Teacher Experience, Learning, and Change:
An Investigation of the Effects of Long-Term Professional Development

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Ruth Rockmore, my grandmother and my role model.

Abstract

As US public schools become increasingly diverse and teachers are expected to teach across cultural differences, teacher educators must consider how different professional development models shape teacher learning and practice. This study explores how a cohort of 55 P-12 teachers experienced and perceived long-term professional development focused on literacy instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. Specifically, it examines characteristics of the process of change for the collective case of participants during their participation in three literacy courses facilitated on-site in the district. The study also provides a close look at the experiences of four upper elementary teachers throughout coursework and in the semester following their completion of the final course. Using grounded theory and symbolic interactionism as a methodological framework, the study utilized and explored data from a three-year professional development program enacted through a partnership between a rural school district and a major university. Data collection tools include surveys, reflections, course artifacts, focus groups, observations, interviews, fieldnotes, and questionnaires. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method associated with grounded theory research to determine categories of interest and inductively generate theory. The impact of coursework can lead to small or significant changes in mindset and practice. Study findings indicate that change happens both incrementally, as a result of on-going support and repeated exposures to ideas, as well as resulting from single, pivotal moments. Course design, duration, and structure were key factors in supporting teacher change.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements……………………………………………………………………..i
Dedication…………………………………………………………………………...iv
Abstract………………………………………………………………………………v
Table of Contents……………………………………………………………………vi
List of Tables………………………………………………………………………xiii
List of Figures……………………………………………………………………...xiv
List of Appendices…………………………………………………………………xv

Chapter 1: A Call to Action…………………………………………………………1

Chapter 2: Literature Review………………………………………………………10
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy……………………………………………...10
Why Culturally Relevant Pedagogy……………………………………...11
Cultural Identity and the Culture of Power………………………………13
Cultural Identity and Classroom Instruction……………………………..16
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Action: Making Curricular Choices.19
Teaching Style: The Power of Discussion……………………………….21
Motivating and Engaging Learners through the Use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy………………………………………………………….24
Professional Development for Teachers of Diverse Learners…………………...26
Addressing a Need: Instruction for English Learners……………………26
Supporting Teachers of Diverse Learners……………………………….29
Identifying Effective Professional Development………………...30
Structuring Professional Development to Support Teacher Change……………………………………………………………...33
Symbolic Interactionism………………………………………………………35
The Foundations of Symbolic Interactionism……………………………36
Unit of Analysis – I vs. Me………………………………………………40

Chapter 3: Methodology……………………………………………………………………43
Background………………………………………………………………45
Symbolic Interactionism: Linking Theoretical Framework to Methodology………………………………………………..45
Researcher Role…………………………………………………48
Setting…………………………………………………………………………51
Site and Context...……………………………………………………..51
Description of the Partnership………………………………………...52
Coursework………………………………………………………………54
Participants………………………………………………………………56
Data Collection…………………………………………………………………..57
Reflective Tools…………………………………………………………58
Self-assessments…………………………………………………………60
Interviews and Observations……………………………………………..61
Summer Course Data……………………………………………………63
Fieldnotes………………………………………………………………...64
Data Analysis……………………………………………………………………66
Coding…………………………………………………………………67
Analytic Tools……………………………………………………………69
Case Analysis: Matrices & Displays………………………………..69
Memos and Diagrams………………………………………………70

Chapter 4: Participation in the Literacy Strand of Coursework…………………………72
Literacy Coursework Strand to Improve Instruction With Diverse Learners……73
Course #1: Elementary Literacy Instruction for English Learners………………74
Overview of Course……………………………………………………...74
Goals and Objectives……………………………………………74
Why This Course Was Developed: Expanding Views of Diverse Learners………………………………………………..75
Demographics of Participants……………………………………76

Course organization……………………………………………...78
Class session structure…………………………………………...78
Key learning activities…………………………………………...78
Data Collection…………………………………………………….80
Written Data……………………………………………………...80
Spoken Data……………………………………………………...81
Observational Data………………………………………………82
Participants' Perspectives on Course……………………………………82
Assessment………………………………………………………83
Instruction……………………………………………………….87
Approaches to Vocabulary Instruction…………………..88
Modeling and Hands on Activities………………………90
Differentiation and Scaffolding…………………………92
Culture and Teaching……………………………………………93
Effective Instruction for English Learners………………93
Making Cultural Connections……………………………95
Summary…………………………………………………………96
Conclusions………………………………………………………98
Course #2: Developing Integrated Themes in Literacy (DITL) ………………...98
Overview of Course………………………………………………...99
Goals and Objectives……………………………………………99
Why This Course Was Developed: Teaching Literacy Through the
Content Areas…………………………………………...100
Demographics of Participants…………………………………..100
Course organization……………………………………………101
Class session structure…………………………………………102
Key Learning Activities: Engagement, Motivation, and Scaffolding
for Student (and teacher) Learning……………………………..103
Spring Class Sessions: Teaching and Learning………...104
Summer Class Sessions: Processing and Planning……..105

Data Collection……106
Written Data……107
Spoken Data……109
Observational Data……109
Participants' Perspectives on the Course……110
Instructional Practices……110
Valuing Hands-on Learning Experiences……110
Differentiation and Scaffolding……113
Vocabulary……114
Integrating Instruction……115
Utilizing Informational Texts……115
Thematic Instruction……117
Setting Clear Expectations……118
Summary……119
Conclusions……120
Course #3: Content Area Literacy: Integration, Implementation, and Assessment (CALIIA) ……121
Overview of Course……121
Goals and Objectives……122
Why This Course Was Developed……122
Links to Previous Coursework……124
Demographics of Participants……125
Course Organization……127
Class Session Structure……127
Key Learning Activities: Integrating Course Concepts and Integrating Instruction……129
Circular Beginnings and Endings……130
Data Collection……132
Written Data……133
Spoken Data……134

Observational Data…………………………………………...135
Participants' Perspectives on Course…………………………...135
Inquiry Based Instruction……………………………………136
Classroom Organization……………………………...136
Instructional Planning…………………………………..137
Assessment…………………………………………………...139
Purpose of Assessment………………………………139
Forms of Assessment…………………………………...140
Instructional Approach………………………………………143
Integrated Instruction…………………………………...143
Self-perceptions and Accomplishments………………...146
Summary……………………………………………………..147
Conclusions…………………………………………………..149
Synthesis of Courses/ Reflection on Coursework……………………………150
Instructional Change…………………………………………………150
Personal Pedagogy…………………………………………...151
Creating a Responsive Learning Environment…………………152
Collaboration…………………………………………………153
Conclusions…………………………………………………………..155

Chapter 5: Zooming in: Exploring the Experiences of Four Teachers…………………156

Case Study Methodology……………………………………………………156
Teaching Placement…………………………………………………156
Teaching Experience…………………………………………………157
Cohort and Academic Focus…………………………………………157
Data Collection………………………………………………………158
Todd: An Early Career Science Teacher……………………………………160
Understanding Todd…………………………………………………160
Todd as a Distinct Case………………………………………………161
Todd's Participation in the Cohort…………………………………...165

Visiting Todd's Classroom……………………………………………..165
Conclusion…………………………………………………………...169
Julie: A Novice Third Grade Teacher………………………………………..170
Understanding Julie…………………………………………………170
Julie as a Distinct Case……………………………………………171
Julie's Participation in the Cohort……………………………………177
Visiting Julie's Classroom……………………………………………...177
Conclusion…………………………………………………………...178
Jan and Mollie: Veteran Fourth Grade Team Teachers………………………...179
Understanding Jan and Mollie………………………………………179
Jan and Mollie as Distinct Cases……………………………………181
Gradual Change: Instruction and Assessment…………………185
Mollie and Jan's Participation in the Cohort…………………………...187
Visiting Mollie and Jan's Classrooms………………………………188
Conclusion…………………………………………………………...192
Discussion……………………………………………………………………193
Experience with Coursework: High Expectations, High Rigor, and Long-Term Support…………………………………………………...194
Collaboration Shapes Experience……………………………………197
Instructional Approach and Classroom Design………………………...200
Creating a Student Centered Classroom………………………..201
Increasing Student Voice and Inquiry…………………………..202
Tracking Learning Through Artifacts…………………………..205
Teacher As Capable Professional: Professional Agency and Self-Efficacy…………………………………………………………………207

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications…………………………………………..211
Limitations………………………………………………………...…214
Exploring Teacher Change…………………………………………………….216
Incremental Change……………………………………………………216

Course Design and Structure…………………………………...217
Spiraling Course Content……………………………….217
High Rigor, High Expectations…………………………222
Providing a Strong Theory to Practice Link……………225
Planning Varied Learning Experiences………………...226
Fostering Collaboration………………………………...228
Teacher as Professional…………………………………………231
Pivotal Moments……………………………………………………..233
Planned Course Experiences……………………………………233
Individual "aha" Moments……………………………………...236
Implications for Professional Development…………………………………….237
Duration and Length……………………………………………………238
The Importance of Context……………………………………………..238
Providing Multiple Experiences and Revisiting Concepts……………..241
Creating Theory to Practice Links……………………………………...242
Rigorous Coursework, High Expectations……………………………...243
Individual Voice, Individual Choice…………………………………….243
Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment……………………….244
Summary………………………………………………………………..245
Conclusion and Directions for Future Research………………………………..245
References……………………………………………………………………………248
Appendices…………………………………………………………………………...259

List of Tables

Table 1: Blumer's Root Images……………………………………………………………39

Table 2: An Outline of the Interpretive Paradigm……………………………………47

Table 3: Reflective Tools…………………………………………………………………..60

Table 4: Video Observation……………………………………………………………..63

Table 5: Gender and Demographic Breakdown of Elementary Literacy for English Learners Course……………………………………………………………………77

Table 6: Data Collected from Study Participants: Course 1……………………………..80

Table 7: Planned Assessments and Student Data Sources for Upcoming Academic Year……………………………………………………………………………85

Table 8: Method for Matching Instruction to Students' Developmental Levels………...86

Table 9: Number of Teachers at Various Levels Who Selected Vocabulary as a Key Area of Reading Focus…………………………………………………………...89

Table 10: Making Cultural Connections…………………………………………………96

Table 11: Gender and Demographic Breakdown of Developing Integrated Themes in Literacy (DITL) Course…………………………………………………...101

Table 12: Typical Day of teaching and learning in DITL……………………………...103

Table 13: Data Collected from Study Participants: Course 2…………………………..107

Table 14: Gender and Demographic Breakdown of Content Area Literacy: Integration, Implementation, and Assessment (CALIIA) Course…………………………...126

Table 15: Level of Teaching Experience of Participants……………………………….127

Table 16: Typical Day of teaching and learning in CALIIA…………………………...129

Table 17: Data Collected from Study Participants: Course 3…………………………..133

Table 18: Criteria for Selecting Cases………………………………………………….158

List of Figures

Figure 1: Features of Non-Fiction Texts……………………………………………..166

Figure 2: Expectations for Independent Reading………………………………………167

Figure 3: Alternative Assessment……………………………………………………183

Figure 4: Year Long Thematic Plan Display (Mollie's Classroom) …………...………190

Figure 5: Graphic Organizers and Alternative Assessment display (Jan's Classroom)..190

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Pre-course survey (CALIIA - Course #3)…………………………….....259

Appendix B: Implementation Plan (DITL).…………………………..……………....261

Appendix C: Peer Coaching Personal Goal Reflection – DITL.……………………….262

Appendix D: Classroom and Instructional Reflection………………………………….263

Appendix E: Classroom Visit/Teacher Interview Organizer…………………………...264

Appendix F: Sample Focal Case Interview Scheme…………………………..……...265

Appendix G: Theoretical Memo (Year 2) …………………………..………………..267

Appendix H: Cultural Immersion Event…………………………..…………………268

Appendix I: Integrated Unit Implementation Plan…………………………..………..269

Appendix J: Integrated Unit Overview…………………………..…………………...270

Appendix K: Museum Walk…………………………..……………………………...273

Chapter 1

A Call to Action

Five second graders sit in a semi-circle on the carpet to begin their daily calendar practice. With students eager to begin, Teacher Q asks María, a student who moved to the United States from Mexico during kindergarten and is classified as an English learner (EL), to answer questions about the date:

Teacher Q: What day is today?
María: Friday (incorrect answer; correct answer is Thursday)
Teacher Q: I wish today was Friday, but it is the day before Friday.
María: Tuesday?
Teacher Q: The day before Friday is Thursday. Today is Thursday.

As the group moves on to their formal reading lesson, Teacher Q wonders, "How can I foster learning experiences that provide María, and other English learners, with opportunities that are at their developmental level and challenge them academically and still address the instructional needs of the rest of the students in my class?"

Many classroom teachers find themselves in the same position as Teacher Q: they are trying to meet the academic needs of a variety of students without being adequately trained to support the learning needs of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Students from non-English speaking backgrounds compose the fastest growing sub-set of the K-12 student population (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). Although historically the greatest percentages of English learners in schools have been most noted in urban centers, in the past decade rural areas have seen large increases in the percentage of English learners in school populations. Rural teachers, like those studied by Wenger and Dinsmore (2005), and those who participated in the current study, are

concerned about their ability and preparation to meet the needs of students who are linguistically and culturally diverse. Research shows that these teachers, who are primarily white and middle class, report having less academic preparation than their counterparts in other schools (de Cohen, et al., 2005; Wenger & Dinsmore, 2005), receiving little coursework or guidance to understand the background knowledge and experiences of learners from diverse backgrounds, and believing they lack the cultural resources to connect to what their diverse students bring to the classroom (Futrell, Gomez & Bedden, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006).

As schools across the United States are experiencing a shift in the demographics of the students they are educating, and the ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of the students who are enrolling in schools are becoming more diverse, the characteristics of the teaching force are not demographically congruent with this change. Despite the fact that in 2005 minorities made up 39% of the US population, close to 90% of public school teachers were White, almost all were female, and most were raised in middle class homes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). This poses a potential disconnect between students' background strengths and academic challenges and teacher background knowledge. I experienced this disconnect when I, a White woman from a middle class background, moved to rural Mississippi to begin my career in education.

In the weeks leading up to my first day of school I worried solely about how I would effectively convey the curriculum and content in order to close the striking achievement gap that exists between students in the Mississippi Delta and those in the rest of the country. However, within my first hour of teaching fourth grade I became

acutely aware that my largest barrier to closing the achievement gap for my students, many of whom were already two grade levels behind in reading, would be my lack of understanding of and familiarity with African American interaction styles and cultural norms, not my lack of familiarity with state standards and curriculum. Familiarizing myself with my students' cultures would be as important as familiarizing myself with the fourth grade standards and curriculum.

I was raised in a fairly homogenous school setting and I had, similarly, begun teaching in a homogeneous setting. However, they were stark contrasts. As a European American, I had always been part of the majority. Now, as a European American woman from California teaching in rural Mississippi in a school that suffered from de facto segregation and no diversity (each of the 423 students was African American) I was the minority. Despite my minority status, I was still the one who created and enforced the rules of the classroom. I held the power and I lacked the training and support in multi-cultural education that I needed in order to make my classroom a safe place for all students. I had never heard of culturally responsive teaching and, at that point, was not aware of its vital importance in creating a productive place for student learning.

When I think of my first weeks and, in fact, my first year of teaching, a heavy feeling takes over. I remember thinking in the first weeks of school that once I understood what my students were saying, instruction would get easier. At the time, I did not know that African American English (AAE) is considered a register of its own. I corrected my students' speech and forced them to rephrase what they said to fit more neatly with Standard English (SE). If students asked me to use the restroom by stating "I

can use it" I would tell them to rephrase it as a question and wait until they said "May I use the bathroom?" This example seems minor, but is representative of a much larger and far-reaching issue. It is something that happened day after day. As a student, my teachers in school would wait for me to rephrase my questions to make them more formal, so I thought it a good practice to do the same. What I know now, and wish I had known then, is that each time I forced students to rephrase their statements into questions I was, in effect, invalidating a strong part of their cultural identity. I was telling my fourth graders that I did not accept who they were or how they spoke, and in effect I added to *reciprocal distancing:* as I unknowingly rejected student cultures by forcing them to speak Standard English, students responded by pushing back from me, thus widening the already existing disconnect (Au, 2006; Fordham, 1999). Au (2006) asserts that reciprocal distancing occurs when a teacher not only does not make use of, but also dismisses students' cultural and linguistic knowledge.

I was unprepared to work with students from diverse backgrounds in a way that would both validate and embrace their cultural heritage. I recognized this deficit in my pedagogy and throughout my first year teaching, and in the following years, I worked to consciously build a culturally responsive classroom. My professional development in this area was all self-initiated. I lacked formal training or support and it was not until I began my graduate studies at the University of Minnesota and had left my classroom in Mississippi, that I learned of the field of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). As I began immersing myself in the research related to CRP, I found myself constantly linking ideas back to specific instances in my classroom, or the classrooms of the teachers I supported

in Mississippi. In many instances I noted that the classroom practices I had developed and my natural approach to instruction, were closely aligned to the tenets of CRP. And, conversely, I also noted that some classroom practices were in stark contrast to the foundational ideas of CRP. For me, while teaching in Mississippi, it was all trial and error. I became a part of the community and attended my students' sporting events not because I knew that CRP research shows it an effective practice, but because for some reason I felt it important and knew that seeing all students shine (whether it be in math class or in city league basketball) was important to their success in my classroom.

I worked in a rural school district and drove 30 miles, twice a week, in order to take graduate courses. The professional development I received while teaching was often disconnected, haphazard, and short-term. I, like the teachers in this study, needed more. I needed long-term support and relevant professional development that focused on working with students from diverse backgrounds in addition to the general content area professional development that was available. It is my experience teaching in the Mississippi Delta that brought me to graduate school. I am deeply committed to working to close the achievement gap that exists in our country between students from diverse backgrounds and white students. And, in my experience, first as a novice teacher and later as a literacy coach, I believe that high-quality, long-term teacher education, professional development, and support is necessarily one of the key levers for change in schools. It is with this belief that I embarked on this research project.

In the past decade, rural areas such as Taylor, the community in this study, have seen great increases in their English learner populations. Teachers in schools with higher

concentrations of English learners, like the one I taught in and the ones in this study, report having less academic preparation than their counterparts in other schools (de Cohen, et al., 2005). Even in schools with certified teachers, research shows that teachers, who are primarily white and middle class, have received little coursework or guidance to understand the background knowledge and experiences, and cultural resources that their diverse students bring to the classroom (Futrell, Gomez & Bedden, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006).

The limited research that exists in the area of rural teacher preparation and support also documents a desire of newly certified teachers to have more training and preparation in the area of culturally relevant pedagogy (Wenger and Dinsmore, 2005). Without opportunities to learn about the background experiences of their students, teachers may perceive students as not being adequately prepared for school and blame families for not providing the support necessary for them to succeed in school (Howard, 1999; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers may also develop an inaccurate view of English language learners that can reduce their expectations of these students and exacerbate educational inequities.

This study focuses on an area of the United States' education system that, to date, has not been the subject of sufficient attention or research: professional development for culturally relevant pedagogy in a rural context. With the changing demographics of the United States and the increasing migration of families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to rural areas, teacher educators need to address the professional development needs of rural teachers in districts that are becoming increasingly diverse.

My study is inspired by my experiences as a novice teacher of students from diverse backgrounds and literacy coach. I felt unprepared as both a teacher and a literacy coach to effectively serve the students who, in my eyes, are too often marginalized and overlooked. My experience is representative of the experience of countless teachers across the United States. Because of this, and the fact that the body of research in continuous professional development is both young and limited in volume, this study is of the utmost importance. Through this study, I examine one example of how teachers in rural contexts adjust their teaching to better meet the needs of all students, including English learners. The professional development was embedded in a four year university-school district partnership that focused on shifting instructional approaches, academic content, and the mindset of teachers who work with diverse students. The university-school district partnership is one that was developed based on the needs of the particular district context as well as the mission of the university: both institutions share a commitment to eliminating the achievement gap that exists in public schools between white students and students from non-white backgrounds. The partnership was enacted with the intent of working to close the achievement gap through extended professional development delivered in the form of graduate level courses.

This study was conducted over a three-year period. And, over the course of the study my role within the partnership evolved. I was first approached with the opportunity to participate as a graduate and teaching assistant for the summer literacy strand courses. My background in literacy education; my interest in culturally relevant pedagogy; my experience teaching diverse learners; and my background working as a literacy coach to

support teachers of diverse learners made me a desirable candidate for the position. My experience with, understanding of, and commitment to rural education solidified my desire to participate in the hopes that my experiences would strengthen the impact of the partnership. I co-facilitated the summer literacy courses throughout the course of the study. I had a single goal: I set out to better understand the process of change for participating teachers, in mindset and pedagogical practice, in order to glean insights to create improved teacher education and support programs for literacy instruction with diverse learners.

While the field of research on teacher learning is relatively young, scholars are now beginning to better understand the process of learning and change that results from teacher's participation in effective professional development (Borko, 2004). Despite the pressing need for research, the literature focusing on effective professional development for culturally and linguistically diverse students is small and as yet not adequately put into practice to provide teachers with sufficient training in teaching and supporting English learners (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). In fact, "more than two-thirds of teachers nationally had not had even one day of training in supporting the learning of special education or LEP students during the previous three years" (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). Recognizing this fact, in tandem with the striking statistic from the Nation's Report Card for 2005 that while 41% of white students scored at or above proficient in reading, only 13% of Black students and 14% of Hispanic students scored at or above proficient, it is apparent that teachers require better preparation to work with students from diverse backgrounds (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). For this reason I embarked

on my study of the various ways long-term, site-based professional development, in a rural context, focused on effective literacy instruction for students from diverse backgrounds, shapes teacher change.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This study explores how teachers experienced a series of coursework that focused on effective literacy instruction for English learners within a long-term professional development partnership. In this chapter I review the relevant research base that laid the foundation for both the development of coursework as well as this study. First, I review current research related to effective literacy instruction for students from diverse backgrounds. I then review the literature on effective professional development as this is essential for supporting teachers in deepening their instructional practice. I conclude this chapter by exploring symbolic interactionism, the theoretical framework that encompasses this study and helps to define and understand the process of teacher change.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In the United States, one in every three students who is enrolled in public school is a student of a non-white background (Nieto, 2002). And, according to the recent National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) report, 49% of elementary and secondary students in the U.S. public schools will be from non-dominant groups by the year 2020 (NCES, 2011). In the upcoming sections, I review what research says is effective instruction for students from diverse backgrounds. My approach to this section of the literature review is to move from the macro to the micro level issues. I begin with a general look at culturally relevant pedagogy, establishing its need and foundational importance. I then explore the concept of culture; how culture and cultural representations are present, or at times absent, in schools; and how these representations

shape students' experiences with schooling. Next, I move to the classroom level and examine culture in the context of daily instruction. From there, I move to curricular decisions and briefly discuss what research says about how designing units and curriculum that are culturally relevant shapes student experiences; how literature choice shapes student comprehension; and how the use of discussion deepens comprehension. I conclude this section with a brief discussion on how factoring culture into curricular and instructional decisions and daily pedagogy relates to motivation and engagement theory.

Why Culturally Relevant Pedagogy?

In the United States, students from diverse backgrounds have been described as being "usually from low-income families; of African American, Asian American, Latino/a, or Native American ancestry; and speakers of a home language other than standard American English" (Au, 1998, p. 298). In this paper I use this as my definition of students from diverse backgrounds. The 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report shows that there is a significant achievement gap between middle class white students and low-income students or students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For example, there is a thirty-point gap between low-income African American students and advantaged white students (Donahue, Daane, & Jin, 2005). Because students from diverse backgrounds make up a large and growing portion of the population, and because there is a staggering achievement gap between the academic achievement of students from diverse backgrounds and that of European Americans, it is of the utmost importance that educators improve the academic instruction offered to non-white children. Students from diverse backgrounds need to

receive high quality, rigorous instruction that will push them to become thinkers and leaders (Au, 1998). This can be accomplished by engaging students in higher-level thinking, and linking what students experience at home and school through the use of culturally relevant instructional methods and curriculum. When students can relate to instructional styles used in the classroom and interact with the texts they are reading, their engagement, motivation, and achievement increases.

Over the past two decades there has been a significant body of research investigating strong instructional practices that take into account students' cultural backgrounds and how the use of these practices affects student experiences within the classroom. These instructional approaches have been termed "culturally appropriate", "culturally congruent", "culturally compatible", "culturally responsive", and "culturally relevant" (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In this paper I use the terms *culturally responsive teaching* and *culturally relevant pedagogy* interchangeably to refer to the practice of using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as the primary method for increasing the effectiveness of their instruction. When educators understand the cultural contexts of their students they can use this knowledge to not only become more effective educators but to also make the classroom learning environment more inclusive and motivating for all learners.

Au (2006) recognizes that the instructional style and content of instruction that dominates the classrooms in our country is a form of culturally responsive teaching. It is responsive and relevant to students from the mainstream culture of the United States. However, because one of every three students enrolled in elementary school and

secondary school is of a racially or ethnically diverse background, this form of instruction does not match the prior knowledge of one third of students who are being taught (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This lack of congruence between instruction and the cultural identities of students can lead to student resistance against instruction, the teacher, and school (Fordham, 1999).

Here, I highlight the research base as it relates to teacher understanding of students' cultural identities, and how the utilization of this knowledge in instructional planning and facilitation shapes students' motivation, engagement, resilience and response. In the following section I define *culture*; explore how culture is present in schools; and discuss how, according to current research, the manners in which culture is represented in classrooms and curricula shapes students' general schooling experiences.

Cultural Identity and the Culture of Power

"Culture, the great enabler, is disabling." (McDermott & Varenne, 1995).

The term *culture* is defined and described in various ways. Nieto (2002) defines culture as "the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created and shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors…and how they are transformed by those who share them" (p. 115). Peacock (1986) asserts that culture is not inherited biologically by individuals; rather, it is learned and is shared by a group. He goes on to argue that "culture is not behavior itself but the shared understandings that guide behavior and are expressed by behavior" (Peacock, 1986, p. 104). Thus, 'culture' is marked by common beliefs, values, and language patterns of specific social groups (Bergeron, 2008). When attempting to understand

cultural differences among groups, it is important to recognize that many children who are classified as ethnically or linguistically diverse are also from poor or working class homes, which is in itself another dimension of culture. Culture is not limited to language, ethnicity, or race; rather, culture extends to include social class and gender. Because culture is omnipresent within schools and classrooms, teachers' understandings of student cultural identity shapes student experiences in the classroom.

By understanding that the definition of culture expands to include race, gender, ethnicity, language, and social class, and encompasses shared cultural values and practices, the influence of culture on individuals is powerful. In spite of this, the impact of culture on both individuals and groups is often overlooked, especially the forms of culture that are enacted in schools. Peacock (1986) labels culture "the silent language". In this way, he posits that cultural traditions and conventions are often unconscious. Schools are cultural institutions that represent the dominant group in a culture. In American public schools, the curriculum and values that are predominantly represented in textbooks and literature selections are that of white, middle class people from European American descent. When this culture of power permeates schooling, the net effect is the maintenance of the status quo (Delpit, 1995; Foley, 1990).

The reproduction of mainstream, European American culture and the maintenance of social class inequality through schooling can be understood through an examination of Bordieu's (1977) idea of *cultural capital*. Bordieu describes cultural capital as competencies one has that allow one to function and succeed within society. These competencies function as symbolic capital. Cultural capital is inherited and procured

through cultural interactions. Educational systems take cultural capital, which is inherited, and turn it into academic capital, which is purportedly earned. Curriculum and standards are neither neutral nor free of culture; they represent the dominant culture. While students from white, middle class backgrounds generally come to school with the cultural capital to succeed, students from non-white cultural backgrounds- be they ethnic, linguistic, or economic class- generally lack this cultural capital when they enter public schools, and are most often not explicitly afforded it as they move through school (Delpit, 1995).

Fine (1997) posits that racial and cultural inequities can be seen as stemming from the consistent privileging of whites through specific institutional processes. Fine defines "whiteness" as the dominant white middle and upper class and argues that racial meanings for both "whiteness" and "color" are created and maintained in a parallel fashion through educational and social processes. "Whiteness was produced through the exclusion and denial of opportunity to people of color" (p. 262). Delpit's (1995) research confirms that parents of students from diverse cultural backgrounds want their children to acquire the cultural competence necessary for success in both school and society. Because of this, many parents assert their beliefs that school should equip children from diverse backgrounds with the ability to be comfortable with and fluent in discourse patterns and spoken and written discourse codes of the culture of power in schools. This process of learning ways of acting other than those of the home or community culture, can be termed *second culture acquisition* (Erikson & Schultz, 1982). In facilitating second culture acquisition, teachers are called upon to honor the cultural heritage of all

students and avoid promoting the feeling within students that their cultural identity is neither valid nor desirable. Au (2006) asserts that teachers can do this by becoming familiar with students' cultural identities.

Cultural Identity and Classroom Instruction

Culture deeply shapes a student's experience in school. Because of this, cultural identities (of the teacher and the students in a classroom) not only intersect with, but are inextricably linked to daily classroom instruction. In this section I discuss the general impact of culture on schooling experiences, in order to examine closely how culture manifests itself in daily classroom experiences.

Students from lower socio-economic stature (SES), non-white, or linguistically diverse backgrounds bring a form of cultural capital to the classroom that is very different from that of mainstream culture. This capital is not better or worse; it is simply a different form. Culturally relevant pedagogy acknowledges this cultural capital and sees it as an asset to learning. Delpit (1995) calls on teachers to both make students aware of and knowledgeable about rules of the culture of power.

Successful teachers of students from non-white backgrounds recognize and acknowledge all sides of their students' backgrounds rather than ignoring them; they acknowledge that student backgrounds often include poverty, unemployment, and violence (Mitchell, 1998). They also recognize that students both want to and can learn, and part of this process for many children from diverse backgrounds will include overcoming the environmental hazards of their home-life. Mitchell's (1998) research examines the practice of successful African American teachers and their classroom roles

in relation to the affective domain. Mitchell found that teachers play three major roles: teacher as mediator, teacher as activist; and teacher as active supporter of student growth and development. As mediators, teachers recognize the way not only ethnic or linguistic background affects students in school, but also how socio-economic status does. As activists, teachers support student rights and advocate for students inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, as active supporters of student growth and development, teachers maintain and communicate high expectations of student behavior and academics.

When teachers understand the strengths that students bring to school they can use this knowledge to create relevant curriculum and build bridges to academic learning (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). As cultural mediators, the successful teachers in Mitchell's (1998) study show an understanding of students' life experiences and students' potential as learners. In order to get to know students' culture, context, and resulting identity, it is necessary to work to create a trusting relationship with students. One way teachers can do this is by familiarizing themselves with students' lives outside of school (Ladson-Billings, 1994).This can reduce the degrees of isolation students may feel. Additionally, when teachers create a welcoming environment, a strong classroom community, and embrace student differences rather than try to erase or ignore them, students will be less resistant and will not feel that they need to lose their heritage or identity in order to succeed in school (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yoon, 2007).

Yoon (2007) studied how teacher behaviors shaped student participation and revealed that teachers have a powerful role in supporting student learning and shaping student identities. Successful teachers helped to positively shape student identities by

"positioning them as resourceful and intellectual instead of positioning them as powerless and inferior" (Yoon, 2007, p. 237). Yoon identified that successful teachers of English learners (ELs) invite them to share experiences and embrace their differences, both linguistic and cultural, while ineffective teachers do not show that they value their students' experiences or ideas by rarely calling on them in class. Teacher practice and attitude not only shape student attitudes toward their peers but also student perceptions of themselves (Yoon, 2007). Yoon's findings show that EL students' positioning of themselves as powerful or powerless greatly varied based on how they were positioned in classrooms by their teachers. Namely, students' who perceived their identities as being valued by their teachers were more engaged, confident, and comfortable in both academic and social interactions in the classroom.

Part of understanding students' cultural identities is being aware of cultural interaction styles. The widespread lack of acceptance for speech patterns that vary from Standard English is demonstrated constantly in public schools. It is visible when students are told to lower their voices, not talk out of turn, always raise their hands, and in effect, conform to dominant white interaction styles (Fordham, 1999). Fordham found that teachers in her study were often unaware of the importance of speech style and dialect to their students' identity. These teachers strictly adhered to forcing students to consistently speak Standard English (Fordham, 1999) without engaging in a dialogue about the culture of power (Delpit, 1995). By asking students to adopt the speech patterns of white culture in order to succeed in school, students are forced to give up an important part of their cultural identity. Fordham found that, in many instances, this trade-off led to

students being rejected by their peers as they were seen as "acting white". Thus, as Delpit's (1995) research shows, discourse styles convey and maintain perceptions of power and the way one speaks determines how one is viewed. Fordham's study with African American high school students found that speaking African American English brought with it perceptions about the speaker by those in the dominant group. When African American students, or students from any non-privileged cultural group, reject the use of Standard English, as those in Fordham's study did, this "promotes academic and social failure" (p. 276).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Action: Making Curricular Choices

While the previous section highlights the various ways culture manifests itself in classrooms on a daily basis, this section examines the various ways in which designing units and curriculum that are culturally relevant to students' lives shape student experiences. In this section I review existing literature and highlight specific research studies that focused solely on the implementation and effects of culturally relevant curricular units.

Teachers can show that they value student cultural identities by keeping student lives incorporated into the curriculum consistently, not from time to time or in token ways. The only way to do this is if teachers understand student lives outside of school (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2008; Moll et al., 1992). Students are not likely learn if they are not interested in the curriculum. One strength of a culturally responsive curriculum is that it benefits all students by honoring and building on the varied lived experiences and cultures of students in the classroom, which in turn

makes learning more meaningful (Milner, 2008). Culturally responsive pedagogy develops in students a sense of cultural competence and a synergistic relationship between their home culture and the school culture. Students do not need to give up or reject their home culture in order to achieve academic success. Culturally responsive teachers recognize this (Hefflin, 2002). Teachers facilitate feelings of cultural competence by reshaping curriculum (Mitchell, 1998; Morrison, 2008), tapping into students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1995), and establishing relationships between the school and children's homes (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Hefflin (2002) documents a transformation in student experiences as a result of the development and implementation of a culturally responsive approach to instructional planning and delivery. Students in Hefflin’s study were more fully engaged and participatory when the lesson enacted followed a culturally relevant approach by linking students’ personal lives to the literature through questions and follow-up activities. This happened because the teacher shifted from a European American instructional approach to one that took students’ culture and identity into account when choosing the text and instructional methods (Hefflin, 2002).

Boutte and Hill's (2006) study provides additional examples of the various ways that teachers integration of student culture into classroom instruction shapes student experiences. Hill's students achieved significant academic gains through a year of culturally relevant pedagogy that was exemplified by a hands-on unit in which all students (15 African American boys) researched the Barbershop, a central part of African

American culture, and tied it to school learning. A second teacher in Boutte and Hill's study engaged students in a different way. She taught the standards in her curriculum, but expanded on them to include student lives. She began doing so by engaging the students in work on culturally relevant topics, an example of which is a unit of study in art class on "hairstyles". As is highlighted in Hefflin's (2002) study: when children were allowed and encouraged to use the communication styles they acquired at home and in their community, they were more likely to actively participate in school and, as a result, learn more (Osborne, 1996).

Teaching Style: The Power of Discussion

In this section I outline the literature on the use of discussion to value student interaction styles (Lee, 1998); foster student learning (Enciso, 1994; Sutherland, 2005); and deepen students understanding of texts and their own lives (Enciso, 1994; McGinley & Kamberelis, 1996). Delpit (1998) argues that schools can provide instruction that meets the needs of all students by "ensuring that each classroom incorporate strategies appropriate for all the children in its confines" (p. 286). This means instructional style are culturally congruent and lessons are structured in a way that is in line with the interaction styles in the students' homes and communities (Au, 1998; Au, 2001; Hefflin, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 1998).

Au's research with culturally responsive teachers of native Hawaiians illuminates the acceptance and use of talk-story; Ladson-Billings' (1994) research found the use of cross talk; and Lee's (1998) research with African American high school students explores the effective use of topic-chaining. With these diverse populations, researchers

noted that effective teachers did not employ initiation, response, evaluation (IRE), which is typical of European American teaching methods, because it leads to competition between students for affirmation from the teacher. Rather, effective teachers of diverse students recognized and utilized conversation and oral interaction styles that resonate with and are familiar to students (Au, 1998; Au, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 1998).

Utilizing small group discussions as an approach to instruction with learners from diverse backgrounds offers the potential benefit of allowing students and teachers to dig deeper into cultural issues and uncover shared insights into culture. Book club discussions offer students the opportunity to have conversations that promote growth for students, interpret social prejudices, and make sense of social norms and assumptions as they relate to the lives of students (Enciso, 1994). As Enciso asserts, "without the kinds of conversations that encourage skepticism and raise challenges to stereotyped interpretations of characters, children have only mainstream culture to refer to as a source of explanation for the fictional and actual events they encounter" (1994, p. 527). Research affirms the power texts carry in increasing student abilities to interpret the social structures, the race relations, and the reality of the world in which they live (Enciso, 1994; McGinley & Kamberelis, 1996; Moller & Allen, 2000; Sutherland, 2005).

Galda (1998) argues that reading literature gives readers the opportunity to take the text that is written on a page and transform it into emotional experiences by acting as “windows into our lives and the lives of others” (p. 1). In order for this transformation to occur, readers must be able to relate the text to their own lives or to previous texts they

have read. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that people react to situations in texts as a result of the social norms and experiences they have grown up with. If the literature does not reflect those social norms or the social culture the reader has experienced, it will be difficult for him to transact with the text. Rosenblatt goes on to assert that the social background of a student will affect the extent to which he understands a text, the way in which he understands a text, and the prejudices he brings to reading the text. This is clearly evident with Brooks, Browne, and Hampton's (2008) study. In this study the book group explored Sharon Flake's novel The Skin I'm In and, as a result of participant response, paid particular attention to the main character's sense of self and identity as is affected by her dark skin. As in Sutherland's (2005) study which looked at identity as is constructed in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, the girls participating in the Brooks et al. study showed multi-layered reader-text identifications as a result of their own shifting adolescent identities. An additional factor is the similarity and relatability presented between the characters in the text and the students who read it. Participants in these studies showed different responses and varying levels of empathy and connection with characters as a result of their own lived experiences. For this reason, Rosenblatt (1995) argues that "books must be provided that hold out some kind of link with the young reader's past and present preoccupations, anxieties, ambitions" (p. 69). Because students from diverse backgrounds often lack the prior knowledge and experiences associated with the typically European American texts that are used in most mainstream classrooms, an additional barrier to academic success and reading engagement is constructed for students who are not from the culture of power (Flores-Dueñas, 2004).

Responding to literature in discussion groups and response journals helps participants enrich their understanding of the text and in turn deepen their understanding of themselves (Sutherland, 2005). Dong's (2004/2005) research found that discussions within classrooms are important in facilitating student success, regardless of type of classroom. When readers explain and express their interaction with the text this brings about new understandings of their own situation and self (Galda, 1998; Singer & Smith, 2003). Au's (2006) research shows book clubs and book club discussions to have very positive effects on readers. Not only do book club discussions allow students to gain different perspectives about literature but research also shows a large increase in the percentage of students who perceive themselves as readers as a result of participation in book clubs (Au, 2006). Thus, effective instruction for non-white learners involves not only choosing texts that resonate with students' experiences and lives but also incorporating approaches to instruction and methods of interaction that value students' cultures and cultural norms.

Motivating and Engaging Learners through the Use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Motivation is complex: it deeply shapes student behavior and student success. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) draw a distinction between motivation, attitude toward reading, and interest in reading. While attitude can be linked to how much a reader likes a task and interest relates to a specific topic, motivation relates more closely to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to people's specific judgments about themselves and their capabilities to perform. Because a person's motivation shapes his or her performance, it

is important to choose texts, utilize instructional methods, and engage students in reading experiences that will motivate them (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Struggling readers from non-white backgrounds who are forced to read traditional European, or European American, texts often run into trouble because teachers do not accept their interpretation of the texts. This, in turn, reduces their feelings of self-efficacy, engagement, and motivation.

Engaged reading is highly correlated to reading achievement and happens because of reading motivation. Reading and comprehending occurs not only because children *can* read the words on a page but also because they *want* to read the words on the page (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Knowing this, it becomes increasingly apparent that teachers need to mindfully choose texts for students to read that will engage them. Texts should be chosen that children will want to read and, in order to do this, teachers need to understand the cultural experiences of their students. This means not only choosing texts on topics students can relate to, but also choosing texts that are rooted in cultures that students can relate to (Moll et al., 1992). Moll and colleagues' research shows that when teachers get to know students socially and outside of school, teachers are able to identify funds of knowledge that students possess. These funds of knowledge can help the teacher in planning units and making curricular decisions to engage students (Moll et al., 1992). Culturally relevant pedagogy, when implemented fully, involves the use of curricular units that honor students' cultures, thoughtful choice of instructional methods that are synergistic with students' cultures and cultural interaction styles, and incorporation of

texts that students will be able to connect to their own lives or experiences. Each of these individual pieces, together, can lead to increased student motivation and engagement.

Professional Development for Teachers of Diverse Learners

In the previous section I focused on identifying the distinct needs of students from lower SES, non-white, or linguistically diverse backgrounds in schools and classrooms. In this section, I discuss the components of effective professional development for teachers, then I review the small but growing body of research focused on structuring professional development to prepare and support teachers for their work with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. First, I provide a brief introductory section that describes the need for effective professional development for teachers that is focused on working with diverse learners. Next, I review literature related to effective literacy instructional methods for English learners. This literature served as a support in developing the courses for this study. I then discuss the small body of existing research related specifically to effective professional development in two parts: I provide a review of studies of effective professional development and I examine studies of teacher change. I conclude by highlighting the shared findings of both.

Addressing a Need: Instruction for English Learners

Between 1979 and 2004, the proportion of 5- to 17-year-olds in the US who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 9% to 19% (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). This shift represents a numeric increase from 3.8 million students to 9.9 million students. English learners constitute the fastest growing subset of the current US public school population (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). Based on 2009 data,

which is the most recent available data, 21% of the students in K-12 schools spoke a language other than English (NCES, 2010). While English learners have traditionally been concentrated in a few states, recent years have born witness to a significant increase in English learners and immigrants in areas where they have, historically, not had a strong presence. This, coupled with the statistics that demonstrate that compared with native English speakers English learners both score lower on standardized tests and have higher dropout rates, serves as a call to action (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). While the proportion of EL students in classrooms is growing, and teacher preparation programs are making attempts to address student needs, these programs often fall short. They do not give sufficient attention to educating students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Lucas and Villegas' (2010) research demonstrates that effective classroom teachers of English learners do two things: they recognize the connected nature of language and schooling and take this into account in developing and modifying instruction for English learners.

A foundational idea in second language learning is that a language learner's home language plays a significant role in the process of learning a new language. For this reason, it is important that teachers develop an understanding of their students' home language (L1) and draw on this knowledge in their planning and instruction. English learners benefit when teachers provide them with academic English in content area instruction in order to excel not only on standardized tests, but also in classrooms (Bielenberg & Filmore, 2004/2005). Thus, it is a logical extension that when working with EL students, teachers incorporate instruction that focuses on the use of content-

specific language, summarizing and defining, as well as use writing to facilitate language development.

Because one major reason English learners struggle with content concepts is that they often lack the prior knowledge necessary to understand the concepts presented, Short and Echevarria's (2004/2005) research finds that students benefit from teachers activating and providing background knowledge in the areas that students are lacking. This can be accomplished by first getting to know students' *funds of knowledge* and then making connections between their prior knowledge and academic learning (Moll et al., 1992).

Lucas and Villegas (2010) assert that "teachers of [ELs] should develop certain types of perspectives, dispositions, and commitments" (p. 302). A major component of this is recognizing that the academic needs of English learners are distinct from those for whom English is a first language. English learners struggle with schoolwork, especially in content area classes, not because of intellectual deficits; rather, most often, English learners' struggles with academic learning can be attributed to a lack of background knowledge coupled with the quality and lack of differentiated instruction they receive in their mainstream classes (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). And, because of mainstreaming and increasing enrollment of EL students in public school, English learners have less access to specialist teachers with expertise in helping them develop language proficiency. In fact, English learners are spending less time with educators with special expertise and more time with classroom teachers who, by and large, report a weak

background in instructional methods for supporting English learners (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

Promoting oral language development through discussion within classrooms is important in facilitating student success, regardless of type of classroom (Dong, 2005). *Sheltered instruction* is a key method in scaffolding instruction for English learners and can be incorporated into any classroom setting. Sheltered instructional techniques include: slower speech, clear enunciation, use of visual aids and demonstrations, targeted vocabulary development, connections to student experiences, and use of additional supplementary aids. Sheltered instruction provides instruction of content to EL students in "strategic ways that make the concepts comprehensible while promoting the students' academic English language development" through specific instructional approaches and techniques (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005, p. 10).

Supporting Teachers of Diverse Learners

Professional development aids in creating high caliber teaching. And, rigorous professional development assists in fostering feelings within teachers that they, as professionals, are life-long learners. Mandel-Morrow, Casey, and Gambrell (2008) assert that once teachers begin to be involved in high quality professional development they are eager to continue. As Guskey (2002) notes, teachers are attracted to professional development opportunities when they believe they will foster professional growth in relation to their knowledge base, pedagogical skills, or effectiveness with students. While research shows the benefits of effectively conceived and facilitated professional development, too often professional development opportunities offered to teachers do not

result in lasting pedagogical changes or changes in teacher mindsets. In fact, professional development is criticized often for being disconnected from daily instruction and inconsistent in focus (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). There are several shared characteristics of effective professional development programs that result in lasting teacher change.

Identifying effective professional development. Though the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2001 mandates high quality professional development for teachers, professional development is frequently criticized for being decontextualized and disjointed (Borko, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Wilson & Berne, 1999), without being focused on the contextual needs of teachers and the students they teach. In fact, recent years have witnessed an unfortunate trend toward single session professional development as it takes less planning and is more affordable. However, what it saves in planning and development time and financial commitment, it lacks in terms of the level of lasting change in classrooms and teacher pedagogy. As Timperley and Phillips' (2003) findings show, changing expectations is not always a straightforward process. Rather, the process of change for teachers is iterative and evolves over time (Taylor, in press).

The findings of Garet et al. (2001) highlight long-term, extended professional development as the most effective form of professional development, when measuring amounts and degrees of teacher change. Extended professional development is important because the longer duration allows for the possibility of deeper discussion and exploration of the topics while also allowing teachers to try out new practices in their own classrooms (Taylor, in press). Borko (2004) identifies four key areas to consider

when developing and evaluating a professional development system: (1) the professional development program; (2) the teachers, who are the learners in the system; (3) the facilitator, who guides the teachers; and (4) the context in which the professional development occurs. When thinking of the professional development program itself, Garet and colleagues (2001) note specific advantages of implementing professional development that is designed for groups of teachers at the same school: increased collegiality and opportunity for professional discussion, the opportunity to jointly integrate ideas from professional development as a result of shared curriculum and assessment; teachers who share the same students and teach in the same context can discuss student needs across grade levels, leading to school-wide change; and, changes are more likely to be sustained over time when teachers are clustered at school sites.

Several scholars have found that effective professional development models need to offer teachers long-term support (Ball, 1996; Guskey, 2002; Heibert, 1999; Taylor, in press; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Wilson and Berne assert that "teacher learning ought not be bound and *delivered* but rather *activated*" (p. 194), describing successful professional development programs as those that ask participants to engage as learners in the area in which students will learn; involve teachers in collegial interactions with each other; document teacher knowledge through on-going, high-quality professional development; and continually adjust course based on current teacher (and student) needs.

Borko's (2004) research supports the *activation* of teacher learning, based on the premise that teachers learn in many different contexts. Teachers learn in classrooms when implementing and reflecting on an instructional technique; in hallway conversations;

through observations; in professional development and structured courses; and working individually with a child to name a few (Borko, 2004). Garet et al. found in their large-scale national study of teacher learning that extended professional development is most effective when measuring individual levels of teacher change. Additionally, from a sample of over 1,000 teachers, researchers identified the following characteristics as features of effective professional development: observing and being observed; actively engaging teachers in meaningful discussions, planning, and practice; planning classroom implementation; reviewing student work; and engaging teachers in presenting, leading, and writing (Garet et al., 2001).

Heibert's (1999) extensive research on teacher learning similarly illuminates the shared qualities of effective professional development. Heibert highlights four characteristics of effective professional development:

1. Ongoing collaboration of teachers that offers the opportunity to plan and occurs over a multi-year period.
2. Opportunities for collaboration focused on the goal of improving student achievement and creating clear learning goals.
3. Course content and activities that are rooted in and maintain focus on the curriculum, pedagogy, and student thinking.
4. Providing teachers with opportunities to observe new, alternative ideas and instructional methods, while offering time and space to reflect on the reasons for effectiveness.

With the understanding that learning happens in various contexts and in different ways for different individuals, extended teacher development allows for deeper discussion and exploration of relevant topics while also allowing for teachers to try out new practices in their own classrooms, thus offering more opportunities to foster reflection and growth and cultivate sustainable change (Garet et al., 2001; Taylor, in press).

Structuring professional development to support teacher change.

"When a teacher is motivated, supported, and encouraged in school, exposed to training opportunities that promote understanding and given sufficient autonomy to be creative, she or he is more likely to reach full potential" (Hayes, 2006, p. 53).

Professional development affects teacher change when it is rigorous; thoughtfully constructed with the goals of the school or district in mind; high quality; long term and sustained; and developed with adult development in mind (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). When considering duration and contact hours, Darling-Hammond and colleagues found that sporadic or low-dose professional development (5 to 14 hours total) correlated to no statistically significant effects on student achievement. The same meta-analysis found that teachers who receive substantial professional development that translates to roughly 49 contact hours and is spread over six to 12 months were able to boost their students' achievement score an average of 21 percentage points. Similarly, those teachers who received substantial professional development (equivalent to 80 or more hours) were significantly more likely to

implement teaching strategies into their practice than those who had received fewer hours (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Change is an iterative, rather than linear, process (Timperley & Phillips, 2003). Meaningful learning is an uncertain process for teachers that develops and shifts over time (Taylor, in press). While some areas of a teacher's pedagogy may easily be modified or changed, others require many more repeated exposures to ideas and processing. And, because change also depends on an individual's prior experiences and deep-held beliefs, change may not look the same for any two people. Guskey's (2002) research demonstrates that significant changes in teachers' attitudes toward ideas learned in professional development often occur after they implement instructional ideas and observe resulting shifts in student learning. This led Guskey (2002) to the conclusion that it "is not the professional development *per se*, but the experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs" (p. 383). In fact, this same research found that unlike teachers who saw improvements in student learning as a result of the implementation of new ideas, teachers who used new procedures but saw no improvements in students' learning did not experience lasting change (Guskey, 2002).

Important in fostering lasting change is the development of collegial teacher communities (Taylor, in press). Developing collaborative teacher communities takes time and concentrated effort. The main reason for this is that teachers must grow to trust each other. However, once trust is in place, strong professional learning communities can lead to both school and district-wide change (Borko, 2004). Harvey and Daniels (2009) identify seven key traits of effective collaborators: they are responsible to the group,

listen attentively, feel comfortable speaking up, do not dominate conversations, encourage peers to participate and share their perspectives, show respect for the group, and reflect on group interactions and learnings.

Our nation currently lacks a consistent structure for setting up long-term professional development. In fact, the United States falls short of other nations in providing its teachers with sufficient opportunities for job-embedded professional development and extended learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). While many professional development programs are designed with an explicit eye to changing teacher practices and beliefs in specific ways, Guskey (2002) makes a call to action. He asserts that an alternative model for evaluating teacher change is needed in order to facilitate the creation of more effective professional development programs. In this study I advocate for this call to action through my exploration of a long-term, embedded professional development in a university-school district partnership.

Symbolic Interactionism

Harold Blumer first used the term *symbolic interactionism* while at the University of Chicago, basing his approach on the works of George Herbert Mead. 1937 marks the acknowledged birth of symbolic interactionism both as a term and as an approach to sociology as it is the mid-point of the publication of 3 pivotal texts which came out of the Chicago School of thought from the University of Chicago: *Mind, Self, and Society* by George Herbert Mead; *Movements of Thought in the 19th Century* by Merritt Moore; and *The Philosophy of the Act* by Charles Morris (Dingwall, 2001; Kuhn, 1964; Snow,

2001). Symbolic interactionism (SI) is rooted in social psychology studies and provides a theoretical perspective for the systematic study of human behavior.

At the core, symbolic interactionists are interested in understanding both the process individuals go through while interpreting a situation and how this interpretation influences individuals' future interactions (Jacob, 1987). In this study I use symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework and lens through which I understand teacher change and development. In this section I offer a holistic view of symbolic interactionism from its inception, through its development, and into present times. First, I develop a framework for symbolic interactionism through an examination of Blumer's (1969) premises, "root images" and foundational ideas. After defining symbolic interactionism, I explore how symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework helps me understand the ascription of meaning, shifting identities, and cultural definitions within the lived social world of this study.

The Foundations of Symbolic Interactionism

Here I describe the three foundational premises of symbolic interactionism as defined by Blumer (1969). Blumer's premises and root images directly link to the coursework in this study, teachers' learnings about culture, and the process of change that teachers engaged in.

The theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism is constructivist in its foundational ideas. Fine (1993) asserts that all symbolic interactionists, despite divergences in beliefs within the field, agree on the idea that the "self is not an object that has inherent meaning, but is a construct that is given meaning through an actor's choices,

mediated by the relationships, situations, and cultures in which she or he is embedded" (p. 78). This core belief, as stated by Fine, is derived from the three premises of symbolic interactionism that Blumer outlines in his seminal text *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (1969).

The first premise of symbolic interactionism is that people, both individually and collectively, act on the basis of the meaning that things have for them (Blumer, 1969). Implicit in this premise is that humans exist separately from the world in which they live and, that the world that is lived in is interpreted through the use of symbols (language) in a process of interaction. People then act based on the meaning that they derive from this process of symbolic interaction.

Second, the meaning of objects arises out of interactions among individuals (Blumer, 1969). Blumer defines objects as anything humans indicate to themselves, and asserts that rather than existing within an object, the meaning of an object arises from the way in which an individual is prepared to act toward an object at a particular point in time. Accordingly, meaning does not rest solely either in the object under consideration or the person evaluating it; rather, it is developed as a result of interactions between and among people. Thus, people not only act toward objects based on the meanings those objects have to them, but people can change how they will act based on the social definition objects are given and by how others receive and react to the object (Blumer, 1969).

Third, meanings are ascribed and thereafter modified through an interpretive process that is continually changing; meanings are redefined and realigned as individuals

make sense of objects in their social world (Blumer, 1969; Kuhn, 1964). This process of interpretation is broken into two steps. First, the individual (or group) who is acting identifies the objects that have meaning through a process of communication with him or herself. After this, the interpretation occurs as the individual selects and makes meanings in the context of the current situation; and, as the individual encounters new situations, this process of interpretation is repeated. Thus, interpretation is a process in which meanings change depending on the interaction and the situation, which makes meanings both flexible and contextually based.

In addition to these three premises of symbolic interactionism, Blumer (1969) identifies *root images*: foundational ideas of this approach to sociology and research. Blumer's root images are central to the framework of SI and describe the nature of "human groups or societies, social interactions, objects, the human being as an actor, human action, and the interconnection of the lines of action" (Blumer, 1969, p. 6). Because Blumer's root images lay the foundation for the way in which symbolic interactionism defines the nature of these domains, Table 1 offers a comprehensive list of Blumer's root images with explanations and descriptions of each.

Table 1

Blumer's Root Images

Root Image	Description of key concepts
Nature of Human Society or Human Group Life	• Individuals may act alone, together as a group, or on behalf of a group or organization. • Culture is derived from the actions people are taking and what they are doing. • Culture, social status, and class are conceptions which are formed as a result of how people act toward each other. This acting can be called *social action*. • Human groups exist *in action*
Nature of Social Interaction	• Person to person interaction is key in producing and determining behavior. • Human beings need to take into account social interaction and what others are doing or are about to do in order to make the decision about what they should do. • Individuals must interpret the actions of others, they cannot simply react without thinking; this interpretation of the meanings of other people's actions, followed by taking action is called symbolic interaction.

Nature of Objects	• An object is anything that can be signified.
	• 3 categories of objects:
	    o physical objects (ie: desk, flower, car);
	    o social objects (ie: student, brother, teacher, supervisor);
	    o abstract objects (ie: moral principles, empathy, exploitation, grief)
	• The meaning of an object lies within the person who is interpreting it. Thus, an object can potentially have different meanings to different people depending on their understanding and prior experiences.

Human Being as an Acting Organism	• Human beings make indications to each other and also interpret the indications that are made to them or by other people. • Humans can recognize their own actions and interpret them. When humans recognize their own actions, they become an object to themselves. In order to become an object to oneself, a person must be reflective and be able to see their actions from the outside (ie: one can recognize his own actions as being racist or offering unequal treatment to groups of students within a classroom based on cultural heritage).
Nature of Human Action	• Action is built on what humans note, how they interpret what they observe and take note of, and the route of action they map out.

Interlinkage of Action	• Humans determine their course of action based on the area in which they operate. • Can also be termed "joint action". • A large social organization of diverse, acting participants. • Joint action does not need to be broken into the smaller acts of individual participants as it is viewed as a joining of the separate acts of individuals.

Unit of Analysis: I vs. Me

As Blumer described in his premises and root images, human beings are able to make their own thoughts and decisions about actions based on customs and common definitions of objects. According to Blumer (1969), individuals must not only interact with other people, but individuals must also interact with themselves in order for action to be complete and be classified as symbolic interactionism. This *self-interaction* is most often noted as *reflection.* Humans are different from other animals because, while other animals act on instinct and reflex, humans act on the basis of the meanings that objects have to them. These meanings are symbolic phenomena and may change; and, for this reason, humans are viewed to be living in both a physical and symbolic world. This concept of humans living in both a physical and symbolic world is linked to George Herbert Mead's assertion that the human self is constructed of the "I" and the "Me". The *I* is the impulsive tendency of humans to react without interpreting; it consists of reactions based on instinct and without reflection. The *me* is the interpretive agent, the part of the individual that leads the process of self-interaction (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1969, 1992; Jacob, 1987). While Denzin (1969) asserts that action can be characterized as either interpretive action (*me)* or non-interpretive action (*I)*, he acknowledges that, in fact, it can be difficult to distinguish these categories.

For the purpose of understanding the core assumptions of symbolic interactionism, dividing human actions into the two categories of interpretive and non-interpretive action will help illuminate certain underlying premises. Non-interpretive actions are ones that are decided upon without thought or reflection; they are simply a reaction. In contrast, interpretive actions are actions that are actively constructed by the part of the individual referred to as the *me*.

Human action is constructed through a process of indications to the self during which "the actor notes various things, defines and weighs them, projects out different possibilities of action, selects among them, makes decisions, and revises his plan as he takes account of something new" (Blumer, 1969, p. 96). From this idea emerge two foundational beliefs about human action as viewed within the theoretical framework of SI. First, before one can act on behalf of another person, one needs to have placed her or himself in the position of the other and view the situation from her or his point of view. Second, individuals create their own set of values through a process of interpretive action and, while doing so, take on the responsibility for any consequences (positive or negative) of their conduct (Denzin, 1992). Denzin's foundational ideas illuminate the extent to which human association factors into the process of meaning making according to symbolic interactionist thought. A subject-to-subject relationship builds as participants are not only aware of each other, but also base their future actions on the other through a process of identification and interpretation. This process of identification and interpretation cannot be told in advance as it is a result of individual interpretation situated in a specific moment in time. As a result, Denzin (1992) asserts that

"interactionist social thought, more than any other kind, maps the social, the self, and social process" (p. 158).

Symbolic interactionism lays the foundation for theoretical interpretation within this study. I spent many months getting to know the lived context and social world of participants in this study in order to understand the locally constructed definitions of objects and concepts. I honed and focused research questions after an initial exploratory phase. During the exploratory phase of research I familiarized myself with the social world of Taylor. This enabled me to inductively generate themes throughout data analysis. I interpreted data and drew research findings using symbolic interactionist perspectives of the lived social world; interpretation of objects; meaning making; and socially constructed definitions. In the next chapter I offer a detailed description of my methodological approach to this study, including how symbolic interactionist thinking guided the design and interpretation of my research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this study I seek to understand how teachers experience and perceive their participation in long-term professional development focused on effective literacy instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. I examine the ways in which teachers enact ideas, concepts, and instructional approaches explored in the long-term professional development program within their classrooms. In the current chapter I describe the methodology I used to develop my research questions, gather, and analyze data. I begin by describing my research questions.

This study focuses on the process of change and the experiences of teachers participating in a multi-year professional development partnership between a small rural school district and a major university. I utilized symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework to design my study. Prior to refining my research questions, I engaged in an exploratory phase by familiarizing myself with the cultural and social world of the teachers in Taylor. I developed an understanding of the multiple social worlds teachers were navigating: the community of Taylor, the school district, the individual schools, and the fellowship program. From this exploratory phase, I was able to refine my research questions in a way that was synergistic with the social world of Taylor. The following research questions guide this study:

1. How do teachers experience and perceive a university-school district partnership focused on addressing the needs of diverse learners?

i. How do teachers perceive the series of coursework focused on the needs of diverse learners within a university-school district partnership/cohort-style masters program?

ii. How do teachers perceive the literacy strand of coursework and its activities having an impact on their teaching and themselves as learners?

iii. What are the prospects (positives) and perils of a university-school district partnership?

iv. How does teaching context* mediate/shape teacher practice and teacher change (within a university-school district partnership)?

2. What are the characteristics of the process of change across a group of teachers participating in long-term professional development in a university-school district partnership?

i. What changes to the curriculum do participating teachers make?

ii. How do teachers' interactions with their students change (as a result of participation in extended professional development that is tailored to the needs of a district)?

iii. How does teaching context* mediate/shape teacher practice and teacher change (when teachers participate in long-term, focused professional development)?

* = In the current study teaching context is defined as grade level/subject area placement, level of specialization, school-building placement, who the teachers are, who the students are, who the community is, and placement in a rural district.

Background

A study is shaped by the paradigm or world-view of a researcher. This paradigm encompasses the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It follows that the primary concern for researchers in developing a study is making informed decisions about research design that will lead the researchers to finding answers to the specific research question being explored (Jeon, 2004).

This section of the paper outlines the methodological components of my research study that I designed and framed through the theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism (SI). In this study I used grounded theory research methods with its theoretical foundations drawn from SI. Because of its focus on understanding the nature of experience, the importance placed on generating theory grounded in daily experiences in the lived world, and the belief that researchers must immerse themselves in the field in order to understand phenomena, grounded theory is termed *fourth generation symbolic interactionism* (Denzin, 1992).

Symbolic Interactionism: Linking theoretical framework to methodology. Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that, according to Blumer (1969), yields “verifiable knowledge of human group life and human conduct” (p. 21). However, a researcher who adopts a symbolic interactionist framework must never ignore his or her

personal influence and conduct on the research and outcomes. SI relies on data collection and analysis methods that use the researcher as the primary instrument (Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994). This most often takes place through participant observation research following a period of observation during which the researcher familiarizes her or himself with local beliefs, mindsets, and customs. Because individuals construct realities and interpret symbols based on prior knowledge, experience, and understanding, individuals also develop different cultural meanings and define the same situation in different terms. Understanding that both objects and situations may be interpreted differently on different occasions by the same person and that the same object may be interpreted differently on the same occasion by different people, SI researchers work to ensure that data are interpreted from the same underlying meaning structure (Woods, 1992).

One way a researcher can strengthen the reliability of his or her interpretation of data is through a process of triangulation. Researchers using symbolic interactionism as a framework recognize their influence in their research and on its outcomes. A researcher is human and, in being human, can never capture completely an event or interaction. Two researchers observing the same interactions will note different events, will conduct interviews differently, will code events in a different manner, and will ultimately produce different findings (Denzin, 1969). Triangulation through the use of complementary frameworks within the same paradigm yields more reliable and valid data as it provides for "continual reciprocation between data and analyses" (Denzin, 1969, p. 926).

While *paradigm* is defined as a worldview or general perspective (Schwandt, 2001) a *theoretical framework* can be looked at as a guiding scheme that tells the

researcher what types of concepts will be important to study. SI, as a theoretical framework, is classified within the interpretive paradigm. Like other theoretical frameworks that are classified within the interpretive paradigm, symbolic interactionists attempt to "understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Theoretical frameworks that are classified as interpretive approach individuals' interpretations of the everyday world through a focus on lived, daily experiences. Because theory is generated through the process of observation and data collection, the interpretive approach to research preserves the integrity of a situation without disrupting events or dislocating actors. Table 2 outlines the key tenets, strengths, and potential weaknesses of theoretical frameworks (such as SI) that fit within the interpretive paradigm.

Table 2

An Outline of the Interpretive Paradigm

Key Tenets/Underlying Assumptions	Strengths	Criticism/ Potential Weakness	Example Theoretical Frameworks
• Focuses on action, and the intentions of those acting in situations • Seeks to understand individuals' interpretations of the everyday world (micro-actions; micro-focus) • Theory is emergent • Theory emerges from (as a result of) the research and data collection (not before it) • Theory that is generated needs to make sense to those being studied (member checks)	• Suited for educational research because focus on individual and social actions as found in classrooms and schools • Influence of the researcher is much less than in positivist paradigm • Preserve integrity of situation as theory is generated through	• Can ignore/ overlook power dynamics and inequalities in defining situations (especially as much interactionist research focuses on marginalized groups) • Can overlook power forces in shaping behavior	• Phenomenology o Transcendental Phenomenology o Existential Phenomenology • Ethnomethodology • Symbolic Interactionism • Constructivism • Social Constructivism • Hermeneutics

data collection

In the current study I focus on understanding how individuals participating in a series of coursework experienced and made sense of a series of coursework. I use the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism to minimize my influence as a researcher and generate theory that is based on the perceptions of the participants in their lived world.

Researcher role. Much of my personal and professional identities and perspectives have been shaped through my time working in schools with learners from diverse backgrounds. I carry my experience as a teacher and a literacy coach with me as I engage in the scholarship of reading education and work as a teacher educator. My experiences working with struggling readers and learners from diverse backgrounds influence my choice to develop courses that deepen teachers' understanding of literacy instruction. As a fourth grade literacy teacher in a small rural school district, I worked exclusively with students from high poverty backgrounds. Many of my students came to my fourth grade classroom already reading two grade levels behind. This time in the classroom brought me face to face with the extreme injustice and inequity of the American public education system. Because of geographic location and socio-economic status, my students were not afforded the same opportunities as their white counterparts in suburban schools. Additionally, working in a high-need, rural school equipped me with a ground-level perspective on the specialized needs and challenges that students from diverse backgrounds face each day in their classrooms.

After three years of teaching fourth grade, I entered a new phase of my career and transitioned to the position of literacy coach within my school. My primary roles were to offer classroom and instructional support to teachers, to assess student and teacher needs in relation to literacy education, to plan and facilitate all school-wide literacy professional development, and to develop interventions for struggling readers. My two years as a literacy coach provided me with hands-on, practical experience working with adult learners. I began to understand that teachers develop and change at different rates and in different ways. Supporting teachers was much like working with students: in order to support change, I needed to differentiate my approach for individuals based on their background knowledge and individual learning needs. I noted that the teachers with whom I worked for more than one year experienced deeper levels of change in their daily pedagogy.

Throughout my work in the current study, I carried with me my experience of being both a teacher of diverse students and a teacher in a rural area. It would have been impossible to separate myself from my background as a literacy coach. My background in coaching and graduate studies related to adult development helped me provide a balance of challenge and support for teachers as they engaged with new ideas and learning in order to create an environment supportive of growth and change (Drago-Severson, 2004).

Similarly, my professional interests, and those of the primary instructor, shaped the design and content of the courses we developed. My knowledge about and interest in children's literature led us to incorporate literature-based activities in courses. Similarly,

the primary instructor's background in instruction for English learners that matches students' developmental levels provided a strong foundation for coursework.

Throughout the course of this study, my role shifted between participant-observation and observation (Yin, 2009). At times I was engaged in activities as a facilitator. At other times my role was that of an observer, without participation. At the onset of this study, and for the following two years, my role in this partnership was defined as a research and teaching assistant. I assisted in the planning of content, instructional activities, and facilitation of class sessions. Additionally, I reviewed student reflections and coursework, offering them consistent feedback. While on paper my role was defined as a teaching assistant, the primary instructor worked to mentor and coach me in the area of teacher education and offered me significant opportunities to plan and facilitate class sessions. We generally split the class sessions in half, with each of us planning and facilitating activities for half of the allotted class time. Because of my active and consistent role as a class facilitator, and my background in coaching, teachers developed trusting relationships with me and often sought me out for advice and feedback both during the summer courses and the academic year.

After the final literacy course ended, and throughout the last year of this study, my role within the program shifted. When the initial coordinator of the program left the university, I was asked to take over her role. I was selected for the role of project coordinator, a job generally reserved for faculty, because of the programmatic consistency I would be able to provide; I had a good understanding of the contextual needs of the district and teachers. Stepping into the role of project coordinator meant

coordinating, managing, and planning the logistics of the entire program. It also meant I would teach the remaining courses in the teacher leadership component of the degree program. Thus, in the final year of this study my role shifted to that of both primary instructor and program coordinator.

While data were collected in an ongoing manner over three years, the final concentration of data collection took place during the academic year in which I transitioned to the role of program coordinator. This transition allowed me to gain a more comprehensive programmatic understanding than when my role was limited to the literacy component of the program.

Setting

In this study I examined a multi-year professional development project working with a single cohort of teachers from one school district. For this reason, the research setting plays an important role in understanding this research study. This section describes the research site and participants.

Site and Context

The Taylor fellowship is a collaborative research and teaching project run between a major Midwestern university and a small, rural school district. It was developed as an opportunity to address the specific instructional needs of teachers highlighted by a shifting demographic in the school district. Specifically, in the five years leading up to the partnership, Taylor Public Schools had witnessed the following changes: (a) a doubling of English language learners in its schools, (b) a significant drop

in standardized test scores, and (c) teachers had identified a gap in their pedagogical knowledge base for effectively instructing English learners.

Taylor is a rural town located about 100 miles south of a major Midwestern city. The town of Taylor has a population of 23,466 and a median household income is $33,750. Adults living in Taylor hold a variety of professional jobs. Many adults are employed by a major meat company whose headquarters and processing plant are located in the town. It is the presence of this processing plant that has, in recent years, deeply influenced the shifting demographics of the town.

Until recent years, the ethnic and linguistic composition of residents was fairly homogeneous. Most students, and teachers, had a European American background and spoke only English. However, since the 2001-2002 academic year, when district data shows 15.2% of students as being classified from non-white backgrounds, the percentage of students from non-white backgrounds has more than doubled. In the 2010-2011 school year, district records show that Taylor Public Schools enrolled 4,507 students. Of this total number, 2,978 students (66.1%) were white, 303 students (6.7%) were black, and 1078 students (24.0%) were Hispanic. According to the state department of education statistics, 1,529 students (33.5%) are classified as being from a non-white background.

Description of the Partnership

The shift in demographics of the community under study spurred the creation of a multi-year partnership between the local school district and the university. This partnership was funded by the philanthropic arm of a local manufacturing company.

Historically, the manufacturing corporation had shown an interest in funding school-based measures focused on math and science. In 2007, in the midst of discussion surrounding the construction of state-of-the-art science labs in the local high school, the district's director of academic services brought attention to the fact that in order to effectively make use of the labs being created, teachers required training and professional support. Thus, a conversation began around the various ways this support could be offered to teachers. The discussion quickly grew to include support beyond traditional professional development and was not limited to the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). It included one of the district's largest area of need, as noted by teachers, school leaders, and state and local assessment results: literacy education for diverse learners. With the financial backing of the manufacturing foundation and following conversations between the district, the foundation, and the university, the university created a preliminary plan for a fellowship-based M. Ed. program. The partnership included five distinct program tracks, each one working either toward a professional degree or a certificate of completion. The manufacturing company agreed to fully fund participating teachers' involvement, by paying all university and course enrollment fees as well as purchasing instructional materials. The bulk of teachers who applied chose to matriculate as degree-seeking students. However, a handful of veteran teachers participated in the partnership as auditors. They did not receive academic credit for their coursework; their goal was to develop themselves as professionals and remain active members of their district's professional learning community.

The majority of courses in the program were developed specifically based on the contextual needs of the district. Because Taylor is located over one hundred miles from the university, teachers did not take classes on the university campus. All courses met at the local site in either the middle or high school. Most courses took the form of intensive summer experiences with instructors traveling to Taylor and staying in the town during the three weeks of course instruction.

As instructors of the intensive summer courses, in order to maintain a close connection with course concepts and progress, we returned to Taylor during the academic year following summer sessions to re-visit key concepts and conduct classroom observations. During the academic year visits we facilitated discussions focused on key successes, challenges, and student responses to implementation of course concepts from the previous summer.

Coursework

In this study I utilize data from three courses within the Taylor fellowship program. All three courses were intensive experiences taught through spring and summer class sessions and focused on the area of literacy instruction and development.

The first literacy course, *Elementary Literacy Instruction for ESL Students*, took place in the summer of 2008. This first literacy-focused course laid the foundation for future coursework by addressing English learners' literacy development and effective teaching practices that support this development in the elementary schools. Both course readings and course activities explored ways to connect students' home languages, background literacy knowledge, and development to instructional activities and

classroom practice. In addition to course readings and in-class activities a major component of this course was for each student to develop and conduct a case study related to the literacy learning of a second-language learner. Facets of this project included documenting the language and literacy background of the student through interviews and observations; collecting informal assessment data of reading, writing, and spelling; keeping a reflective journal of what was learned; and writing a case report and sharing it with the class.

The second course, *Developing Integrated Themes in Literacy (DITL)*, began in the spring of 2009 and continued in the summer of 2009. DITL was developed specifically for the school district based on teachers' identified needs and goals. This course connected content area instruction with literacy instruction and explored research and instructional approaches for students from diverse backgrounds. Throughout the course there was an embedded focus on working with teachers to identify ways to connect students' cultural funds of knowledge, background literacy knowledge, home languages, culture, and development. Course readings and discussions explored both the existing research related to student engagement and motivation in reading and writing activities and how to teach literacy through content area instruction. Participants' major project in this course was to plan and craft an integrated unit relevant to their content area and grade level placement that wove strategy instruction throughout content instruction. The final product for this project included lesson plans, assessments, and an implementation plan.

The third course, *Content Area Literacy: Integration, Implementation, and Assessment (CALIIA)*, began in the winter of 2010 and continued into the summer of 2010. In a manner similar to DITL, CALIIA was developed specifically for this school district. Drawing on the concepts of funds of knowledge and culturally relevant pedagogy from the first course, and motivation, engagement, and integrated instruction from the second course, the focus in the third literacy course centered around year long thematic instruction to engage all learners. Major concepts explored include the instructional planning, development, and assessment of inquiry-based instruction. The major project for this course was similar in nature to the project from the second course: teachers worked throughout the course to develop year long integrated themes for their classrooms that wove literacy instruction into the content areas. Components of this project included lesson plans, assessments for one complete unit, book and supply lists, and an implementation plan fro the upcoming school year. In addition to the instructional planning and development component, this course also had a built-in peer coaching component. Teachers participated in a video sharing protocol in which they viewed and gave feedback on instructional videos of their peers teaching a lesson that integrated literacy into content area instruction.

Participants

The participants in the study were 55 course members (49 females, 6 males) from nine schools within the school district. Participants worked at all levels within the schools, ranging from PK-12th grade, and included a small number of district level and leadership personnel. Of the entire cohort, over half of the individuals worked in an

elementary (PK-5th grade) placement. All participants worked with culturally and linguistically diverse learners in some capacity and held varying levels of pedagogical knowledge for working with this group of students.

We collected data over the course of three years from all 55 participants. In addition to utilizing data from the cohort as a whole in order to understand large trends in thinking and mindset shifts I also focused on four teachers as individual, focal cases (Yin, 2009). Using both individual and collective cases helped me understand how these individuals constructed meaning, experienced the targeted courses, and changed their ways of thinking and beliefs throughout the program. I selected focal cases for the study purposively in order to offer both a representative sample as well as provide information at varying levels of experience, specialization, and placement at the elementary level.

Through the case studies I examined the instructional practices, learnings, and the changes in attitudes and practices of five PK-12th grade educators (I assigned pseudonyms to all teachers). I took several steps to identify focal teachers. In order to obtain a representative sample from the larger group, my initial criteria included having variation of gender, grade level/teaching placement, years of teaching experience, school placement, and academic focus in the cohort.

Data Collection

I collected data for the study utilizing a variety of strategies over a three-year period throughout the collaborative partnership between the university and the school district. I employed multiple methods for data collection that would lead to greater internal validity by providing for triangulation of data sources. Data sources included

online pre- and post-surveys; teacher questionnaires; course assignments such as action plans for instruction, unit plans, research proposals, and reflection activities; student work samples; analysis of student work protocols; best practice and dilemma sharing protocols; teacher reflection logs; observation notes created while visiting teachers' classrooms; teacher interview notes; audio and video recordings of classroom observations; and researcher field notes.

Reflective Tools

The use of surveys, questionnaires, action plans, and reflective essays served as both a learning tool in the coursework and a way for me to identify specific changes in teacher beliefs and practices (See Table 3 for descriptive snapshot of reflective tools). I administered surveys before and after teachers participated in individual courses. These surveys included a balance of structured and constructed response questions. Survey questions helped me gather data about a variety of areas related to course concepts and teacher mindsets including: the degree to which teachers felt they were implementing course concepts into their pedagogy; teacher beliefs; teacher reactions to course ideas; and teacher reflection on personal stance (See Appendix A for example pre-course survey). I utilized teacher responses across the three courses, from reflective tools such as surveys, as an aid in conducting within-case analyses and across-case analyses. Analyzing reflective tools collected over the three years of this study provided tangible artifacts related to teacher change over time.

Additionally, teachers completed implementation and action plans for the upcoming academic year as they neared completion of each course (See Table 3 for

description). Action plans offered teachers the space to reflect and plan while offering instructors insight into the ways in which teachers planned to integrate course concepts into their personal pedagogy (See Appendix B for DITL Implementation Plan). After teachers created action plans we developed follow-up activities for teachers to reflect on the degree to which they were meeting their goals throughout the year. I reviewed teachers' action plans before engaging with teachers in classroom visits and interviews and focus groups during the academic year. Analyzing the action plans in advance of conducting classroom observations and individual teacher interviews allowed me to develop an understanding for teachers' developmental levels from the previous summer and the concepts which they planned to focus on incorporating into their pedagogy in the upcoming school year. By conducting classroom observations and individual interviews I was able to compare their instructional plans from the summer to their enacted plans during the school year. Our mid-year check-ins with teachers served as a way for us to understand the theory to practice link of course concepts while also offering participants the space to monitor their progress and adjust course if they felt it necessary.

Teachers also wrote reflective essays throughout their participation in each course. I used these reflective essays to highlight teacher beliefs and compare their mindsets across the years.

Table 3

Reflective Tools

Artifact name	Description and Purpose
Surveys	Collected baseline data about teacher experiences and beliefs related to literacy instruction and students from diverse backgrounds. Illuminated shifts in teacher beliefs throughout coursework. Isolated areas of focus for future professional development
Action Plan	Teachers created an instructional action plan based on major course concepts and focus.
Implementation Plan	Teachers were asked to write up a plan for the implementation of major course concepts and projects. Plans outlined specifics such as what teachers would implement, when they planned to implement it, why they perceived the concept to be important, who they might collaborate with, and how they envisioned their process of implementation.
Reflective Essays	Teachers completed reflective essays synthesizing course concepts and readings. Teachers completed reading reflections for each class session.

Self-assessments

In this study I share the self-assessments of the teachers in relation to their instructional needs, their reactions to course activities, their projected goals as documented in action plans, and their reactions to aspects of their pedagogy following summer coursework.

We built peer-coaching activities into the structure of each course. The focus of peer coaching activities varied based on teacher needs. Examples include an activity that honed teachers' implementation plans, an activity that served as a progress and process check (mid-year) for implementation of course concepts, and an activity that called for teachers to reflect on the degree to which they had met their course goals. The peer

coaching activities were semi-structured; we gave teachers forms that outlined specific baseline questions to address and they determined appropriate times to ask follow-up questions during the peer coaching session based on individual responses (See Appendix C for an example of the peer coaching structure). We collected and analyzed these reflection activities. We also developed additional reflection activities as follow-ups to course readings and related to classroom instruction (See Appendix D for an example of a semi-structured reflection form).

Interviews and Observations

We gathered these data through a combination of teacher interviews and classroom observations in various teachers' classrooms (see Appendix E for sample classroom visit/teacher interview organizing document). We conducted observations and teacher interview notes during the academic year following participation in summer courses. These notes helped us gain deeper insight into the process and degree of instructional implementation and mind-set shifts that individual participants experienced as a result of participation in coursework.

Additionally, I conducted a series of interviews and instructional observations in the classrooms of each focal teacher during the final year of the program. All interviews were semi-structured. This ensured that I obtained uniform information from each participant while also giving me the opportunity to ask individualized follow-up questions based on teacher responses (See Appendix F for sample focal case interview scheme). I utilized individual interviews as a tool to better understand the individual processes of change for teachers and the specific ways an individual participant

experienced the literacy strand of coursework. I conducted a series of three planned, semi-structured interviews with each focal teacher over the course of a semester. I conducted the first interview with each focal case within the first two weeks of the school year following the final literacy course. I scheduled it at this time in order to gather baseline data related to goals and course reflections. I audio-taped and transcribed all scheduled interviews. In addition to scheduled interviews, I engaged in many unplanned reflective conversations with participants throughout the course of the study. These interactions happened before and after class sessions, in hallways during site visits, during class breaks, and occasionally in the school parking lot. In some cases I was able to document these conversations through audio recording and transcription. In other cases, when I did not have access to my digital voice recorder, I documented key ideas from conversations through field notes.

In addition to interviews, I conducted a series of classroom observations in each focal teacher's classroom. Observations in classrooms lasted for a complete "lesson cycle", the definition of which was determined by individual teachers. I intended for the observations to offer insight into the theory-to-practice link teachers were making with course concepts, to determine the degree of transfer of course concepts to daily pedagogy, and to triangulate what teachers were saying in individual interviews and in course associated reflective tools. Teachers facilitated the scheduling of classroom observations. Teachers notified me of dates and times in their classroom when they planned to instruct a complete lesson cycle, from beginning to end, related to their integrated thematic planning from the previous summer. All classroom observations took

place during the months of November and December. Observations generally lasted for segments of three instructional days. I captured and documented the events of classroom observations in multiple ways: I video recorded, audio recorded, and took observation notes on instruction.

Table 4

Video Observation

	Description
Duration	Each video observation captured an entire "lesson cycle", as determined by the teacher. Observations took place over multiple academic days in multiple subject areas. Total observation time averaged four hours per teacher.
Observation focus and purpose	Teachers determined the scheduling of observations. Teachers selected times within their daily instruction during which they integrated literacy and content area instruction as planned during the previous summer
Data gathered	Classroom artifacts (copies of graphic organizers and instructional materials) Photographs Videotape Audiotape Fieldnotes

Summer Course Data

As each of the participants was involved in three intensive summer literacy courses, I collected specific data throughout the coursework. I observed and took field notes on interactions, ideas, and reflections of the teachers during class-based activities in the summer courses. This was possible because there were two instructors in the classroom at the same time so one was generally free to observe. For classes in which I was the primary instructor, I wrote field notes directly following class.

I also collected and photographed artifacts created in class. Examples of artifacts I collected include: teacher created action plans, unit plans, video-share notes, research proposals, and reflections. Teacher reflections proved to be a rich and valuable data source. Teachers wrote reflections based on their academic readings for each class session for each of the three literacy courses in which they participated. Photographed artifacts included posters and charts created by teachers during instructional activities to synthesize key course concepts. I also documented teacher presentations and displays of information through the use of photographs. Having these artifacts photographed helped me, and the teachers, to recall course events after courses had concluded. Photographs were particularly valuable because of the longitudinal nature of this study. I reviewed the documented student thinking from three years of coursework and learning. This offered a traceable view of teachers' shifting and evolving beliefs and mindsets and I was able to analyze teachers' evolving thinking on the same concepts, such as assessments and differentiation, over the span of the three literacy strand courses.

I chose to tape record certain class activities for reference later. One activity that I audio-taped was the conversation following a video-share for each of the focal cases in the study. I collected the video-share preparation and description sheets for each focal case. When possible, I conducted brief interviews with each focal teacher during the on-site courses.

Field notes

Because the researcher is viewed as the primary research instrument in observational research (Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994), the key tools used to gather data

also stem from the researcher. I gained a broad perspective of events by taking thorough notes during data collection. Doing this provided me with the necessary information to recreate the research scene as descriptively as possible. Wolcott (1994) also recommends looking for the things that stick out in the data, which he terms *bumps*. This is particularly important for educational researchers who spend time observing in classrooms. With the stance of looking for those things that stick out and deviate from the norm I tuned myself in to specific phenomena in individual classrooms.

In the field, I gathered *field notes* and *head notes* (Sanjek, 1990). Head notes represent not only what is observed, but also the first stages of analysis and interpretation of what is observed. Because a tenet in observation is thick description, it is important to capture as much specific detail and participant language as possible. Accordingly, descriptive field notes need to be written as close to leaving the field as possible (Sanjek, 1990). If one waits until the next day or later to transfer scratch notes to field notes there is great risk of losing detail and information. For this reason, I created scratch notes while in Taylor and transferred scratch notes to field notes immediately after returning home from the two-hour drive from the field site. I utilized technology and took advantage of my two-hour drive home. As I drove I dictated field notes using a digital voice recorder. I later transcribed these audio field notes in a summary form after returning to the university.

Data Analysis

"The interpretive content of a human document depends markedly on the competence and theoretical framework with which the document is studied." *(Blumer, 1969, p. 123)*

The nature of the data collected in a study influences data analysis (Blumer, 1973). Symbolic interactionist studies look to develop substantive theories, rather than attempting to verify existing theories (Jeon, 2004). With this in mind, rather than entering the study with a concrete research question, I began the study with a specific research goal in mind: seeking to understand how rural teachers experience long-term professional development that is tailored to the needs and circumstances of a single school district. Erikson (1986) argues for as deliberate an approach to data collection as possible. Without a deliberate approach to fieldwork, Erikson notes certain inadequacies that can result: inadequate amounts of evidence, inadequate varieties in kinds of evidence, faulty interpretive status of evidence, inadequate disconfirming evidence, and inadequate discrepant case analysis. Heeding Erikson's warnings, and linking my approach to my theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, I set out with the initial intent to gather information and get to know the lived social world of my participants. In the context of this study, this meant getting to know the community of Taylor, individual school sites, and the community of learners engaged in coursework. Through the process of data collection and analysis, I followed "a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about [the] phenomenon" of teacher change (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p 24).

Coding

Methods of analysis in grounded theory research include open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. While the over-all process of coding can be described as the process that connects raw data to theory, it can look very different at different points in the research process. During the first two years of this study I coded and analyzed data purely by hand. I continued hand-coding throughout the study. However, in the final year of the study I integrated the use of NVivo, a computer-based qualitative analysis program. Coding using NVivo follows the same process as coding by hand and is driven solely by the researcher. However, there are certain benefits to utilizing NVivo in terms of analysis. In using NVivo, the researcher develops all codes and hand codes documents and artifacts. In addition to traditional documents, NVivo also offers the capability of importing and coding videos, audio recordings, photographs, and PDF documents. The program allows the researcher to group major and minor codes, sort for recurrent themes, and compare distinct cases. Using the program to sort and group codes, and to assist in the management and organization of data, rather than solely using the researcher as the instrument, illuminates individual instances of a phenomenon that a researcher might otherwise overlook when working with a dense and a saturated data set. NVivo allowed me to organize, and re-organize, coding groups based on the specific phenomena I was interested in understanding at that moment.

I coded throughout the three years of this study in a similar manner, whether coding by hand or utilizing the computer-based program NVivo. First, I transcribed recordings of all interviews and focus groups. I also typed up field notes, which eased the

process of coding. In the beginning stages of data collection and analysis I coded interview transcripts, focus groups transcripts, and fieldnotes by hand, line by line. I also looked at larger chunks of data - a sentence or a paragraph - in order to distill the observed phenomena or theme within that chunk. After identifying key themes I, at times, looked at an entire document to understand the dimensions of the phenomena at work. The level of coding depended on a combination of researcher choice, situation, and data source.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) identify open coding as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, and categorizing data" (p. 61). During open coding, once I identified one or two categories, I attempted to find linkages between them through the process of constant comparison. Constant comparison and reviewing field notes helped me identify key linkages that connected a significant number of similar instances in field notes to show that they are part of a specific phenomenon. Following open-coding for major themes, I reviewed the coded data to determine what minor codes or facets of a phenomenon were present. I then created sub-categories of identified themes as I coded the data further. In addition to using NVivo for coding organization, I also created spreadsheets in which I compiled coded data as a way to organize information.

While open coding involves breaking down data and identifying possible categories, axial coding involves putting the data back together and determining relationships. Axial coding makes connections and identifies linkages both between categories and between a category and its subcategories. During axial coding I deepened my understanding for a category by uncovering how it came to be, its context, and its

consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once I produced theories, I determined their relevance by again combing the data to record the frequency at which themes recurred. After I determined the major phenomenon under study and the categories of interest through open and axial coding, I coded data that specifically highlighted instances of these categories. This process is known as selective coding.

Analytic tools

Throughout the course of a study, I utilized various analytic tools in order to make sense of the data I had gathered. I interpreted data findings through theoretical consolidation; theoretical application; the use of metaphors and analogies; and synthesis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In order to get to this point, I began writing memos and creating diagrams as data were first collected and continued throughout the course of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Case analysis: Matrices & displays. I conducted both within case and cross case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used within-case analysis to illuminate specific phenomena observed in individual cases while I conducted across-case analysis as a means to identify trends and phenomena across the larger group. I used advanced queries and functions within NVivo to facilitate across-case analysis.

Throughout the course of data collection and analysis I utilized a variety of matrices in order to better understand the phenomena under study. In my initial analysis, I created a series of checklist matrices as a means to systematically compare observations and trends across cases. Because I collected data over a multi-year span, it was important to organize it in a way that kept the phenomena clear and usable. For this reason, I

employed time-ordered matrices that documented trends in change over time across the collective group through each of the three courses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used the time-ordered matrices to create metaphors and examine change in individual cases and the program as a whole. I also used these matrices to determine whether focal cases fit a proposed pattern noted across the larger group.

Memos and diagrams. Theoretical memos and diagrams offer insight into the emerging themes and shifting realities researchers are documenting in the field during data collection and throughout the process of analysis. Writing memos and creating diagrams enabled me to distance myself from the data and move from specific observations to abstract ideas and theory. I created memos and diagrams in various forms: I wrote basic memos as I began to formulate theory and more complex memos as theory developed; I created theoretical notes as the products of and summaries for informal memos; and I constructed diagrams as a way to offer a visual representation of relationships between concepts or themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I created memos periodically throughout the instruction of the courses. In the semester in which I conducted interviews and classroom observations, I consistently wrote memos. Similarly, I created frequent memos during the process of open and axial coding. I wrote memos throughout the research process whenever I identified an idea I wanted to understand more clearly (Maxwell, 2005). Appendix G presents an example cognitive map/theoretical memo I created during axial coding of data from the second summer course. Initial themes had emerged and this theoretical memo aided the process of

making sense of the data and themes. I used this memo, and others like it, to help determine the course of future data collection.

In the following chapter I analyze and discuss the data collected in the three literacy strand courses of the Taylor fellowship program. I explore the experiences of the collective group of participants and highlight trends seen across the fifty-five participants during their three years of participation in the professional development partnership.

Chapter 4

Participation in the Literacy Strand of Coursework

In this chapter I share background information and results from literacy coursework for teachers participating in the fellowship program over a three-year period. Each of the three courses was developed specifically for the fellowship program, based on the contextual factors and needs of a single, rural school district experiencing a shift in demographics. In this chapter I share the content and processes involved in the literacy coursework, a variety of data produced by teachers participating in the courses, and what I learned from my perspective as a teacher educator. The three courses, each of which I describe in detail, focus on (1) elementary literacy instruction for English learners; (2) developing integrated themes in literacy instruction; and (3) integrating, implementing, and assessing literacy in the content areas. We developed each course from a constructivist lens. We hoped to increase teachers' understanding of student funds of knowledge and support instructional planning that begins with what students know, rather than acting from a deficit model (Nieto, 2002).

In the following section I outline the three courses in the literacy cluster that took place over three years. I begin by offering an overview of the literacy coursework. I follow this by outlining the logistical and demographic information about both the courses and their participants. Next, I outline the various data points collected for each course. And, I conclude this chapter by exploring and discussing the results from data I analyzed for each course.

Literacy Coursework Strand to Improve Instruction With Diverse Learners

As instructors working with a stable group of participants over three years, we felt it important to offer consistency in learning structures embedded into the coursework. Maintaining consistent structures and expectations provided for clarity and a deeper focus on content for teachers, rather than learning new processes. One example of this phenomenon relates to the core texts and readings associated with each course. Academic readings for each of the three courses adhered to a similar structure. Each course utilized a common core text in addition to supplementary research articles. The core text for each course focused on the key conceptual areas of the course and each student was expected to read from this text in preparation for class meetings. We utilized a variety of activities to process course readings such as jigsaws of readings, waterfall activities, peer-led discussions, and the creation of metaphors to represent key concepts. In addition to the core text, participants engaged in book clubs. We utilized book clubs and supplementary research articles to address and provide specialized support for the diverse instructional placements of course participants. We divided participants into book club groups based on their teaching assignment so that conversations on assigned readings could focus on both theoretical concepts and link to daily practice. We asked teachers to join the book club that most closely aligned with their teaching placement. There were three book club groups: pre-K through 3rd grade; 4th grade through 8th grade; and 9th grade through 12th grade. In addition to readings from the core text, there was an assigned book club reading for each class session.

Once book clubs were established, participants signed up to facilitate one book club discussion. Additionally, teachers wrote reflections for each class session based on the concepts covered in the readings for that day. Reading reflections offered teachers a space to reflect on academic readings and apply concepts to their daily classroom practice. These reflections pushed teachers to synthesize research and foster the practice of constant reflection.

Course #1: Elementary Literacy Instruction for English Learners

The first course in the literacy strand took place in the summer of 2008. Participants had completed a one-credit course during the preceding school year that focused on developing and maintaining professional learning communities. In the following sections, I describe all aspects of this course. I begin by providing an overview of the course; next, I describe the process of data collection; I conclude this section by presenting participants' perspectives on this course.

Overview of Course

I begin my discussion of the course by painting a broad picture of course development and the course experience for participants. I outline the goals and objectives of the course and the reasons for its creation. I follow these sections by describing course participants. I conclude this section by describing the course organization, structure of individual class sessions, and key learning activities from this literacy strand course.

Goals and objectives. The first literacy-strand course, *Elementary Literacy Instruction with ESL Students*, focused on literacy development for English learners and effective teaching practices that support their development in the schools. Objectives of

the class were to understand the similarities and differences in learning to read in a first or second language; to gain a foundational understanding of the cognitive, socio-cultural, linguistic, and educational perspectives of literacy development and instruction; to expose teachers to various ways to connect instruction to students' home languages, background literacy knowledge, and development; to explore the factors that influence second-language literacy development, share the challenges that exist for English learners, and discuss how to address these through classroom and school-wide practices; and, finally, to learn best practices in literacy instruction and assessment for English learners. The major goal for this course was to help teachers understand that effective instruction for English learners looks different, and needs to be planned differently, than effective instruction for native speakers. All course readings were chosen to support the development of foundational knowledge in planning and implementing high quality instruction to meet the academic, social, and cultural needs of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Course activities were developed to support and deepen teachers' understanding of the theory presented in course readings and provide a theory-to-practice link.

Why this course was developed: Expanding views of diverse learners. At the onset of the partnership, the school district engaged in conversations with faculty from the university to discuss district priorities for professional development related to classroom instruction. These conversations, and the priorities that surfaced, shaped the focus of the courses that were developed and taught in the literacy strand of coursework. One of the key areas identified by the district was a changing demographic in the rural

town and, as a result, in the schools. A geographic area that was formerly homogeneous and overwhelmingly Caucasian had witnessed a significant increase in students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Teachers had voiced their lack of preparation to work with students from diverse backgrounds and test scores confirmed their limited success. The district put some supports in place for teachers, but significant professional development in the foundational concepts of literacy instruction for English learners was needed. The development and facilitation of this first literacy course laid the foundation for the entire literacy strand of coursework. Concepts from this course were integrated into and revisited throughout all courses in the literacy strand.

In planning this course we structured activities and readings to serve as springboards for discussion and reflection related to teachers' personal views of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As the shift in demographics within the district was a recent one, it was important to offer teachers the space to explore and uncover personal biases and assumptions in relation to learners from diverse backgrounds. Course readings introduced the topics of *culturally relevant pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995), *funds of knowledge* (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992), and the importance of and methods for effective vocabulary instruction. Course activities were designed to support these concepts.

Demographics of participants. Participants in this course included the teachers working in the interdisciplinary science program track, the interdisciplinary math program track, teachers pursuing a certificate in teacher leadership in literacy instruction, and a small group of non-credit enrolled teachers who participated as auditors (see Table

5 for a demographic breakdown by sub-group). Thirty-two students formally enrolled in one section of this course. The gender breakdown was thirty females and two males. Twenty-two students formally enrolled in the second section of this course. The gender breakdown was fifteen females and seven males. Of the fifty-four credit-seeking participants, all but four were employees in the public schools within the town. The other four participants were teachers at the private, Catholic school within the town. Participants were PK-12 classroom teachers, specialists, interventionists, district personal, and school building administrators.

In addition to degree and certificate seeking participants, four auditors participated in this course. These district employees participated fully in the course, however they did not receive a grade. Instead, auditors were compensated financially by the district for the time they spent in class sessions.

Table 5

Gender and Demographic Breakdown of Elementary Literacy for English Learners Course

Instructional Track	*n*	Female	Male
Interdisciplinary Math	22	15	7
Interdisciplinary Science	26	22	4
Literacy Certificate	6	5	1
Auditor	4	4	0

Course organization. As the first course in the literacy strand, this course was set up as a three credit, summer intensive course. The course met for two weeks. During the two weeks, classes met for five hours per day. Because the partnership was with a single school district, class sessions took place within the local teaching area. Class sessions were held in the media center of the local high school.

Class session structure. Summer class sessions began with an overview of the foundational concepts of working with learners from diverse backgrounds. Following these introductory concepts, we focused attention on planning for, administering, and interpreting assessments for diverse learners. Book clubs met during each class session to process and discuss assigned readings.

Key learning activities. Being the first three-credit graduate course of the program for teachers, the course laid the foundation for expectations relating to class participation and course rigor. Reflections and book clubs were daily learning structures. Additionally, there were several key course activities that were structured to support course concepts and themes. Key activities of the ESL literacy class were: (1) to conduct a brief case study of a second language learner; (2) to research an effective instructional practice; (3) to read widely and reflect on the topic of instructional strategies for diverse learners; (4) to participate in a brief cultural immersion experience; (5) to engage in dialogue with a community representative; (6) to create a *Plan of Action* for better meeting students' diverse needs during the upcoming school year.

A major course assignment for participants was developing and conducting an individual case study with a learner from a diverse linguistic or cultural background. This

case study required that teachers assess students using a variety of literacy assessments. The assessments provided information related to students' developmental spelling levels (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnson, 2008); developmental reading levels; and their personal reading interests.

In an effort to push teachers to reevaluate their position as a member of the cultural and linguistic majority and to facilitate a deeper understanding of the unspoken ways that power manifests itself to learners from diverse backgrounds, teachers engaged in an *immersion experience*. The *immersion experience* took place during one of the first class sessions and set the scene for all course concepts. It pushed participants outside of their comfort zones by asking them to spend a half-hour in an establishment in which they were the linguistic minority. In most cases teachers had not previously set foot in these local establishments (e.g., stores and laundromats serving people from non-English speaking backgrounds) even though they were a part of their small town. Teachers recorded what they noticed visually about the establishment. They also noted how their presence, as a linguistic and cultural outsider, shaped their feelings of comfort or discomfort. After the immersion experience, teachers returned to class to debrief their experiences. In the following class session, as a way to link this personal experience to the school context, we invited the district's *success coaches*, cultural liaisons who serve as translators and work with the schools to facilitate consistent communication with families, to lead small group discussions (See Appendix H for complete description of the *immersion experience*).

Data Collection

We gathered data for this course prior to, during, and following completion of the course. In the following sections I describe the three types of data throughout this course: written data, spoken data, and observational data. Table 6 provides an outline of the three types of data collected from participants in this course.

Table 6

Data Collected from Study Participants: Course 1

Type of data	Data collected from each participant
Written data	Tutoring project lesson plans and reflections Reading reflections Pre-course survey Post-course survey Instructional action plan
Spoken data	Audio tapes/field notes from teacher interviews Audio tapes/field notes from focus groups
Observational data	Observation notes from classroom observations Field notes from classroom observations Field notes from course discussions

Written Data. Throughout this course, we collected teacher-produced, written data that took on many forms. We viewed documents in order to understand teacher mindsets and beliefs. We also examined documents across time in order to illuminate shifts in mindset and teacher change. Participation in this study meant allowing us to use and share information and documents generated as a result of participation in this course. These include: course projects; lesson plans and reflections on the lessons developed as

part of the individualized tutoring program; written reflections to course readings and content; and further course assignments.

In addition to course artifacts and assignments, additional data points we utilized were a survey students completed before beginning the course to gain baseline information about teacher background and beliefs; a post-survey administered after completing the course that measured beliefs and mindsets; and an end of course action plan completed by teachers to plan for integration of course concepts for the upcoming academic year. Each member of the cohort completed each of these assignments. We conducted single and across-case analysis in order to highlight individual changes in mindset as well as changes that spanned grade-level bands.

Spoken Data. In addition to written data, we gathered spoken data from teachers. Spoken data included audio-taped focus groups and individual teacher interviews. Interviews and focus groups lasted roughly 30 minutes. We transcribed the audio recordings from interviews and focus groups. Focus groups and interviews took place during the school year following teacher participation in the first course beginning in the fall and continuing through the spring. Over the course of the interviews and focus groups, teachers reflected on their current and previous instruction, their personal beliefs, and discussed links to course content. I transcribed each of these interviews and focus groups and analyzed the transcripts as a way to triangulate the themes I had inductively generated from the summer course. We wrote field notes of interviews describing the setting and experience of the interviews based on scratch notes as soon as possible following the interviews.

Observational Data. Throughout the course we observed teachers in different situations. We collected notes on small group discussions and book club meetings. We used these observations, and accompanying notes, as a way to understand the synergy between teachers' espoused theories from their written reflections and their theories in action as they engaged in activities around course concepts with their peers. Following completion of the course, instructors conducted site-visits and classroom observations throughout the next academic year. Observations of teachers and students in learning situations helped to contextualize and triangulate the spoken and written data. Observations often confirmed, challenged, or extended the ideas put forth by teachers from their in-class reflections and interviews following the course. Observing within the classroom allowed us to observe teachers teaching and students learning through our own teacher/researcher lens. We used data from observations to assist our efforts to document the level of transference of course concepts to daily practice.

Participants' Perspectives on Course

Throughout the duration of the course, and in follow up visits the following fall, each of the teachers in this study described and/or demonstrated something that he or she learned about teaching literacy to students from diverse backgrounds. Several participants described having their eyes opened to the complexity of language acquisition and literacy development for English learners. For many of the teachers this was a major shift in focus. Examining literacy instruction, with an emphasis on working with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, exposed participants to many new ideas and provided a space for them to reflect on their personal beliefs and biases. In the following

section I outline findings related to teachers' learning in assessment, instruction, and culture and teaching. We generated these findings from analysis of written, spoken, and observational data collected throughout the course.

Assessment. Assessment was a key area of learning for the many of the teachers in various ways. Early course concepts focused on exploring students' developmental levels and how knowing these levels might be used to inform instruction. For many teachers this was a new understanding. Teachers were used to assessing and collecting data on students, but these data did not consistently illuminate the instructional or developmental levels of students. Some schools utilized the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), some used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), some used district-created scantron assessments, and some created their own assessments. The district lacked consistency in what assessments were used, what scores were reported, and the information that was obtained from current district assessments. Thus, we emphasized the importance of conducting assessments that yield information about developmental reading, writing, and spelling levels in order to mindfully plan instruction for all learners.

We introduced to the concept of assessing students' developmental level and teachers learned how to use key assessments. While teachers had previously administered school and district mandated assessments without question, once introduced to the theory and benefits of assessing for students' developmental level, many participants began to demonstrate shifts in their mindset in relation to what they valued as an informative assessment. Working with various assessments in class and in their tutoring projects, and

engaging in discussions around the topic of purposeful and informative assessments, teachers began to reflect upon their current practice. For example, Teacher T reflected on how this course would shape her approach to assessment in her fourth grade classroom:

> I will begin the year by using the developmental spelling inventories. By using inventories, I will be able to pinpoint where the students are in their reading level, spelling level, and writing level. I will also assess through the school's requirements of DIBELS and scantron. After assessments, I can divide up my students for small group, based on their needs, and work with them at their instructional level (Action plan, August, 2008).

Teacher T's discussion exemplifies a theory to practice link that other teachers made as well. Rather than thinking of assessments in isolation, teachers began relating how the use of specific assessments could inform instruction. In response to the same question, Teacher U reflected,

> I will first of all, remember the purpose of assessment. Its sole purpose should be to improve teaching and learning! With that in mind I will use assessment results to make instructional decisions carefully. I have used DIBELS, Progress monitoring, and other formal and informal assessments in the past. I will continue to use such assessments but also use the developmental spelling inventory. I will make appropriate adaptations and modifications to the assessments I give and use alternative assessments to glen (sic.) a clear picture of students' knowledge (Action plan, August, 2008)!

As the course progressed, many teachers began changing their ideas about how they viewed and used assessments. We analyzed end-of-course action plans and found the beginning of a mindset shift for teachers. At the secondary level (defined as middle and high school), teachers identified the value in increasing the level of connection between students' homes and school in order to learn about students' literacy backgrounds and needs. Overall, teachers demonstrated an understanding of the value of assessing, and knowing, student developmental levels. For example, twenty-four teachers

(n=55) indicated that they intended to match instruction to student developmental level through the use of the Developmental Spelling Inventory. It is important to note that the primary instructor has a deep knowledge of developmental assessments, such as the Developmental Spelling Inventory, and thus was able to offer extensive support and information to teachers during their studies and throughout the tutoring case study. This additional support and knowledge may have aided in teachers' willingness and levels of comfort with this new form of assessment. Table 7 synthesizes teachers' responses to questions pertaining to the particular literacy assessments and data sources they planned to use to inform their instruction.

Table 7

Planned Assessments and Student Data Sources for Upcoming Academic Year

Teaching Placement	*n*	Most frequently cited assessment	*n*	Second most frequently cited assessment
PK-K	18	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=9)	18	DIBELS (n=7)
1st – 5th	21	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=11)	21	DIBELS (n=5)
6th-8th	7	Increased parent contact (n=6)	7	Collaboration with EL specialist (n=6)
9th-12th	9	Increased parent contact (n=5)	9	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=4)
Total	55	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=24)	55	DIBELS (n=12)

Did the new understandings about assessment for English learners transfer to all teachers, regardless of grade-level teaching placement? When reading teachers' reflections, action plans, and post-course surveys we began to see the trend that, in

general, this concept did transfer. Thirty-six out of fifty-five participants planned to use the developmental spelling inventory, an assessment that identifies students' developmental spelling level, as the primary way to match instruction to student needs. Table 8 provides a synthesized picture of teachers' responses, by grade level bands, when asked how they planned to match instruction to students' developmental levels. These data came from the end-of-course survey that all participants completed. Results show that the link between assessing developmental levels and appropriate assessments to measure this was formed for teachers regardless of teaching placement. However, we did note from teacher's action plans that the belief of the importance of assessing students' developmental level, and the plan to utilize a variety of assessments in order to do this, were more widespread among PK-5th grade teachers. Middle school and high school teachers most frequently planned to create family connections in order to capture data about English learners' literacy development (See Table 8 for a detailed snapshot of teacher responses by grade level band).

Table 8

Method for Matching Instruction to Students' Developmental Levels

Teaching Placement	*n*	Most frequently cited assessment
PK-K	18	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=9)
1st – 5th	21	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=15)
6th-8th	7	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=6)
9th-12th	9	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=6)
Total	55	Developmental Spelling Inventory (n=36)

Teacher L, a third grade teacher, explained that in addition to using the literacy assessments that her school mandates, she planned to incorporate assessments that would yield results related to her students' developmental levels (Action plan, August, 2008). She explained that these results would inform the formation of her small groups. Similarly, Teacher O, a teacher at the district kindergarten center, reflected on how the course had begun to shape her approach to assessment,

> I will use the assessments given in kindergarten- DIBELS, progress monitoring, Woodcock Muñoz, and kindergarten skills, but I will use it in new eyes. I will be more aware of why students answered the way they did and keep that in mind while grouping students. Thank you for the new eyes (Action plan, August, 2008)!

When we spoke with Teacher O in a focus group after the school year had begun she confirmed that while she had continued to use the same assessments as she had in the past, she had, in fact, looked at the data through a new lens. Her approach included factoring students' developmental literacy levels into her instructional grouping. While we realize that Teacher O demonstrated a preliminary shift, it showed promise of more change to come.

Instruction. Planning for the how and what of effective instruction for *all* learners was the second area teachers discussed in detail in the surveys, reflections, and action plans they completed. Teachers described the instructional areas they felt were most important to attend to in order to effectively reach all learners. Also, they focused on specific approaches to instruction that they felt would serve as catalysts for change within their classrooms. In the following two sections I present the three main areas of

change for teachers in relation to instructional planning: 1) approaches to vocabulary instructional 2) modeling and hands-on activities; and 3) differentiation and scaffolding.

Approaches to vocabulary instruction. One learning goal of this first course was for teachers to develop an understanding of the factors that influence second-language literacy development and how these factors translate into classroom practices. We developed this course goal, as instructors, based on the programmatic goals of the district, and instructors were selected based on their competency in this realm. Despite initial pushback from teachers, as seen in the pre-course surveys, after participating in this course, teachers overwhelmingly demonstrated the belief and understanding that EL students benefit from focused support in the reading area of vocabulary. Table 9 presents a snapshot view of the key reading area teachers highlighted as a focus for the upcoming academic year. Forty-seven out of fifty-five participants identified vocabulary as the key literacy area they intended to focus on. Not only did teachers identify the need to focus on refining and honing vocabulary instruction, as Table 9 demonstrates, but they began actively creating links between the various key areas of readings. Teacher I, a kindergarten teacher, identified the link between vocabulary acquisition and literacy development in a personal reflection, noting that "vocabulary is an area I would like to target because it has a major impact on other areas (fluency, comprehension, and oral language)" (Action plan, August, 2008).

Table 9

Number of Teachers at Various Levels Who Selected Vocabulary as a Key Area of Reading Focus

Teaching Placement	*n*	*Key Reading Area*	*Instructional Goals*
PK-K	18	(n=14)	(n=18)
1st – 5th	21	(n=18)	(n=13)
6th-8th	7	(n=7)	(n=7)
9th-12th	9	(n=8)	(n=5)
Total	55	(n=47)	(n=43)

At the end of the course, teachers not only identified the links between areas of reading, but they also began linking course concepts to their instruction. They did this through a combination of reflecting on previous instructional methods and thinking forward to future instruction. This became most evident in teachers' end of summer action plans. Some teachers, like Teacher F, a first grade teacher, spoke of the ways in which their learnings from this course would impact their pedagogy more generally:

> One of my goals is to be more aware of how and when I teach vocabulary. It needs to be explicit and I need to take the time to do it. I realized I often put meaning aside to teach a skill.

Other teachers offered a much more focused reflection. For example, Teacher I, a kindergarten teacher, explained,

> As I think about next year, I plan to incorporate more vocabulary activities to help build ELL's language. The past year I had weekly vocabulary lessons where we learned new words but did not do much explicit instruction where we really discuss or revisit the words. I plan on doing more activities this year to help build my students' oral language.

Regardless of grade level teaching assignment, after completing the course, teachers overwhelmingly identified vocabulary instruction as the instructional area for focused energy and improved quality within their classrooms. Table 9 illuminates teacher responses, by grade-level band, to a question asking individuals to prioritize their instructional planning and development goals for the upcoming school year in relation to literacy. Forty-three out of fifty-five teachers planned to focus their attention on planning for vocabulary instruction. When asked to elaborate on steps they planned to take in order to achieve their goal of targeting vocabulary instruction, teachers responded with specific instructional examples appropriate to their teaching placement. For example: Teacher AC, a kindergarten teacher, laid out her plans to utilize visual aids, story props, and word sorts to bolster vocabulary instruction within her classroom; Teacher L, a third grade teacher, planned to increase her use of small group instruction while, at the same time, engaging the assistance and expertise of the school's English language specialist; Teacher AA, a primary teacher, noted her intention to increase her use of picture cards and listening stations; Teacher T, a fourth grade teacher, explained her plan to activate students' prior knowledge and link vocabulary both to the text being read as well as students personal cultures; and Teacher AQ, a high school teacher, intended to focus on the use of cognates to support instruction (Action plan, August, 2008).

Modeling and hands on activities. The second area of mindset shift that teachers demonstrated in relation to instruction was the importance of modeling and hands on activities. Course readings and discussions focused on the importance of modeling concepts for students and utilizing a variety of hands on instructional methods and

activities in order to reach all learners. Many teachers showed a developing understanding of these concepts when reflecting at the end of the course. Teachers demonstrated expanding personal views of what it means to utilize visual aides. While in the past they possibly used one specific method for presenting information visually, after participating in coursework, many participants showed an understanding of a variety of potential ways to utilize visual aids within the classroom. Teacher AG, a middle school teacher, reflected "I plan to use more visuals, this class gave ideas beyond pictures such as sentence frames. When I think of visuals I tend to get stuck on pictures. I plan to extend that into actions, charts, etc." (Post-course survey, August, 2008).

After participating in the first summer course, some teachers acknowledged the importance of incorporating hands-on activities and modeling for students (Post-course survey, August, 2008). We noted teachers collaborating and sharing ideas with each other and relating effective approaches for hands-on instruction that would diversify their current methods. Some ideas mentioned were: giving students a check-list, engaging in shared writing, creating word webs, and allotting additional time for student practice of concepts explained by the teachers. Teacher A explained that she planned on "capitalizing on the use of visuals and manipulatives within every lesson" she developed for her Pre-K students.

Processing of course concepts did not happen at the same rate for all teachers. Some teachers pushed back against course concepts while engaging in this first summer course. For many teachers, this aspect of course learning manifested *after* they had an opportunity to return to their classrooms and work with their students. In a focus group

that took place eight months after the course, Teacher AC reflected on the process of integrating course concepts into her daily instruction in relation to a hands-on unit teaching the life cycle of baby chicks to her kindergartners,

> And even with what we learned last summer has been so valuable for us with a lot of our children because it just helped us realize why their brains may be working the way they are and what we can do through these ***real***-type activities. Things that are more purposeful… And that has been a lot of conversation that we have had on how we expand on bringing in the visuals and bringing in the ***real*** items (Focus Group, 4/15/09*)*.

Teacher AC's reflection demonstrates how teachers link instructional experiences and course concepts and transfer learning experiences into their classrooms and schools.

Differentiation and scaffolding. The third component of instructional growth that teachers demonstrated related to concepts of differentiation and scaffolding. Data analysis from course reflections, action plans, and pre- and post-course surveys show that many teachers beginning to recognize the importance of differentiating instruction to meet the varying needs of learners in their classrooms. On the pre-survey conducted before the first course, most teachers expected all students to complete the same tasks and read textbooks without supports. After participating in the course, teachers began to show a shift in their expectations and the way they approached instruction. For example, Teacher U planned to use small group instruction while "tailor[ing] instruction as much as possible to provide instruction level teaching for all of my students". Similarly, Teacher C explained that she "will look at each individual students' needs and see what it is they need work in. I will then build instruction off of that".

My analysis of frequency counts from the pre/post survey show the most frequently cited shift in relation to literacy instruction was connected to grouping

students. Teachers began changing their position on students using their primary language during the school day. Previously, it was policy *not* to allow students to speak anything other than English during the school day. However, post-course survey results demonstrated that many teachers planned to both group more intentionally and allow English learners to use their primary language (L1) during the school day. For example, Teachers A, J, and N each work in the same grade level team. While Teacher N noted that "no students were previously grouped for reading instruction" and she will attempt grouping in the future, Teacher A and Teacher J both noted that they planned to not only utilize smaller group reading and visual aides for English learners, but also increase the use of L1 in their classrooms.

Culture and teaching. Teachers repeatedly brought up issues relating culture and teaching in both their instructional action plans and post-course surveys. Two key themes related to culture and teaching that I identified through data analysis are teachers deepening their understanding of what constitutes effective instruction for diverse learners and the importance of making cultural connections during instruction. In the next two sections I present findings related to these two themes.

Effective instruction for English learners. While teachers affirmed in the pre-course survey that English learners' achievement in their classes was at the level they expected, throughout the course they evidenced a growing belief that instruction must be modified in order to better serve the students in their classes. In her pre-course survey, Teacher P specifically identified that she believed English learners did not meet, and in certain cases were not capable of meeting, grade level expectations. After participating in

the summer course, Teacher P's mindset shifted and she felt "optimistic about the possibilities for the upcoming school year" for her English learners. Many teachers also began to recognize that working with diverse learners called for alternative approaches to instruction. Rather than viewing this as a burden, some teachers began to view it in a more positive light. For example, Teacher AS noted in the post-course survey that after completing the course he understood "ELL instruction as a complex challenge and [was] excited to figure this out." As with other course concepts, while many teachers began to manifest degrees of change in their mindset during the course, some continued to pushback against course concepts.

As noted previously in relation to instruction, teachers also demonstrated a shift in belief about students using their primary language (L1) in class. This acceptance of L1 is a component of a larger trend we saw with teachers: they began to value students' home culture and their funds of knowledge. This mindset shift manifested itself in different forms depending on both the teacher and the setting. For example, Teacher F reflected that she "hopes to provide more instruction that takes into account the L1 of my students, their experiences, and their prior knowledge"; Teacher AS "would love to use students L1 more often than I ever have before"; Teacher T hoped to share with colleagues that "using their L1 language can be beneficial to the students"; Teacher M was interested in "letting peers know that it is ok for students to use their L1 in their classrooms and not to discourage it"; and Teacher AQ felt that "colleagues and administrators need to understand that it is acceptable for students to refer to things in L1 to aid with comprehension." After the first summer course teacher reflections showed that they were

actively reflecting on instructional methods to meet the needs of English learners, changing their expectations for performance levels, and becoming more open to new forms of instruction.

During the program there were specific activities and sessions that dealt with cultural competency and understanding students' funds of knowledge. One activity, a cultural immersion event, culminated in a conversation with cultural liaisons from the district who were called "Success Coaches" (Appendix H outlines the structure of the cultural immersion event). My data analysis of teacher reflections, instructional action plans, and post-course surveys revealed the impact of this activity. After the activity, teachers expressed the various ways in which the Success Coach visit shaped their attitudes, mindsets, and approaches. For example, Teacher F explained that "after listening to the Success Coaches I think I understand more about where the families of my English learners are coming, this will make it easier to know how to communicate with them." Similarly, Teacher AS noted that "I am no longer afraid of using a translator, especially after hearing the Success Coaches talking about how we can best communicate with parents." The lasting impact of this single experience is illuminated by the fact that two years after the experience, in a final reflection on coursework, some teachers highlighted this experience as the most meaningful and lasting experience from the program.

Making cultural connections. Many teachers also reported an increasing awareness of the importance of making cultural connections with students in class activities and curriculum. For example, Teacher N planned to "connect with students and

their parents by daily conversations, home visits, and surveys of how they would like to participate in the classroom and share their culture.” Similarly, Teacher F explained “I now understand my instruction will only be better, and in fact culturally appropriate if I get to know my students.” Teacher AS expressed his summative learning affirming that “the one thing I will always remember from this class, that I never really made the connection with before, is that culture is one of the major underlying factors regarding the acquisition of reading and writing skills”. Table 10 presents the most frequently occurring ideas teachers offered for connecting classroom experiences to students’ lived experiences in their post-course survey responses.

Table 10

Making Cultural Connections

Specific ways to make cultural connections	**Instances mentioned** (N= 54)
Focus on family interests/culture & get to know student lives outside of school	40
Utilize Success Coach	24
Incorporate multi-cultural literature into the classroom curriculum	23
Utilize family volunteers in class	16
Send books home in L1 for families to read together	13
Provide a safe, low risk environment for students	11

Note. Each teacher listed multiple methods for creating cultural connections

Summary. After examining the data from course one, three large themes emerged. Many teachers demonstrated shifts in thinking in the areas of assessment; instruction; and culture and teaching. Teachers demonstrated a growing understanding of

both what constitutes an effective assessment and how to utilize data from assessments. It appears that the structure of the course and course activities greatly influenced the beginnings of change for the teachers. Teachers had multiple opportunities throughout the course to discuss concepts and questions related to assessment. They participated in structured experiences to practice administering assessments which led to increased self-efficacy and development of feelings of self as professional. Following the class, teachers incorporated new assessments into those their schools and district mandated in order to gather a full picture of their students as learners and began to look critically at the assessments that were already in place within their schools and classroom.

Throughout their coursework, and in follow-up site visits and focus groups, we saw teachers enrich their perceptions of effective instructional methods for English learners. Teachers developed a greater understanding of the importance of differentiating and scaffolding instruction to meet the needs of learners; modeling and incorporating hands-on activities; and focused vocabulary instruction to support literacy development. The tutoring project was pivotal for these shifts. Conducting a case study of one English learner provided teachers with an opportunity to focus attention on the needs, and gains, of a single student. The case study offered teachers consistent, on-going opportunities to apply course concepts to their practice. At the same time, because teachers conducted the case study while attending class, they had a built-in support network.

Finally, many teachers began to recognize the important role culture plays in daily instruction. Participants began discussing the need to, and methods for, adapting instruction to build on the strengths of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural

backgrounds. Similarly, they began asserting the importance of valuing student cultures and making cultural connections within the classroom. We saw teachers begin to shift their mindsets in relation to their approach to, and incorporation of, student cultures within their classrooms. We believe this shift can be attributed, in large part, to a single set of experiences. The *immersion experience*, coupled with the conversations with Success Coaches, led to an immediate and powerful shift for many teachers.

Conclusions. In this first literacy course we saw teachers *begin* a process of change in several areas. At times, the change happened as a result of a single, pivotal moment or experience. In other instances, change was gradual and happened over time as a result of repeated exposures to concepts and structured experiences. And, in some instances, teachers pushed back against ideas during coursework, but began shifting their mindsets (or instructional approaches) after returning to their classrooms and testing out concepts. In each case, we found a key lever was supporting course concepts with experiences and activities that facilitated practical, real-life application. Structuring our course with a focus on both studying theoretical concepts and creating direct links to classroom application resonated with teachers.

Course #2: Developing Integrated Themes in Literacy (DITL)

The second literacy course took place in the summer of 2009 and was titled *Developing Integrated Themes in Literacy* (DITL). The course, DITL, was developed specifically for teachers in Taylor. It built off of the foundational knowledge for working with English learners that we established through coursework the previous summer and explored the concepts of motivation and engagement theory and integrated thematic

instruction. We developed an understanding for teachers' daily practice through classroom observations and focus groups during the academic year after the first course and used this information to aid in course development for DITL.

Overview of Course

I begin my discussion of the course by painting a broad picture of course development and the course experience for participants. I outline the goals and objectives of the course and the reasons for its creation. I follow these sections by discussing course participants. I conclude this section by describing the course organization, structure of individual class sessions, and key learning activities from this literacy strand course.

Goals and objectives. Currently, there is a wide body of educational research that focuses on instructional methods and content area instruction. However, the study of teacher actions relating to the affective domain and student engagement receives less attention in traditional professional development. Because the district identified integrating instruction as a priority, and because it is often absent from professional development, this course was developed to focus on motivation and engagement with diverse learners, teaching literacy through content areas, and crafting a four to six week instructional unit that would integrate literacy into either math or science instruction. Course ideas built off of the previous summer course that focused on literacy instruction for English learners. Objectives of this second course were to understand the importance of rigorous literacy instruction that integrates content-area curricula; gain practical strategies for integrating and differentiating literacy instruction using content area material; and use instructional techniques that motivate and engage diverse learners. The

major goal for teachers was for individuals to develop an understanding of the theory behind and application of integrated instruction.

Why this course was developed: Teaching literacy through the content areas. For this course, we again consulted with the district to determine their perceived areas of need and, in conjunction with our understandings of teacher's knowledge base coming out of the first literacy course, developed a focus for the rest of the literacy strand courses. DITL was developed to address the district's goals of strengthening literacy and content area instruction for all learners. In addition to this major focus, this course revisited the concepts of funds of knowledge and culturally relevant pedagogy from the first course and linked them to engagement and motivation theory.

Demographics of participants. After the rigorous coursework of the summer before, there was a small attrition rate for the second literacy course. Total participation dropped from fifty-nine teachers participating in the first course to fifty-four teachers participating in the second course. Like the first course, participants were divided into two sections. Those participating in the interdisciplinary math track were in one section (n=26). The second section was comprised of those teachers from the interdisciplinary science track (n=19); those pursuing a literacy certificate (n=6); and those who were auditing and participating purely for professional development (n=3). Part-way through the summer course, one teacher participating for professional development discontinued her participation due to health complications. Table 11 illuminates the demographic breakdown of each sub-group participating in this course.

Table 11

Gender and Demographic Breakdown of Developing Integrated Themes in Literacy (DITL) Course

Instructional Track	*n*	Female	Male
Interdisciplinary Math	26	24	2
Interdisciplinary Science	19	15	4
Literacy Certificate	6	5	1
Auditor	3	3	0

Course organization. As the second course in the literacy strand, this course was set up as a three credit, summer intensive course. Unlike traditional university courses, since we were working with teachers in a single school district, we were able to create a schedule for course meetings that took into account the academic calendar of the teachers while also structuring courses in a way that facilitated the creation of strong linkages between theory presented in class sessions and teachers' daily pedagogical practice.

Reflecting on the schedule of the previous course, feedback from teachers, and insights we had gained, we decided to stagger class meetings and begin meeting with teachers in the spring and conclude coursework in the summer. Thus, though the bulk of coursework took place during the summer term, we began conducting course meetings on Saturdays, once a month, throughout the spring. We did this for two primary reasons. First, this structure enabled us to introduce teachers to key foundational concepts and theory while offering them time to process and digest concepts, which is something that is not necessarily present during the intensive summer coursework. Second, by holding key class sessions in the spring, and maintaining a month between meetings, teachers

were provided the space to link course ideas to their daily pedagogical practice, translate the theory to action, reflect on student outcomes, and return to the next class session with plenty to discuss from their personal practice.

Whether teachers developed their units with a colleague or worked alone, each teacher was given opportunities to collaborate in different forms. A key activity for teachers was a peer coaching session that took place as teachers were beginning to think through the focus of their integrated unit. Thematic units were new to most participants and thus created feelings of doubt and dread. As teachers showed this trepidation, rather than create a structure where they looked to instructors for answers, we facilitated a peer coaching structure where each teacher collaborated with a partner and coached them through their thinking process concerning their thematic unit.

Class session structure. Spring class sessions laid the foundation of course concepts and offered participants significant time to process concepts. Summer class sessions began with an overview of integrated units, the major output for the course. Each subsequent class session focused both on instructional course concepts and examined one component of the unit. Instructors first offered a brief mini-lesson on the component; each day, an hour of individual work time on unit components followed. Teachers were encouraged to work in groups and collaborate throughout the creation of their units. However, some teachers choose to work alone. Table 12 outlines the daily schedule followed in the summer session.

Table 12

Typical Day of teaching and learning in DITL

Activity	Time allotted	Notes
Welcome	10 minutes	Discuss focus of the day
Book Club	30 minutes	Different participant leader each day prepares discussion questions for each book club
Unit planning Time	60 minutes	Teachers work on specific components of their unit plan that are linked to that day's course focus Work is either individual or collaborative
Activities to process readings	90 minutes	Two activities – one led by each instructor. Depending on activities, time breakdown varies. 45 min/45 min or 60 min/30 min
Closure	10 minutes	Wrap up daily activities Participant questions

Key learning activities: Engagement, motivation, and scaffolding for student (and teacher) learning. The second literacy course focused on three major research areas: engagement, motivation, and scaffolding. We provided a link between these educational theories and teachers' daily practice through class activities, personal reflections on course readings, and the major project of this course- creation of a four to six week instructional unit that integrated literacy instruction into either math or science. We structured the course meetings and course activities in a manner that helped teachers create linkages between research and their personal pedagogy. Key activities of this class included:

a) A deep exploration of the standards and content being taught at the teachers' grade levels (PK – 12th grade)

b) Creating an instructional unit that integrates literacy and math or science

c) Working collaboratively with colleagues to construct an integrated thematic unit

d) Wide reading and reflection on the topic of student engagement and differentiation of instruction

e) Creating an *Action Research and Evaluation Plan* for implementation of the unit.

We used rubrics for teachers to evaluate their students' work as well as rubrics that allowed teachers to evaluate and reflect on their personal pedagogy.

Spring class sessions: teaching and learning. While the bulk of the course was structured as a summer intensive course, four class sessions were spread throughout the spring. This allowed us to introduce teachers to in-depth research concepts while also offering them time to process information and an opportunity to connect theoretical concepts to their daily practice. Because the core text for the course was both dense and notably more theoretical than course texts teachers had previously been exposed to, we intentionally structured spring class sessions to scaffold teacher learning. While instructionally we focused on exploring the research behind scaffolding for student learning, as university instructors we planned activities to scaffold concepts to support teacher learning. An example of this comes from the second class session. As instructors, we identified the key vocabulary terms from course readings (eg: self-efficacy, engagement, challenge, intrinsic motivation, and mastery goals) and teachers participated in a small group processing activity in which each group created definitions for specific terms, in twenty words or less, and then presented them to the larger group for discussion and clarification. This activity of creating and presenting working definitions, and the

discussion that followed, helped create a set of common definitions and understandings for major course concepts.

The spring class sessions introduced major course concepts and concluded in a structured protocol in which teachers worked in small groups, based on instructional placement, to analyze student work. Each group collaboratively developed expectations for student work to be collected in order to compare work across classrooms as well as agree upon a rubric for evaluation. This activity offered teachers the opportunity to collaboratively examine student outputs based on performance expectations. It also gave teachers the chance to examine the standards within both literacy and a specific content area.

Summer class sessions: processing and planning. As a result of the timing of the course, it was extremely important to ensure that teachers had a plan for implementation of their integrated units during the upcoming year. Direct coursework for the third course would not begin for six months. We structured activities within each of the final class sessions that focused on assisting teachers in envisioning the integration of their summer coursework into their daily practice. Three activities particularly resonated with teachers. The first was a guided visualization in which teachers envisioned various elements of their classrooms and their classroom instruction in the middle of their unit implementation and instruction. The second activity was creating an implementation plan for the instruction of the integrated unit. The implementation plan provided answers to essential questions about the unit such as when it would be implemented, how it would be implemented, and any specific concerns the teachers had related to implementation (See

Appendix I for integrated unit implementation plan assignment). It offered teachers the space to step back from the instructional details of the project and focus on important logistical details and proposing specific dates for implementation. It made implementation more concrete. At the same time, it provided instructors with an idea of specific areas of struggle for individual teachers and an understanding for who planned to implement units during the start of the year so that support visits could be planned accordingly. The third activity was a final, personal reflection on individual performance and growth in relation to course goals. This reflection offered teachers the space to identify areas in which they needed further support or study.

Data Collection

Data for this course was gathered leading up to, during, and following completion of the course. Three types of data were collected: written data, spoken data, and observational data. Table 13 describes the key data sources collected and analyzed from this course. In the next sections I describe each of the types of data and specific data points that we collected and analyzed during this course.

Table 13

Data Collected from Study Participants: Course 2

Type of data	Data collected from each participant
Written data	Thematic unit Reading reflections Post-course survey Analysis of student work Implementation plan Action research plan Photographs of course activities
Spoken data	Audio tapes/field notes from teacher interviews
Observational data	Observation notes from classroom observations Field notes from classroom observations Field notes from course discussions and book clubs

Written Data. As with the first course, class-based artifacts were considered data points. Ongoing collection of written data from coursework included: all components of integrated thematic unit; written reflections to course readings and content; and activity-based artifacts. We photographed posters and thinking maps created by teachers during instructional activities. These in-class artifacts documented teachers' evolving beliefs and thinking related to course concepts. Because of the longitudinal nature of this study, the photographs aided in stimulated recall throughout data analysis.

Each teacher created a four to six week instructional plan for a thematic unit. The various elements of the thematic unit are outlined in Appendix J. Like the first course, teachers completed reading reflections for each class session in which they discussed the assigned readings and linked ideas to their personal pedagogy and experiences. Written reflections captured teachers' evolving thinking and position related to course concepts and their personal pedagogy. These reflections were collected and reviewed by

instructors. After reviewing reflections, instructors offered teachers comments and feedback. I coded and analyzed individual teacher reflections in order to identify themes across the cohort and grade level bands.

We collected and analyzed artifacts and teacher reflections from participation in a structured protocol focusing on the analysis of student work. The analysis of student work protocol revealed teacher perceptions of assessment and beliefs about student work and expectations. Teachers prepared for this protocol and reflected on the experience both individually and in working groups.

At the end of the course teachers were asked to write up a plan of implementation for their major course assignment: an integrated four to six week unit of instruction. Implementation plans laid out the relevant background information related to teachers' unit planning and implementation timeline (See Appendices I for complete description of implementation plan assignment requirements and Appendix J for description of components for integrated unit). These implementation plans were analyzed both to inform instructors of teacher plans at completion of the course as well as reflect on levels of implementation the following spring. Teachers also created action research plans. This course activity, and resulting document, was structured as a coaching activity in which individuals reflected on their goals from the course, and the level to which they achieved these goals; their accomplishments from the course; and the next steps teachers planned to take upon completing the course. Teachers also made a plan for monitoring and assessing their implementation of their integrated unit and identified ways in which they

could be supported throughout the implementation process. Additionally, teachers developed an action research question related to their instructional unit.

In addition to course artifacts and assignments an additional data point we utilized was a follow-up survey students completed about eight months after completing this course. Each member of the cohort completed this survey. The survey provided important data related to shifts in teaching assignment. This survey measured, among other things, the integration of course concepts into personal pedagogy, how teachers perceived their personal pedagogy, implementation of the integrated units created during the previous summer, and current mindsets related to concepts from the previous two courses.

Spoken Data. Spoken data included audio-taped, semi-structured individual teacher interviews. Interviews lasted roughly 30 minutes and were transcribed. Interviews took place during the school year following teacher participation in the first course beginning in the fall and continuing through the spring. Over the course of the interviews teachers reflected on their current and previous instruction, their personal beliefs, and created links to course content. Field notes of interviews describing the setting and experience of the interview were written from scratch notes as soon as possible following the interviews.

Observational Data. Throughout the course, we collected notes on small group discussions and book club meetings. Following completion of the course, instructors conducted site-visits and classroom observations. Observations of teachers and students in learning situations helped to contextualize and support spoken and written data.

Classroom observations also provided rich insight into the transfer of course concepts into teachers' daily pedagogy.

Participants' Perspectives on Course

Throughout their participation in the second literacy course, each of the teachers in this study self-identified and/or demonstrated a developing understanding of teaching literacy and working with learners from diverse backgrounds. While the course focused on the foundations of integrating literacy instruction into the content areas, we embedded concepts from the previous summer. For this reason, some aspects of teacher learning represented new areas of thought while others built off of themes from the previous summer. In the following section I outline themes relating to instructional practices and integrated instruction.

Instructional Practices. Many teachers demonstrated a developing dedication to matching their instructional approach to the learning needs of their students. I discovered that teachers were interested in increasing hands on learning opportunities, scaffolding instruction based on student needs, and deepening their focus on vocabulary instruction. In the following sections I present the results from the second course in relation to these three areas.

Valuing hands on learning experiences. As teachers entered the second literacy course, they showed an evolution in practice and thought. The Analysis of Student Work Protocol (ASW) was the first structured protocol teachers participated in. The ASW was a structured protocol in which groups of teachers with similar teaching placements co-examined student work to determine student performance levels and how this is related to

instructional approach. Groups jointly determined sources of student data, developed evaluation criteria, collaboratively worked to evaluate student work, and reflected on how information they gathered linked to their instructional practice. Data from this protocol show that teachers began to recognize the importance of modeling and providing hands-on writing experiences for students. After participating in this focused protocol, twenty teachers (*n=46)* identified teacher modeling as an essential instructional method for improving student performance. A middle school teacher, Teacher AG, planned to continue modeling reading strategies, with an increased focus on inferring (ASW, 5/16/09). Teacher AB, a first grade teacher, explained that after participating in the protocol, she realized, "I do a lot of modeling and need to do more interactive writing earlier in the year as well as more independent writing earlier" (ASW, 5/16/09).

In addition to focusing efforts on modeling, most teachers demonstrated an understanding of the importance of increasing opportunities for hands-on learning experiences for student practice. For example, in their implementation plans, forty-one teachers (*n=52)* highlighted hands on activities as the key instructional approach they planned to utilize in putting their instructional units into place. Of the forty-one teachers, nineteen highlighted their planned use of field trips (or virtual field trips); sixteen planned to incorporate hands on learning (without specifying a type); and six teachers offered specific approaches to hands-on learning that they planned to utilize in order to enact their curricular units. Some specific ideas they mentioned included: giving students a check-list, engaging in shared writing, creating word webs, and allotting additional time for student practice of concepts explained by the teachers (Implementation plan, 6/30/09).

Teacher A explained that she planned on "capitalizing on the use of visuals and manipulatives within every lesson" that she developed for her Pre-K students. Similarly, Teacher Y, a fifth grade teacher, identified that she would seek out games and visual aids to match the learning needs of students at all levels. Both examples, that from Teacher A's Pre-K classroom and from Teacher Y's fifth grade classroom, illuminate a continuing shift and growth in teachers towards differentiating instruction and valuing hands-on learning experiences. As teachers progressed in their coursework, they became more focused on developing learning opportunities to engage all learners.

Course activities and readings also pushed teachers to rethink the possibilities of field-based learning. Specific class activities and discussions explored the concept of virtual field trips. After learning about virtual field trips and reimagining the concept of field trips as a learning tool, some teachers began to show an increased interest in incorporating them into their classroom pedagogy. As mentioned earlier, nineteen teachers *(n=52)* cited field trips as one of the key learning tools they planned to use to put their curriculum plan into place (Implementation plan, 6/30/09). Follow-up site visits revealed that teachers had transferred course concepts into their daily pedagogy. During site-visits the following spring I confirmed that teachers had carried through on their plans to integrate field trips and were pleased with the student outcomes. For example, Teacher V reflected on what she determined to be one of the most memorable experiences from implementing her integrated unit, "getting my students out into the community in meaningful ways" (Post-course survey, 3/6/10). Similarly, Teacher Y explained her plan to take students outside of the classroom throughout the spring as a

way to engage with nature through informal field-based science activities (Post-course survey, 3/6/10). When asked to relate a memorable experience from the implementation of her integrated unit in her kindergarten classroom, Teacher P explained:

> My students really liked the part of my unit about the sense of sight. We did many activities that the students enjoyed. We graphed the class eye color. We diagrammed the eye color of each student in the class. We worked in groups and each student got to be the teacher and explained the parts of the eye. We handled the tools used by an eye doctor. We also tried out different lenses and discussed how they helped or changed our vision in addition to reading books about the eye color. The students were actively involved in learning (Post-course survey, 3/6/10).

Differentiation and scaffolding. Teachers continued the process of adaptation in the areas of differentiation and scaffolding to meet student needs that began during the previous summer course. At the end of the first course, many teachers were able to identify the importance of differentiating within their classroom in order to provide instruction that met students' needs. However, most were not yet at the point where they could identify specific methods they would use to differentiate lessons on a daily or weekly basis. During the second course teachers continued to develop their understanding of differentiation and began to internalize how it fit into instructional planning. Data from the post-course survey completed in April of the academic year in which teachers implemented their curriculum show that teachers' understanding of course concepts advanced after returning to their classrooms. When examining teachers' approach to differentiation after returning to their classrooms, 67% of teachers explained that they increased their focus on and frequency of differentiating assignments. Similarly, after participating in an analysis of student work protocol in the spring, twenty-seven teachers ($n=46$) responded that their next steps in using assessment information to guide their

instruction would be to differentiate instruction for students. For example, Teacher AE answered, “by doing an assessment like this in the fall it would help the teacher be more purposeful and mindful in intervention and planning use” with individual learners. Similarly, Teacher F explained how her participation in the protocol opened her eyes to the underlying methods for differentiation: “I see now how writing instruction can be differentiated. Individual needs can be met better this way. I can do this in small groups. I would like to pull together more creative and worthwhile ways.” During a follow up focus group with Teachers H, O, and R, Teacher H explained how the cluster of nine teachers at the kindergarten center initiated a study group to collegially discuss and explore methods for differentiation within their context and support each other in developing appropriate scaffolds based on student needs (Focus group, 4/15/09).

Vocabulary. Teachers also demonstrated a consistent interest in methods of vocabulary instruction and building connections with families that began during their participation in the first summer course. When surveyed eight months after completing the course, 67% of teachers responded that, in comparison with the previous year, their use of targeted vocabulary instruction increased. Teachers offered specific examples during focus group interviews. For example, teachers at the kindergarten center discussed how they transferred course concepts from both summer courses to their classroom practice with diverse learners in multiple ways, including: creating a list of essential vocabulary words, administering this list, and creating flexible groups for vocabulary instruction; offering visual aides in addition to written work; and involving students’ home culture into classroom instruction in order to motivate and engage students. Their

descriptions indicated that they were taking into account student cultures, backgrounds, and developmental levels when planning for instruction. In an individual interview Teacher I explained that since she began utilizing “real-life objects” as a part of vocabulary instruction with her kindergarten students, she had noticed an increase in students’ motivation and engagement in their work. Teacher’s I’s reflection shows transference of course concepts to personal practice.

Integrating Instruction. Throughout their participation in the course, and after returning to their classrooms, many teachers changed their feelings, understandings, and approaches to integrating literacy instruction into the content areas. When surveyed in March of the academic year following the course, 75% of teachers responded that they were on track to meet, or had already met, the goals for integration that they had set at the end of the previous summer (Post-course survey, 3/6/10). However, the other 25% self-idnetified as not being on track. And, some of these teachers had abandoned their units altogether. For those who were on track, the data highlighted three areas teachers believed to be pivotal in supporting successful implementation of integrated instruction: integrating informational texts into classroom instruction; approaching instruction thematically; and setting clear expectations for students. In the following sections I discuss these three areas of teacher change related to integrating instruction.

Utilizing informational texts. Valuing the use of informational texts to support instruction and learning emerged as a key area of teacher learning. Data from teachers’ action research plans and reflection on course goals support this emergent theme. For example, Teacher W planned to use informational texts to motivate student writing;

Teacher J also noted that she planned to add informational text to her pre-kindergarten classroom; Teacher BF set the intention to diversify the genres of literature used in her second grade classroom while also being mindful to select high quality texts; Teacher S explained that she would continue incorporating informational texts and expand her focus to become more purposeful in her planning of informational writing; additionally, Teacher U began intentionally working to structure the texts in her classroom with a "1/3, 1/3, 1/3 representation of texts in genres" (Action research plan and goals reflection, 6/30/09).

When asked to reflect on the goals they set for themselves at the end of their participation in DITL, and the positive outcomes they witnessed in their classrooms, many teachers seemed to link the extent to which they met their goals with the integration of informational texts within their classrooms (Post-course survey, 3/6/10). On the survey 79% of teachers identified that, when comparing their current use of informational texts to that of the previous year, their use of informational texts as instructional supports increased. For example: Teacher BE, a third grade teacher, increased her use of informational texts during her "read to partner centers", noting that her students seemed more excited about informational texts than fiction texts; Teacher L found that through increasing her use of informational texts within her classroom, her third graders began choosing informational texts to put in their book boxes for independent reading; Teacher BA, a special education teacher who works with developmentally and cognitively delayed students, explained that she began using informational texts as a way to introduce new topics to her students; and Teacher BF set the goal of continuing to integrate

informational texts into daily instruction through read alouds and small group lessons. Similarly, Teacher B, explained a shift she noticed in teachers while working as a district level instructional coach: “I have observed more use of informational text in classrooms, teachers talking and thinking about ways to incorporate high quality informational text and literature with math and science instruction.”

Thematic instruction. In choosing a topic of focus for their integrated units, teachers’ major task was to identify a theme that was inherently meaningful to their students. Through the process of implementing their units across the curriculum teachers discussed a recurring theme: when they organized instruction thematically, and planned with students’ interests and backgrounds in mind, it led to increased levels of student learning and engagement. For example, Teacher AO explained his belief that, “the theme makes it an easy way for students to gain the background knowledge that they need in order to feel successful” (Post-course survey, 3/6/10). Similarly, Teacher O noted a shift in her students’ approach to a field-based learning experience she has done in the past:

> I think that the most memorable experience was when my class visited Farmer John’s Pumpkin Patch. My class was engaged the entire time talking about life cycles of pumpkins and how the weather affects them, how the weather was affecting them (because it was a chilly fall day), and many other topics that came up as we toured the farm. It was great to see. I have been to the pumpkin patch in the past and never had such connections. It was great to see (Post-course survey, 3/6/10).

In her reflection, Teacher O identified a shift in student experience as directly tied to her instructional method. Similarly, Teacher Y noted her students’ positive reactions to her hands-on approach to teaching the concept of buoyancy that involved the creation of

boats out of various materials. Teacher H found in his classroom that thematic instruction led to increased motivation levels of the kindergarten students:

> The kids are so excited to learn science every day. They are wanting to do more and more, and it makes for memorable writing experiences as well. They love to read about science concepts and see them in action as well. This course has helped me fine tune my lessons and present science concepts more effectively (Post-course survey, 3/6/10).

Setting clear expectations. As teachers moved along in the program, their approach to instruction changed. Coursework emphasized the importance of backwards mapping and planning assessments before beginning instruction. Teacher reflections indicated that they were synthesizing course concepts related to explicit expectations and connecting concepts to their personal pedagogy. After engaging in the analysis of student work protocol, twenty-three teachers ($n = 46$) identified that in the future they would set clearer expectations for student mastery as a result of their participation in the protocol. For example: Teacher J planned to work with her team of fellow pre-k teachers to identify common goals and objectives for instructional material. The nine kindergarten teachers who worked together planned to recreate the rubric they used by narrowing the category focus and including more concrete guidelines. Teachers S and U identified the need to raise the standards of expectations for their second grade students after participating in the protocol. Middle school Teacher F noted the need to set both a purpose and clearer expectations for students. Teacher AJ explained that in evaluating student responses he realized that the wording of his evaluation questions were unclear. Finally, Teacher AQ planned to adopt a clearer and more deliberate approach in relation to expectations with her ninth grade students (ASW protocol reflection, 5/16/09).

Summary. After examining the data from this second course, two large categories of themes emerged. Teachers demonstrated shifts in their approaches to instruction and their understanding of integrating instruction. Teacher learning built on areas that began the previous summer in their coursework and was strengthened through their implementation of course concepts. Teachers demonstrated an understanding of the value that hands-on learning experiences add to student experiences. Teachers did not limit these hands-on experiences to inside the classroom walls; they extended into the local community through the planning of field trips and the global community through virtual field trips. Continuing to build off of areas of learning from the class in the previous summer, teachers expressed a deepened understanding of the importance of scaffolding and differentiation in order to meet the needs of all learners. Similarly, throughout the creation of their instructional units, teachers increasingly focused on the importance of effective vocabulary instruction for all learners. I believe this set of teacher learning can be attributed, in large part, to class structure. The structure of working through course concepts throughout the spring, while teachers were in the midst of teaching, facilitated the building of theory-to-practice links. Also, continuing the study of key course concepts from the first course facilitated a deepening understanding and supported the integration of course concepts into daily pedagogy. An example of this was the way teachers embedded word study and vocabulary assignments their thematic units.

Teachers also developed a preliminary understanding for integrating literacy instruction into the content areas. Participants began speaking of the value of utilizing high quality informational texts to support student learning. And, they began to take the

initiative to build these resources within their classroom. Similarly, after completing the course and returning to their classrooms, teachers began exploring integrated instruction through the implementation of their thematic units. Teacher reflections reveal that one specific course experience led them to recognize the importance of setting clear expectations for student performance *before* assessing students in order to accurately gauge student mastery and performance: the analysis of student work protocol. The creation and implementation of the thematic unit coupled with a structured analysis of student work, facilitated deep changes in many teachers' pedagogy.

Conclusions. Through analysis of individual teachers' reflections across the course and course artifacts I identified that in some instances change was incremental for teachers and was fostered through the learning loop we developed. The course introduced new concepts, such as integrated instruction, and presented this new material in various ways in order to support teachers' developing understandings. We intentionally scaffolded our instruction to take into account teacher's developmental levels, backgrounds, and prior knowledge. We also continually revisited concepts from the previous course through *spiraling course content*. Analysis of individual teachers' reflections across the first and second course, in addition to classroom observations and pre/post surveys, reveal this incremental change for many teachers in relation to concepts introduced in the first course.

In other instances change was immediate and resulted from a single experience in the course. We observed, and data from the instructional goals reflection support, the beginning of a shift in teachers' perceptions of themselves as educators and their

approach to instruction. Taken together, excerpts from teacher's implementation plans, analysis of student work protocol and reflection, classroom observations, and focus groups reveal the tiered integration of instructional practices and evolution of understanding of course concepts, as related to effective instruction, for participating teachers. Teacher O reflected on her goals and the pedagogical changes within her kindergarten classroom:

> A major goal was to integrate science into literacy. I believe that this will be a work in progress every year. I feel that as I myself learn as an educator I will make adjustments in my teaching. This year I have been able to consistently teach science in my classroom as before it was hit or miss (6/29/09).

Course #3: Content Area Literacy: Integration, Implementation, and Assessment (CALIIA)

The third literacy strand course took place in the summer of 2010 and was titled Content Area Literacy: Integration, Implementation, and Assessment (CALIIA). As the third and final course in the literacy strand, CALIIA, integrated and expanded on the key concepts from the previous two years of coursework and teacher practice. Teachers were prepared for the major concepts of this course through their work developing and implementing their integrated thematic unit. This course prepared teachers to fully integrate thematic instruction into their pedagogy. In fact, the final product of this course culminated in a complete, year-long plan for integrated thematic instruction.

Overview of Course

In the following sections I present an overview of the course. I begin my discussion of the course by outlining the goals and objectives of the course and the

reasons for its creation. I then discuss course participants. I conclude this section by describing the course organization, structure of individual class sessions, and key learning activities from this literacy strand course.

Goals and objectives. The second and third courses in the literacy strand were conceived and created in tandem. CALIIA extended the course concepts from DITL through both readings and activities. CALIIA built off of concepts of motivation and engagement theory from DITL while introducing the concept of inquiry based instruction. In doing this, we had the goal of supporting teachers in deepening their understanding of and commitment to ensuring that learning in their classrooms was inherently meaningful to the lives of their students. In order to reach this goal, we developed specific course objectives. Course objectives for participants included: (1) understanding the importance of providing rigorous, standards-based, meaningful literacy instruction that integrates important content-area curricula; (2) gaining knowledge of numerous practical strategies for integrating and differentiating literacy instruction using content area material; (3) learning about and using instructional techniques found to be effective in motivating and engaging diverse learners in literacy; (4) designing integrated units for use in their classrooms that are standards based, integrate literacy and content area study, and contain student assessments; (5) developing plans for implementation and evaluation of the units.

Why this course was developed. This course was developed as a culmination of the literacy coursework; an extension of the course that introduced teachers to the foundational concepts of integrating instruction; and as a way to build off of previous

course learnings and assist teachers in the transfer of this knowledge to the practice of thematically oriented, long-term instructional planning. Through participation in class activities and discussions, and completion of course assignments, teachers were guided through a synthesis and integration of concepts from all previous coursework. This synthesis was both theoretical and practical. While class discussions pushed teachers to reflect on concepts from the first and second course, in addition to content area courses, the course project also pushed teachers to apply concepts to their instructional planning

By the time teachers began the third literacy course, they had already participated in rigorous graduate level coursework and professional development for nearly three years. In the second literacy course, DITL, teachers created a four- to six-week unit. However, not every participant succeeded in implementing their integrated units within their classrooms. Reasons for this varied from a change in teaching assignment to a lack of support from school-building leaders.

We considered CALIIA an extension of the learning and focus of DITL. In fact, teachers often referred to it as “DITL part two”, making the strength of the connection in learning apparent. Session topics for CALIIA focused on the method of teaching literacy through content area instruction; building integrated, thematically organized units of instruction; motivating and engaging all learners in reading and writing activities; crafting an integrated unit; weaving strategy instruction throughout content instruction; the role of the teacher in integrating instruction; and fostering student comprehension of informational texts. The major course project teachers engaged in throughout this course was developing and planning a year long integrated theme appropriate to their content

area, aligned with grade level standards, and inherently interesting to their students. They also designed assessments to monitor student progress and developed an action plan for implementation over the following school year. Continuing from the first course with a focus on working with students from diverse backgrounds, CALIIA explored ways to connect students' home languages, background literacy knowledge, cultural funds of knowledge, and literacy development.

After nearly three years in the program, there was a significant amount of learning and research to draw on. And, as the final literacy course, this course was viewed as both a culmination and a preparation. It was a culmination of concepts and a chance for teachers synthesize all learnings and engage in transformational learning. It also served as preparation for the final portion of the masters program: classroom based research/action research. After completing this final course in the literacy sequence, teachers prepared for their capstone projects by engaging in an action research project focused on a specific aspect of the integrated thematic curriculum they developed.

Links to previous coursework. It is vital that teachers keep student lives featured in the curriculum consistently, not from time to time or in token ways. As teachers learned in their first summer of coursework, the only way to do this is by gaining an understanding of students' lives outside of school (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2008; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Teachers prepared for the task of creating a year-long integrated theme for instruction during their second course in which they created a single unit of integrated study. This foundational piece prepared teachers for both the planning and implementation of integrated instruction. They spent the intervening year

testing out this unit and the beginning of the course reflecting on both the successes and challenges of implementation. By the time teachers began thinking about a worthy theme to encapsulate all instruction for the year, they had a strong foundational understanding of what constitutes a meaningful theme and they drew on the concepts covered in their previous coursework to guide their planning.

When planning their integrated themes, teachers needed to activate concepts covered in previous coursework. They utilized their understanding of both funds of knowledge and motivation and engagement theory in their attempts to ensure that the focus of study they chose for their classroom was important to students' lives, both culturally and academically, while also taking into account students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992); there was a strong focus on creating and choosing formal and informal assessments that highlighted both mastery of concepts as well as student developmental learning levels; and, teachers drew on previous coursework in order to integrate literacy instruction into content areas. Additionally, teachers were expected to focus on incorporating new concepts from this course related to inquiry-based instruction into their thematic plans.

Demographics of participants. When classes began meeting in the winter, there were fifty-one teachers participating. However, by the time the summer coursework began, three teachers had discontinued their participation in the program. Two discontinued due to personal reasons and one teacher discontinued as a result of a change in job placement. At the end of the summer course, there were forty-eight participants in both of the class sections. As in previous summers, sections were determined by which

track of study teachers were participating in. The section for those students enrolled in the interdisciplinary math track had twenty-four students enrolled. Of these twenty-four students, twenty-three students were female and one was male. The class section for the interdisciplinary science track had twenty-four participants total. In addition to those teachers enrolled in the interdisciplinary science track (n=16), this section included teachers working toward a literacy certificate (n=6) as well as those who were auditing the course (n=2). Twenty-four students participated in this section with nineteen female and five male participants. Table 14 outlines the demographic breakdown of this course. This course was the final course in the literacy sequence and the final course in which auditors participated. Table 15 outlines the levels of teaching experience of all participants from this course, including those who discontinued their participation midway through the course.

Table 14

Gender and Demographic Breakdown of Content Area Literacy: Integration, Implementation, and Assessment (CALIIA) Course

Instructional Track	*n*	Female	Male
Interdisciplinary Math	24	23	1
Interdisciplinary Science	17	13	4
Literacy Certificate	5	4	1
Auditor	2	2	0

Table 15

Level of Teaching Experience of Participants

Years of teaching experience	Participants *(n=51)*
One to four years	16
Five to nine years	14
Ten to fourteen years	7
Fifteen to nineteen years	1
Twenty to Twenty-four years	6
Twenty-five to twenty-nine years	4
Thirty and above years	3

Course organization. As the previous courses, CALIIA was designed to be a three credit, summer-intensive course. Unlike traditional university courses, since we were working with teachers in a single school district, we created a schedule for course meetings based on our deepened understanding of the instructional context of the district, the developmental needs of teachers, and the district's academic calendar. We began the course by revisiting key concepts from the previous summers and developed course activities that created linkages between theory presented in class sessions and teachers' daily pedagogical practice.

Based on teacher's positive feedback from the modified schedule of the previous course, we decided to once again stagger the class and begin meeting with teachers in the spring and conclude coursework in the summer. Thus, we once again began conducting course meetings on Saturdays, once a month, throughout the spring.

Class session structure. Spring class sessions laid the foundation of course concepts and offered participants additional time to process concepts. Summer class sessions began with an overview of the integrated thematic project, the major output for

the course. Each subsequent class session focused both on instructional course concepts and examined one component of the unit. Instructors first offered a brief mini-lesson on the component; each day, an hour of individual work time on unit components followed as well as twenty-five minutes of daily video-sharing. Teachers were encouraged to work on planning their integrated thematic units in groups and collaborate throughout the creation of their units. Though some teachers choose to work alone, the majority formed collaborative working groups. Book clubs also met each day to discuss and process assigned readings. Additionally, we developed a targeted small group activity for teachers to engage in to process readings from our core course text. Table 16 outlines the daily schedule followed in the summer session.

Table 16

Typical Day of teaching and learning in CALIIA

Activity	Time allotted	Notes
Welcome	10 minutes	Outline focus of the day
Book Club	20 minutes	Different leader each day prepares discussion questions
Unit Component Instruction	20 minutes	One new component of the project is introduced and outlined per class session
Unit Work Time	60 minutes[a]	Time allocated for teachers to work on a single component of their integrated thematic plan related to content presented that day (individual or collaborative)
Video Sharing	25 minutes[a]	Teachers share instructional videos related to course content and get feedback from peer-working group
Activities to process readings	40 minutes	Inquiry processing
Closure	10 minutes	Recap learning for the day and discuss upcoming assignments

[a]*Unit work time and video sharing time were bundled together to last 100 minutes total (including a 5 minutes transition). These two activities were placed in one large chunk of time to allow one instructor to sit in on each video share.*

Key learning activities: Integrating course concepts and integrating instruction. The final literacy course, CALIIA, acted not only as a continuation of the second literacy course, DITL, but also tied together concepts from previous coursework teachers engaged with during their participation in the literacy strand of coursework. CALIIA focused on one major course product: creating a year-long integrated theme for use in the upcoming year. As part of the creation of and planning for the integrated themes teachers constructed units of study; drafted complete cycles of lesson plans for at

least one unit; created unit assessments; backwards mapped concepts to be taught based on state standards; and identified instructional materials for use throughout the year. In order to do this successfully, teachers needed to draw on knowledge and concepts from all previous coursework.

Circular beginnings and endings. The third, and final, literacy course began and ended with a museum walk of participants' culminating projects. However, the museum walk that began the course felt quite different than the gallery walk that ended the course. The first course meeting occurred in the spring and the focus of this gallery walk was for teachers to present and reflect on the implementation of the 4-6 week integrated unit created during the second course. It was intended to bring focus back to the concepts from the previous summer and the work that teachers engaged in. For this activity, teachers were provided with art supplies and class time to create a visual representation of facets of key pieces of their unit implementation (See Appendix K for complete assignment description). Teachers experienced varying degrees of perceived success with their units and we found this activity was a strong way to open the conversations for the third course. Following the museum walk, teachers had a space to work in support groups and reflect on the implementation of their unit. Discussion topics included what worked, what did not work, and what instructional or planning components needed to be changed in order for the curriculum to be successful.

These conversations led directly to a semi-structured activity reviewing course concepts from the previous course. We felt it essential to begin with a review of previous concepts as teachers had nearly a full year of instruction between course meetings and,

during this time, they had been processing, questioning, and developing a deeper and more personalized understanding of course concepts. These first conversations provided many teachers with what they described as “aha moments”. Individuals began to realize that ideas that once seemed cloudy or confusing now made sense within the context of their practice.

Similar to the activity that began the course, the third course ended with a museum walk. The final course museum walk was more formal and offered teachers a space to present the year-long theme they had planned for the upcoming academic year. Both class sections met jointly to present their units. Meeting together provided course closure and allowed teachers to see the work happening at their school buildings. This closing activity had two main purposes. First, we developed it in order to help teachers synthesize their ideas and “take their practice public.” For the bulk of the course teachers worked either independently or in small groups planning an integrated curriculum around a theme that they determined to be important in the lives of their students and, in being so, would motivate and engage students in active learning. Teachers’ work on their integrated theme tied together major course concepts from each of the three literacy courses. The museum walk offered all participants the space to learn what their colleagues had been working on and the diversity of themes that were created.

In addition to taking learning public with colleagues, teachers created a graphic display to be shared with a major stakeholder. Teachers determined their audience in creating their display. Some chose to create displays for introduction to students, some created displays with a focus on parents, while others created displays for presentations to

fellow colleagues who were not participating in coursework. The second purpose of this museum walk built off of the first. In creating visual displays of main concepts covered within the theme and presenting to colleagues within the cohort, this activity provided teachers with the opportunity to hone the description of their work and instructional plan in a safe setting. Because this activity was semi-structured, teachers repeatedly presented their theme to small groups during the museum walk. The multiple opportunities to present information, coupled with the follow-up and clarifying questions that were posed to presenters, pushed teachers to identify areas of their presentation that confused others and strengthened the quality of their presentation through revision.

Data Collection

Data for this course was gathered leading up to, during, and following completion of the course. We collected three types of data: written data, spoken data, and observational data. Table 17 describes the data collected from participants in this course. In the following sections I describe the three types of data collected during this course and describe specific data points.

Table 17

Data Collected from Study Participants: Course 3

Type of data	Data collected from each participant
Written data	Year long thematic plan Reading reflections Pre-course survey Reflection on differentiation Classroom and instructional reflection Reflection on experiences with professional learning collaborative activities Implementation plan Action research follow-up and professional development plan Photographs of course activities
Spoken data	Audio tapes/field notes from teacher interviews
Observational data	Observation notes from classroom observations Field notes from classroom observations Field notes from course discussions and book clubs

Written Data. As with the first two courses, we considered class-based artifacts data points. Ongoing collection of written data from coursework included: all components of year long theme; written reflections to course readings and content; and activity based artifacts. We photographed posters and thinking maps created by teachers during instructional activities for both analysis and recall after course completion. These class-created artifacts documented teachers' evolving beliefs and thinking related to course concepts.

Each teacher developed a theme to guide instruction within their classroom in the upcoming academic year. The various required and optional elements of the thematic unit are outlined in Appendix J. Like the first course, teachers completed reading reflections for each class session in which they discussed the assigned readings and linked ideas to

their personal pedagogy and experiences. Written reflections captured teachers' evolving thinking and position related to course concepts and their personal pedagogy. Instructors collected and reviewed these reflections. After reviewing, instructors offered teachers comments and feedback. In addition to creating reading reflections for each class session, teachers completed various in-class reflections that we analyzed in order to understand changing beliefs over time. An example of this was a reflection on the entire course that teachers wrote during the last class session. In this written reflection, teachers identified their most powerful learnings from the course and over-all reflections on their participation.

At the end of the course teachers were asked to reflect on the action research question they developed the previous summer and create a professional development plan. In this document, teachers reflected on the implementation of their thematic units from the previous summer, what they learned from implementation, their next steps for professional growth, their major accomplishments, and their participation in the course over-all. This action research reflection helped us better understand how teachers applied course concepts to their daily pedagogy and their self-perceptions of change.

Spoken Data. Spoken data included audio-taped individual teacher interviews that I later transcribed. Interviews lasted roughly 30 minutes. Over the course of the interviews teachers reflected on their current and previous instruction, their personal beliefs, and created links to course content. I wrote field notes of interviews describing the setting and experience of the interview from scratch notes as soon as possible

following the interviews. These interviews helped me to better understand the forms and process of change teachers were experiencing.

Observational Data. Throughout the course, I collected notes on small group discussions, book club meetings, coaching activities, and video shares. This helped me understand the role and forms of collaboration that existed. Following completion of the course, instructors conducted site-visits and classroom observations. Observations of teachers and students in learning situations helped to contextualize and support spoken and written data. It also afforded me the opportunity to see the level to which teachers were making theory to practice links within their personal pedagogy.

Participants' Perspectives on Course

Throughout their participation in the third literacy course, each of the teachers in this study expressed and/or demonstrated a deepened understanding of integrating literacy instruction into the content areas, inquiry based instruction, or working with learners from diverse backgrounds. This course built upon the previous summer's focus of integrating literacy instruction into the content areas while simultaneously exploring research in the field of inquiry-based instruction. We also drew on concepts from the first summer course that related to culturally relevant pedagogy. For this reason, some aspects of teacher learning in the course represented new areas of thought while others built off of themes from the previous summer. In the following section I outline themes that I discovered in my analysis of the data that related to inquiry-based instruction, assessment, and teaching approaches.

Inquiry-Based Instruction. Many teachers developed a growing understanding of the components of inquiry-based instruction. Not only did these participants deepen their understanding of the underpinnings of inquiry-based instruction, they also identified necessary shifts they planned to make in both the physical organization of their classroom space as well as their approaches to instructional planning. While not all teachers felt it was feasible to implement inquiry-based instruction in their classroom setting, I discovered that teachers who were open to the idea identified their deeper understanding of inquiry-based instruction as one of the major accomplishments within the course and the program.

Classroom organization. As teachers worked through course concepts in the third literacy course they began to synthesize concepts from all previous coursework. Teachers showed a deepened understanding of the important role a student-centered learning environment plays in fostering student inquiry (Classroom and instructional reflection, 6/18/10). A cluster of teachers from the kindergarten center identified specific ways they planned to alter the set-up of their classroom in order to foster student inquiry. For example: Teacher P planned to make resources more accessible to students by reorganizing her classroom library and book boxes; Teacher AA explained that she would make teaching and learning within her classroom more student centered by providing materials at all student levels; and Teacher AC described her plan to reorganize her classroom library and group texts thematically and by topic in order to make texts more accessible to students. Similarly a first grade teacher, Teacher F, explained her plan to strategically place additional writing supplies throughout her classroom for quick student

access in order to facilitate students capturing their thoughts and questions throughout the school day (Classroom and instructional reflection, 6/18/10). Both Teacher J, a pre-k teacher, and Teacher C, a middle school teacher, planned to re-structure their classrooms; Teacher J's interest in reorganizing her classroom was based in her desire to set up her classroom to reflect student interests. Teacher C's interest in reorganizing her classroom came from her desire to work on team-building in her middle school classroom. Both teachers espoused a belief that altering their classroom layout would spur additional student-initiated inquiry cycles within their classrooms (Classroom and instructional reflection, 6/18/10).

Instructional planning. In addition to focusing on organizing their classrooms to support student inquiry, I discovered that many participants developed strong beliefs about the role teachers play in student learning. Teachers incorporated a perspective on the role of the teacher discussed in the course text. Teachers affirmed their desire to change their role within the classroom from being a "sage on the stage" to becoming a "guide on the side." Individuals often repeated this refrain, both in class and in written reflections, and applied it differently based on their specific teaching context. However, no matter the context, teachers stated the belief that it is important to allow student questions to drive learning experiences and thereby increase student agency and a student-driven curriculum (*Comprehension and Collaboration* text reflection, 6/24/10). For example: Teacher O described her new perception of her classroom role being one that will "show, model, coach, mentor, and facilitate"; Teacher P explained that an 'aha' for her was that, after reading the course text, she planned to change her role within her

kindergarten classroom to that of a guide and facilitator of learning; and Teacher B, who held a district-wide position supporting literacy instruction, explained that after participating in the course she understood the important role the teacher plays in modeling and scaffolding the inquiry process. When reflecting on how course concepts would impact her approach to instruction in her 5th grade classroom, Teacher AZ explained that "the most powerful idea in C&C [the text] was, in a way, also the most frightening or intimidating for me and this is the idea that the learning should be entirely student driven". Similarly, Teacher AN, a high school government teacher, reflected on his experience in the course and resulting shift in beliefs:

> I think the most powerful take away from this book was letting go of some of the control in my classroom and allowing students more freedom to decide on their own learning. This is a new paradigm for me but I am excited to see where it will take me in my instruction.

Through analysis of teachers' reflections of the main course text I discovered that the idea of increasing student involvement in the teaching and learning process resonated with some teachers regardless of teaching placement. For example, Teacher BC, a high school English language specialist, explained that after participating in this course she understood the importance of involving students more in the process of determining assessments and developing rubrics; Teacher W felt that a key component of successful inquiry is allowing students to serve as the guide which, in turn, leads to authentic experiences where both teachers and students are learning; and Teacher AI, a veteran middle school math teacher, described her perception of classroom roles by explaining her new belief that "facilitation is the role of the teacher, wonder is the role of the student" (*Comprehension and Collaboration* text reflection, 6/24/10).

Many teachers also identified specific ways to honor student questions and increase student involvement in the learning process. A common and recurring approach participants planned to use was to increase the frequency of collaborative learning within their classrooms. For example: Teacher V noted the importance of modeling and practicing small group work to promote inquiry in her special education classroom; Teacher A planned to collaboratively create small groups with her pre-k students; Teacher AO highlighted his belief that, for his fourth grade students, collaboration around common interests led to increased student motivation and engagement; and Teacher J explained that "by empowering students and teaching students how to collaborate, they become the teachers" (*Comprehension and Collaboration* text reflection, 6/24/10).

Assessment. Beginning with the first course in the literacy strand, a recurring course theme and focus was assessment within the classroom. Throughout each course we saw a deepening of teachers' conceptual understanding of key ideas and their relationship to assessment. As I have described, in the first course we focused on foundational concepts related to assessment, such as student developmental level, while in the second course teacher learning centered around informal assessment and crafting informative assessments. Through my data analysis I learned that during the third course, teachers synthesized concepts from the previous two summers and began focusing their energy and attention on identifying the purpose of assessment, and utilizing appropriate assessments within their classrooms.

Purpose of assessment. In previous summers teacher reflections and thinking in the area of assessment often focused on specific, pre-made assessments. Generally, these

were periodic or summative assessments. However, over the course of their participation in CALIIA, teachers began shifting their focus to larger questions related to assessment. Teachers began to build a strong foundational understanding of the purposes for assessing students. Teacher AJ, a middle school science teacher, reflected toward the end of the course that through his studies that summer, he began to understand the distinction between assessment and evaluation (Personal reflection, 6/25/10). Data analysis revealed that many teachers demonstrated a shift in mindset to see that the focus of assessment should be on the process of learning, rather than the product created. For example: Teacher I explained her belief that the assessment should be focused on what students learned through the process of engaging in their studies and not on the 'outcome', or how smart they were at the end; Teacher F explained her belief that "it is important to remember that assessment is more about the process and learning rather than having such a strong focus on the product in the end"; and Teacher A explained that at the early childhood learning center she and her colleagues "will be able to focus on the process over the product more as we facilitate and encourage young students to describe their findings and curiosity" (*Comprehension and Collaboration* text reflection, 6/24/10).

Forms of assessment. While adding to their schema about the purposes of assessment and the importance of continually assessing students they had developed in the first two courses, teachers began to expand their views of the possible forms an assessment can take within a PK-12 classroom. In previous courses and interviews, teachers constrained themselves to a narrow interpretation of what constitutes an informative assessment. However, during CALIIA teachers expanded their beliefs to be

broader and more encompassing. For example, Teacher BA explained that while she had never written a rubric until participating in this course, she felt energized and excited because as she transitioned from teaching special education to teaching fourth grade she felt there would be numerous opportunities to utilize rubrics to assess student learning (Personal reflection, 6/25/10). In a personal reflection to coursework, Teacher AO, a fourth grade teacher, demonstrated his integration of course content into his pedagogical approach when he explained, "it seems that in this day and age, our assessments are mainly based on reaching the standards. I personally like the idea of assessing in many ways. This can be through the use of games, discussions, quick checks, inquiry, and projects" (Personal reflection, 6/25/10). Similarly, Teacher AF reflected, "I have a whole new outlook on what assessments should look like. It is extremely important for students and their families to be involved with the assessment process" (*Comprehension and Collaboration* text reflection, 6/24/10). Throughout course activities and working groups, teachers identified specific ideas for assessing student learning such as utilizing turn and talk techniques with 4 year olds, creating rubrics, recording and maintaining anecdotal records, student observations during work time, student conferences, utilizing individual white boards to track mastery, and evaluating student journals (Individual reflections, June 2010).

A key area of learning for many teachers in relation to assessment practices was that teachers do not need to be the sole assessors. These participants began to recognize that student self-assessments can be very informative. Many teachers explained that they had never considered student self-assessments previously but, through participation in the

course, understood the value of self-assessments. For example, Teacher BE explained that while she had not previously thought of using math inventories or interviews as a way to better understand her students' self-perceptions as math learners, she planned to use both in her third grade classroom (Personal reflection, 6/24/10). Teacher AP described self-assessments as "invaluable in an art classroom" and explained that she used student self-assessments of the same rubric she uses as an instructor in order to gauge the alignment between teacher and student perceptions (Personal reflection, 6/17/10). Teacher AZ associated her shift in thinking with readings from the course texts:

> One thing that really struck me in both of the assessment readings was the idea that students should be very involved in the assessment process. They should participate in the creation of the rubric. They should have the rubric available to refer to as they work on the project. They should be involved in the process of completing the rubric at the end of the project to determine their own grade (Personal reflection, 6/25/10).

She continued by explaining that she previously had constructed and shown students the rubrics at the beginning of a project. However, she did not involve students in the final evaluation process. Similarly, Teacher B reflected that before her participation in CALIIA (course readings, discussions, and activities) she did not understand the power of self-assessment and she did not use it effectively. However, with the aid of the course text as a resource, she felt confident in her ability to incorporate practical and effective ways for students to self assess in the future (Personal reflection, 6/25/10).

Throughout the course many participants showed increased interest in the area of assessment. As questions came up for individuals in class, collaborative working groups discussed them. As teachers developed assessments for their thematic plans, they also began thinking forward to the upcoming school year. While some questions were

answered over the course of the summer, teachers continued to think and reflect on the instructional practices related to assessment within their classrooms, school building, and district. Teachers demonstrated that their thinking in relation to assessment had shifted: they were thinking beyond change within their personal classrooms to a broader application of course content. In a personal reflection, Teacher T explained her thinking surrounding assessment as it related to her fourth grade classroom:

> My question I continue to wonder about is, do I use these other types of assessments as informal and quizzes and tests as formal assessments? Do I continue with the idea that these formal assessments will be the only ones which will affect their overall grade? If not, can I be the only teacher who incorporates these other types of assessments to affect students' grades? Will other colleagues collaborate and help see the importance of these different types of assessments? Assessments have always been a heated issue amongst my colleagues and the district. I hope some of these ideas about assessments can be shared with *all* colleagues, and colleagues will be open minded and willing to try something different. Although trying something different is sometimes intimidating, I hope people realize that trying new ideas are to help improve our instruction as teachers, and help deepen student understanding (Reading reflection, 6/25/10).

Instructional Approach. Many teachers demonstrated a continuing evolution in their approach to instruction. Various facets of teacher's instructional planning shifted throughout the course, beginning with the spring class sessions. I determined through analysis of class assignments, personal reflections, and interviews that teachers shifted their beliefs related to planning and implementing integrated instruction within their classrooms. Similarly, I discovered that despite initial doubts and trepidation, the completion of the major project for this course filled participants with a sense of personal and professional accomplishment.

Integrated instruction. Through the final two courses key concepts focused on, among other things, methods of planning for and implementing integrated thematic

instruction. From the beginning of DITL through the end of CALIIA, we scaffolded concepts related to integrated instruction. We began by focusing our attention and studies on foundational ideas and incrementally built teacher schema in order to prepare them for the culminating project: creation of a year-long integrated thematic instructional plan. 75% of teachers implemented their unit plans from the second course. Some teachers were unable to implement their integrated unit plans because of changes in teaching placement. Others did not implement their units simply because they chose not to. Whether teachers implemented their units or not, I discovered that teachers' feelings toward integrated instruction evolved through their participation in the final literacy strand course.

Not implementing, or partially implementing, their units pushed teacher thinking and reflection. Teachers found value in the instructional planning and development process. Whether or not they fully realized the implementation of their units, all teachers went through a process of change in which they planned for and envisioned the day-to-day structure of their classroom through the lens of an integrated theme. For example, Teacher BF implemented a portion of her unit. Though she had not implemented the entire unit, she observed the power of continually linking students' learning back to conceptual ideas. Teacher BF identified a lack of support and collaboration from her grade level team as being one of the barriers to implementation and developed a plan for creating a support network as she implemented her year-long theme (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10). Teacher BB was unable to implement the unit she created during DITL due to a change in teaching assignment.

Though she shifted from teaching high school to teaching first grade, through the final summer of coursework Teacher BB explained: "what I learned was that even though I may have had a grade level change and the content was not appropriate for my new grade level, the theory or the driving force still applied." She shared that though she could not implement the content she had planned, she integrated the instructional concepts discussed in coursework (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10).

Those who implemented their units also changed their beliefs about integrated instruction. For example, Teacher U realized, while planning her year-long theme, that standards can easily be met through integrated instruction; Teacher S found that exploring a theme pushed students to come together as a community exploring a topic of interest; and Teacher D reflected that, in her kindergarten classroom, her students' most powerful learning happened when her lessons spanned across the content areas (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10). While planning for his thematic unit during the second course, DITL, Teacher AO linked his planning closely to the curriculum used in fourth grade math at his school rather than the state standards. However, the following year, his school adopted a new math curriculum. After implementing his first unit and participating in CALIIA, Teacher AO deepened his understanding of what it means to integrate instruction. Toward the end of the course, he explained his changed beliefs and how this is linked to student learning:

> After creating a unit last year, I was able to realize that it needs to be based off of standards and not curriculum. Curriculum can hold you back from reaching goals or causing roadblocks. Inquiries will allow for student engagement, as well as,

> challenging concepts learned (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10).

Self-perceptions and accomplishments. I identified through data analysis that most teachers experienced a major shift in relation to their perceptions of themselves throughout their participation in the final literacy course. Teachers completed a survey leading up to the beginning of this final literacy strand course. The survey had multiple purposes. One specific purpose was for teachers to prioritize the instructional areas they felt were important to focus on. We used these survey responses to plan the course. When asked what instructional area teachers felt it important to focus on in the final literacy strand course, 71% of teachers isolated "bringing the thematic unit to life" as either very important or moderately important. At the beginning of the course teachers identified the need to deepen their understanding of thematic, integrated instruction. By the end of the course participants created a plan for a year-long integrated theme and increased their feelings of self-efficacy. In fact, teachers specifically identified their largest accomplishment from the course as being related to the creation of their instructional themes. For example, Teacher AN explained that looking through his high school government curriculum with a specific theme in mind equipped him with a focus for planning that he identified as not previously present (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10). Similarly, Teacher AS described his belief that creating the year-long thematic plan for his middle school economics curriculum allowed him to see that approaching curriculum thematically can work in all settings, regardless of placement (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10).

A group of nine teachers from the district kindergarten center worked together to plan a standards-based, year-long theme for their school. With the suggestion of the principal, this theme would serve as the science curriculum for the grade level. When asked to reflect on what she considered her major accomplishment of the course, Teacher AA reflected on the impact she believed her working group's standards-based, year-long theme would have when implemented for the entire kindergarten center. Similarly, Teacher D, another member of the kindergarten center working group, identified her largest course accomplishment as learning more about inquiry and creating a year-long theme for the entire grade. Teacher H also identified the year-long theme as his major accomplishment. He explained: "I'm proud of how the group took parts of the science units we needed to build up and tackled it together. I think we must spend some time discussing the work we have done so we can present our ideas to the entire staff" (Action research follow-up and professional development plan, 6/25/10). Teachers AA, D, and H's reflections highlight the powerful role collaboration held in shaping feelings of success and accomplishment.

Summary. After examining data from this third course, I identified three large categories of themes: teachers developed their personal beliefs and understanding about inquiry-based instruction, effective assessment, and broad instructional approaches. First, teachers focused their personal reflections and in class discussions on the concept of inquiry-based instruction within a PK-12 classroom. Teachers began linking concepts studied in the second course to those being presented in the third course. Discussions centered on the shifting roles of the teachers and students within an inquiry-based

classroom. Participants focused their conversations on the benefits and necessity of creating a classroom environment in which student questions drive learning experiences. They also identified specific ways to create a student-centered learning environment that fosters inquiry. Teacher reflections revealed that the core course text, combined with instructional videos, played a pivotal role in making teachers believe in the power of and possibility of inquiry-based instruction in a student centered learning environment.

A second area of learning for teachers during this course was assessment. From the beginning of the literacy strand of coursework we focused our instruction on different aspects of assessment. In the first and second courses instructors initiated discussions and facilitated activities surrounding assessment. In the final course, teachers were the ones to drive the conversations. Teachers investigated the purpose of assessment and engaged in discussions surrounding the importance of aligning assessments to instruction. These conversations led to conversations that linked everyday practice to a variety of forms of assessment. An additional mindset shift many teachers demonstrated related to the role of the student in crafting assessments and evaluating classroom performance. Spring coursework allowed teachers to not only discuss ideas related to assessment, but also to identify specific methods of assessment from discussions with colleagues. The timing of having class sessions in the spring while school was still in session allowed teachers to test out different forms of assessment within their classrooms and return to university coursework to discuss the outcomes.

Thirdly, teachers changed their approach to instruction. At the onset of the course participants prioritized focusing their learning on thematic instruction. Teachers

described the need for additional support in understanding how to effectively implement their thematic units. They also demonstrated trepidation and doubt about the feasibility of creating a year-long theme within our course session. For some teachers this doubt was based on their experience the previous summer with the intense planning of an integrated thematic unit. For others it was based on their experience of implementing their units with students the following year. By the end of the CALLIA course teachers' feelings and beliefs had changed. Many teachers noted that the creation of their year-long theme was one of their greatest accomplishments. Teachers showed that they valued thematic instruction. They also showed a deeper understanding of the underlying theory and structure of integrating literacy instruction into the content areas and unifying instruction through a common theme.

Conclusions. From a close examination of over-all course data from CALIIA, as well as mid-year reflections leading up to the course, I noted several factors that supported conceptual learning for teachers: linking current coursework to previous classes, adding new content incrementally, and stretching classes out across the spring and summer sessions. CALIIA served as a continuation of DITL. CALIIA built on the foundations that had been laid out in DITL and expanded the exploration of concepts. Spring course meetings both extended learning from the second summer and provided a space for teachers to attempt implementation in a supportive environment. Meeting throughout the spring added an additional layer of accountability and support for teachers. Knowing that our class would meet each month gave teachers the space to take the risk of implementing ideas from class while maintaining the support of university

instructors and colleagues. I conclude from my data review that teachers' perceptions of success in this course were tied to the levels of support they received whether it be rooted in the course structure or their collaboration with colleagues.

Synthesis of Courses/ Reflection on Coursework

Over the course of the three years that teachers participated in the literacy strand coursework they demonstrated transfer of many course concepts into their planning and teaching. I noted this transference on numerous occasions through conversations, teacher-created projects, formal and informal instructional observations in teachers' classrooms, and teacher reflections. Upon completing the third, and final, course in the literacy strand participants reflected on their participation in coursework and how it shaped their mindset and approaches to instruction. In the following section I discuss the recurrent themes related to ways in which teachers changed their mindsets and practice over the three years they participated in coursework.

Instructional Change. In order to gain a holistic view of teacher change, we developed a single, final reflective activity that served as a culmination of the literacy strand of coursework. This activity included a follow up to teachers' action research and the creation of a personalized professional development plan. Teachers reflected on their accomplishments during the three years they participated in the literacy strand of coursework and created an individualized plan for their continuing professional development (Action research follow up and professional development plan, 6/25/10). Data analysis revealed teacher change over the span of the literacy strand of coursework in areas related to their instructional planning and development. In the following sections

I discuss three major, recurrent areas of change: personal pedagogy; creating a responsive learning environment; and perceptions of collaboration.

Personal pedagogy. Teachers repeatedly mentioned issues of instructional planning in various ways. Regardless of grade level placement, teachers' daily pedagogical practice and approaches to instructional planning changed as a result of their participation in the literacy coursework. First, teachers expressed a strong understanding that course concepts and approaches to instruction applied to their teaching context, regardless of teaching assignment. Teacher BC told us, "although I have had some major changes – teaching 9th-12th, now 1st grade, I have been able to use what I read and learned regardless of what grade I teach."

Additionally, teachers began to approach planning for instruction in new ways after participation in coursework. Teacher G described her increased level of confidence in relation to the soundness of the instructional lessons she planned. She elaborated that while she became more conscious of her text selection for her second grade classroom, she also became less disparaging of her own teaching. Teacher BC described herself as a "much more effective teacher" as a result of her participation in the courses. Specifically, she attributed her increased effectiveness to creating long-term learning goals for both herself and her students. She also identified her adherence to a gradual release of responsibility to students within her high school classroom.

Did course concepts transfer to teachers' instructional planning and daily practice? Teachers identified and we observed examples of transfer. For example, in her final reflection on coursework Teacher R commented that in addition to integrating

instruction, she also began examining and utilizing the standards in order to plan for and drive instruction. She further explained that in the past she had not focused on the standards when planning. Teacher U explained the theory to practice link she was able to draw between course texts and activities and her daily pedagogy: “The readings have been reaffirming to me and have taught me that small changes can make a big difference. I have learned the most from my classes when I am asked to try a new practice we have read about.” Similarly, Teacher J reflected on her integration of course concepts from all three courses into her approach within her pre-k classroom. For Teacher J, coursework impacted both her planning and her mindset in relation to planning:

> I have been able to take information from all classes and incorporate it into my 4 year-old classroom. I have included more informational texts, concept sorts, webbing, and integrated units into our current curriculum. I have also been more reflective on myself as a teacher.

Creating a responsive learning environment. Beginning with reflections in the first course, teachers highlighted a growing awareness of the importance of creating an additive learning environment for all students. Teachers began to consider the impact that specific learning activities, instructional approaches, and text materials have on student experiences within the classroom. Individuals, such as Teacher T, identified that their participation in coursework led them to develop a higher awareness of English learners within their classroom and dedicate focus to meeting these students’ learning needs. Teacher S described a key accomplishment as the incorporation of course concepts into her work with English learners. She described her inclusion of a variety of practices, “from explicitly teaching and modeling for our ELL population (as well as others) to the importance of sharing thinking and learning in math.”

Teachers also demonstrated a deepened understanding of students' developmental levels and differentiation of both instruction and assessment. First, teachers identified the importance of understanding and assessing English learners' developmental levels in literacy. Teacher F told us, "a key piece of my development is being more aware of language and language development." Teacher L built on this idea when she reflected on her participation in the cohort. She explained that she integrated the use of concept sorts into her teaching as a result of her participation in courses because she felt they assisted her in building, supporting, and assessing learning in her third grade classroom.

Did change for teachers result from recurring focus on theoretical concepts? Many teachers demonstrated transfer of course concepts to their daily pedagogy as a result of repeated exposures to ideas throughout the three literacy courses. However, some single events or activities proved powerful enough to resonate with teachers in a way that catalyzed an immediate change in mindset or practice. One of these events was the cultural immersion experience from the first course. For example, Teacher AF reflected:

> I feel like I have come a long way in these last 3 years. I think that every year was a growing experience for me and made me become a better person and teacher. Our field trip we took our first year to immerse ourselves in another culture was very life-changing for me.

Collaboration. Throughout the literacy strand courses teachers demonstrated that they placed increased value on collaboration with colleagues. Participating in three years of coursework together led to the development of strong professional relationships. Participants developed a shared interest in the success of all teachers. Teachers developed a strong learning community; individuals felt invested in the endeavors of others.

Members of the cohort showed a dedication to supporting their colleagues and ensuring that they shared knowledge and information that would help their colleagues to be successful. Teacher BF told us that despite joining the cohort late, and missing the first course, her peers who had taken the course had worked with her to teach her a variety of strategies for vocabulary instruction that she then included into her thematic unit.

Collaboration was not limited to members of the cohort. In addition to increased collaboration with members of the fellowship program, teachers engaged with colleagues who were not participating in coursework. Teacher F told us, “One of the most influential accomplishments that has impacted my teaching practices is the level to which I have been able to collaborate with those both in the fellowship and my team members who are not in the fellowship.” Teacher Z also explained that one of the major factors she attributed to her strengthened teaching was her increased collaboration level with members of the cohort and other colleagues.

Certain groups of teachers participating in coursework had many colleagues from their school buildings participating in coursework. One example of this is the district kindergarten center that had nine teachers participating in the same program track and taking all coursework together. Teachers from this building continually described collaboration as a key emphasis of participation in the program, as well as one of their greatest accomplishments. For example, Teacher I recounted that “one goal was to utilize colleagues more, which we all effectively do. We are very collaborative and can work together effortlessly.” Teacher H, another teacher from the kindergarten center, also described collaboration as being an important accomplishment. At the same time, he

recognized that they had made progress toward their goal, but had not yet achieved it and would need to continue working together. Teacher H explained:

> The most important aspect of the three years we have spent together is the fact that we are collaborating on the major issues and themes we face at our level. The study on how to better meet the needs of our growing ELL population is an ongoing emphasis – hopefully the effort we put there will continue to be built upon. We have a long ways to go yet.

Conclusions. We structured our courses in a way that offered recurrent focus on effective instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students. We found that teachers felt supported in their implementation of course concepts. Additionally, teachers were afforded the opportunity to take risks within their classrooms and return to the supportive environment of our course and gain feedback from both instructors and colleagues. This dual structure of iterative learning cycles and professional support facilitated change and growth within teachers. Teacher AN was an experienced veteran high school government teacher who chose to participate in the literacy certificate program. As he completed the third course, he was also nearing completion of his participation in the program. His reflection on participation in the literacy strand coursework captures the importance and value of rigorous professional development on teacher pedagogy:

> The past three years have truly resurrected my passion for teaching. I think that as teachers progress through their careers there can be a lure to go on 'auto pilot'. Before this program I was fast approaching that place, but through this course I have seen exciting ways to hone my craft and better work with students.

Chapter 5

Zooming in: Exploring the Experiences of Four Teachers

This study as a whole explores the experiences of fifty-five teachers who participated in a Masters program. Specifically, it shares their experiences within a literacy strand of coursework that focused on effective instruction for learners from diverse backgrounds. The case studies described on subsequent pages are nested within the larger study. In this chapter I focus on, explore, and describe the specific experiences of four 3rd through 5th grade elementary school teachers during and after they completed the literacy strand of coursework. I first outline the specific methodological approaches used to gather case study data. Then I present four distinct teacher cases and their experiences with the coursework. Finally, I discuss the recurrent themes related to teacher change that emerged through my data analysis.

Case Study Methodology

This section describes the methods I used to select representative focal cases and the additional data I collected and analyzed. I outline how teaching placement, teaching experience, and academic focus within the fellowship program influenced selection of focal cases. Then I present the data collection methods I used that were specific to focal cases (in addition to data collected through coursework).

Teaching placement. I selected the focal teachers based on various criteria. Focal teachers included three females and one male. Focal teachers represent cases across the teaching spectrum in terms of teaching assignment within the upper elementary level. Julie was a self-contained third grade teacher. She taught at Autumn Elementary, the

school in the district with the highest percentage of English learners, students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and students receiving free or reduced lunch. While the district average of students from minority backgrounds was 33.5%, the average at Autumn Elementary was 54%, with twelve languages spoken by students. Todd was a specialist and taught science to all fifth graders at Round Meadow Elementary. Two teachers, Jan and Mollie team-taught fourth grade at Elm Creek Elementary; they worked with two groups of students and between them taught all subject areas. As evidenced by the description above, I purposefully considered placement in relation to specialization in creating a case sample representative of the larger group (see Table 18).

Teaching experience. I also selected focal participants with varying levels of teaching experience. At the start of the study Julie was entering her first year of teaching, Todd was beginning his third year of teaching, Mollie was returning to the classroom to begin her ninth year of teaching, and Jan was entering her twenty-sixth year.

Cohort and academic focus. While there were five academic tracks within the Masters program, two tracks held an interdisciplinary focus that combined literacy instruction with content area instruction (interdisciplinary math and interdisciplinary science). I selected focal participants in a manner that ensured the representation of each of the two specialty tracks with a focus on integrated instruction. Julie, Jan, and Mollie participated in the interdisciplinary track that focused on literacy and math. Todd participated in the interdisciplinary track that focused on literacy and science (See Table 18).

Table 18 illustrates the above-mentioned factors of interest and illustrates the nature of purposive sampling.

Table 18

Criteria for Selecting Cases

Name	**Gender**	**Grade level/ Teaching Placement**	**Years Teaching Experience at start of program**	**Cohort Focus**
Jan	Female	4th grade	26 years	Literacy & Math
Julie	Female	3rd grade	0 years	Literacy & Science
Mollie	Female	4th grade	9 years	Literacy & Math
Todd	Male	5th grade Science	2 years	Literacy & Science

Data collection. I collected and analyzed a robust set of data for the four focal cases. Focal case data included the same data I collected for every participant: class artifacts, reflections, action plans, implementation plans, unit plans, and structured protocols. In addition to these data, I conducted a series of at least three structured interviews with each focal case. Each interview was audio recorded and later transcribed. I took scratch notes during the interviews and noted key moments to revisit.

I conducted interviews in focal teachers' classrooms during the fall of 2010 – the semester after the completion of our final literacy course. Interviews took place during teachers' planning periods. Beyond the structured, planned interviews, I engaged in unplanned interviews and conversations with each teacher. These unplanned interviews came about because of the nature of my position within the program: I continued to teach an action research methods course to teachers during the fall 2010 semester. My interviews helped me understand, on an individual level, how teachers experienced the

literacy strand of coursework and their evolving beliefs about themselves and their pedagogy.

I also conducted a series of classroom observations. Classroom observations ranged in duration (both in terms of classroom hours and span of days) for the set of teachers. Through the classroom observations I captured one complete lesson cycle by the teachers. Individual teachers scheduled these observations: they selected a lesson cycle during which they were instructing from their thematic plan that they had created in our summer course, CALIIA. Also, teachers determined what defined "lesson cycles". Observations ranged in length, but each spanned at least two instructional days. While observing, I recorded a running script and took scratch notes of particular instances that I felt it would be important to return to. I videotaped each observation for later viewing, selective transcription, and coding of key moments. I developed an understanding for individual levels of transference of course concepts by analyzing classroom observations. This equipped me to understand the degree of synergy between teachers' espoused theories and their theories in action.

After collecting data on each of the teacher cases through a series of interviews and classroom observations, I analyzed their data and inductively generated themes. I used the individual case studies to better understand teacher experiences at an individual level. In the following sections I present each teacher case in depth, and offer a picture of their experiences during and following their participation in the literacy strand of coursework.

Todd: An Early Career Science Teacher

In the following section I describe Todd's experience within the cohort. I highlight the process of change for Todd, an early career teacher, as he participated in coursework. I begin by painting a picture of Todd as an educator. I continue by describing the facets of Todd's personality and teaching identity that make him unique. After laying this foundation, I describe Todd's participation in and throughout coursework. I then provide a window into Todd's daily pedagogy. I conclude this section with a brief summary.

Understanding Todd

Todd was an early career teacher who worked as the fifth grade science teacher at Round Meadow Elementary. When he began the Masters program, Todd was in his third year. In addition to teaching science to all of the fifth graders within the building, Todd also taught one section of reading to his homeroom students. Todd had a quick-witted, dry personality and an artistic background. When he worked with small groups and the task at hand was to graphically represent a course concept, Todd was always selected as the artist. His artwork often took longer than the allotted time, but his classmates made the allowance for this. His talent was welcomed and took dense research topics and made them more understandable for teachers.

Todd was also very reflective of his own personal practice and how his approach affected his students. He came to class each day with a moleskin notebook that he spent the summer taking notes and recording ideas within. One morning, during the second literacy course, Todd couldn't find his notebook and thought he had lost it. His demeanor

was shifted that morning. After class ended, I sat down at his table while he was eating lunch and checked in with him. When I asked him how he was doing, Todd explained that he was feeling pretty deflated because he could not find his notebook. He kept all of his ideas for the upcoming school year in his notebook and he had nearly filled it up over the term of our course. Throughout the summer, during our frequent lunchtime conversations, Todd was often scribbling furiously in an attempt to record all of the ideas that were coalescing in his mind. That afternoon, he told me of his worry that he would not find his notebook and would not be able to replicate the ideas captured within it. He left our room that day with shoulders slumped.

Todd found his notebook later that afternoon. He had left it in the science classroom the day before. That conversation exemplifies Todd. Even as an early career teacher, Todd showed the thoughtfulness and level of reflection usually reserved for a veteran teacher. His reading reflections showed high levels of reflexivity. Todd often did not give himself credit for the good things happening in his classroom. He engaged with the readings from class in such a way that at the same time as he processed the meaning, he also translated them to his classroom setting. Todd did not cut himself any slack and was often his toughest critic. Because of this, I found myself wanting to understand how ideas from his coursework impacted his daily pedagogy. I wanted to view for myself what the climate of his classroom was, because he was so hard on himself.

Todd as a Distinct Case

Each year of the fellowship program, Todd showed a deepened understanding of effective instructional methods for learners from diverse cultural and linguistic

backgrounds. During the third course, Todd identified an epiphanal moment in which he tied together concepts from all of the literacy courses: he integrated the idea of encouraging discussion and increasing talk time within his classroom. He began translating this mindset shift into action within his classroom by focusing his energy on implementing small group work and later added to this through the integration of small group inquiries and thematic instruction. Todd rearranged his room to facilitate and promote discussion and inquiry, and created a clear division of work and meeting space. He also posted clear expectations for the two distinct areas, and how students should behave and interact when working independently or in a small group. In fact, Todd spent the first two weeks of school focusing on routines and setting clear expectations for work, behavior, and participation. Todd explained that his emphasis on setting and maintaining expectations, increasing student talk, and facilitating small group inquiry was new to his classroom as a result of the coursework (Interview, 9/17/10).

Todd was a teacher who appreciated consistency and clearly laid out plans and instructions. He valued course experiences, such as videos or observations, that offered concrete visions of how course concepts might look when they were translated from readings into practice. He explained this in an individual interview:

> There is a disconnect of 'hey we are studying these really cool things and it sounds really neat' but then how does it work? Not being able to see it or experience it or try it, in some senses, with supervision, I think would be a big thing if we could get professors, you know, like, if I could have, if we could make the subbing work, if I could have [teachers I collaborated on my unit with] come over and see 'ok, here's how this part of the unit is working for me' and do kind of extended observation and planning time in the middle of it, that would be, it would help a lot (Interview, 11/1/10).

Todd's classroom set-up offered insight into his learning style: it was organized, labeled, and homework for the entire week was written on the board. He had a magnet board with photographs of his students to visually keep track of attendance. Knowing this about Todd, it was no surprise to me when he explained that the lack of a clear long-term vision for the fellowship program led him to distance himself. In an interview following completion of the literacy series coursework, Todd explained:

> I really feel this year is the first year that I am changing how I am teaching because of the classes and what we have learned in the classes…Probably up until this year I have been like 'oh, I am going to do what I am supposed to do.' You know, and more jumping through hoops kind of thing. And then this year turned into more 'I'm gonna' actually do something more with it' instead of just going through the motions (Interview, 10/4/10).

Todd's position as the sole science teacher in his building, and in the fellowship program, led him to feel isolated at times. He saw this as a barrier to his personal collaboration. He discussed this in interviews, course surveys, and personal reflections. Though he recognized the benefits of collaboration, he seemed to see the obstacles as insurmountable. In the year following the final literacy course, another member of the fellowship became a fifth grade science teacher. Despite the collaborative efforts that took place over the summer, and the fact that he had a colleague who shared his placement and with whom he had planned, in follow-up interviews Todd explained that he had not continued to collaborate with her. He described limitations to collaboration as being structural – he saw the need to have release time in order to collaborate (Interview, 11/1/10).

Todd identified a shift in his role in the school after his second year of participating in the program. He described his role as having changed to that of an "instigator". With the research base from his coursework, Todd began to feel greater confidence in himself as a well-rounded professional. Because he had previously viewed himself solely as a science teacher, Todd described having taught reading in the manner he had been told to without referring to research or questioning the soundness of methods. However, through his participation in literacy coursework, Todd identified a shift in his outlook. Todd explained, "the fellowship has kind of made me think bigger picture" (Interview, 10/4/10).

For Todd, the literacy coursework, and its multi-year focus on thematic instruction, shifted his approach to instruction. He began to instruct thematically, looking for big ideas that would engage students. Todd began to understand that he could tie together curriculum, concepts, and standards through broader themes rather than approaching instruction through discrete ideas and lessons. Framing his approach to the standards by emphasizing relationships made him feel more organized, confident, and comfortable (Interview, 10/4/10).

When Todd reflected on his classroom, after having completed the literacy courses, he described a personal mindset shift. He identified his instruction as previously being "teacher-centered." As a result of coursework Todd was increasingly conscious of the amount of time he spent talking and the amount of time his students spent talking during class. Todd described that course concepts from CALIIA and ideas from our core

course text had increased his awareness of the importance of student talk and small group discussions.

Todd's Participation in the Cohort

Todd took his participation in each course very seriously. He always arrived early, ready for class to begin with his notebook on the table in front of him open to a blank page. He never missed a single class session over the three years of coursework. He was reflective, thoughtful, and goal-centered. When working in small groups, his voice was not the loudest or the one most often heard. When Todd spoke in a group discussion it was measured and thoughtful. His words were coherent and he was confident. His comments were focused on how to improve his personal classroom pedagogy and that of his colleagues. His presence quietly guided the groups in which he participated. Todd chose to work and collaborate with three colleagues. Two of the women in his working group had personalities that dominated the conversation and one colleague was often over-shadowed. Todd's presence balanced his group. He de-escalated situations by inserting a witty comment or joke and smirking at his group members.

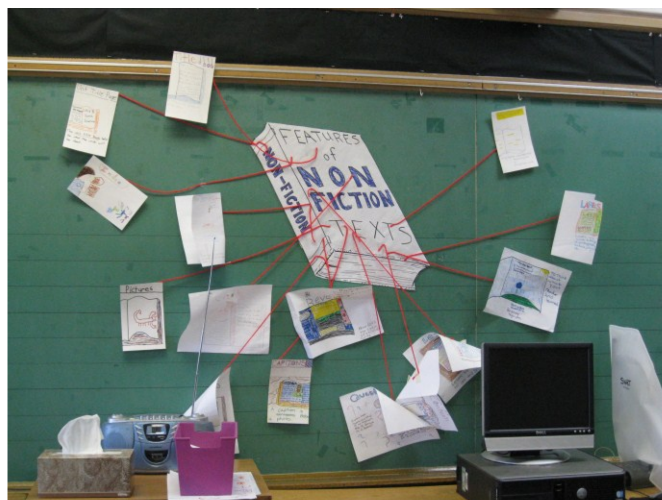
Visiting Todd's Classroom

I visited Todd's classroom five times between September and December of 2010. On three visits I met with Todd individually during his planning period at the end of the day in order to conduct interviews. On these visits, his students would return to the classroom after our interview. When his students returned, I stayed in the classroom. Though there were only ten minutes of class time before students were dismissed, I found this time helped me to understand Todd's teaching. We had spent the previous summer

talking about community building within the classroom and these ten-minute snapshots of instructional time helped me see his progress. Students had already packed up their belongings for the day when they returned to his classroom. They came in and sat on the ground as Todd read aloud to them. This time was calm, it was quiet, and Todd seemed to enjoy it as much as his students did. Though he was a science teacher by definition, he was focused on building literacy into his instruction.

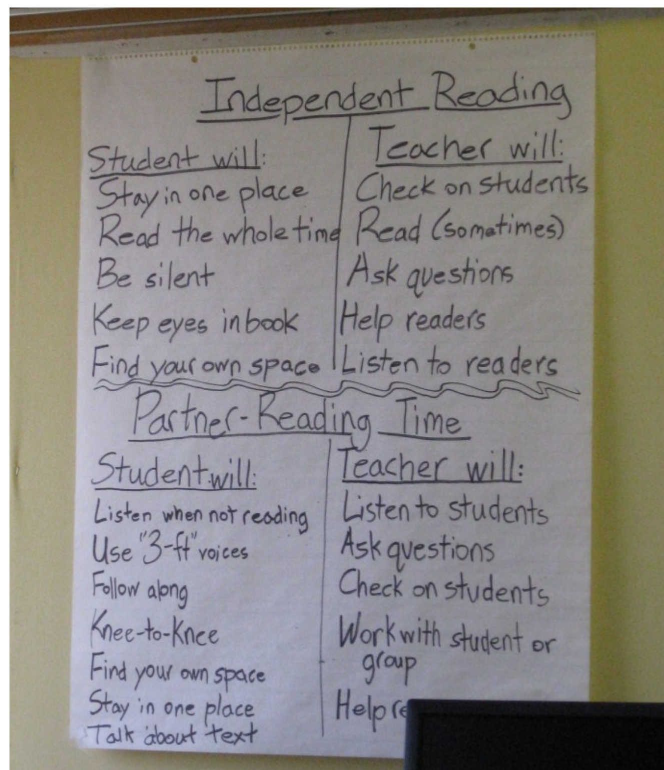
On my first visit, during the second week of school, Todd's use of literacy within his science classroom was evident (Classroom observation, 9/17/10). During the coursework of the previous summer, he had been interested in strengthening his approach to non-fiction instruction. When I made my first visit to his classroom, I saw how he had begun carrying through with his plan. Figure 1 shows a display Todd co-created with his students depicting the many features of non-fiction texts. Todd explained that he got the idea for this display, and the accompanying lesson, from our course text from the previous summer (Interview, 9/17/10).

Figure 1. Features of Non-Fiction Texts



On my second visit, I noticed that Todd had anchor charts, guiding posters from instructional lessons, posted around the room (see Figure 2) (Classroom observation, 10/4/10). Though he was the grade level science teacher, Todd's room had an obvious focus on literacy development. Todd explained that various anchor charts posted in his room grew from course readings the previous summer. One example of this was a chart that outlined student and teacher responsibilities and goals for both independent and partner reading (see Figure 2). When I asked Todd about this, he explained that he had gotten the idea to incorporate this chart into his 5th grade classroom from our class reading (Interview, 10/4/10).

Figure 2. Expectations for Independent Reading



Artifacts within Todd's classroom provided examples of his integration of ideas and concepts from each of the literacy courses into his daily pedagogy. Todd held high expectations for his students in both individual and small group work. The level to which he got to know the interests of his students allowed him to tailor his instruction in such a way that led to high levels of student engagement. Todd's first mini-inquiry with his science classes demonstrates this. In one interview, Todd explained that his first attempt at a mini-inquiry within his classroom focused on creating "silly bands", a bracelet craze that had swept his school. He chose this as a topic because it was an area the majority of his students were interested in. He pinpointed that his choice to model a mini-inquiry on the topic of silly bands, something students were highly interested in, stemmed from our coursework. He specifically referenced how his rereading of our course text impressed upon him the importance of letting students' interests guide the choosing of topics for study (Interview, 10/4/10). Todd used this mini-inquiry as a jumping off point before immersing himself and his students in the year-long theme of "discovery" that he had planned the previous summer.

My observations in Todd's classroom helped me see how he synthesized and integrated concepts from each of the three literacy courses into his daily pedagogy. In a single, one hour classroom observation I noted his inclusion of concepts such as scaffolding student learning (DITL); linking new learning to student prior knowledge (a concept covered in each of the three courses); engaging students in inquiry based instruction (CALIIA); fostering oral language development through the use of turn and talks (EL); integrating literacy instruction into the content areas (CALIIA); and choosing

instructional topics to based on student interest to engage all learners (DITL) (Classroom observation, 12/7/10).

Conclusion

Todd's teaching context directly influenced the form of teacher change he experienced. Todd's feelings of professional isolation within the cohort, resulting from him being the only fifth grade science teacher, shaped his change process. When he discussed his participation in the cohort, he identified a distinct turning point; there was a critical incident that he identified in which he began to integrate course concepts into his teaching. For Todd, the core course text from CALIIA, and the way we structured course learning, led to what he termed "an epiphany". Todd reflected, "There was nothing new in that book. You know, I had heard all that stuff before. It was just the way it was put together that was like 'oooh, that's how it works'" (Interview, 10/4/10). He continued to describe that using the book throughout spring class sessions, viewing supplementary videos, having the opportunity to test concepts within his classroom while studying, and engaging in conversations with colleagues outside of the cohort helped him integrate course concepts into his pedagogy. Though Todd felt conflicting feelings of isolation and barriers to collaboration as a result of his unique teaching placement, he found ways to foster high levels of his own personal professional development. Participation in the cohort provided a safe space for Todd to experiment within his classroom and return for support. Though he did not collaborate with peers outside of coursework, his in-class collaborative unit offered the safety to take risks in his classroom that he would not have

otherwise taken. For Todd, change happened as a result of a combination of his personal thoughtfulness along with specific course activities and resources.

Julie: A Novice Third Grade Teacher

In the following section I describe Julie's experience within the cohort. I highlight the process of change for Julie, a novice teacher, as she participated coursework. I begin by painting a picture of Julie as an educator who was beginning her teaching career at the same time she began participating in the literacy strand of coursework. I continue by describing the facets of Julie's personality and developing teaching identity that make her unique. After laying this foundation, I describe Julie's participation in coursework. I then provide a window into Julie's daily pedagogy as I understood it through my classroom observations. I conclude this section with a brief summary of Julie as a distinct case.

Understanding Julie

Julie had just graduated from a local university and was preparing to begin her first year of teaching when she began participating in the professional development partnership. She had completed her student teaching at Autumn Elementary School during the spring prior to her participation in the first course in the literacy strand and had been hired to continue teaching there after graduation. Julie taught third grade at Autumn Elementary for the three years of this study.

From my first interaction with Julie, I was intrigued. Her questions were thoughtful and showed that, as a novice teacher, she was actively looking for coaching and support. I noted that she never offered her opinion in whole group class discussions and often abstained from talking during small group discussions. She appeared fully

engaged in discussions, yet she did not offer her insight or opinions. She would speak with her peers individually about concepts brought up during group discussions, but would not weigh into the discussion itself. I wondered why this was so. I later found out through our individual interviews that Julie recognized this about herself. She noted that though she often felt that she had a lot to contribute to class discussions, she held back from sharing her viewpoints. Julie attributed this to two things: feelings of judgment stemming from her peers within the cohort and her lack of self-confidence because of her status as a novice teacher (Interview, 10/5/10). In one of our final interviews, Julie reflected on how her position as a novice teacher linked directly to her feelings of professional doubt:

> Sometimes I feel like I need to be more confident in my thoughts or my ideas. And that's why I am always like 'is that crazy?' I am a little unsure sometimes, I guess … I don't know. I think it is because I feel like I am a new teacher still. It is like, it's my third year … I should be more confident about it I guess (Interview, 10/18/10).

Julie as a Distinct Case

While some teachers in the cohort remarked that they felt that four years was too long of a time-frame for the program, Julie felt otherwise. As an early career teacher, Julie saw the four-year fellowship program as an opportunity to grow in a supportive environment. After her participation in the first literacy class, Julie remarked that "going into my first year of teaching I feel better prepared to teach [English learners] not because of my bachelor's degree but because of the course this summer" (Personal reflection, 6/08). When she reflected on the complete literacy strand of coursework, Julie saw the content of the courses, and the resulting learning, as linked. In an interview, she reflected:

"I think all of our classes built on each year as we kept taking these courses. And, I feel like, you know, what I did in the previous two classes led up to making the integrated theme throughout the year easier." (Interview, 9/2/10)

For Julie, the literacy strand of coursework was inextricably linked to her developing approach to teaching. Julie explained this in an interview:

> I think about things from class now when I am lesson planning. And, I can't say that I did that coming from undergraduate … My mind is constantly going with those ideas from class and how I can bring that in. And, I wasn't that way before (Interview, 10/5/10).

Walking into Julie's classroom demonstrated her transfer of course concepts. Over the three literacy courses, Julie continually noted ideas in her personal reflections that she wanted to integrate into her personal pedagogy including the use of rubrics, inquiry-based instruction, increased use of informational texts, validating student questions, allowing for more student talk, and building on students' prior knowledge. In one reflection, she explained:

> Every time that I read a new chapter in one of these books I keep catching myself saying 'I want to try that' or 'I do something similar to that', which I hope will create a better environment for reading comprehension in my classroom (Reflection, 6/15/09).

Each time I visited her classroom, as I looked around the room, I noticed specific artifacts that were linked to the three literacy strand courses and the transfer of course concepts into her daily instruction. But, it wasn't just artifacts that changed for Julie. Julie's approach to teaching and her growing confidence in that approach were notable. The three years of coursework were also Julie's first years of teaching. And, building a professional knowledge base through her participation in coursework not only prompted

her to share ideas with colleagues, but also built Julie's confidence in sharing these ideas. Before her third year of teaching, Julie based the set-up of her classroom on that of an inquiry-based classroom as it was discussed in our course readings for CALIIA. Visually, this approach was very different from the traditional classroom organization at Autumn Elementary. Julie recounted how teachers reacted when they saw this and how she, in turn, responded with growing confidence in her choices:

> Everybody comes in, and they are giving me a hard time. All the other teachers, they are like, 'Julie, what's with the board? It's empty!' They think I should have stuff up everywhere. They keep giving me a hard time. And, I am like, 'I am going to keep it empty and hang up the artifacts [as we make them]', because that is what we talked about [in class] (Interview, 9/2/10).

While Julie may not have always shared her ideas during group discussions, and she may have seemed timid in certain situations, she proved to be a leader within the small group of teachers with whom she collaborated. Julie was a part of a core group of four teachers who collaborated throughout the coursework. Through observations, I noted that she took on the role of the leader within this group. While the other teachers had more years of experience teaching, Julie's determination to continue to develop her pedagogy pushed her into the role of group leader. I witnessed her presence within her working group shift as time went on in the program. By the third course, Julie often served as the voice of the small group. She was the person who posed questions of clarification to the instructors on behalf of the group (both during class and via e-mail).

Through her participation in the literacy strand of coursework, Julie's confidence and self-efficacy grew. She initiated collaborative sharing events from coursework within her school building both with members of the fellowship program and those who were

not involved. Because I observed her taking on a leadership role within her small working group and with her peers at her school building, I wondered why she still hesitated to share her opinions during class in large group discussions.

Julie taught in the school that served the most diverse student population within the district. It also had the highest rate of students receiving free and reduced lunch. Julie felt that this impacted the way other teachers in the district viewed her, and her teaching colleagues, during their participation in coursework. She remarked in multiple interviews that she felt collaboration was fostered only at the school building level. Beyond that, she perceived competition and judgment permeating the cohort rather than collaboration. She explained this in an interview:

> I sometimes feel like instead of learning from one another, from other elementary schools, I feel like it is an 'us vs. them'. Like, 'our school needs to be better than your school'. And I don't feel like sometimes people want to share their ideas (Interview, 10/5/10).

Despite the competition she perceived as permeating the large group, Julie felt that one of the largest benefits of the structure of the program was that she attended classes with colleagues from her school building. She felt that this structure not only made her more comfortable at the start of the program, but also provided the benefit of a shared context. The major benefit Julie saw was that in class she was supported by people with whom she taught and outside of class she was able to build a stable network for daily collaboration (Interview, 10/5/10).

Julie's approach to instruction shifted throughout the literacy strand coursework. After her participation in the second course, DITL, Julie attempted to

implement her thematic unit, however, she abandoned it after teaching ten lessons. In her professional development plan after CALIIA, she reflected on this:

> The students absolutely loved the first 10 lessons I taught. They were very engaged and motivated. I really felt the level of participation increase. Students were making a lot of connections throughout the school day to the unit. I wish I would have completed the unit because students asked why we didn't! (Action Research Follow Up and Professional Development Plan, 6/25/10).

With this experience in mind, and equipped with the knowledge from CALIIA, Julie committed herself to organizing her classroom thematically and incorporating inquiry-based instruction. Her major goal for the year, as she stated it, was to follow through with implementing her thematic plan organized around the idea of "community" (Interview, 9/2/10). In the middle of October, during an unplanned school visit, I saw Julie's commitment to her theme in action. While sitting in her room during her planning period, Julie explained to me how the foundational concept linking each of her lessons that day in math, writing, and guided reading was "community". In math the lesson on *perimeter* culminated in determining the perimeter of their community (their classroom); in writing students were involved in creating a narrative piece about friendship; and each of the guided reading groups were reading books linked thematically by friendship.

After participating in the first course, and completing her first year of teaching, Julie felt she had learned a lot. In the middle of the second course, she reflected:

> As a first year teacher I learned quickly how important modeling, scaffolding, and guided practice is for the students. I think modeling is

> absolutely crucial for independent use of these strategies in a successful way for reading comprehension. (Reflection, 6/15/09)

Julie continued to place a high value on modeling and scaffolding. While observing in her classroom, I saw Julie model habits of good readers and structure her expectations for productive group work throughout her meetings with small groups. In one classroom visit I observed her showing students how to hold a book so that the entire group could read the text. She also called students' attention back to previous lessons in which she had modeled the process of taking notes using post-its.

The first course focusing on effective instruction for English learners was pivotal for shaping Julie's approach to working with diverse learners. In addition to focusing her efforts on building prior knowledge, scaffolding, and modeling, Julie became committed to building relationships with her students and their families. In an interview that took place during fall conferences, Julie explained how she was focusing on building relationships with her students' families. Because she had participated in *Semester at Sea*, a study abroad program that travels the world, Julie had visited many countries, including those in Africa. This gave her some first-hand prior knowledge of her students' cultural backgrounds. And, she believed that this experience was critical in helping her to take the first steps in forming relationships with her students and their parents (Interview, 9/2/10).

Julie's Participation in the Cohort

In class, Julie was attentive and engaged; she was also timid and reserved. Though certain days passed without Julie sharing her opinion with the whole group, she never missed a single class session. When Julie facilitated book club conversations, the discussion questions she developed were among the most thoughtful and probing of all the students. Julie took copious notes and the written assignments she turned in were thoughtful; they showed high levels of personal reflection. Julie always sat with the same three teachers, at the same table within our classroom. Two of these teachers shared a teaching placement at her school building and the four teachers completed all course projects together.

Visiting Julie's Classroom

I visited Julie's classroom at various points throughout the school year. I went before school started and throughout the fall. I found myself in her school building often, and she always opened her classroom doors to me. We met and the conversations flowed. When I came into her classroom, she immediately showed me the new things she had integrated into her classroom and followed up with areas of question. Many times I felt she was simply looking for validation; she wanted to hear from me that the concepts she was integrating into her classroom were moving along soundly.

Each time I was in her building, I visited with Julie. I conducted 3 formal interviews, along with additional unscheduled visits and observations. I also conducted a series of formal observations within her classroom in which I viewed a series of connected lessons, or lesson cycle. This observation of the lesson cycle included a pre-

observation meeting and a post-observation debrief. Each time I visited her classroom, as I looked around the room, I noticed specific artifacts such as vocabulary posters and student book boxes to organize materials that were linked to concepts discussed in the three literacy strand courses.

At the beginning of the year, Julie kept her classroom walls bare and through the visits the learning and teaching in her room became evident through the artifacts on the walls. This is a concept Julie read about in our course text and discussed implementing in her reflections throughout the course. However, though she collaborated throughout the school year with members of the cohort at her school building, none of the other teachers adopted this practice. Julie was the only one and she stood by her decision. Her classroom was calm and felt warm. The front of her desk was decorated with student created artwork and student artwork covered the walls behind her desk as well. From the ceiling she hung student-created signs showing team names. Both Julie's year-long theme and her personal approach to her classroom focused on building community.

Conclusion

Julie's belief in the importance of collaboration was not limited to adults; it transferred to her approach to instruction. Julie focused her energy at the beginning of the year teaching students how to work effectively in small groups and learn from their peers. There was always a lot of action within her classroom, but it was not chaotic. Students moved purposefully, remained focused, and the routines functioned smoothly. During small group work time Julie moved between facilitating groups at a kidney shaped table at the side of the room and sitting on the floor with student groups.

By the middle of November, students were working effectively in small groups – students facilitated their own learning, looked to each other for clarification, and Julie remained available to support them as necessary. In Julie's classroom, student voices outweighed the teacher voice. And, unlike during our coursework, this did not have to do with Julie's confidence level. Julie encouraged students to take risks and remain active in the learning process. Her efforts to increase student talk, foster collaborative learning within her classroom, and gradually release responsibility to students were evident.

Jan and Mollie: Veteran Fourth Grade Team Teachers

In the following section I describe the experiences of two teachers, Jan and Mollie, within the cohort. I discuss Jan and Mollie's experiences together because of their high levels of collaboration teamwork throughout coursework and in their daily pedagogy. I highlight the process of change for Jan and Mollie, both career, veteran teachers, as they participated coursework. I begin by painting pictures of Jan and Mollie as educators. I continue by describing the facets of Jan and Mollie's personalities and teaching identities that make them unique. After laying this foundation, I describe Jan and Mollie's participation in and throughout coursework. I then offer a glimpse into Jan and Mollie's daily pedagogy. I conclude this section with a brief summary

Understanding Jan and Mollie

At the start of coursework, Jan had taught for twenty-six years and Mollie for nine years. Mollie had just returned to the classroom after leaving it for four years in order to care for her children. Throughout this study, Jan and Mollie taught next door to each other and were paired as team teachers. When asked what the strongest point of their

participation in the fellowship program was, without hesitation they each quickly highlighted the collaboration it fostered. Each of them saw the other as integral to both their personal success and that of their students. In an interview Jan and Mollie reflected on how they felt their collaboration influenced both student and teacher motivation and engagement:

> *Mollie*: I think that is really one of my favorite parts. You know this would not be *anything* [emphasis added] if I had done this on my own and if I was a self-contained classroom and I was doing this all myself. I could deliver it, but it would not be the same as having a partner to do it with. It is just, I mean, it is wonderful…It is so much fun…
>
> *Jan* (*interrupts)*: "It's so much fun! We were both like 'the school year starts! We get to do this!'"
>
> *Mollie*: "…To share that excitement and then also to ummm, it's almost like, you know Jan's excitement makes me more excited and then I get excited about something and it makes Jan more excited about that. You know, we build each other up…"
>
> *Jan*: "...And then the kids get excited about that because we come in and we go… because we are excited to see if it works. And then the kids get excited about it because they can see that we are excited about it, I think" (Interview, 9/17/10).

Jan and Mollie began collaborating on course projects early on and they continued this collaboration throughout the entire strand of literacy coursework. As a researcher and teacher educator, it was interesting to see their relationship evolve. While their beliefs in relation to pedagogy were similar, their personalities were markedly different. Jan was theatrical and enjoyed dressing up and taking on different characters in her teaching; the idea of doing this in her own classroom made Mollie visibly uncomfortable. While Mollie often focused on details, Jan was able to see the big picture. Jan was well versed with the school's curriculum in science and social studies and Mollie's strong suit was

planning and facilitating discussion-based and small group literacy instruction. Mollie and Jan complemented one other. Their similarities, and differences combined to make a strong partnership. Both of the teachers recognized this. When describing her view on their collaboration, Mollie summed it up by saying “we can either swim together or sink alone” (Interview, 10/18/10).

Mollie and Jan as Distinct Cases

Both Jan and Mollie had participated in graduate coursework prior to this fellowship program. When they spoke of their previous experiences with graduate coursework, neither one was satisfied with the level of rigor of their program. Jan completed her degree, despite her dissatisfaction with its level of rigor, while Mollie chose to discontinue her studies.

Almost a year after the literacy strand of coursework ended, Jan contacted me to ask if we could schedule a private meeting when I would be teaching in Taylor later that week. She explained in her e-mail that she had questions about both the classroom-based research project that she was working on for the action research course I was instructing and the content area course she was currently taking. We scheduled our meeting for later that week. It was mid-June, the school year had recently ended, and summer coursework had begun. When we met, Jan began by voicing her dissatisfaction with a course she was enrolled in. She felt that it was not rigorous enough and that she was not being asked to think deeply. She spoke at length about how the structure of the reflections for the literacy strand courses allowed her to process the readings and apply concepts to her daily pedagogy. She explained that she loved the literacy courses because she was able to

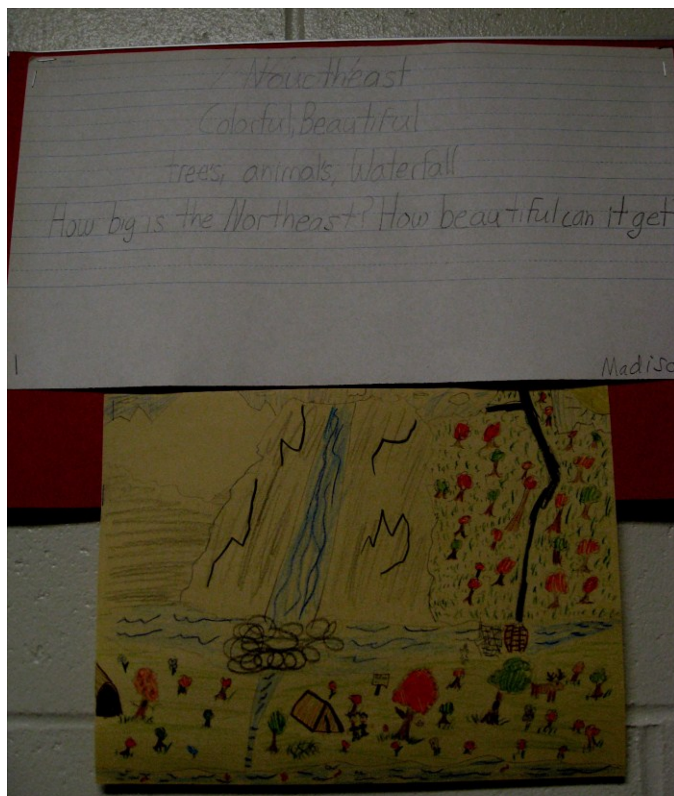
reflect; she was able to take away learning, such as her integrated unit and yearlong theme, and directly apply it to her instruction; and she felt the literacy coursework, and accompanying projects, were directly and clearly linked to her daily instruction. (Interview, 6/16/11). In an interview earlier that year, Mollie expressed a similar feeling. In relation to the length of the fellowship, and the method of linking course projects to daily pedagogy, Mollie explained: "I like that it is at a pace where you are constantly applying what you are learning and because of that, I feel like it is sinking in. And, you know, slow change is good for me" (Interview, 10/18/10).

For Jan and Mollie, participation in the literacy strand of coursework facilitated the collaboration that they described as critical to the success of their classroom. Over the three years of coursework in the literacy strand, Jan and Mollie's professional relationship blossomed. While they had known each other before beginning coursework, and they had spoken about collaborating in the past, they had never followed through with it. Each of them said that things got in the way - a perceived lack of time and family commitments were the two biggest reasons. However, they each saw their participation in coursework as a gateway to collaboration. Jan explained that integrated instruction "gave us permission to take that time [to collaborate] because we did it for a class. We had to get this done. And now it just continues. It makes sense" (Interview, 10/18/10).

The walls outside of Mollie and Jan's classrooms at Elm Creek Elementary School always showcased student work. One fall morning, as I walked down the hallway, a few minutes early for a joint interview, I stopped outside of their classrooms and read the student poems on display. They were related to their thematic unit of study on the

Northeast. As I read the poems, and observed the accompanying student artwork, I saw concepts from our coursework come to life in front of my eyes such as integrating literacy into the content areas, providing hands-on learning experiences, and incorporating the use of alternative assessments into classroom instruction (Observation, 9/17/10). Jan and Mollie's alternative assessment of student mastery of their unit on the Northeast had integrated reading, writing, and social studies while, at the same time, accounting for various learning modalities through the incorporation of both artwork and poetry (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Alternative Assessment



Beginning with the second literacy course, DITL, Jan and Mollie immersed themselves in their planning for integrated instruction. Each day they went to a private workspace to collaborate. And, each evening they divided up the work to be done before the next day. At the end of the course, Jan described what she viewed as her greatest accomplishment from the coursework:

> The thematic unit is my major accomplishment. It is a goal I have had for many years. Another co-worker and I tried to do this several years ago, but became frustrated with inability to implement. Now I feel we will have the opportunity and permission to move forward (Personal Goal Reflection, DITL, 2009).

After the course ended, the two teachers met once a week for the rest of the summer in order to finalize their plans. This investment of time and energy paid off for Jan and Mollie. At the start of the school year, they each felt comfortable with integrating literacy instruction into the content areas. They were committed to their units. However, a change in school building leadership created an unforeseen roadblock to implementation of their unit plans: the new principal wanted teachers to rely on instructing from the basal reader and did not support integrated instruction. A few weeks into the school year, I met with Jan in her classroom during her planning period. She relayed the situation and her response was noteworthy. Jan explained that her principal had shifted her schedule and teamed her with someone other than Mollie. She noted that just three weeks into school she had already experienced major setbacks, but she was not going to give up and abandon her integrated unit. She continued:

> Come Hell or high water, I will do this unit. And the high water has to be *really high* because I believe in this unit…You are given the parameters. I am going to meet those parameters and sneak in the good stuff (Interview, 9/24/09).

A year later, the administration at Jan and Mollie's school building had changed once again. However, unlike the previous principal, the new school building leader supported Jan and Mollie and encouraged them to use their professional judgment when making instructional decisions. This meant they were able, and encouraged, to implement the year-long thematic plan they had spent their summer creating. Jan described that she felt like their new school building leader viewed them as professionals, which was in contrast to how she felt their previous administrator treated them (Interview, 10/18/10). Mollie continued Jan's thought by explaining how the support from her school building leader shaped her perceptions:

> You feel respected and like all of this actually matters. Before it was like we were not trusted to use our judgment, I guess. You know, we were expected to do what we were told… and I think, 'how sad is that?' I mean, how many decisions a day does a teacher have to make? (Interview, 10/18/10)

Gradual change: instruction and assessment. Mollie and Jan's approach to instructional planning changed markedly over the three years they participated in literacy strand coursework. At the beginning, they each relied on textbooks and basal readers. Students read selections of texts, but did not have experiences with reading entire books. Though Jan had attempted to implement a thematic unit in the past, she had not been successful. At the onset of coursework, instruction in each subject area was conducted separately for both Jan and Mollie. While they discussed the idea of collaborating, they never followed up on this. However, each of these areas changed dramatically over the term of their coursework. It began gradually with collaboration. Next, they began to modify the forms of assessment used in their classrooms and to incorporate alternative

assessments, such as flipbooks, to determine student mastery. Following the second course, Mollie and Jan began integrating instruction across the content areas. They connected social studies and reading, however math instruction still stood alone. After participation in the third literacy course, Jan and Mollie not only integrated instruction through all of the subject areas across their two classrooms – math, science, social studies, reading, and writing – but they also implemented inquiry-based instruction.

From her first attempts at implementing a mini-inquiry during the spring class meetings for CALIIA, Mollie saw the benefits in allowing students to have voice in selecting what they would study and learn. She viewed inquiry-based instruction as an opportunity to "give them a chance to think about, you know 'what is it *I* want to get out of this?' And have a chance to, in class, to research what they are interested about" (Interview, 10/18/10). Both Mollie and Jan viewed inquiry-based instruction as one of the most straightforward ways to increase students' engagement with their own learning.

Mollie also began to show an understanding of the benefits of heterogeneously grouping students. In an interview at the beginning of the year, Mollie described a shift in her personal mindset. Based on the literacy coursework, she explained that she recognized the limitations of always placing students in learning groups with classmates of similar ability levels. This fall day, she explained how excited she was to work with her students because she had a great mix of ability levels within her classroom and she planned to group them heterogeneously and at times allow students to group themselves based on interests. Equal to her general approach to instruction, Mollie described her shifting beliefs about struggling readers as being a key to the increased engagement and

motivation of the students in her class. She felt that with her change in perspective, students changed their reactions and attitudes. She linked her mindset shift to examples from our coursework and focus on motivation and engagement theory (Interview, 9/17/10).

Mollie and Jan's Participation in the Cohort

Mollie and Jan took their participation in coursework very seriously. Neither one of them missed a single class session over the three years of coursework. Each of them was always prepared for class – having read the assigned readings in advance and coming prepared with questions for both classmates and instructors. Their primary concern was to ensure that they got the most out of each class assignment. Jan was naturally positive and took on an asset-based perspective. She also was able to intuitively understand the larger picture of a situation. In small groups, Jan's sense of possibility rang through. When her colleagues complained that something in the texts seemed idealistic, or an instructional approach would not be successful with their students, Jan quickly reframed the conversation. Because of her status as a veteran teacher, and her proven instructional success, Jan's classmates listened to her advice. She often took on the role of interpreting ideas from the text and creating tangible links to everyday instruction. I witnessed on multiple occasions Jan pointing her colleagues to supplemental information she had found outside of class readings. For example, during a book club meeting in our third course, CALIIA, when one member of her group was explaining a desire to learn more about content area read alouds, but her limited store of resources, Jan quickly pointed to an appendix in the course text where she had found a relevant book list that she described

as “updated, new, and fresh” (Observation, 6/18/10). Mollie also thought deeply about texts. While she also has a strong sense of possibility, her optimism was more muted than Jan’s. Mollie often focused on the details of a situation. While Jan talked about the excitement associated with revamping her approach to instruction, Mollie identified the potential issues that would arise.

Jan and Mollie collaborated extensively with one another. They were also part of a small group of participants from their school building who collaborated. When Jan described this group to me, she explained that they met outside of class to “do readings together, talk about what the assignments are, [and] bounce ideas off of each other” (Interview, 10/4/11). This collaboration was student organized and Jan and Mollie also worked with this group during class. Although the group fluctuated, there were always around six people in it and these six people were the ones Jan and Mollie worked with the most. It comprised what Jan referred to as both a “team” and a “study group”.

Visiting Mollie and Jan’s Classrooms

Mollie and Jan’s classrooms reflected both their individual teaching identity and their high level of collaboration. Their co-planning was evident in the artifacts that hung on the walls and the content of their instruction. Lessons carried over from one classroom to the other with both students and teachers openly referencing concepts of study from the other classroom. By the end of the literacy strand of coursework, and three years spent building a collaborative relationship, Mollie and Jan’s classrooms functioned as extensions of each other. Each one not only knew what the other was teaching, but they tied their instruction together. When I observed in their classrooms, rather than spend a

full day in one classroom, I chose to follow one group of students as they rotated between the two teachers. This allowed me to see the continuity of lessons and begin to understand how high levels of professional collaboration shaped students' learning experiences.

Jan and Mollie both preferred facilitating small group instruction to presenting to the whole group. They both maintained organized classrooms with purposeful and student-centered layouts. Artifacts around their rooms and their method for reorganizing their classrooms demonstrated transfer of concepts from our coursework. For example, as they studied concepts in social studies, the big ideas were represented on the walls through teacher and student created artifacts. Jan and Mollie each displayed their year-long thematic plan of study prominently at the front of their classroom. It served as an anchor for instruction. Figure 4 offers a visual of both the representation of the year-long theme as well as visual aids created to support and track classroom instruction. Jan and Mollie took concepts from each literacy strand course and integrated them fluidly into their classrooms. An example of this is the use of graphic organizers as pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading tools to support student learning as well as the incorporation of alternative assessments (Figure 3 and Figure 5).

Figure 4. Year Long Thematic Plan Display (Mollie's Classroom)

Figure 5. Graphic Organizers and Alternative Assessment display (Jan's Classroom)

While their classrooms were visibly and deeply linked, each teacher's personality came through in her instruction. Jan approached her students with a gentle demeanor. Her voice was soft, she used clapping patterns to call them back from small group work, and she referred to her students as "friends". On the days I spent in her classroom, Jan's students demonstrated comfort and ease in their cooperative learning. They were obviously used to working collaboratively with their peers. And, it was also apparent that Jan had set specific and high expectations for student work. Her students were grouped heterogeneously and each student's voice held weight. During one visit I observed students engaging in a science experiment related to hydroelectric power. Jan gave step-by-step instructions and then let students begin their experiment. As one group's experiment began to look different than the rest, they called Jan over. Rather than tell them what they had done differently (she avoided using the word "wrong"), Jan asked them questions and let them arrive at the answer on their own. Soon, Jan called other students over to watch what was happening with this experiment and note its difference. Jan's calm approach of working as a guide to her students helped them turn their potential mistake into a learning experience, not just for that small group, but for the entire class (Classroom observation, 11/16/10).

Mollie also preferred working with small groups of students rather than engaging in whole group instruction. Over the term of the literacy strand of coursework Mollie moved further and further from relying on whole group instruction. Like Jan, Mollie set high expectations for her students and clearly outlined procedures. Mollie's students engaged in classroom activities with a great sense of purpose. There was little wasted

time in transitions. On the days I spent in Mollie's classroom, students were always on task. And Mollie went to great lengths to ensure that student work was differentiated based on individual student needs. One fall day, as Mollie facilitated a small group reading session at the back of the classroom with a group of six students, an intervention teacher worked with one student, pairs of students were spread around the room partner reading, and some students worked independently. Everyone knew what they were expected to do, and when Mollie announced to the whole class that it was time to come back together, they did without hesitation (Classroom observation, 11/16/10).

Conclusion

Mollie and Jan's teaching context directly shaped both their teaching practice and the level of change they experienced as a result of their participation in the literacy strand of coursework. For these two teachers, the processing of readings and course concepts and creating linkages to their daily pedagogy did not happen in isolation. Jan and Mollie were able to look to each other, constantly and naturally, for support throughout the program. While many teachers planned their units for our second course individually, Mollie and Jan were one of the few collaborative pairs. Their collaboration continued not only in our coursework, but also in their day-to-day teaching. Jan and Mollie constantly provided support for each other. They relied on the other's strengths to bolster their instructional planning. They knew each other's students, classrooms, and instruction well enough to offer both insider and outsider advice and feedback. And, when one of them was being hard on herself, or comparing herself to another, the other one would step in and remind her of something that was going well within her room. With Jan and Mollie it

is important to remember that though they planned together, and shared a vision for classroom instruction, their classrooms were not identical. Each classroom represented the individual's interpretation of an idea, concept, or vision. For, as Jan explained, "Just as every child learns differently, every teacher is different as well" (Interview, 10/18/10).

Discussion

These four focal teachers shared certain similarities: they each taught upper elementary school, they each taught within the same rural school district, and they each participated in the literacy strand of coursework. However, each of these participants was unique. They embodied different perspectives when they entered the program. Their mindsets and perspectives were shaped by their prior social, cultural, educational, and professional experiences (Ball, 1996; Blumer, 1969; Kuhn, 1964; Schwandt, 1994). They were also informed by their reasons for joining and goals for participation within the Masters program.

Julie entered the program before beginning her first year of classroom teaching with the hope of developing her budding teaching craft. She saw the fellowship as an opportunity for professional development support and as an extension of her undergraduate studies. Todd described himself as a science teacher at the onset of the study. He was in his third year of teaching and a departmentalized science teacher also responsible for teaching one section of reading. He hoped to develop his knowledge base for effective instructional practices in literacy. Mollie had nine years of teaching experience, had just returned from four years out of the classroom, and saw the fellowship as an opportunity to hone and reconnect with her teaching practices. And Jan,

a twenty-six year veteran teacher at the onset of the study, saw the fellowship and the coursework as a means for further developing her teaching craft and providing her with a research base from which to draw.

No matter the initial reason for participation in the program, each of the teacher cases demonstrated shifts in both their mindsets and personal pedagogy in key domains. In this section I discuss the various ways each distinct case experienced the coursework; the forms of collaboration they participated in during the three years of this study; the various ways in which their participation shaped individual changes in personal pedagogy; and how their participation in coursework shaped them as professionals.

Experience with Coursework: High Expectations, High Rigor, and Long-Term Support

Interviews with individual teachers revealed that each teacher recognized the links between the content and focus of each of the courses in the literacy strand of coursework. The teachers noted how course concepts were embedded in class activities. And, each of the focal cases saw the courses as extensions in learning and felt that the content and focus of one course naturally lead to the next. Jan, Julie, Mollie, and Todd were always prepared for class sessions and took their participation in coursework very seriously. Data show that they experienced course activities and forms of learning differently. Teachers' self-perceptions and identities shaped their experiences and interpretations of ideas, affirming the dictum that individuals see things as a result of how individuals see themselves (Kuhn, 1964). Jan and Mollie thrived in group situations; they participated, shared their perspectives, and asked questions. They saw themselves as benefiting

powerfully from small group and individual activities. Todd also participated openly in small group work. However, his voice never dominated conversation; he shared opinions and asked questions at select times. Julie, on the other hand, did not consistently participate or offer her opinion when working with small groups. If she was grouped with her school-building colleagues, she openly participated and shared ideas. However, when placed in groups that were not self-selected, Julie often remained quiet. She preferred to work, process, and reflect individually. She attributed her timidness in group settings to her lack of self-confidence, her status as a novice teacher, and her feelings of judgment by other members of the cohort. For these focal teachers, professional experience, along with personality, shaped their levels of participation in, and reaction to, group work.

Throughout the literacy strand of coursework we continually held teachers to high standards. We chose a mix of theoretical and practical texts and expected teachers to process and synthesize all course texts deeply. Individual teachers responded differently to this in the moment – some felt that the readings were cumbersome, others voiced their belief that the density of the text was inappropriate, and others felt the workload was too heavy. While teachers said this in the moment, when they were removed from the process and reflected on what they had learned from pushing their thinking, they expressed a mix of pride in themselves and longing for more. Mollie and Julie appreciated the long-term, spread out nature of the coursework. They appreciated the time between classes to process ideas, incorporate them into their pedagogy, reflect on the process, and continue the learning loop (Ball, 1996). While Jan and Todd also saw the value in this, they questioned the structure of the over-all program, raising issue with the low-volume of

coursework during the academic year. Todd and Jan craved high rigor not only in the summer while they participated in the literacy strand of coursework; they wanted the same thing throughout the school year while teaching. Todd, in particular, desired the support and structure of meeting with instructors and colleagues, throughout the school year, as he implemented course concepts.

Each of the focal teachers felt that one of the largest strengths of the literacy strand of coursework was the concrete link drawn between theory and practice through course activities and projects (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002; Heibert, 1999). Todd referenced this in multiple interviews. He described how he believed the biggest strength of the program was the way that we connected teachers' daily pedagogy to course concepts throughout the literacy courses. Similarly, Mollie and Jan described in an interview how pleased they were to enter the school year with lesson plans and full unit plans resulting from their completion of the culminating course project. They had such thorough plans because they had met weekly, after our class ended each summer, to prepare further for the upcoming year. While Julie appreciated the theory to practice links made in our course activities and discussions, she benefited more from creating the links between theory and practice on her own (Ball, 1996). She did this through her daily reflections on course readings and concepts.

Regardless of the degree to which they implemented the thematic units that they planned as the culminating project for the second course, each teacher felt that the creation of the unit set them up for success in the third course. Jan and Mollie fully implemented their unit on "exploration" after creating it for DITL, and they incorporated

it into their year-long thematic plan that they created during CALIIA. Julie implemented the first ten lessons from the unit she created for DITL. Though she did not complete her lesson cycle, her students' reaction to the portion she did implement provided her with the experience and positive feelings to support her in integrating her year-long theme. And, while Todd did not include his initial unit from DITL into the creation of his year-long theme for CALIIA, he identified that having the experience of creating a single unit set him up to successfully create a year-long thematic plan consisting of five units. All teachers expressed the view that they appreciated the relevance of course projects and activities to their daily pedagogy (Garet et al., 2001).

Collaboration Shapes Experience

For Jan, Mollie, Todd, and Julie, their individual experiences with collaboration greatly shaped their experience in their coursework (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Beyond in-class activities, participants engaged in varying levels of collaboration throughout the coursework. Jan and Mollie are examples of teachers who collaborated on multiple levels and demonstrated characteristics of proficient collaborators (Harvey & Daniels, 2009). Before beginning the literacy strand of coursework Jan and Mollie had discussed the idea of collaborating with each other and saw the potential benefit it could have on their classroom instruction. They had similar working styles, taught in the same school on the same grade level team, and were similarly motivated to work hard. However, they had never made the time to do this until they began working in our classes. After developing a trusting rapport during the first literacy course, Jan and Mollie began working together consistently. They described the work for the courses as giving them the "permission" to

spend additional time collaborating. Jan and Mollie collaborated with each other on course projects, throughout the summers, and during the school year. They also formed what Jan called a "team" of teachers from their school building who were also in the cohort. This small group worked together throughout the school year on both course-related and non-course-related endeavors. They did not, however, collaborate with others outside of their school building. Jan recognized in an interview that while she viewed her experience with collaboration as extremely strong and powerful, her classmates from other schools might have different perceptions and experiences. This was, in fact, the case for both Julie and Todd.

Todd collaborated with colleagues during our summer course but once each course ended and the school year began, he did not continue collaborating. Todd saw his unique placement at his school building as a grade-wide science teacher as an insurmountable barrier to collaboration. In interviews he described his desire to work with or observe the other member of the cohort with a similar placement who worked at a different elementary school. Despite discussing this desire, Todd did not take action to make time to collaborate with this teacher. He explained that if he had release time from his school, he would collaborate. But, unlike Jan and Mollie, Todd did not want to spend his personal time collaborating with others. He also did not feel it worthwhile to collaborate with other teachers within his school building who taught at the same grade level but with a different placement. For Todd, in addition to his feelings of isolation in relation to teaching placement, he also had a markedly different work-style than the other fellowship participants from his school building.

Julie's experience with collaboration was not like Todd's and it was not like Jan and Mollie's. Julie engaged in multiple levels of collaboration during her time participating in the literacy strand of coursework. She worked on course projects and assignments with a core group of people from her school building. And, during the school year she collaborated not only with these three teachers, but also with teachers from her school building who were not in the fellowship program. She did not, however, collaborate with teachers within the fellowship who taught outside of her school building.

At times Julie demonstrated each of the seven key traits of proficient collaborators that Harvey and Daniels highlight (2009). However, this was not consistently the case. As a novice teacher, Julie often felt insecure sharing her ideas during small and large group discussions in class. While Julie often resisted speaking up in settings where she was grouped with colleagues from other school buildings, within the safety of the group of peers she had chosen, Julie felt her voice and her opinions were valued and spoke freely. Julie attributed this to the dual feelings of competition and collaboration she felt in the classroom setting. Julie felt that there was competition between schools within the district and she felt this played out in class discussions. However, she felt supported within her small working group. Because of this, she not only freely shared her opinions, but she also became the voice of the group. While Julie's working group collaborated on course concepts throughout our summer course, Julie noted in individual interviews that her colleagues did not share her interest in continuing to work throughout the summer to fine tune plans (as Jan and Mollie also did). Julie was the one person who, in addition to

working with teachers enrolled in the fellowship classes, described finding strength through her efforts to collaborate with teachers outside the fellowship.

While we incorporated group activities into our class time and provided a structure to support collaborative efforts for teachers, it was, ultimately, up to participants to seek out and develop lasting collaborative relationships. For Jan and Mollie, collaboration fueled their creativity. For Julie, her work with her self-selected collaborative working group helped her find her voice and develop a sense of legitimacy and leadership. And, for Todd, the perceived barriers to collaboration, as a result of his teaching placement, led him to feel isolated and to distance himself from the program.

Instructional Approach and Classroom Design

Over the three years of this study, teachers changed their personal pedagogy. While these changes looked different in each classroom, interviews and data analysis revealed that the transfer of course concepts from the literacy strand of coursework was at the root of many of these changes. Over the three years of coursework Jan, Mollie, Julie, and Todd each began relying more heavily on alternative and formative assessments. This was an area of teaching and learning we focused on in the first literacy strand course and continued to weave throughout the following courses. Julie placed great value on understanding students' developmental levels through her use of the developmental spelling inventory (Bear et al., 2008). She incorporated the use of a developmental spelling inventory into her repertoire of beginning of year assessments and formed small groups based on this. Jan and Mollie also showed transfer of course concepts as they incorporated alternative assessments, such as poems or response journals, into their daily

instruction. Todd did not speak of his approach to assessment directly. However, through observations I noted he utilized rubrics for student self-evaluation following group work. The use of rubrics for student self-evaluation was a concept highlighted in our coursework and that Todd had noted in not having used before his participation in the final summer course. Each of the four teachers gradually modified their approach to assessment within their classroom. They interpreted concepts from coursework; made modifications to them based on their interpretations and contextual needs; and incorporated them into their daily teaching practice (Guskey, 2002; Timperley & Phillips, 2003).

Creating a student-centered classroom. After the third course, CALIIA, teachers identified the important role that creating a student-centered learning environment plays in facilitating high levels of student learning, engagement, and inquiry. While each classroom was distinct, and reflected the individual instructor, each of the teachers altered the arrangement and structure of their classroom to be more student centered: materials were made available and accessible to students, teachers reduced the amount of teacher talk and increased the amount of student talk in their classrooms, and began tracking instructional learning through artifacts posted around the room.

Julie arranged her classroom in a manner that offered students high levels of independence. They could access all materials on their own and were expected to do so. Julie met with students in different locations when she worked with small groups – sometimes they worked at a kidney shaped table and other times they worked on the

floor. Todd's classroom was more structured than Julie's. While he incorporated more small group instruction into his day, he always met with groups at the same table. He also had his classroom divided into three parts: a work space, where students were not allowed to talk; a student meeting space, where students could speak in low voices; and a teacher meeting space, where Todd met with small groups of students. Jan and Mollie both created a learning environment where students had high levels of autonomy. They had classroom rituals and routines firmly in place. This led students to remain on task while also being able to be self-sufficient. When they needed a supply or had a question, they found a solution on their own, rather than interrupting Jan or Mollie while they were working with a small group. Each of the four teachers created student-centered learning environments based on concepts discussed in the literacy strand of coursework. However, as I describe above, each of the teachers interpreted and enacted this in distinct and individual ways based on their personal experiences and identities (Blumer, 1969). This highlights that teacher learning is an individual, as well as group, experience (Borko, 2004).

Increasing student voice and inquiry. Throughout the literacy strand of coursework, concepts were presented to help teachers foster a classroom environment that was student centered; valued student cultures (Au, 2006; Hefflin, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995); incorporated concepts of study that engaged student interests (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000); and drew on students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al. 1992; Moll et al., 2005). This included, but was not limited to, integrating small group instruction; inquiry-based instruction; and valuing students' interests when

conceptualizing instruction. In addition to increasing the frequency of small group work within his classroom, Todd described his focus after the third literacy strand course as being on creating an inquiry-based learning environment. He incorporated additional science experiments and allowed student interests to guide his instruction. An example of this was his use of “silly bands” as the topic of inquiry as a model for students. Todd’s voice continued to outweigh student voices within his classroom because of his reliance on a teacher-managed classroom structure. While he incorporated graphic organizers to support student learning, and rubrics for students to self-evaluate their participation in small group work – both being concepts explored in our coursework – Todd was the one to create the graphic organizers and the rubrics. He led discussions when he met with small groups. He released some responsibility to students, but still was not at a point where he let students take charge of their own learning.

Jan, more than Mollie, worked to reduce the amount of time she spent talking in comparison to the amount of time that students spoke. She pushed students to lead conversations, develop questions, and guide themselves in their learning. When meeting with small groups as in the hydroelectric power experiment, rather than tell students what happened Jan fostered inquiry. She asked students what *they* thought happened. Jan positioned herself not as the fountain of knowledge; rather, she gently guided students. She encouraged their inquiry while taking on the role of supporter of learning.

Mollie also relied on small group instruction. She and Jan both focused her attention on implementing literature circles. However, while Jan’s approach to literature circles fostered student-led inquiry, Mollie’s focused on scaffolded learning through

differentiation. An example of this took place during a day I spent observing in their classrooms. While Jan's students used their exploration notebooks to write their personal questions about what happened to characters *after* the book ended, Mollie's small group of struggling readers worked through a graphic organizer she had created to support their comprehension of an informational text. Jan and Mollie both incorporated course concepts such as inquiry notebooks and graphic organizers to support comprehension. Jan's use of the exploration notebook increased student voice while Mollie's use of the graphic organizer maintained a teacher-centered approach to instruction as she gradually released responsibility and scaffolded learning for her struggling learners.

In a manner similar to Jan, Julie focused her attention on creating a learning environment that was fueled by student questions. When working with small groups, Julie often waited for students to ask questions. She consistently asked students what they wondered, why they thought something happened, and what they thought the result of an action would be. When students asked her a question, she redirected the question to the group and asked what *they* thought the answer was. Julie's approach was aligned with the concepts from our courses as well as her in-class reflections. Unlike Jan and Mollie, Julie did not fully implement her unit or her year-long thematic plan. However, she was successful in engaging with students in mini-inquiries that lasted for a week of instructional time. The shorter duration of mini-inquiries as compared with open- or curricular-inquiries (one week as opposed to six weeks of instruction) were more accessible for Julie as she pushed herself outside of her instructional comfort zone. A one week mini-inquiry allowed Julie and her students to focus their attention on a concrete

inquiry for a finite amount of time. During classrooms observations, while Julie's students were engaged in mini-inquiries, I observed the high value she placed on student voices: Julie's students effortlessly guided their own studies through inquiry and, because of this, were deeply engaged in their learning (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Each of these teachers began creating a classroom environment that was more student-centered and saw an increase in student-led behaviors. Each teacher was at his or her own spot along a continuum, with Todd and Mollie having released less control than Julie and Jan. As other teachers espoused, Jan and Julie's approaches to instruction were the ones who most closely resembled a "guide from the side" approach to instruction discussed in the course text from CALIIA. Over time they gradually released responsibility and successfully increased student voice and student agency within their classrooms.

Tracking learning through artifacts. After the third literacy strand course, each of the focal teachers had changed their approach to "decorating" their classrooms. The idea of tracking classroom studies and learning through artifacts and anchor charts had transferred to teachers. As I visited classrooms for interviews and observations I was able to clearly note, in each classroom, what it was they had been studying. Julie was the individual with whom this idea seemed to most powerfully resonate. The idea of having bare classroom walls at the beginning of the year, and slowly filling them as she and her students explored new concepts, marked a new approach to instruction. When she began to incorporate this approach after our third course, she recounted to me the pushback she had encountered from her colleagues at her school building. Despite her colleagues'

criticisms of her bare classroom walls, Julie was firm in her resolve. I was surprised and impressed by her ability to stand her ground in the face of criticism. As the year progressed, she continually added artifacts and her classroom walls told the story of the learning and inquiry in her classroom. When Julie discussed this situation, she explained that her response to her colleagues' criticisms was that research backed up her position and she had learned it in her coursework (Garet et al., 2001).

Jan and Mollie also began the year with relatively bare walls. They added artifacts as they developed rituals and routines for small group work and as they progressed in their units of study. They displayed student work both inside of the classroom and in the hallways. Neither Jan nor Mollie encountered criticism from colleagues. To my knowledge, no one judged their approach and they never had to defend their position. This could potentially be attributed to the fact that, unlike Julie, they were two people at their school site who collaborated and were invested in using the same approach. It could also be that Jan and Mollie were veteran teachers at their school.

Todd also showed a transference of concepts from coursework to his pedagogy in relation to tracking student learning. He integrated literacy instruction into his classroom and made this evident through visual displays such as the informational text organizer (Figure 1). His artistic background shined through both inside and outside of the classroom. The student work he displayed outside of his classroom drew the attention of all students and teachers passing by. One day, I witnessed a traffic jam in the hallway as students stopped to admire Todd's students' work. Students and teachers alike stopped to admire the work posted outside of Todd's classroom because he always created an

elaborate display to accompany his students' writing. Though primarily a science teacher, Todd increased his focus on literacy. In addition to reading aloud with students, Todd incorporated creative writing assignments. He displayed these writing assignments in the hallway. Unlike Jan, Julie, and Mollie's rooms, Todd's walls did not demonstrate a wide variety of artifacts. This could potentially be attributed to the fact that he taught one subject while the other teachers taught multiple subjects.

Teacher As Capable Professional: Professional Agency and Self-Efficacy

Throughout their coursework, these teachers demonstrated a developing sense of themselves as professionals. Because each teacher's core identity was different – prior experiences, professional identity, cultural identity, schema, and so on – his or her level of self-efficacy was different from the start (Blumer, 1969). However, each of the teachers experienced and demonstrated notable shifts in this area. The teachers felt that their experience with coursework and their growing knowledge base was something they could use to support the instructional decisions they made within their classrooms.

Supporting Guskey's (2002) research on teacher learning and professional development, Todd recognized a gradual change in himself. I also saw this change. He described how at the onset of the program, and through the first two years, he was not engaged deeply with the coursework; he explained that he did what he needed to get done and went through the motions for completion. He also accepted instructional decisions and mandates from his school building leader, even when he did not agree with them. However, Todd became engaged with the content in the third course, observed specific shifts in student learning while he integrated concepts throughout the spring, and his

position changed (Guskey, 2002). After completing the third course, Todd described his role and identity within his school as also having changed (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992). He began to view himself as an "instigator". He explained that rather than adopt ideas without question, he had begun pushing back on ideas he did not agree with. He cited his coursework, and the research we explored, as being the catalyst for this change. He felt that participating in coursework gave him the credibility to challenge decisions he did not feel were pedagogically sound.

In a similar manner, Mollie and Jan developed a stronger sense of professional credibility and agency. They began to view themselves as capable professionals whose voices and opinions *should* be valued by both the district and the school administration. Jan had attempted to implement integrated instruction within her classroom before participating in our coursework and her school building leader had told her she could not do it. At that point, Jan relented and returned to subject-specific instruction using the basal reader. However, participating in DITL and then CALIIA gave both Jan and Mollie the courage and confidence they needed to stand behind their instructional decisions when they were again challenged. Though Jan and Mollie encountered obstacles to integration of their first unit when they were paired up with other teachers for instructional teaming, they advocated for themselves and, ultimately, were able to team-teach. After that experience, and after participating in CALIIA, Jan explained in an interview that no matter what obstacles she encountered, she was going to implement her unit. She had found her professional voice. For Jan and Mollie, as for Todd, their

confidence was integrally linked to their participation in coursework and their growing knowledge base in effective instructional practices for diverse learners.

Julie did not encounter resistance from her school building leader. For Julie, her struggle with seeing herself as a professional came from within. It stemmed from her status as a novice teacher and the feelings of insecurity that this created. Julie looked for support and validation from instructors at the beginning of the program. She did not feel confident in what she did in her classroom or in her ideas. In her reading reflections she frequently highlighted specific practices that she wanted to implement into her daily practice. She did not recognize that her pedagogy, especially in relation to learners from diverse backgrounds, was developing soundly. As Julie progressed through the coursework and developed a trusted group of peers with whom to collaborate, she found her professional agency. She became the voice of her group, often being the one to share out with the whole group or the one to e-mail instructors questions on behalf of the group.

At the end of the literacy strand of coursework each of these teachers had noticeably grown in their self-perception and skills as educational professionals. As Guskey (2002) found in his research, this shift in self-efficacy and developing identities as empowered teaching professionals was an ongoing process for each of the teachers. When reflecting on the changes they noticed in themselves in individual interviews, they each attributed it to their participation in the literacy strand of coursework. As they continue to implement and reflect on course concepts, gain further experience, and take note of how these changes shape student learning, each of them – Jan, Julie, Mollie, and

Todd – will continue this journey beyond where the coursework took them (Garet et al., 2001).

Chapter 6

Discussion and Implications

"*This program has been like learning calculus: it seemed absolutely impossible from the outside at the beginning, but when the pieces came together and the small steps were mastered it was not impossible at all!*"

In this personal reflection to her participation in the literacy strand of coursework, Teacher BC unknowingly highlighted a key foundational idea related to teacher change: it is a complex process made up of incremental and gradual shifts that result from repeated exposures to concepts. Timperley and Phillips (2003) assert that learning and changing teacher mindset is an iterative process that does not happen in a linear fashion. Garet et al. (2001) found long-term, extended professional development to be the most effective method of professional development when measuring amounts of teacher change. And, in their national survey of professional development programs, Wilson and Berne (1999) highlighted the benefits that school-based professional development has on levels of teacher change. I conducted this study in order to build off of the existing literature in effective professional development and to address specific gaps in the literature. First, shifting demographics in the United States compels all teachers to build their capacity in effective instruction for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Second, more studies are needed that focus on the professional development needs of teachers in rural settings, especially in light of current demographic shifts. Third, there is currently a dearth of research focusing on site-based professional development created through university-school district partnerships.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I presented data collected throughout the three-year study. I analyzed data at the group level and the individual level. I identified themes that emerged from the data collected throughout the three years. After identifying overarching themes, I examined them at multiple levels. I described how the themes played out for the group as a whole, for grade level bands, and for individuals. I compared themes that emerged through individual teacher cases to the collective case of all fellowship participants as well as the other individual teacher cases.

In Chapter 4 I presented and discussed data collected from all participants both at the individual and group level. I found that, as a result of spiraling course content and multiple exposures to key concepts, over the three years of coursework, teachers changed their personal pedagogy in many ways: they began using alternative, formative, and developmental assessments; teachers began creating learner-centered classroom environments through the incorporation of hands-on learning activities, small group work, and inquiry based instruction; and participants began collaborating with colleagues in order to strengthen instruction.

In Chapter 5 I delved deeply into the experiences of four upper elementary teacher cases: Todd, Julie, Jan, and Mollie. I explored four key areas with each teacher: I presented background information about each teacher; I discussed unique aspects of each individual; I described what was distinct about his or her individual participation within the cohort; and I described specific classroom visits I made. My data analysis revealed that the though focal teachers changed similar aspects of their daily pedagogy as a result of coursework, they manifested this change differently based on their individual

interpretation of course concepts. Focusing on individual teacher cases provided me with insight into the continuing changes in mindset and practices teachers demonstrated *after* they returned to their classrooms (Guskey, 2002). For example, data analysis from the collective case revealed that collaboration greatly shaped all of the teachers' experiences. Through my exploration of individual teacher cases I was able to understand that it was not simply the idea of collaboration that shaped teacher experiences, but it was an individual's level of collaboration and personal experience with collaboration that could either positively (Jan and Mollie), neutrally (Todd), or negatively (Julie) shape an individual's experience.

My analysis highlighted that, over the course of the three years, teachers began to demonstrate shifts in their approaches to classroom instruction and instructional planning. Unit plans, lesson plans, and personal reflections showed that teachers began to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the importance of taking culture into account when planning lessons (Bergeron, 2008), developing activities that honor student culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2008), and drawing on students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Over the course of the three-year study, with the continued support of university faculty and district peers, participants began referring to course concepts, such as motivation and engagement theory, when making instructional planning decisions (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Teachers began valuing inquiry-based instruction and understanding both the complexity and benefits of integrated thematic instruction, rather than simply pushing back from it as many had done when we first introduced these ideas. Participating in three years of coursework together

led teachers to develop strong professional relationships, build a common professional knowledge base, and develop a strong learning community that valued individual and group successes.

In the current chapter I discuss the recurring and salient themes from the collective case analysis and the individual teacher cases. I begin by noting the limitations of this study. I then make linkages across themes that emerged in the group and individual case formats. I conclude the chapter by presenting the implications of this study on future research and the ways that this study's findings may be applied to educator professional development and classroom practice.

Limitations

The current study involved documenting the experience of adult learners over multiple years within a cohort based Masters program in a rural setting. The schools and community at large were experiencing a demographic shift from mainly white and English speaking students to a rapidly growing population of English learners. While I describe a complex and rich data set that crosses time and space, it represents a single, rural school district and the district's particular circumstances. This study provides highly contextualized views of the learning and professional experiences of particular teachers in this community. Even though there is a large sample size of participating teachers, the sample is not random or comprehensive: the number of elementary teachers far outweighed secondary teachers and certain schools within the district had large clusters of teacher participants while others had only a single participant.

Although about one-third of the district's teachers participated in the Masters cohort, they were not a representative sample as they were not randomly chosen. Perhaps most importantly, it is essential to recognize that all participants in the fellowship program were selected through an application process. This meant that study participants had already gone through one level of self-selection: each fellowship participant had chosen to apply for and engage in professional development. Thus, study participants were each invested and interested, to some degree, in deepening their pedagogical craft from the onset of the study.

It is important to point out that portions of the data were collected through teacher self-reporting. The long-term nature of this study helped me to develop trusting relationships with teachers. They often noted that they felt comfortable being honest with me and speaking freely. However, this study was linked to graduate coursework and for the final year of the study I held the position of coordinator of the fellowship program. There is always the danger that when individuals self-report, they express what they think someone else would want to hear. Blumer's (1969) root image "human being as acting organism" addresses the complex nature of human interpretation and reflection and its impact on the ascription of meaning. In order to account for human interpretation and reflection, and to triangulate data collected, I conducted individual interviews, collected written artifacts, and conducted classroom observations.

With these limitations in mind, this study offers an in-depth understanding of a single partnership, a single research site, and a single cohort of teachers. It provides a detailed view of one rural community and its university partner over a three-year time-

frame. And, understanding how teachers experienced a long-term professional development partnership in this particular context aids me in theorizing how this tupe of change might occur in different settings with different teachers.

Exploring Teacher Change

Like Borko's (2004) and Timperley and Phillips' (2003) findings, in this study I found that teacher change and learning are processes that happen over time. Change can be a slow, uncertain process. While many professional development programs are developed with an eye on changing teacher practices and beliefs in specific ways, Guskey (2002) asserts that an alternative model for evaluating teacher change is needed in order to facilitate the creation of more effective professional development. In line with Guskey's beliefs, rather than determine specific ways in which teachers needed to change, in this study I sought to understand the process of change that teachers experienced, individually and collectively, while participating in Masters level courses. The teacher change I observed and discussed in this study manifested itself in two forms: *incremental change* and *pivotal moments*. Our professional development model was successful because it provided long-term, site-based, contextualized professional development. In the following sections I discuss the forms of change the participating teachers demonstrated.

Incremental Change

Change is an iterative process and *incremental change* refers to change that happens gradually, over time. I found in this study that professional development is most effective when it has an integrated, longitudinal structure. It requires time, integration,

and a critical mass of collaborators. In many instances, teachers participating in the literacy strand of coursework demonstrated change over time as a result of ongoing support. Through individual reflections, survey responses, action plans, and classroom observations I was able to identify how teachers continued to shift their beliefs and mindsets throughout their three years of coursework and following completion of the coursework. In the following sections, I discuss the various ways in which teachers demonstrated incremental change.

Course design and structure. It is clear from this research that the manner in which the three literacy strand courses were designed and structured shaped the experiences and forms of change of participating teachers. Over time, teachers made both slight and large shifts in their instructional planning and delivery. Individuals made modifications to their planning that took into account student cultural backgrounds (Au, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 1998). We saw teachers, individually and in collaborative learning groups, work over time to make their instructional methods more appropriate for students from diverse backgrounds. They did this by getting to know their students' backgrounds and making intentional and thoughtful decisions in various realms such as text choice, vocabulary instruction, and incorporation of hands-on activities in their classrooms. In the following sections I describe the specific facets of the courses' design that contributed to the lasting changes teachers experienced.

Spiraling course content. Knowing that our work with the teachers in this study would span for over three years, we took the opportunity to structure our coursework and plan for conceptual development accordingly. One of the ways we leveraged our long-

term work with teachers was by linking learning from year to year, revisiting key concepts and theories throughout coursework, and continually exploring central concepts on levels of increasing depth. We called this approach “spiraling course content.” Approaching course design by developing a structure of spiraling course content deeply shaped teachers’ experiences. It offered teachers the necessary time to process information, create theory to practice links by implementing course concepts into their daily pedagogy, and redefine course theories based on their experiences with implementation.

Learning new concepts and approaches to instruction can be frightening to teachers. The idea of changing a well-developed habit or guiding paradigm can be paralyzing. This, in many ways, is what we asked our participants to do through their participation in coursework. Overall, teachers who participated in this study lacked experience in modifying instruction to meet the distinct learning needs of English learners, and we built our coursework to support their development in this area. Building that capacity was, at its core, one of the main reasons for developing the partnership between the university and the school district. As teacher educators, we were familiar with the existing research base that supports professional development being structured in a manner that offers teachers long-term support in order to facilitate lasting teacher learning (Ball, 1996; Guskey, 2002; Heibert, 1999; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

In each course, teachers pushed back against ideas and concepts when we first presented them. During the first course, pre-course surveys and teacher reflections showed teachers viewed students from diverse backgrounds from a deficit-based

perspective. Many teachers expressed beliefs that administering alternative assessments and differentiating instruction were not feasible based on their already limited time with English learners. However, as teachers were given the opportunity to test and implement course concepts in their individual tutoring projects, their mindsets began to shift. During summer coursework teachers noted the direct benefits of honoring student cultures through culturally relevant pedagogy and became firmer in their stance of its importance after they returned to their classrooms. Teacher AP demonstrated this when she reflected on the importance of increasing student talk in her high school photography classroom and discussed how she planned to tell her colleagues that students should be able to speak in their primary language during class (a practice that teachers described as being looked down upon throughout the district). As we revisited certain concepts in each course, we found that as participants gained more experience and confidence with a topic, teachers began leading the discussions. And, those teachers who had opposed concepts when they were first presented became more open to them as colleagues talked about related successes from their classroom.

Groups of teachers worked collaboratively to implement concepts from our courses (such as assessing students' developmental levels) and gradually, over the three years of this study, shifted their approaches. I found this to be true for a variety of course concepts such as targeted vocabulary instruction, utilizing informational texts within the classroom, integrated instruction, and differentiation. The shifts in pedagogical approach did not happen all at once. Rather, we observed change over time. In the case of assessing students' developmental level, we found that teachers gradually incorporated

developmental assessments and rubrics throughout their participation in the literacy strand of coursework; it was not a practice that was incorporated immediately. Teachers required the support of colleagues and instructors as they encountered obstacles or setbacks, such as difficulty in interpreting results.

In the second course we introduced the idea of integrated thematic instruction. This approach to instruction was new to most teachers. And, during that course teachers were skeptical about whether it was feasible. We recognized that the idea of approaching instruction thematically was new for teachers and we planned accordingly: teachers spent the second course planning a single unit of instruction, they implemented it the following year, and the final literacy strand course extended learning on this topic. During teachers' initial implementation of integrated units, we visited individual classrooms and conducted class sessions with the entire group. In the follow-up class sessions, participants discussed issues they were having, identified successes, raised questions to course instructors, and trouble-shot with peers. Though not every teacher implemented his or her integrated unit in the academic year following DITL, I found that participating in discussions and course activities with colleagues who were implementing their units led more teachers to take the risk of implementing portions of their units. Like Guskey (2002), I found that significant change in teachers' attitudes toward ideas learned in our summer coursework occurred after they had a chance to return to their classrooms, implement concepts within their classroom, meet with colleagues throughout implementation, and gather evidence that course concepts resulted in positive shifts in student learning or experiences.

As we gained a deeper understanding of the circumstances of the teachers and the district we were able to better craft our courses around the areas of need we jointly identified with teachers. Too often coursework and thinking about course concepts tapers off the further one moves from that course. However, because we were engaged in extended professional development, we had the opportunity to continually revisit course learning. I found that the act of beginning each course with an activity that linked to key concepts from previous courses had many positive outcomes for participants. Beginning with a reflective activity, such as the gallery walk that began CALIIA, demonstrated our commitment to supporting teachers' hard work from the previous summer, and current academic year, as well as the implementation of course concepts. Additionally, it provided a springboard for conversation, reflection, and projection. After these activities we saw teachers begin conversations about how to implement previous course concepts into their daily pedagogy; collaborative groups came together over the lunch hour to trouble shoot; and individuals began recognizing their personal successes. Showing our investment and continued interest in previously taught concepts solidified their importance to participants.

Asking teachers for their input into areas to revisit and focus on in upcoming coursework was very important for cultivating and maintaining high levels of teacher investment (Mandel-Morrow, Casey, & Gambrell, 2008). Because we worked with teachers over multiple years, and because we met with them throughout the spring while they were still teaching, we were able to survey them and provide in-class activities about important concepts. We offered course participants a voice in determining the content

that we would revisit from previous coursework by asking individuals to identify the areas in which they felt they needed additional support. From this information, combined with what we noted in observations in both our university class and teachers' classrooms, we created courses of study that supported and built on existing teacher knowledge. It was this method of jointly determining the focus of study that led teachers to feel satisfied with coursework. We found that allotting portions of each course to revisit previously taught concepts, while also introducing new concepts, created a supportive environment for teachers in which there was a balance of challenge and support (Drago-Severson, 2004).

High rigor, high expectations. Professional development has often been criticized for being decontextualized and disjointed. Like Wilson & Berne (1999), I found that offering teachers choice in pursuing professional development opportunities was important in relation to shaping high levels of teacher change and meaningful teacher experiences. The fellowship program created a partnership between a university and a school district and offered all teachers in the district the opportunity to participate in graduate coursework that was tailored to meet the specific contextual needs of the district. Teachers applied, and were selected, to participate in the fellowship program; it was not mandatory. Some teachers participated in coursework for credit while others audited the courses as a way to deepen their professional craft. Thus, on a foundational level, all participating teachers had interest in further developing their professional abilities.

Providing a rigorous learning environment that continually challenges and pushes teachers' thinking, while offering the necessary level of support (for individuals as well as the group), is a key factor in shaping and supporting teacher change (Drago-Severson, 2004). Findings from this study show that teachers experience change when they have a balance of challenge and support. We created a learning environment that was supportive of risk-taking and growth in various ways. While I found that choosing theoretical and challenging texts as our core texts and creating reflective in-class activities led to initial push-back from teachers, it ultimately resulted in high levels of pride and satisfaction within participants. The bulk of teachers complained vocally about the difficulty of the central course text from the second course. This text was notably more theoretical than the literature teachers were used to reading in their professional learning communities in their schools. When teachers first engaged with this text, they voiced the belief that it was overly theoretical and not applicable to their classroom situation. They said that they craved something that they described as more "teacher friendly." However, after they had a chance to work through the concepts and return to their classrooms, teachers' perceptions of this text changed. When participants re-read sections of that text during the third course, and participated in reflective activities, they made sense of the concepts in new and different ways (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1969). We saw teachers linking theoretical concepts to examples from their daily practice. Teachers continued to develop new understandings of concepts from the previous summer and reflected on how their feelings about the text had changed. I found that interpretation for our teachers was a

process in which meanings changed depending on the interaction and the situation, which made meanings both flexible and contextually based (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1969).

Similar to the initial pushback I witnessed in relation to course texts, teachers also pushed back against course workload. But, the act of completing these initially daunting tasks led to high levels of pride and a shift in teachers' perceptions of themselves. We structured the extended professional development with the expectations of graduate coursework. Though it was developed around the needs of the district, we kept our expectations of reading quality, density, and engagement as we would have structured any graduate course. Over the three years of coursework, teachers continually talked among themselves, and noted to me, the challenge of our high expectations. During the second and third courses we consistently heard teachers saying how they did not think they could finish their curriculum design projects. And, it became a running joke within the cohort that they had not seen their families since class had begun because of the time they devoted to our coursework. However, after teachers returned to their classrooms each fall, they described how they longed for our class sessions to resume. A conversation I had with Jan after she completed the literacy strand of coursework embodies this idea. She scheduled a meeting with me to discuss her participation in the courses outside of the literacy strand and lamented that they lacked rigor and challenge. She described "going through the motions" and contrasted that to the high expectations we set in the literacy coursework. For Jan and other participants, while they complained about the challenge of coursework as it went on, they appreciated our high expectations and valued the lasting impact this had on their learning. Teachers redefined the workload

as they reflected on coursework (Blumer, 1969). Individuals showed this redefinition through reflection as they spoke with pride of their hard work and accomplishments marked by the tangible units they created.

Providing a strong theory to practice link. I learned that providing concrete linkages between theory and practice through course assignments and offering examples of theory to practice links for teachers reduced the amount of pushback and, ultimately, supported teachers' integration of concepts. Structuring professional development in a manner that is strongly connected to teachers' daily practice and curriculum is a core feature of effective and meaningful professional development (Heibert, 1999). When we introduced the concept of inquiry-based instruction, Jan and Mollie were concerned about how it would fit into literacy instruction; Julie had doubts about students being able to guide their own learning; and Todd felt like it was unrealistic in every sense. However, through continued support and classroom application, each of these concerns fell to the wayside as the teachers flourished in implementing their newly acquired methods of instruction. In fact, when reflecting on the coursework, Todd attributed the concrete linkages we provided to inquiry-based instruction (through classroom videos, sample lesson plans, observations, and model units) as the root cause for change in his pedagogical approach. For participants, initial resistance represented anxiety and fear that dissipated as we offered them concrete examples to link to the theories presented, they deepened their understanding of the concept, and they began to translate it to their daily practice.

The central projects for each course were challenging. They demanded that teachers integrate their knowledge from that particular course as well as the ones before it. They also called for teachers to apply course content directly to their individual teaching context. In order to foster an environment supportive of teacher change we scaffolded assignments: participants were encouraged to work in class, with groups, and debrief in class with groups. During the school year as they implemented units and thematic plans, we continued to meet with the group so that teachers could also debrief in our course within a support network. Teachers were able to take risks in their classrooms and come to the group with questions. This led participants, like Jan, to describe their integrated thematic plans as their largest accomplishment in the fellowship.

Planning varied learning experiences. Teachers, like students, have distinct learning styles. Some teachers work best and learn most from group activities, others learn best from individual activities, others learn from personal written reflection, and still others are visual or kinesthetic learners. I found that offering a mix of learning experiences around a single concept assisted all teachers in deepening their understanding of concepts. Providing varied learning experiences around a single concept is important for multiple reasons: it accounts for varied learning styles; it provides repeated exposures to a concept which, in turn, can assist in deep interpretation as an individual makes meaning; and it shows a commitment to the importance of the concept on the part of the instructor. Blumer (1969) argues that meanings of objects and definitions of concepts are ascribed by individuals or groups and are continually changing. An individual or group will first ascribe the meaning and then work to continually reinterpret it based on

evolving understandings. We saw teachers do this with course concepts throughout the three years of coursework. For example, I noted that Todd engaged deeply with activities that processed course concepts and included artistic expression. Jan and Mollie often led group interactions and naturally processed learning through discussion. Julie described that she often had ideas to contribute during group activities and learned much from them, however she hesitated to speak. For Julie, much of her learning, teasing out of ideas, and ascription of meaning occurred through the process of writing daily reflections that tied course concepts to her pedagogy.

I found that while in some instances an individual, like Todd, would respond well to a group activity and be highly participatory, at other times he preferred working alone. For Todd, there were times when he preferred making meaning collectively and sought the input of his peers. There were other times when Todd processed concepts independently, constructing a written reflection that offered him the space to delve more deeply into a topic and express himself freely. Todd recognized that in order for him to process a concept he required multiple exposures to an idea. He described that in addition to reading our course texts, viewing supplementary videos; having the opportunity to test concepts within his classroom while studying a concept in class; and engaging in conversations with colleagues outside of the cohort helped him integrate ideas into his daily pedagogy. This example from Todd's experience highlights the benefits of offering multiple exposures to ideas in multiple manners that are, at the same time, tied to daily instruction.

Fostering collaboration. A key factor in the high levels of change teachers experienced during their participation in the literacy strand of coursework was its early and on-going emphasis on collaboration and the de-privatization of individual practice. Over three years of course-work, with a cohort of 55 teachers, we developed a professional learning community that valued peer collaboration. It was this critical mass of collaborators that deeply shaped the levels and forms of change teachers experienced. Over time teachers formed trusting relationships in which they were able to take risks; expose and focus on developing specific areas of their personal practice; and challenge each other's thinking and practice.

There are specific advantages of implementing professional development that is designed for groups of teachers at the same school: there are opportunities for collegiality and increased professional discussion; teachers can jointly integrate ideas from professional development because they may share curriculum and assessment requirements; teachers who share the same students can discuss student needs across grade levels; and changes are more likely to be sustained over time as teachers are at shared school sites (Garet et. al., 2001). Understanding the important role peer collaboration plays in supporting teacher change, we created many opportunities for collaboration throughout the program in our coursework. In-class activities such as peer coaching, video observations, and book clubs were structured to foster collaboration. We consistently structured course activities that integrated various models of collaborative working groups throughout each of the three courses.

During their participation in the literacy strand of coursework, individuals began to place an increased value on collaboration as they personally witnessed how it could benefit their pedagogy. This shift was most overtly obvious following teachers' participation in the second course. Though we suggested that individuals collaborate on the creation of their integrated unit plan for the second course, Mollie and Jan were among the few teachers who collaborated on this major course project. Most teachers chose to work independently. However, the following summer, when embarking on the planning of the yearlong integrated theme, all teachers chose to collaborate to some degree. They described in surveys and personal reflections that that they recognized how much stronger their final product the summer before would have been if they had worked with others throughout the planning process. And, they explained that in addition to lightening the load of planning and strengthening the product they would turn in for class, working with a peer over the summer would allow them to have support as they implemented their plan the following year.

Collaboration shaped the experience of each of the participants in this study. While collaboration increased over-all during the three years of coursework, we noted specific patterns of collaboration that emerged. And, the forms and degrees of collaboration in which individual teachers engaged shaped their experience with coursework and implementation of course concepts. For Jan and Mollie, their on-going collaboration served as their key lever for change. Their long-term collaboration fostered their individual development; pushed them to take risks, knowing that they could lean on each other for support; and fueled their enthusiasm. Certain teachers, like Todd,

collaborated with groups during the coursework, however this collaboration was limited to the summers and did not continue during the school year. Todd described his barrier to continued collaboration being his school-site isolation: the teachers he collaborated with during class taught at different school-sites and he felt it too difficult to coordinate their schedules outside of coursework. This lack of ongoing peer-support during the school year contributed to Todd's feelings of isolation.

Teachers often chose to collaborate with others at their school building, rather than working outside of their school building. Participants chose to work with colleagues at their school sites because of shared experiences, shared context, shared curriculum, and ease of continued collaboration outside of coursework. While Jan and Mollie spoke of the benefits of forming a strong collaborative team within the fellowship that was based at their school-site, Julie explained that though she benefited from working with others at her school building, she felt that forming school-site collaborative units led to a competitive feeling within the cohort. Julie described her feeling that the collaborative units that organically formed by school-site within the fellowship enhanced the already existent undercurrents of competition between schools within the district. Julie was particularly sensitive to competition and valuing people's opinions and work. Because of her sensitivity to being inclusive, it is worthy to note that in addition to working with her site-based collaborative unit within the fellowship coursework, Julie continually collaborated with teachers from her school building who did not participate in coursework.

Teacher as capable professional. In their meta-analysis of effective professional development programs, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) found that teachers who participated in substantial long-term professional development achieved higher levels of change in their pedagogical practices rather than those who participated in short-term professional development. High caliber professional development assists teachers in feeling that they, as professionals, are life-long learners (Mandel-Morrow, Casey, & Gambrell, 2008). One form of change that participants in this study experienced while participating in rigorous, long-term professional development related to their definition of what it meant to be a teacher. In line with Blumer's (1969) theory of the nature of social objects, I found the same to be true with participants in this study: objects (such as the definition of "teacher") took on different meaning to individual participants depending on their prior experiences.

As teachers developed a research base from which to draw, formed a strong network of peers with whom to collaborate, and observed the ways in which their implementation of course concepts positively shaped student learning, participants redefined what it meant to be a teacher. They began to perceive themselves and their roles within their classroom, their school, and their district in new, and more complex, ways. At the beginning of the study participants saw their role as the receivers of information; they sought knowledge from instructors without trusting in themselves. Over time, however, participants in this study shifted and modified their identities and roles as teachers. As they developed a research base on which to make instructional decisions, teachers became more confident in themselves and their instructional

decisions. By the end of the study they had redefined the definition of what it meant to be a teacher and participant in coursework. Todd began to see his role within his school as an “instigator”, no longer willing to simply follow instructions; Julie saw herself as the person who passed on learning from courses to colleagues at her school building who did not participate in coursework; and Jan and Mollie described themselves as capable, confident professionals with the requisite knowledge to make research-based decisions.

Teachers across the cohort increased their self-efficacy and their belief in their professional judgment. Their increased feelings of self-efficacy can be attributed, in part, to the structure of the courses. We planned each course with hands-on activities that valued peer-collaboration; offered teachers the practice of tying instructional decisions to existing research; and pushed participants to look to their peers to trouble-shoot, rather than seeking answers from the instructor. We did this through structuring daily, teacher-led book study groups; peer-coaching activities; various small group text processing activities; and peer-facilitated video-observations. These course activities began to build leadership skills within the teachers and increased their self-efficacy. We found that when teachers were asked to coach each other through dilemmas, as in the peer coaching activities, they flourished. Rather than look to instructors for answers, they became the advisers to their peers. As groups collaboratively planned their units, when they came to us with questions we posed the question back to the working group. Groups were then able to think through dilemmas and solve them for themselves. Similarly, when we incorporated coaching activities, teachers entered the role of mentor and built their competency and confidence around offering peer support. By developing activities in

which we positioned participants as the experts, we disrupted the long-held belief within participants that instructors are the ones who impart knowledge. And, as teachers began to increase their feelings of self-efficacy within the literacy courses, they began to emulate this same approach with their students. Julie's approach to facilitating a student-led learning environment is a strong example of the transfer of course concepts to teacher practice.

Pivotal Moments

In addition to shifts in teacher beliefs as a result of repeated exposures and incremental change, I observed shifts in teacher mindset and practice that resulted from single, pivotal moments. I define *pivotal moments* as single events that caused initial disequilibrium and led to an immediate and powerful mindset shift in an individual. Guskey (2002) found that, for teachers, "change brings a certain amount of anxiety and can be threatening" (p. 386). This is the case because changing one's practice and opening oneself up to new ideas can mean admitting that past beliefs and practices were flawed. While disequilibrium may be unsettling, offering support for teachers as they challenge their own beliefs fosters a safe environment for change. In the following section, I discuss examples of *pivotal moments* that led to immediate change for individuals during coursework.

Planned course experiences. Certain in-class experiences from each course led teachers to make immediate changes in their mindsets, beliefs, and practice. The cultural immersion experience and activity with local success coaches from the first course serves as an example of a single experience that led to powerful mindset shifts for teachers in

relation to working with English learners. The cultural immersion experience brought theories and concepts we explored in course readings to life as teachers felt what it was like to be a cultural outsider. In many cases participants had never experienced what it was like to be a cultural or linguistic outsider. This caused initial disequilibrium in teachers. However, we structured the experience in a way that offered teachers the support of meeting in small groups with success coaches afterward to debrief. Not only did participants acknowledge that they recognized their previous approaches to students and families to be from a deficit perspective and no longer appropriate for daily instruction, but teachers, like Teacher F and Teacher AS, immediately made note of a potential partnership with the success coaches that they had not been aware of before this single class activity. Coupling the challenge of being pushed outside of their comfort zones with the support of debriefing in a controlled environment with both peers and success coaches contributed to the lasting power of this single, pivotal moment for teachers. This planned course activity resonated with teachers and remained with them throughout their participation in the program.

Similar to the way that the cultural immersion experience from the first course served as a pivotal moment for the group in relation to their beliefs and mindset, the experience with informational picture books in the second course led to immediate shifts in teacher practice. This single activity with picture books was epiphanic for secondary teachers because of the theory to practice link it drew between concepts discussed in course readings and secondary, content area instruction. Middle and high school teachers explained that before completing the course readings and participating in the class

activity they had never perceived of picture books as being useful learning tools outside of primary classrooms. The single in-class experience with intermediate picture books led to lasting shifts in teacher practice. Participants included specific lessons utilizing picture books in their integrated unit plan; I observed Teacher BC conducting lessons with high school English learners in which picture books served as the anchor; and, I observed Teacher C, a middle school math teacher, facilitate a professional development session with her colleagues at her school site that focused on the importance and value of utilizing picture books with adolescents. Each of these changes stemmed from the same single course experience.

In the third course, completing the integrated thematic plan served as a pivotal moment for many teachers. And, teachers would not have been able to complete the assignment without developing strong collaborative units with peers. The act of completing the unit and turning in the product signaled a shift in teachers' perceptions of themselves. Throughout their work on the integrated thematic plan, teachers showed doubt in themselves and their capacity to complete the project. However, upon completion, I witnessed an immediate shift in teachers. Many individuals described the completion of their integrated thematic plan as their single largest accomplishment. And, the act of completing this plan gave teachers more self-confidence and belief in their professional capacity. Creating the integrated thematic plan was an ongoing challenge for teachers, however the act of completing the plan was a distinct moment of accomplishment that teachers pointed to as they reflected on their experiences. It was the

moment of completion that, for teachers like Jan, signaled a shift in their personal perception of their professional capacity.

Individual "aha" moments. In addition to planned activities that serve as pivotal moments, I learned that change also happens on an individual level as a result of what our teachers termed "aha" moments. For participants, these "aha" moments represent the exact moment that learning clicked for them. "Aha" moments were often what Denzin (1992) refers to as illuminative or relived moments that were disconnected from course instruction; they represented change that occurred, most frequently, after teachers had returned to their classrooms and were implementing and reflecting on course concepts (Guskey, 2002). Participants developed their understanding of theory, concepts, and ideas through both individual personal reflection and interaction with colleagues and students (Blumer, 1969). Teachers reflected on and discussed their individual "aha" moments throughout coursework in their individual reading reflections; in informal conversations; in discussion groups; and in interviews. I learned that as teachers redefined concepts and objects, they were able to reflectively identify these shifts in themselves (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992). This process of change was individual. Some participants, like Todd, described the exact moment at which course concepts clicked. Todd was able to point to the specific moment, and where he was, when the components of inquiry-based instruction, from the third course, made sense to him. He had at first been resistant to the idea of inquiry-based instruction but, after watching a demonstration video in class, he realized that it was feasible as long as teachers modified their approach to fit the specific context. While Todd had this moment of epiphany during participation in the course,

Teacher BB had a similar moment while she was implementing her integrated unit, four months after completing the course. For both of these teachers, their pivotal moments can be linked to the process of individual reflection and ascription of meaning as they interpreted concepts and integrated them into their knowledge base (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1992).

Implications for Professional Development

The American education system is at a crossroads. It is difficult to ignore the statistics: students from non-English speaking backgrounds represent the fastest growing subset of the current United States' student population (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). If our schools are to prepare all students for success in the twenty-first century, significant changes need to be enacted. School district and individual school personnel recognize this. Teachers in rural areas have identified their perceived gaps in professional development as most pressingly relating to effective instruction for diverse learners (Wenger & Dinsmore, 2005). While the majority of states have adopted standards that call for effective professional development there is not a consistent vision for what this professional development looks like when it is planned and enacted. Districts are addressing this by restructuring their staffs, attempting to attract talented individuals into the classroom through alternative pathways, creating academies for new teachers, and becoming more closely involved with decisions about who will be teaching and in which schools they will teach. While these district level efforts do affect some change, it is necessary to focus more concentrated efforts on strengthening the talent that already resides within the classroom. This can be achieved by reallocating finances and providing

rigorous long-term, rather than episodic or sporadic, professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The Taylor School District set forth to do this by building a professional development partnership with a major university in which university faculty developed professional development that was then supported within the district. In the following section I outline the implications of the findings of this study for planning educator professional development as well as potential directions for future research.

Duration and Length

Creating lasting change takes time. For faculty interested in working with teachers to affect lasting change, partnerships must be developed that are long-term in nature. In our case, we found that teachers began making significant changes to their daily pedagogy in the years following their participation in a single course. In order for change to be sustainable, it is important that professional development is long term, that learning is structured in such a way that it builds on itself, and that faculty provide support to participating teachers *after* coursework is completed and teachers have begun to implement course concepts into their daily pedagogy. This not only helps ensure that change will be lasting and sustainable, but it also leads to greater levels of teacher ownership over the process.

The Importance of Context

Successful *contextualized professional* development is situated within the district (or lived social world of participants) and is longitudinal in nature. Knowing the lived context and culture in which teachers work and students learn when planning professional development is central to the level of lasting impact professional development has on a

teacher's practice. Gaining a deep understanding of the lived social world takes time and effort.

In addition to developing an understanding for the social context in which participants teach, the physical location of the professional development is very important. Findings from this study show that facilitating professional development in the district, rather than at the university, deeply shaped teacher experiences. Offering classes in the district facilitated teachers' creation of more immediate connections between theories explored in coursework and their daily practice. An example of this is seen in teacher's work on, and creation of, their unit and thematic plans for the second and third courses. Holding courses in the district allowed teachers to access their classroom resources and incorporate them throughout the planning stages. Additionally, for teachers in Taylor, a rural school district, it would not have been feasible for them, as a cohort, to attend courses at the university. While some teachers may have been able to negotiate, and accommodate, the two hour commute from their rural area to the urban university, it would not have been possible for the cohort to travel to the university for courses. And, one of the key levers pushing the change that teachers experienced was rooted in the critical mass of professional collaborators that resulted from the cohort structure of the Master's program. With these factors in mind, it was not only more feasible but it was also critical for university instructors to travel to the district site. Based on findings from this study, when working with groups of teachers from the same school, or district, faculty should plan and facilitate site-based professional development as a way to maintain learning that is connected to daily practice and teaching context.

Professional development should not be prescribed or pre-packaged. Faculty should create authentic, learner-centered, contextually meaningful activities for teachers that support program goals. We found that developing the literacy strand of coursework around the specific needs of the district and participating teachers led to high levels of change. In our case, it was essential that we took the time to familiarize ourselves with the rural setting and the shifting needs of the district. We accomplished this first by soliciting information from the district level and by administering pre-course surveys to participants. We also continually made adjustments to our instructional plans based on our observations during coursework and the shifting needs of teachers.

We found that teachers participating in the literacy strand of coursework demonstrated significant shifts in mindset and practice as a result of our interpretation of, and what it meant to us, as teacher educators, to facilitate long-term professional development on-site, within a district. Not all instructors within from the university developed their courses in the same manner we did. Some instructors used previously created courses taught at the university when working with the teachers in Taylor; these courses were not modified based on context. As a result, teachers had varying experiences in their coursework outside of the literacy strand of courses. The fact that not all courses were modified to be contextually applicable, and because some teachers felt other courses were not challenging, individual teachers, like Jan, identified in interviews that they felt courses outside of the literacy strand of coursework had less of a lasting impact on shifting their pedagogical approach. Though it may be difficult to relinquish class time when one does not know whether an activity will lead to meaningful learning,

if teacher educators familiarize themselves with teachers' contextual needs and situation, it is more likely that experiences will impact teachers in significant ways.

Providing Multiple Experiences and Revisiting Concepts

Too often we view learning as being represented by immediate, overt, and obvious changes. Findings from this study support existing research that lasting change for teachers happens gradually and must be supported over time (Ball, 1996; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002; Hiebert, 1999). Change is an iterative process: teachers need to unlearn as well as learn. Individuals require time and space to reflect, and require follow-up support as they make meaning of and integrate concepts into their daily pedagogy. This research has demonstrated that learning and change can be subtle and gradual. Often, teachers did not adopt and integrate new concepts immediately; rather, they did this over time, after multiple exposures, and with ongoing support. Findings point to the need to plan professional development that provides teachers with repeated exposures to important concepts and on-going follow-up support.

When working with large groups of individuals it is important to account for the various learning styles present. One way to plan for powerful professional development is to vary the types of learning experiences and activities planned to engage teachers. This may include: providing a mix of individual and group processing and reflective activities; allowing teachers the space to implement concepts into their daily pedagogy, try it out, and return to the professional development setting for further support and guidance; and providing opportunities for teachers to process a concept or interact with an idea in multiple ways to account for different learning styles and modalities.

Creating Theory-to-Practice Links

As this study shows, learning and incorporating new ideas takes time. It is essential to create strong theory-to-practice links and offer teachers the opportunity to test out course concepts in their classrooms and then return to the professional development setting for support. Faculty should structure professional development in a manner that supports teachers creating linkages between course theory and daily practice. Engaging in reflective discussion with teachers, modeling theory, and incorporating meta-cognitive processing activities are ways to assist teachers in bridging the gap between theory and practice.

In addition to in-class activities, faculty should develop course assignments that facilitate teachers' application of course theory to their daily pedagogy and that result in tangible outputs that can be utilized in instruction. In our case, we wanted teachers to take ownership of their classroom instruction and find their voice in developing meaningful curricular units of study. We worked to foster the belief within teachers that they were professionals who were capable of, and in fact needed to, make informed instructional decisions. By developing learning activities, such as the creation of the integrated unit plan, we demonstrated to teachers our commitment to a learner-centered environment. Faculty intending to work with practicing teachers must develop course activities that are learner centered, provide clear linkages between daily pedagogy and educational theory, and result in tangible and usable outputs.

Rigorous Coursework, High Expectations

While faculty must determine the supports they offer to teachers based on an understanding of their developmental level with course concepts, it is important to select high quality texts and develop challenging coursework and course activities. Course texts should be thoughtfully chosen, challenging, and provide linkages to daily pedagogy. They should build on teachers' foundational knowledge and should not be overly simplified. While adopting challenging texts for coursework and fostering a rigorous learning environment, faculty must plan to revisit concepts throughout their work with teachers. Creating long-term professional development partnerships allows access to high-rigor materials and ideas. When learning is expected to happen over time, and participants know there will be support in place as they attempt to integrate new concepts into their teaching, individuals will take more risks.

Individual Voice, Individual Choice

Faculty should give teachers a voice in determining the professional development topics in which they will participate. Professional development should be jointly constructed so that it touches on both teacher-espoused needs as well as externally-observed needs. While we structured the courses based on the essential knowledge we felt teachers needed, we also solicited teacher input in determining what concepts we would revisit from previous coursework. Creating flexible course plans added an additional layer of support for the teachers. Being flexible and adjusting topics based on teacher responses showed them that our goal was not to pass on information; rather, the goal of the professional development was to support teacher learning.

In order to know *when* instruction needs to be slowed down or sped up, faculty must get to know the group as a whole as well as on a one-to-one basis. In the same way that we recognize the essential nature of differentiating instruction to meet the learning needs of students, it is also important to differentiate support offered to teachers as new concepts are introduced. Faculty can offer this support by scaffolding assignments; working with individuals one-on-one; asking participants to personally reflect on and respond to course concepts; and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment

For faculty who are interested in working with teachers at various stages of development, it is essential that they work to create a safe learning environment that supports change. Teachers must feel comfortable sharing their opinions, soliciting advice, taking risks, and showing weakness. This often takes time and concerted effort. It is important to create a learning environment that simultaneously challenges and supports teachers in order to foster teacher growth.

Peer collaboration is a powerful agent in supporting teacher change. Teachers from common school sites have a shared knowledge base and can work jointly to translate course concepts to their school context. Faculty should foster collaborative relationships among participants in order to build teacher agency, self-efficacy, and support lasting change. Teacher educators can do this by structuring professional development in a manner that builds in collaborative activities for participants consistently and in an ongoing manner. Initially, facilitators must work with participants to develop norms for interaction. And, in an on-going way, teacher educators can increase

teacher agency by incorporating peer coaching, peer-facilitated discussions, and peer observations.

Summary

Change for participants in this study is linked by key features of course design and structure. Namely, change resulted from the contextualized nature of the literacy strand of coursework. By teaching classes that we developed based on the specific needs of the Taylor school district, on site, we experienced a unique set of benefits. Teachers developed shared knowledge and norms that they then translated as a group to their school setting (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Because clusters of teachers from each school participated in coursework, they developed a common vernacular and set of knowledge that they brought back to their school buildings and shared with colleagues. Instructors, who doubled as researchers, gained an understanding of the lived world of participants and the specific needs of the town through immersion in the site. And, teaching on-site, in district schools, provided an opportunity to break down the division between practicing teachers and teacher educators that traditionally exists when programs are designed by university professors and delivered by a teacher educator at a university. Courses took place within the familiar, lived context of teachers and provided for much more straightforward linkages between instructional content and teachers' daily pedagogy.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The process of change for teachers is multi-faceted and manifests itself in various ways. Change is incremental, taking place over time, as is seen in teacher responses to developmental assessments. Change also results from single, pivotal moments that shift a

person's mind-set and take the form of "aha" moments, as is seen in the cultural immersion experience. Thus, it is important to plan teacher support that is extended over time; provides day-to-day work; offers repeated exposures to important ideas and concepts; and challenges teacher beliefs.

Planning for long-term support and change, especially with teachers who work with learners from diverse backgrounds, has the end goal of reducing *reciprocal distancing* between teachers, students, and students' families (Au, 2006). This study shows that when teacher educators familiarized themselves with the needs of teachers and planned learning experiences that addressed those needs, teacher learning and change was evident across the board. Though one can never predict with certainty how an experience will affect a group or person, this study shows that by planning activities and experiences that challenge teacher beliefs and address a specific professional or instructional need of the group (in this case, effective literacy instruction for English learners) it is more likely that lasting, transformative change will result. Teacher U stated in an end-of-course reflection her belief that "teaching preparation programs nationwide should be adjusted ... Our nation is changing [in terms of cultural and linguistic diversity]. We must meet those changes in order for our students to succeed. Our future depends on it!" As Teacher U aptly notes, with the changing demographics of the U.S. public school system it is imperative that the professional development offered to teachers is adjusted as well.

Though the body of literature on effective professional development is growing, it remains small in volume. In order to determine the most effective way to adjust professional development in a manner that fosters both teacher and student learning,

further research is needed that explores the effects of extended professional development *after* the courses have ended and teachers have returned to their classrooms. As we found in our study, significant teacher learning occurred after teachers returned to their classrooms and experienced the positive effects of implementing course concepts on student learning. Future research should pick up where this study leaves off by exploring different contexts, conducting studies in similar contexts in order to test for similarities, and perhaps contrasting experiences of rural teachers with those of urban teachers in order to better understand the role location plays in shaping experiences. An exploration of different contexts, with different research questions, will help teacher educators understand what factors are unique to a context as well as what is shared across contexts.

As Wilson and Berne (1999) note, a major shortcoming in the existing research on professional development is that funding often ends in concert with the facilitation of professional development and studies do not document the follow-up learning that happens after teachers return to their classrooms. This study followed up with teachers in the year following the completion of a three-year professional development partnership. The field of research on effective professional development would benefit from additional studies, like this one, that continue to follow teachers in order to understand the lasting impact and changes that result from long term professional development partnerships.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pre-course Survey (CALIIA - Course #3)

Category of question	**Question**
Demographic	Name
Demographic	Gender
Demographic	How many years have you been teaching?
Demographic	Where do you teach?
Demographic	What is your teaching placement?
Reflection on Goals	Reflect on the goals that you set for your instructional practice at the end of our summer course (DITL). Where are you in relation to meeting these goals?
Reflection on Goals	Reflect on the goals you set for your instructional practice at the end of our summer course (DITL). What are some positive outcomes you have witnessed in your classroom?
Reflection on Goals	Reflect on the goals you set for your instructional practice at the end of our summer course (DITL). What are the main challenges you have faced?
Reflection on Goals	Reflect on the goals you set for your instructional practice at the end of our summer course (DITL). What next steps will you take in order to continue moving closer to meeting your goals for the remainder of the school year?
Reflection on Goals	What factors do you believe challenged/hindered your success in terms of the extent to which you reached your goals of integration?
Instructional Practices	When you think about your level of success in implementing your integrated unit, please rate the following factors in terms of their helpfulness. • Reviewing course readings from summer class • Reviewing notes taken in summer class • Assessments and lesson plans crafted during the summer course (DITL) • Collaboration with colleagues from cohort (who are not in my school building) • Collaboration with colleagues from cohort (who are in my school building) • Collaboration with colleagues from school building (who are not in cohort)

	• Support from school building leaders • Support from district personal
Instructional Practices	Comparing your instructional practices this academic year with last year, how would you describe your: • utilization of the success coach • use of informational texts in the classroom • modification of assignments for ELLs • use of picture books to enhance lessons • use of targeted vocabulary instruction • use of the Developmental Spelling Inventory to assess students • differentiation of assignments • differentiation of assessments
Instructional Practices	To what extent did you find yourself utilizing the services of the Success Coach at your school this year?
Instructional Practices	As we approach our final literacy focus course, please identify the areas you would like further focus on, and explain why. • Reading strategies instruction • Working with ELLs • The basics of integration • Vocabulary instruction • Motivation and Engagement • Other:
Collaboration	Describe your level of collaboration during the course of this year in relation to integrating instruction. Do you think your level of collaboration as you implemented your unit impacted the success of your unit? Explain.
Collaboration	How would you describe how you worked as you implemented your unit? • I worked mostly alone • I collaborated regularly (more than once a week) with a colleague • I collaborated occasionally with a colleague • I worked consistently with a group of colleagues

Appendix B

Implementation Plan (DITL)

Designing Integrated Themes in Literacy, Summer 2009
Questions to address in your implementation plan section:

Who: Describe your teaching assignment and the students with whom you work (e.g., grade level, content area, special needs of students, etc.). Will there be other teachers with whom you collaborate? Who are they, and what are their roles?

What: Summarize your integrated unit in 3-4 sentences.

When: When will you implement your unit? How much time daily will be dedicated to activities? How long will it take all together? How are unit components built into typical activities in your math/science studies, and in literacy block or language arts times?

Where: Describe your school setting, school address and phone number, along with any needed contextual information.

How: Provide any additional information about how you will implement your unit. Are you following a specific sequence or format? How will this unit fit into your classroom structure? Are you integrating ideas from a commercial publisher? If so, which one? Do you plan to use a specific location in the community for study (e.g., a pond, the courthouse)? Will you have parent involvement? Anything else to share…?

Appendix C

Peer Coaching Activity

Name: ____________________

Coach's Name: ____________________

Personal Goal Reflection
Designing Integrated Themes in Literacy, Summer 2009

1. Evaluate yourself personally on your accomplishments relating to the goals of the class. How do you feel about your participation and learning?

2. What would you consider your major accomplishments?

3. What are your next steps in terms of professional growth in this area?

**Partner Coaching Activity:*
Take 8-10 minutes to share and coach your partner through their ideas
Write any additional reflections from your conversation on the back of this page

Appendix D

Classroom and Instructional Reflection

Think of your classroom from last year. Is the scenario described in the text (p. 153) one that you feel is realistic? What is your reaction to it?

Things I want to keep thinking about, reflecting on, and examining as I prepare for the upcoming year.	
BIG steps	*Small steps*

Lingering questions?

Appendix E

Classroom Visit/Teacher Interview Organizer

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Context of visit: Date and time:</td></tr>
<tr><td>ℵ Class context and students:</td><td>ℑ Where is teacher in terms of unit implementation or research question? What additional thoughts or actions have taken place since the summer class?</td></tr>
<tr><td>ℜ Questions about integrated or differentiated instruction?</td><td>℘ How much is what was learned in class influencing the beginning of the year planning and instruction? How?</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix F

Sample Focal Case Interview Scheme

October 4th / 5th 2010 Second Interview Name: __________________ Time: _______

How do you feel the fellowship program is going?	Have you been in another post-graduate experience? If so, how does this compare in your opinion? If not, how does this compare to what you would expect?
How do you feel your participation in the courses is affecting your teaching and you as a professional?	Now that you are a month into school, and when you think about your instruction, do you see any ways that you have changed your curriculum or your approach to the curriculum this year?
When you think about the changes you have made, what do you attribute them to?	How is the theme going?
How do you see your thematic instruction impacting your students?	How do you see your thematic instruction impacting yourself?

Todd:

In our first interview you mentioned your focus on building community,	In our first interview, you were talking about how you wanted to implement 3 days a week of literature circles/book clubs. How is that going? What are you finding easier or more difficult than what you expected?

Julie:

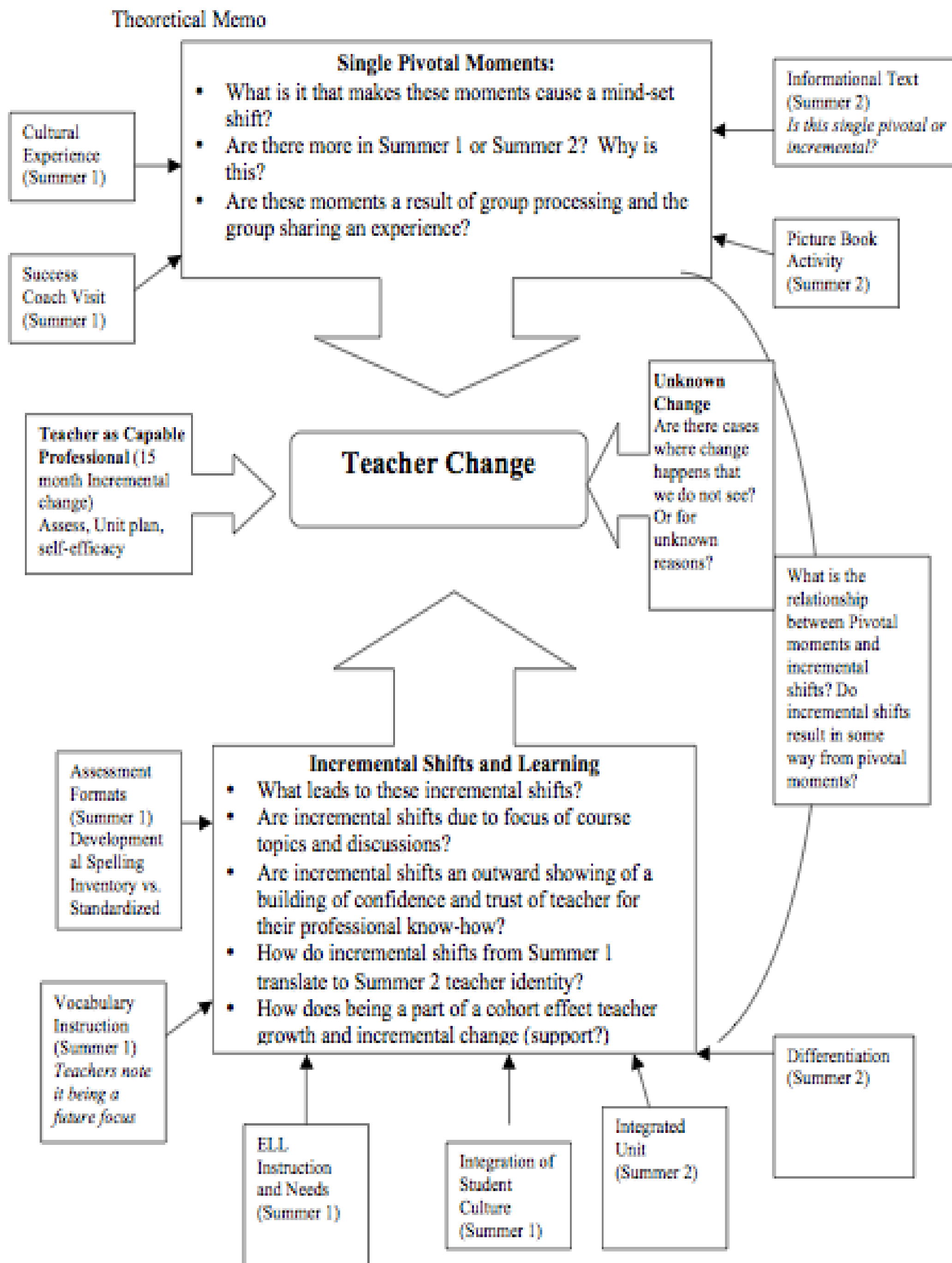
In our last interview, you mentioned how you were planning certain community building activities. How is it going?	In our last interview, I was here on conference day. You expressed concern about building relationships with parents due to the group conferences. Now that you are a few weeks into school, how do you see this playing out?

Mollie & Jan:

In our first interview, you mentioned that you would kick of Unit 1 by dressing up as Pilgrims. Tell me about that. How was the experience for you (comfort zones)? How did the children react? How do you see it impacting their learning/engagement?

Appendix G

Theoretical Memo (Year 2)



Appendix H

Cultural Immersion Experience

As English speakers living in the United States, we often do not have the opportunity to be in situations in which our English Learners are often: being completely immersed in the second language. In order to gain some perspective on their "immersion" experience, we would like you to immerse yourself in a language that you do not speak fluently.

There are various stores in Austin that are owned and operated by Spanish speakers and this activity will be centered on visiting one or more of such stores.

Your "assignment" will be to go and investigate these stores. Feel free to communicate with the store employees and the clientele, but remember to do so in a respective way.

This assignment will also give you the opportunity, if you haven't taken the chance already, to experience parts of your students' lives. The home/school relationship is one that also involves the community and it is important to build this connection in order to positively impact our students learning experiences.

¡Buena suerte!

When you go out and visit stores that cater to Spanish speakers, please look for the following:

Write down some products that you can't find in a typical United States store (like Hy-Vee). Try to find at least five.

Write down some products that you can find in a typical store. Try to find at least five.

Write down some products that are similar to the ones in a typical store, but are somehow different (ingredients, packaging, amount, etc). Include why they are different and why you think they are different. Try to find at least five.

Write down your observations about how the store is organized and how it differs from and how it is similar to other stores in Austin. Why do these difference exist, do you think?

The stores you are visiting are obviously catering to Spanish speakers. Why are such stores successful in a community that already has many retail and grocery stores?

Appendix I

Integrated Unit Implementation Plan

Designing Integrated Themes in Literacy, Summer 2009
Questions to address in your implementation plan section:

Who: Describe your teaching assignment and the students with whom you work (e.g., grade level, content area, special needs of students, etc.). Will there be other teachers with whom you collaborate? Who are they, and what are their roles?

What: Summarize your integrated unit in 3-4 sentences.

When: When will you implement your unit? How much time daily will be dedicated to activities? How long will it take all together? How are unit components built into typical activities in your math/science studies, and in literacy block or language arts times?

Where: Describe your school setting, school address and phone number, along with any needed contextual information.

How: Provide any additional information about how you will implement your unit. Are you following a specific sequence or format? How will this unit fit into your classroom structure? Are you integrating ideas from a commercial publisher? If so, which one? Do you plan to use a specific location in the community for study (e.g., a pond, the courthouse)? Will you have parent involvement? Anything else to share…?

Appendix J

Integrated unit overview

CI 5410: Designing Integrated Themes in Literacy
Summer 2009, Taylor Cohorts
Assignment Overview: Integrated Unit

Component	Description	Criteria	Points
Review of standards	Identify relevant standards in literacy and your content area for your grade level to use in your unit. Show how your unit is based on standards, your local context, and is important for students to know.	• Appropriateness of standards selected • Realistic number of standards addressed for time frame of unit	5
Goals & expected outcomes	Create a set of goals for your unit. What do you hope students will come away with? What is the big conceptual idea you hope they will comprehend? Next, outline specific performance objectives- what students will be able to do- if they are successful on the individual pieces of the unit.	• Developmentally appropriate/differentiated • Based on state and local standards • Meaningful/important • Connect to your content area class learning • Engaging to students • Describe student behaviors • Realistic number for the time frame of unit (2-3 goals; 6-10 objectives?)	5
Student assess-ments	Find, create, or adapt a few informal assessments to check for your students' learning and growth on your expected outcomes. Assessments should measure both literacy skills and content area learning, including vocabulary knowledge.	• Sensitive to student learning • Connected to goals & outcomes of unit • Guides instruction • Easy to use • Involve language and literacy, as well as content area learning	10

Lesson plans	Represent approx. 4-6 weeks worth of instruction in literacy and science/math (~20 days). Provide one page for an overview of each day's activities: you may summarize the activities in narrative or graphic form. State what the teacher and students will do each day.	• Clearly state what the teacher and students are doing • Provide enough details to visualize the lesson(s) • High quality of instructional activities based on what we have discussed in class • Meaningful literacy activities are integrated into content area learning • High possibility of student engagement • Will lead to successful completion of unit goals and objectives	20
Texts & materials	Clearly outline the materials students will be using to learn the content area subject matter. Select a variety of print and electronic texts and other materials.	• Selection of high quality trade books and other texts • Number of texts is dependent on age of students, but 3-4 books per topic might be reasonable • Use of realia, visuals, and hands-on materials and experiences • Materials are used in depth • Materials enhance students' conceptual learning	10

Implemen- tation overview	Describe: How will this integrated unit fit into your classroom structure? How are unit components built into typical activities in your math/science studies, and in literacy block or language arts times?	• Clarity of description • Level of integration • Realistic timeline • Thoughtfulness/level of self reflection	10

Appendix K

Museum Walk

Afternoon Task #1: Documentation of your unit onto a chart

If you did your unit alone, please make your own chart. If you did a collaborative unit, use additional sheets of chart paper as necessary to make a collaborative display.

Purpose: To share some highlights of your integrated unit in a visual form: What it consisted of; how you implemented it; what worked well; what might need tweaking when you do it in the future.

Time: You will have 45 minutes to work on this. We will post our charts and take a "Museum Walk" at 1:30 p.m.

Format: Start with a piece of chart paper and be creative. Use crayons, markers, colored paper, magazine pictures or letters, student artifacts, or whatever to illustrate your unit. Any organization is fine as long as you communicate to the viewer the *what, how, how well, student engagement, successes* and *areas you might adjust in the future* of the unit. Please include your name(s), the title of the unit, and the overarching concept(s) you addressed as well.

Sharing: At 1:30 p.m. we will all display our charts in the courtyard. First, the group that participates in the Math cohort will stand by their charts as the Science group views. After 15 minutes, the group that meets in the Science cohort will stand by their charts as the Math group views. Pace yourself to see as many of the charts as possible, but feel free to ask questions and discuss your projects with each other. We will stop at 2:00.