisciplinary education for all students" (p. 231).

How far have we come in the field of teacher education and practice since this call for collaboration was made twelve years ago? Based on a review of the literature, we have not come far at all. While teacher collaboration is discussed and acknowledged as a vital component in ensuring improved educational outcomes for all learners, a powerful tool in new teacher success and teacher development, and as a force behind positive educational change (Mostert, 1998; Pugach & Johnson, 1995; 2002; Rogers & Babinski, 2002; Snyder, 1994; Trent, 1998), little collaboration actually occurs. When it does occur, many teachers (73.1%) have found those efforts to be "largely inadequate" (Leonard & Leonard, 2006, p. 6). While the positive benefits of teacher collaboration at the secondary level have been documented (Achinstein, 2002; Manouchehri, 2001; Rottier, 2000) and the benefits of teacher collaboration have become a regular message in many teacher education programs, actual change in middle and high schools in terms of the level of teacher collaboration has not occurred (Memory, Yoder & Williams, 2003). In addition, despite the call for collaboration to enhance the education of linguistically and culturally diverse learners, little research into actual collaborative partnerships between ESL and mainstream teachers has occurred (Creese, 2002).

The question of why more collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers does not occur is a critical one based on the anticipated growth of the language learner population over the next few decades and the current implementation of many ESL programs in the United States (where students who are learning English participate in mainstream classes without the benefits of sheltered instruction for most of their day). The current research study is an effort to investigate the types of barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration that ESL teachers identify and how TESOL methods courses can be effective in

removing the identified barriers so that true teaching partnerships between mainstream and ESL teachers can develop. The following questions are addressed:

- What barriers to collaboration with mainstream teachers do ESL teachers feel exist, and how are these similar to or different from other collaborative teaching relationships?
- Can the identified barriers be eliminated through theoretical knowledge, guided practice, reflection, and independent practice?
- How can the experiences of the teachers in this study be used to inform practice in TESOL methods courses?

The Study

This qualitative research focused on the results of a semester long project that involved interdisciplinary teacher collaboration between mainstream secondary level English Language Arts (ELA) and ESL teacher candidates. Qualitative data in the form of reflective writing, focus group discussions, and interviews were collected. The reflective process is critical to the preparation and ongoing professional development of educators in that educators can re-visit events and develop multiple perspectives that situate the events within a theoretical context and create connections between beliefs, theory, and practice. Ayers (2004) discusses reflection as "a disciplined way of assessing situations, imagining a future different from today, and preparing to act" (p. 110) and as such formed the basis for the data collected during the semester.

Contextual Factors and Participants

The backdrop for this research was a co-scheduled, semester- long TESOL and English Methods course focusing on building academic literacy skills through the teaching of Young Adult[2] (YA) literature selections. The participants were eighteen candidates enrolled in a Master's of Science in Education program in TESOL and sixteen candidates enrolled in a Master's of Science in Education program in English Education. The average age of the TESOL candidates was thirty four years and the group consisted of one male and seventeen females. The teachers ranged in background experience and certification, but sixteen of the TESOL candidates held teaching certifications in either elementary education, ESL (and seeking a master's degree to satisfy final state certification requirements), or in a secondary education core subject (e.g., Mathematics, Science, Social Studies or English Language Arts). Two candidates were seeking initial certification in TESOL and were not certified in another subject. Of the sixteen who were already certified, all were currently employed in

schools in New York City or one of the surrounding counties. The average age of the English Education candidates was 29.3 years and the candidates were all either seeking an initial certificate in secondary level English Education or a Master's degree to complete their state certification process in English Education. The English Education group consisted of four men and twelve women. Those who possessed certification were also employed in either public schools in New York City or in the surrounding counties.

The course structure was designed to provide ESL and English teachers with a foundational knowledge of teacher collaboration through course readings and discussions. In conjunction with the building of a theoretical base of knowledge, the goals were to create supervised, structured opportunities for teachers to discuss issues of ELLs in mainstream classrooms, identify challenges faced by ELLs, problem solve, and ultimately collaborate to create a YA literature thematic unit that would build skills necessary for mainstream success in the ESL classroom and provide access to the curriculum for ELLs in the mainstream English classroom. The thematic unit required groups of students to select a young adult novel, decide on themes that would emerge from the teaching of that novel (for example, family relationships, social class, friendship, immigration), and develop a series of lessons that would span two to three weeks. In the lessons, the novel itself, as well as the emergent themes would be explored. Both mainstream and ESL students would be learning together, and the ESL and English teacher candidates collaboratively developed the unit and lesson plans to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.

Method

The TESOL and English Education faculty members developed the research methodology in conjunction with modifying the existing course to include additional collaboration within the existing syllabi. The following data collection formats were used:

- Interviews (audio-recorded and transcribed) with open ended questions on candidates' experience to date, knowledge of, and beliefs about interdisciplinary teacher collaboration. The first group of interviews took place during the first two weeks of the semester (August/September), and again during the last two weeks of the semester (December).
- Weekly guided, reflective journal entries on the collaboration taking place in the course; these were written and analyzed in a narrative inquiry framework.

- Focus group interviews/discussion (four throughout the semester; September, October, November, and December; audio-taped and transcribed).
- The focus group, reflective writings, and interview data of only TESOL teacher candidates is described in this article.

Data Analysis

Issues that were important to the participants emerged as a result of their reflective writing, focus group discussions, and interview responses. The interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and both the transcriptions and reflective writings were coded in a recursive and iterative way. In other words, I initially had assumptions about the issues related to teacher collaboration and ESL student success, but as the transcription and coding were being conducted different categories emerged. This was in part due to the open ended nature of the interview, focus group, and reflective writing prompts since participants were able to introduce issues and topics that were not explicitly asked about. In addition, this occurred because of my own beliefs about what the important issues in ESL/mainstream teacher collaboration would be, based on my own experiences as an ESL teacher, program coordinator, and teacher educator. For example, I went into the study believing that collaboration would be embraced as a way to meet the needs of ELLs who might be underserved, and the barriers that would emerge would have a great deal to do with administrative support and gaining knowledge and skills rather than teacher positioning. I also believed that the participants would be receptive to working across disciplines, and that since ESL and English education are allied fields, it would be easier for teachers to work together. I felt that ESL teachers would find working with mathematics or physics teachers more challenging and that working with English language arts teachers would be a natural fit. As I read and re-read the data and collected more data, candidate writing would necessitate new categories and recoding. This was primarily due to the fact that the participants had experiences within their collaborative groups that my colleague and I did not anticipate, and during the time the groups were working together, were not aware of. For example, my colleague and I structured the first co-scheduled class to act as a 'getting to know you' event and literature circle discussion. Candidates from each class were required to have selected and read a YA novel and bring notes for discussion within their small, interdisciplinary groups. The groups were then to engage in a consensus reaching discussion (something explicitly taught as a *talking to learn* strategy in the ESL methods classes) and ultimately decide on a young adult novel to teach. My English education colleague and I walked around the room and heard lively discussion about the books our candidates had read as well as ESL student issues and the types of writing that need to be developed in the secondary English classroom. We were both excited about what we perceived to be the success of the evening. Later in the week, when the student reflections started arriving in my email in-box, I was disabused of my previous notions. The TESOL teacher candidates were angry. They were angry at what they felt was a superior attitude on the part of the English candidates: "They treated us like we knew nothing about books and writing" (Roxie[3], Reflective Journal Entry, October, 2007); the power struggles that occurred in-group: "We [the ESL teachers] wanted to do a book that we knew the ESL kids could not only relate to but actually get through. They [the English candidates] kept wanting to do Kite Runner…way to high for the kids we had created a classroom profile of" (Jay, Reflective journal entry, October, 2007). In addition to feeling that the English candidates saw the TESOL candidates as less than equals, the negotiation of meaning came up as a frequent topic in the first reflections: "They kept talking about *front-loading*. Finally, Tara (another TESOL candidate in the group) told them she had never heard that term. After they looked at us like we were from Mars, they explained it, and it was basically schema activation…we had just never heard that term used" (Lisa, focus group discussion, November, 2007). Perhaps the strongest sentiment came from Holly after the second meeting. Holly is a certified secondary level English teacher seeking ESL certification and had taken five courses towards an advanced certificate in TESOL at the time of this course: "I do not like working with them [English teachers]. So far I have taken the initiative each time to contact them. I have NEVER [Holly's emphasis] gotten an email in return. I would prefer quite honestly NOT [Holly's emphasis] to work with them. The fact that this is a required and graded assignment will work to mend this problem to some degree. As with most group work, a group is key, not an individual. I will, of course, remain open to reinventing this task and the group" (Reflective journal entry, October, 2007). Holly's reflection highlights the challenges that arise when professionals must take the initiative to meet and participate in a group project. In addition, her comment that 'a group is key' speaks to the issue of developing collaborative skills so that teachers have the tools that are necessary to successful interdisciplinary collaboration. Holly's reflection is especially interesting since she entered the TESOL

certification program with a secondary English education certification and works as a high school English teacher. She has identified with the pre-service TESOL candidates rather than the English education candidates and has assumed the identity of ESL teacher through her program and group affiliation.

In my interviews and reflective writing prompts, I was focusing on how teacher collaboration could help ELLs and where in the curriculum collaboration could effectively occur. In addition, I wanted to understand the beliefs that these candidates had about collaboration and develop a learning environment where they could see just how effective teacher collaboration could be for their ESL students in the mainstream and ESL classrooms. The candidates' actual responses caused me to add categories that I hadn't considered during the design of the study. For example, one disturbing trend that emerged from many of the candidates' written responses, and to a lesser extent but still present in during the focus discussions, was anger at a system that can and has marginalized both ELLs and their teachers. This anger was frequently manifested in an 'us' (ESL teacher) versus 'them' (content teacher) attitude. These feelings of anger changed over the course of the semester, but were present and 'loud and clear' in message in the beginning of the semester. In addition, while reviewing the data, I would read a reflection or statement that made a point that seemed especially important to a particular teacher candidate and I would go back to the other journal entries and interview transcripts to see if that theme emerged in other students' responses and coded accordingly when it did. There was overlap in some of the categories that emerged; they were coded as follows:

- Barriers to collaboration, including time, the culture of isolation, teacher positioning, and ESL teachers' knowledge of content.
- Mainstream teachers' impressions about ESL and ELL's and their understanding of the needs of ELLs.
- Candidates' feelings of being under-prepared in terms of their skills in collaborating with other teachers.
- Unrealistic increase in teacher workload.

In Their Own Words: Themes that Emerged from the Qualitative Data

Barriers to collaboration: Time, the culture of isolation, teacher positioning, and ESL teachers' knowledge of content. All eighteen of the TESOL candidates discussed barriers they experienced both in the course under investigation and in their school settings. Time was a factor for the sixteen in-service teachers in terms of their ability work with teachers across the disciplines in their school settings. These teachers worked at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels. Finding colleagues who are willing to engage in this type of collaboration compounded the issue of time since the commitment needed to be made either during shared preparation periods or during the teachers' lunch periods.

Many teachers wrote about and discussed how they felt like they were in the same position as their students when they began teaching: they either would sink or swim on their own. They echoed feelings of loneliness and isolation both as new teachers and as ESL teachers, which frequently represent a minority in a district. One teacher remembers her first day of teaching:

I was really excited. I had the name of a mentor, a classroom key, a little box of supplies, and a class list. When I entered the classroom it was dismal. I was ready to do the bulletin boards, but even with that, the room seemed empty and solitary. I tried to find my mentor for the first two weeks. When I finally did, she said we would set up meetings. I saw her that time, once in May, and once in June and I was considered 'mentored'. My door closed that first day and I was alone. I struggled with making decisions about what to teach, what was important to these students, and how to select content because the principal said that they did CBI there. I did interest inventories but it turned out that I had 28 students and 28 different identified interests. Pulling a theme was hard. I wish I had other teachers to collaborate with. Even if they couldn't help with my issues we would kind of all be in it together. (Jenn, reflective journal entry, September, 2007)

Positioning and marginalization of the ESL teacher, program, and students is another theme that emerged related to barriers to collaboration. One candidate shared her experiences of not having a set space to teach and having to move from location to location throughout the day. Not only did this make planning a challenge in terms of not having a space or desk to call her own, but teaching in the hallway made her feel that ESL was not taken seriously and that she and her students were not a priority. In one of her reflective journal entries she writes "When I get these kids and we go to the designated space there are sometimes other people there already using it. I can get them to move, but it takes time and my students are standing there watching me. It makes me feel like I am begging for space to teach, which I guess I am. I feel so bad for these little kids" (Mary, reflective journal entry, September, 2007). Other reflections from the TESOL candidates highlighted how the ESL teacher is viewed as an adjunct and not

a part of the 'real' teaching staff in the building. Another candidate echoed this sentiment during a focus group discussion that asked candidates to share their experiences (if any) with interdisciplinary collaboration to date:

> I had my prep-period [*sic*] at the same time as three other teachers who taught science, social studies and English. I was kind of friendly with them and I figured I would ask them if we could plan together so I could help the ELLs we had in common. To their credit, they agreed to meet. The first day, the math teacher never showed up and the science and social studies teachers kind of lectured me on how their subject was the important one and I should figure out how to fit their needs into my ESL class. This was fine, but I also wanted them to use some strategies I could give them to help their ELLs. I met with them three more times, thinking it would get better and I could turn them to see how some strategies could help the ELLs, but each session became a "do this, do that" type of thing and an opportunity to tell me how hard it was to work with the beginning level ELLs. I let things fizzle out because I really didn't know how to deal with it." (Jane, Focus group discussion, September, 2007)

In terms of content knowledge needed to engage in CBI, the main factor that emerged from the participants' writing and discussion was access to the content curriculum. ESL teachers have the task of teaching language and content, and frequently the content they decide on is content that reflects their strengths as teachers and their students' interests. One of the TESOL participants discussed her experience with a specific type of writing that ESL students need to master in New York State in order to pass the standardized exam in English:

> I was teaching very different kinds of writing. We did a lot of journal entries and letters, and five paragraph essays, which I thought was the kind of thing they (ESL students) needed for their classes. Then, the English teachers in my collaboration group started talking about the critical lens essay and I had no idea what this was. When I found out, I realized that this is a really hard kind of essay for ESL students to write since you need a lot of different things. You need background knowledge, intense information on two novels, and, hardest [*sic*] of all, the ability to interpret a quote which can be metaphorical. I said to myself, "Wow, I've been really wasting my and their time by

focusing on this five paragraph essay!" (Roxie, reflective journal entry, November, 2007

Since the course assignment was to select and teach a Young Adult novel, many of the TESOL participants discussed how this was new to them in terms of the types of reading ELLs engage in. Julie, who was teaching 6th grade, discussed that she had a variety of classroom reading materials, but they were all specifically for ELLs:

> After looking at some of the novels [the professor] brought in for us to pick from or get ideas from, I realize that the stuff I have in my classroom is really all wrong. It is very formulated and has fill in the blank questions after each chapter. It had pre-reading questions and comprehension questions and a vocabulary list. It really is a Basal reader for ELLs. It's not that I had never seen these, it's just that the school I teach in only gave me these leveled readers. When I saw the real YA literature, I was excited and worried. Excited because these were really great novels with important messages and a lot of ways the theme could be developed. Worried because I had no idea how to teach such a novel. This is what I hope to learn from this class. (Reflective journal entry, October, 2007)

Finally, Roxie discussed how she is learning what needs to be done in the ESL class to really develop the necessary language skills in the context of the content:

> I had an elementary background, then got placed in ESL after I finished half my [TESOL] degree. I approached all of my groups as an elementary teacher, which isn't all bad…but I was missing the real content stuff. For example, I had no idea what a critical lens essay was, which they [ELLs] need to pass the regents. Teaching literature is different, and I didn't realize what I was missing out on until this course. I was excited, worried, and nervous about the whole thing, but I do feel that I have better skills for teaching English content and working with English teachers in my school. I'd like to do this with math and science and social studies too. (reflective journal entry, November 2007)

Mainstream teachers' knowledge of and beliefs about ELLs. Another issue that emerged from the data was that of mainstream teachers' beliefs about linguistically diverse learners. Many of the candidates expressed concern over the notion that content teachers looked at ELLs as students for

whom they were not responsible or who were somehow broken and needed to be fixed. In her journal entry Mary explores how the mainstream teachers she has been working with are less than eager to discuss the ESL students who they share, which she feels is an outcome of the lower expectations these teachers have for their non-native speaking students: "I have gone to [name] numerous times since they [ESL students] have a lot of trouble in that class but my attempts to help have been met with this patronizing tone…what do you want to do this extra work for…I don't really expect much from them [ESL students]" (reflective journal entry, October 2007).

Another candidate described an incident she had in her collaborative group when the discussion topic dealt with ways to support ELLs in the mainstream English classroom:

> The ESL people were talking about some ideas that maybe could be used in the English class to help the ELLs with the reading. The English group's talk turned to types of busy work that the ELLs could do like doing a computer program or being the time keeper in a group. This made me angry because the ELLs are always getting stuck doing menial things while the English speakers get to do the real work, and really, the real learning. Being a time keeper in the group every time doesn't help those [ELLs] with anything" (Jenn, Focus group discussion, November 2007)

Alternatively, Roxie focuses on the experiences students who are learning English bring to the classroom and how mainstream teachers can come to see their diversity as strength:

> My students come to us with almost no skills in terms of academics, but the beginners are placed in mainstream classes for all but 3 periods a day. From observations I did I see that the ESL kids are often stuck on a computer or paired with another student as a buddy, but ultimately, they are left to their own devices. They [content teachers] need to understand that these kids have a lot of experience in other ways, and they [content teachers] need to take the time to learn how to work with these kids. I think that getting together like we are helps us both understand each other's job, and by understanding what we are required to do, I think we can help each other and ultimately help the students. (Reflective journal Entry, December 2007)

Overall, the TESOL candidates felt that their mainstream counterparts' negative or inaccurate beliefs about ELLs stemmed from their lack of preparedness in teaching ELLs:

> "I don't really believe the English teachers don't want to help these kids. I know that they do. I actually think they can't, not with their current skills. The teachers in my group told us that they had never taken any coursework that dealt with teaching ELLs and their methods classes really didn't focus on the issue. I think, and I feel they have the same idea, that if they had the necessary information they would do fine" (Roxy, focus group discussion, October, 2007).

Skills. The lack of skills in collaborating across disciplines poses a barrier to developing successful partnerships. Through the course readings, meetings, reflection on the sessions, and developing frameworks within which to situate their experiences, the TESOL candidates did experience positive growth in the development of collaboration skills:

> We've met a few times with the English teachers and at first, I wasn't sure how this all would work…in fact, I wasn't that confident that it would work at all. Now, I feel stronger about my ability to talk to them and learn from them so my teaching is better. Reading about it and talking about it and planning the next session helps me see things in a different light. Having the knowledge that it [collaboration] is hard helps me not take things personally (Lisa, reflective journal entry, November 2007).

Jenn, on the other hand, remembers a particular session that highlighted how the lack of skills can form roadblocks to collaboration, "We were meeting to go over the learning goals and assessment plan for the unit. Our group consisted of two middle school English teachers and two middle and high school ESL teachers. We had defined team roles, determined a focus for the meeting, and had decided on the young adult novel and the supplemental materials we needed. When the group met, although we had roles, we found that they were really just labels. We didn't really know how to fulfill our obligations to the group and wound up talking a lot about our jobs" (Reflective journal entry, October, 2007).

Increased Workload. During the initial course reflections all of the TESOL participants reported that they felt that interdisciplinary teacher collaboration would increase their workload and therefore would not be worthwhile. Mary, an elementary school teacher in a pull-out ESL program provides a sentiment that is echoed by the other participants:

We have about 36 minutes of prep [preparation] each day, then lunch. I usually eat lunch at my desk because the prep isn't long enough. I have a lot of paperwork and planning to do. I have to keep anecdotal notes, plan books, etc. I have to call parents when necessary. I teach 6 different groups of ELLs, about 50 students all together, and they're all at different levels. Every night and every weekend I am working at home on school stuff. I can't imagine finding time that doesn't exist to work with another teacher. Just coordinating it would be a nightmare" (focus group discussion, September, 2007).

Changes in Beliefs. At the start of the course, there was a tone of frustration and at times anger that emerged from the reflections and focus discussions. The amount of *certification area-centrism* that emerged was surprising. Based on these initial levels of hostility towards other disciplines it seemed more imperative than ever to create a context for dialogues across disciplines.

While the first few meetings and attempts to collaborate had rough patches, ultimately ESL teachers developed knowledge, acquired skills, and developed positive beliefs about collaborating across the disciplines. This change is evident in their reflections at the end of the course. For example, Roxie, who initially wrote about the power-struggles that occurred in her group, included the following in her final reflection:

We really came together. In the beginning I didn't really like them [English candidates], and I kept feeling that they were attacking us [TESOL candidates]. It took a few trials and errors. The readings in the class about collaboration really helped me see it from outside of my own perspective. I almost felt like I was looking at our group from the outside. When I would reflect after the sessions I could see, based on the readings and discussions, what we did right and what we still needed to work on. I am happy with the way the unit turned out.

Roxie experienced professional growth through a combination of underlying theoretical knowledge, the opportunity to apply that theory to practice, and reflection on her own and her group's efforts.

In addition to the opportunity for the candidates to deconstruct collaboration, engage in applied practice, reflection, and independent practice, my colleague and I provided a collaborative model that many candidates had not previously been exposed to. In her final reflection Jenn summarizes what many participants voiced:

This [program] is an advanced certificate for me, so I have been in school for a while. I had never had an opportunity to work with professors from different certification areas. It was always just the department faculty. Seeing you two work together and actually revising things in real time taught me a lot about working with another colleague. The main thing I took away is that the teachers themselves have to develop this in a way that makes sense for them, not have a principal tell them how, what, and when to do it. (Final reflection, December, 2007)

Participants also demonstrated increased understanding of the demands classroom content places on learners. Samantha writes about her expanded understanding of the real content demands that her secondary level ESL students experience:

Before working with the English teachers this semester I kind of had a frustration with both my students and the content teachers in my school. My students kept saying how hard things were for them and that their teachers didn't understand…and the content teachers would complain that the ELLs were lazy, or unmotivated, or shouldn't be in their class. What I learned was that yes, it really is hard for these ELLs in high school English or Social Studies or Science or Math classes. The language demands were such that, while I was building skills, I was missing a lot, and therefore, they were missing a lot. The subject teachers were treating them as mainstream learners…they really didn't understand how language and culture interact with schooling and how, just by understanding SLA [second language acquisition] in a very basic way will help them develop lessons that are relevant to their ELLs. By the end of this semester, I know that I really developed an understanding of what my ELLs have to do to be successful in their English classroom. And this is important because you can't graduate in New York without the [state assessment]. I was also very impressed with how far the English teachers came. At first they seemed hostile and not receptive to our ideas, by the end, they were totally on board with working to develop learning experiences for ELLs in the English classroom and they saw that by doing this they wouldn't be abandoning their own

commitment to literature and English. (Final reflection, December, 2007)

Holly, who was very frustrated at the beginning of the course and experienced challenges with her group coming together, described how professional growth occurred and collaboration was fostered:

> There was a turning point around the end of October. We had been meeting and talking a lot with the English teachers. I had a lot of negative feelings about their commitment and their respect of ESL teachers and students. While we were meeting with them [English teachers] and having our TESOL methods class we had been doing these readings on collaboration and discussing how the things in the research emerged or didn't in our groups and that really helped me see things from a research perspective and take myself and my group's issues out of it and look at what was happening professionally rather than personally. We talked about ways it could go wrong and ways it could go right and how to negotiate with the other teachers. This was a huge help, and I feel it gave us real information and the ability to actually do this project, which I was afraid couldn't really happen. So, after all these meetings and discussions, things started to gel. It took a lot of work and my group would debrief after the meetings and take notes on what worked and what didn't. What I learned is that this really takes work, but if you put the work in at the beginning you get great stuff at the end. [Final reflection, December, 2007]

The collaborative project was also a theme that emerged from the final reflective entries. Candidates began the semester unsure that the unit would come together and unconvinced that anything would emerge from the collaborative relationship. During our TESOL only class sessions the candidates would spend a great deal of time asking me about the unit, how it was to be done, and what would happen if their partners did not adequately participate. The TESOL candidates wanted a road map for the project. I revised the assignment and developed explicit *elements of collaboration between ESL and ELA teachers'* suggestions in each of the required unit components. This provided the additional and needed support and enabled candidates to work together in a more structured way which emerged as an important component of the early stages of the collaborative groups. Lisa reflects on the outcome:

> I was very happy with our group's unit plan and how we were able to integrate real content skills into the ESL unit while the English teachers had sections on vocabulary development for ELLs, schema activation and connection for ELLs, differentiated assignments and assessments and in general, an appreciation for what the ESL students could contribute to their class. Adding the suggestions for how we could collaborate was a huge help and it gave us a framework and jumping off point. It was great to see that the English teachers started seeing them [ESL students] as an asset and not a hindrance. I also walked away with this feeling that I can do it…I can go to content teachers, work with them, and write lesson plans that really help my students. I didn't think I could do this before. I thought there were too many issues that we couldn't overcome. I feel differently now. (Final refection, December, 2007)

Discussion

Collaboration between teachers within- and across-disciplines can be challenging and problematic for a variety of reasons. First, despite the fact that collaboration is encouraged, teaching, especially secondary level teaching in the United States is frequently a profession that takes place in isolation. Teachers are assigned to their own classroom, have dedicated time to prepare that may not coincide with others who they might work with, and essentially act in isolation. Teacher isolation can be defined as "the extent to which teachers are restricted from or restrict themselves from interactions with other individuals or groups in the school" (Bakkenes, de Brabander, & Imants, 1999, p.168) and in fact has become the norm in United States schools' organizational culture (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2003). While efforts are underway at administrative levels in schools to foster teacher partnerships through activities such as new teacher mentoring and shared planning, teacher education programs must take the lead and integrate explicit instruction in interdisciplinary teacher collaboration, focusing on both declarative and procedural knowledge. In other words, not only including course readings and discussion on the benefits of collaboration and models of collaborative teaching partnerships, but providing explicit instruction on how to develop these partnerships and negotiate the relationships found within collaborative contexts is important. This dual focus is essential for real change and success to occur.

Many of the discussions that emerged from the interviews, focus groups, and reflective writing revolved around the theme of teacher positioning which can form a barrier to successful collaboration.

It is an unfortunate reality that ESL teachers, programs, and students are often marginalized. ESL teachers are frequently not seen to be on the same level as mainstream teachers at all points on the educational continuum, from elementary to higher education to adult education (Auerbach, 1991). Grey discusses a variety of factors that contribute to marginalization of ESL teachers which include the fact that immigrant students are expected to become *English speakers* and *Americans* at the expense of their native language and culture and that initiatives such as *English Only* and subtractive bilingual education play a critical role in the way that linguistically diverse learners are viewed (Auerbach, 1991). The power relationships that emerge between teachers and disciplines in the school can make collaboration a challenge. Arkoudis (2006) discusses that the call for collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers assumes an equitable relationship between the two. She argues that in fact, this relationship is usually not equitable and the ESL teacher usually has low status in the school. If ESL students and teachers are marginalized, meaningful collaboration across the disciplines becomes difficult, if not impossible.

In addition to teacher positioning, the issue of the types of content knowledge that ESL teachers possess emerged as an important theme. While the main task of the ESL teacher is language instruction, the current United States school environment requires ESL students to meet the same standards as their native speaking counterparts in terms of content knowledge. Students who are language learners, and who may have had very different or limited educational experiences in their native countries, need the support of both the content and the ESL teacher in order to be able to achieve levels of success in their new country. While in the past it may have been acceptable that "ESL teachers should choose a content area they feel comfortable with and enjoy teaching" (Brown, 2004), presently, what takes place in the ESL classroom must be connected to and supportive of the acquisition of academic skills that are required in mainstream classrooms. Teaching students who are learning English in a thematic way allows for the exploration of content and the understanding and development of the linguistic skills and academic language needed in mainstream classrooms, in other words, the language of schooling (Schleppegrell, 2004). However, these themes and the content selected must be aligned with the actual work that is taking place in the mainstream, subject-area classroom in order to allow for the transfer of skills across contexts. When ESL teachers and subject area teachers work together, ESL teachers have the opportunity to deconstruct the real meaning of *content based instruction* and *success in mainstream classrooms*.

Teacher beliefs about students who are not native speakers of English also emerged as a common theme from the data. Beliefs, both negative and positive, can affect the level of collaboration among professionals and the degree of success that can be achieved in collaborative teams. Researchers have found that the way teachers perceive their linguistically diverse learners directly affects the way that teachers teach those students as well as the students' attitudes about themselves (Clark, 1988; Flores, 2001; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). When teachers have negative beliefs towards their ELL's, either based on their culture, language, or other factors, these beliefs and attitudes can translate into behaviors on the part of teachers that have a negative effect on students, specifically in terms of student efficacy and achievement (August & Hakuta, 1997; Cummins, 2000; Díaz-Rico, 2000; González & Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gutiérrez, 1981). These negative beliefs about learners' native language and culture can influence how teachers evaluate performance and achievement (August & Hakuta; Cummins; Díaz-Rico; González & Darling-Hammond; Gutiérrez).

The observation that mainstream teachers lack knowledge of teaching ELLs is supported by recent research that found that 77% of content area teachers have had no course work or professional development that addresses the issues of ELLs (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). This poses a challenge to schools, teachers, and linguistically diverse learners since ELLs generally spend about 80% of their school day in mainstream classrooms (Dong, 2002). When mainstream teachers have had no coursework or professional development that makes them aware of the strengths and needs of ELLs they can fall into the trap of viewing these learners as a homogeneous group with the label *non-native speaker*. In addition, this belief leads to the assumption that ELLs are students in need of remediation and ESL instruction is remedial coursework, both of which are wrong. This serves to marginalize diverse learners and suppress opportunities for real sharing, learning, and development to occur.

The findings of this research suggest that collaboration between teachers is neither natural nor easy. If teachers do not possess the skills necessary to work together then, despite their best intentions, the collaborative relationships will fail. These skills can be developed through explicit instruction, either at the pre-service or in-service level. Teachers muse be exposed to explicit teaching in terms of learning "how to work, communicate, and collaborate with

other adults" (McCormick, Noonan, Ogata, & Heck, 2001, p. 130). Teacher collaboration requires members of a team to step out of their comfort zones, to share in an open, non-evaluative way, and to be able to engage in constructive, critical analysis of their own and their colleagues work. Teachers must be able to accept constructive comments and share their personal teaching stories: both the successful ones and those that highlight needs and short-comings. In addition, teachers must be able to identify challenges and collaboratively develop plans to address the issues, remain focused on those issues, and revisit them periodically. Finally, teachers must share similar objectives and have a stake in the outcome of the collaborative effort. Support throughout the process is essential.

Time for collaboration also emerged from the data as an issue that forms a barrier to collaboration. The constraint of time in the school building is one that teachers (and teacher educators) have little control or influence over. This is probably the barrier most resistant to individual change and initiative and requires administrative support to overcome. However, research suggests that when teachers do effectively collaborate, their creativity as educators, levels of collaboration, and productivity increases. Researchers have observed that while collaboration does not decrease planning time, it does increase the quality of instruction (Walther-Thomas & Bryant, 1996). Leonard and Leonard (2003) investigated the barriers to collaboration reported by a group of teachers. While this research was not specifically focused on ESL/mainstream collaboration, the researchers found that despite calls for more collaboration and the implementation of collaborative programs in schools, teachers reported that major barriers exist that cause these collaborative initiatives to fail. Based on teachers' responses, the authors developed a list of suggestions for promoting teacher collaboration and reducing the barriers associated with time. Some of the suggestions that addressed the issue of time and could be implemented without the complete restructuring of programs include:

- "Arranging common planning time.
- Provide substitutes for teacher release time.
- Pay for collaboration beyond school time.
- Reduce teacher paperwork.
- Provide web-based teacher networks" (Leonard & Leonard, 2003).

Teacher education programs can play a critical role in providing theoretical and practical education in developing, building, and sustaining interdisciplinary teacher collaborative relationships. Educational Leadership programs can take a lead in providing future administrators with the same types of understandings and the skills needed to support interdisciplinary teacher collaboration. The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) requires future leaders develop collaborative environments and prepare staff to engage in collaboration and that educational leaders ensure that "collaboration[s] are [*sic*] used to design meaningful and effective experiences that improve student achievement" (ELCC, 2002, p. 6). Since many educational leadership programs require authentic projects to be completed by administrative interns, one of the required projects could be making space for collaboration in their building or district. This would ensure a multi-faceted approach that would span the organizational levels that exist: Teacher Education programs, teachers, school, and district leaders.

Changes over Time

Candidates did experience change over time in terms of their beliefs about collaboration and the types of skills they developed that will enhance collaborative partnerships. The types of relationships that the candidates developed, based on knowledge, building of skills, and positively affecting dispositions, played a role in their changing beliefs. Prior research that has investigated intra-group relationships describes different types of conflicts that can arise (Tjosvold, 1997). These conflicts can fall into either the cognitive or affective domain. The TESOL participants experienced affective conflicts that are similar to the prior findings of feeling *devastated*, *personally attacked*, and *angry* (Hargreaves, 2001). These feelings, while natural, can be destructive to the collaborative group and were effectively addressed in this course through open and supportive focus group discussions, reflection, and group problem solving techniques in the form of reflective frameworks as a spring board for constructive discussion of the group's interactions.

Many of the later reflections emphasized the positive role that seeing the faculty from different disciplines collaborate and negotiate (and re-negotiate) their own professional relationship played in the candidates' understanding of collaborative teaching partnerships. Kluth and Straut (2003) discuss the importance of modeling collaboration for general and special education teacher candidates. The current study found that similar modeling and creating opportunities for ESL and mainstream candidates to develop collaborative relationships across disciplines had positive effects on candidates' skills and beliefs.

The changes that candidates experienced in terms of understanding each others' discipline were

significant. By having the ability to work together, to plan, problematize, and learn about the challenges that students learning English can experience in the content classroom, the English and ESL teacher candidates developed skills that make it possible to meet the needs of language learners in a way that enhanced instruction for all learners. What tends to occur when language learners are in mainstream classes with teachers who have had little or no preparation in working with such students is that teachers "plan and deliver instruction as if everyone in the classroom has reached the level of English language proficiency that is needed to master the instructional content" (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002, p.3). When teachers attempt to directly apply strategies and techniques that have been successful with mono-lingual students to the L2 population, they fall into the trap of not being able to situate the needs of ELLs into the broader educational context. This can create a situation where mainstream teachers blame ELLs for their lack of success in the mainstream classroom, which places different demands on ELLs than on monolingual learners (Toohey, 2000; Valdés, 2001).

Finally, the reflections spoke to the finding that developing collaborative skills takes time and work on the part of teachers and does not come naturally (Friend, 2000). When teachers engage in successful, collaborative partnerships their sense of teacher efficacy and their knowledge base are enhanced (Brownell, Yeager, Rennells, & Riley, 1997). It also seems that increased collaboration has a recursive effect on teacher efficacy: increased collaboration increases teachers' feelings of efficacy (Shachar & Shmuelevitz, 1997). This in turn benefits students since research has shown that when teachers have an increased sense of efficacy there are positive effects on student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Ross, 1995). In addition, collective efficacy, which refers to teachers' beliefs and attitudes about the ability for the whole faculty to be successful in teaching (McGuigan, 2005) has a dramatic positive effect on student outcomes (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk, 2000, Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002a; Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002b). One way that this sense of collective efficacy can be built is through collaborative teacher partnerships.

Conclusion

While this study was small and its results not necessarily generalizable to larger populations, there are benefits to such research. The participants' experiences and beliefs generally supported past investigations of teacher collaboration and identified challenges that arise when ESL teachers and content teachers collaborate to plan instruction for students who participate in both ESL and mainstream classrooms. The results of this research highlighted issues such as teacher positioning, knowledge of ELLs on the part of mainstream educators, and knowledge of content and curricular demands on the part of ESL teachers who are required to engage in CBI. These are issues critical to effective collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers and create challenges that must be faced by all teacher educators and teacher education programs.

TESOL teacher education programs must make room for real collaboration to occur so that pre-service teachers are able to experience collaboration modeled by the faculty in the TESOL program and other certification areas. TESOL candidates must also gain an understanding of collaboration from a theoretical standpoint. In addition, they must be able to deconstruct issues relating to ESL students' success in mainstream classrooms and what constitutes CBI is in the current academic world. The current study provided an environment where this was accomplished by including course readings, discussion, reflection, and a modified loop-input format in the course. Finally, TESOL candidates and candidates from other disciplines need opportunities to actually engage in collaborative partnerships that require authentic products to be produced, such as the YA literature thematic unit the English education and TESOL candidates developed together. If teacher education programs assume that collaboration between ESL and mainstream will occur in the PreK-12 grade school setting then we are not giving pre-service teachers the opportunity to develop a knowledge base and skills set that will actually enable them to effectively collaborate. Rather, we are shifting the responsibility to another organization. This has proven not to be pedagogically sound, based on the paucity of collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers that currently occurs in schools.

This study supported prior research that has shown that teachers need to be exposed to models of collaboration (Kluth & Straut ,2003), and that they must develop not only declarative knowledge, but procedural knowledge of the skills necessary to effectively collaborate (Cook & Friend, 1995; 2002; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996). The present study extended the extant research to include interdisciplinary collaboration between TESOL and content area educators, which is important since the literature to date has focused primarily on collaboration between special and general education teachers. In addition, the present study provided support for the notion that while teacher collaboration is not a natural occurrence (Friend, 2000), teacher education program can indeed provide contexts for the effective development of these skills.

Teacher education programs can incorporate opportunities for pre-service teachers in mainstream certification programs to work with pre-service teachers of ELLs in a variety of innovative ways that make sense for their particular program. This allows the mainstream pre-service teachers to become sensitized to the needs and experiences of English language learners which heighten the potential for greater understanding, empathy, and patience. In addition, activities that sensitize mainstream teachers to the needs of ELLs allow the mainstream teachers to experience first hand the "impact of pedagogical orientation and teacher-student communication patterns and attitudes on student learning" (Kaufman, 1996, p.45). Conversely, pre-service ESL teachers can gain knowledge about the curricular demands of the subject, the skills needed for success in that particular content area, and the culture of the discipline. This allows pre-service ESL teachers to design learning experiences for their ELLs that build language and literacy skills that are aligned with the content they are actually engaged in learning and that are required for success in mainstream classrooms.

Footnotes

[1] LAU ET AL. v. NICHOLS ET AL. No. 72-6520 SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 414 U.S. 563 December 10, 1973, Argued January 21, 1974, Decided.

[2] Literature written specifically to an adolescent and young adult audience and recognized as a distinct genre.

[3] All names assigned to teachers are pseudonyms.

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