

Content-Area Teachers Seeking ELL Preparation: What Motivates them?

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the relationship between content-area teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and professional experiences and their decisions to seek preparation in working with English language learners (ELLs). Six in-service teachers, who were enrolled in a graduate-level Sheltered Instruction course at a large U.S. Midwestern university, were administered a survey and interviewed regarding their enrolment decisions. The initial assumption that pre-existing positive ELL attitudes guided the teachers' decisions was only partially supported by the findings. Although varied across individual teachers, motivational reasons for enrolment were primarily based on (a) the perceived value of ELL preparation for immediate and future professional goals, (b) consistency with teachers' self-concepts, and (c) expected success in the learning experience. Implications for teacher preparation programmes are discussed.

Key words: English language learners; English as a second language; teacher ELL-related attitudes, beliefs, and experiences; content-area teachers' motivation to seek ELL preparation; teacher preparation

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Introduction

As number of English language learners (ELLs) continue to grow the United States and other English-speaking countries (Goldenberg, 2008; Kaufman & Crandall, 2005), quality education for this culturally and linguistically diverse population becomes vital for the social and economic futures of their host countries (Dorfman, 2008; National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education [NCPHPE], 2005). Yet, as indicated by test scores in reading and mathematics, high school completion rates, and attainment of higher degrees, minority student underachievement remains a reality (Fry, 2008; Kao & Thompson, 2003; NCPHPE, 2005).

Research has identified a number of factors explaining the language minority underachievement. Among these factors are: (a) at the student level, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, and minimal schooling in a student's first language (L1; Ardasheva, Tretter, & Kinny, 2011; August & Shanahan, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Proctor, August, Carlo, & Barr, 2010); (b) at the community level, a lack of language support services in areas with a low concentration of language minority groups (Galguera & Hakuta, 1997); and (c) at the school and classroom levels, home-school cultural differences, negative stereotyping regarding ELLs' language and intellectual abilities, and a lack of ELL preparation among content-area teachers (Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman, & Castellano, 2003; Dorfman, 2008; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). The present study concentrates on classroom-level factors crucial to ELLs' academic achievement, namely, content-area teachers' ELL-related attitudes, beliefs, and experiences as they relate to their decision to seek ELL preparation.

Although prior research linked pre-service and in-service ELL preparation with increased positive attitudes toward ELLs (Almarza, 2005; Capella-Santana, 2003; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; see also Furman, 2008) and with increased achievement of language minority students (Amaral, Garrison, & Klentschy, 2002; Lee, Maerten-Rivera, Penfield, LeRoy, & Secada, 2008; Lucas, Henze & Donato, 1990; Palaroan, 2010), some content-area teachers have expressed reluctance to receive ELL preparation (Beckett et al., 2006; Clair, 1995; Reeves, 2004, 2006), failed to capitalize on a collaborative input from language specialists (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010), or doubted the appropriateness of ELL-specific strategies in their content areas (Clair, 1995; Harper & de Jong, 2004). Yet, little research has examined teacher motivation in seeking ELL preparation, particularly from a perspective of content-area teachers who seek such preparation voluntarily. By exploring the relationship between content-area teachers' ELL-related attitudes, beliefs, and professional experiences and their decision to proactively seek ELL preparation, the present study aimed to contribute to the development of a better understanding of content-area teachers' motivation toward ELL preparation and to reveal practical insights for teacher education providers and, ultimately, for improving ELLs' experiences in content-area classrooms.

Study Background

The influence of teachers' beliefs on practice begins with an understanding of the relationships between the two (see a discussion in Cornelius-White, 2007). Thus, examining teacher belief systems offers greater insight into the types of experiences they are likely to provide in their classrooms (Bandura, 1993; Simmons et al., 1999).

Definitions of Key Concepts

Vygotsky (1978) argued that beliefs are social in nature, that is, they are constructed by individuals in relation to their social worlds. In a similar vein, van den Berg (2002) defined teacher beliefs as “personally formulated” and “often culturally shared” opinions with regard to teaching and learning (p. 579). Pajares (1992), however, argued that teacher beliefs must be best defined in terms of specific contexts and behaviours of interest and should be more appropriately termed as “educational beliefs about” (p. 316). Among the educational “beliefs about” discussed in Pajares, the following were of particular interest to the present study: beliefs about the teaching profession, beliefs about self-efficacy (i.e., the ability to perform a specific task), and beliefs about student attributes underlying their performance.

In the literature, attitudes have been defined as the positions that people adopt in relation to a particular situation (van den Berg, 2002). Thus, drawing on previous research (Reeves, 2004, 2006; Sas, 2010; Youngs & Youngs, 2001), we operationalized the concept of teacher *ELL-related attitudes* as attitudes toward ELL students' inclusion into content-area classrooms and toward ELL preparation. Lastly, we defined professional experiences as experiences related to the teaching profession as well as personal experiences underlying participants' professional beliefs and practice (van den Berg) and used the term *ELL preparation* to refer to college coursework or professional development (PD) designed to prepare content-area teachers to work with ELLs (e.g., sheltered instruction, multicultural education, English-as-a-second-language [ESL] methods).

Theoretical Lenses

The analysis of the relationship between teachers' decision to seek ELL preparation and their ELL-related attitudes, beliefs, and professional experiences was explored through two theoretical lenses: Youngs and Youngs' (2001) positive attitudes hypothesis and Brophy's (2004) motivational theory.

In their study of content-area teachers' ELL-related attitudes and preparation, Youngs and Youngs (2001) found that coursework in foreign languages, ESL, and multicultural education as well as experiences with culturally diverse students significantly predicted teachers' positive attitudes toward ELLs. The researchers, however, noted that the teachers' “pre-existing attitudes toward ELL students, positive or negative, [may have] led teachers to seek or avoid many of the

[assessed] experiences” (p. 116). In other words, Youngs and Youngs hypothesized that pre-existing positive or negative attitudes toward ELL students may lead content-area teachers either to seek or to avoid ELL preparation opportunities, as well as other experiences linked to the enhancement of positive ELL attitudes. This theoretical assumption—referred to as the *positive attitudes hypothesis* throughout the remainder of this paper—served as the initial hypothesis to be investigated in this study.

Brophy’s (2004) motivational theory served as an alternative theoretical lens for grounding this study. This theory, defined as the *expectancy × value* model of motivation, predicts that learners will engage in a given learning activity only if they (a) expect to succeed in performing this activity and (b) perceive that activity as relevant to the attainment of their goals and as compatible with their self-concepts. Within this theoretical framework, expectancy is defined as the degree to which people expect to succeed in performing a given activity or task. Brophy defined expectancy as a two-dimensional construct that includes *affect* (i.e., apathy and resignation vs. excitement and reward) and *cognition* (i.e., perception of potential success). In turn, he defined the concept of value as the degree to which people value engagement in, and potential rewards from, a given activity or task. Similar to expectancy, value is two-dimensional and includes *affect* (i.e., alienation and resistance vs. energy and eagerness to learn) and *cognition* (i.e., perception of relevance to the attainment of future goals and compatibility of the task with self-concepts). While highlighting the individualistic nature of motivation, Brophy also stressed the importance of the social dimension of motivation: He wrote, “*unique expectancy × value reasoning concerning potential task engagement occurs within each individual, but it is influenced by the social context in which the task is embedded*” (p. 19, emphasis in the original).

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs Regarding Students of Culturally Diverse Backgrounds

Negative attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students have been identified as one of the factors underlying minority student underachievement as they have been linked to missed opportunities to use diverse students’ linguistic and cultural background knowledge as a means of enhancing their educational outcomes (de la Luz Reyes, 1992; Flores, Cousin, & Diaz, 1991; see also August & Shanahan, 2006; Cummins, 2000). Zurawsky and Gordon’s (2004) review of research on the achievement gap of African American and Hispanic students suggested that negative stereotyping led to low expectations (Braun, 1976), curriculum dilution, and minority students’ academic and cultural isolation, which in turn interfered with minority students’ academic persistence and performance. In her ethnographic study of high school teachers’ discourse, Vollmer (2000) discovered that students who shared the same values with the teachers (i.e., individualism, mobility, the desire to assimilate) were perceived as “good” students and were praised and given individualized attention; the students who did not were described as “typical ELL students,” perceived as less willing to assimilate, and stigmatized as less capable and motivated. Similarly, a programme evaluation study examining Comprehensive School Reform models in 13 diverse elementary schools in a large urban district found that

cultural stereotyping was a major hindrance in implementing reforms and achieving educational improvement for ELLs (Datnow et al., 2003). Some teachers in the study perceived minority students as lacking innate abilities and basic skills, and these teachers linked their constructions of student ability to students' cultural backgrounds rather than to effort. Yet, recent evidence has suggested that language minority students' academic outcomes may depend on positive teacher attitudes and teacher-student interpersonal relationships even to a greater extent than those of language majority students (den Brok, van Tartwijk, Wubbels, & Veldman, 2010).

Teacher Attitudes Toward ELL Inclusion and ELL-Related Misconceptions

While a substantial body of empirical research has documented a set of persistent misconceptions regarding ELL education among content-area teachers (see reviews by de la Luz Reyes, 1992; Goldenberg, 2008; Lucas et al., 2008), research on teacher attitudes toward ELL inclusion into mainstream classrooms produced inconsistent results (e.g., Reeves, 2004, 2006; Sas, 2010; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). In her survey study of 279 high school content-area teachers, for example, Reeves (2006) found that while teachers held “welcoming” or “neutral” attitudes toward ELLs' inclusion into their classrooms, they also expressed reluctance toward working with limited English proficient students, believing that “they did not have enough time to meet the needs of ELLs” (p. 137). Further, while evidence has suggested that ELLs may require seven to ten years to achieve literacy skills comparable to those of average native speakers (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002; see also Cummins, 2000) and that continued L1 development positively contributed to ELLs' second language (L2) outcomes (Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Proctor et al., 2010; see also August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005), a large proportion of teachers (71.7%) in the study believed that ELLs should be able to acquire English proficiency within two years, and a further 39% believed that ELLs should discontinue using their L1 in school.

Reeves (2006) argued that holding such misconceptions may lead teachers to (a) misdiagnose student learning difficulties and (b) misinterpret student academic failures as lack of intelligence, ability, or motivation. In their study of 442 Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) teachers, Walker et al. (2004) documented similar misconceptions which they linked to a lack of ELL preparation among participating teachers and to a subsequent increase in teacher frustration. The authors concluded, “Negative attitudes begin to emerge when unprepared and unsupported teachers encounter challenges in working with ELLs” (p. 153). Notably, in their study of 729 teachers, Karabenick and Noda (2004) found that teachers with positive attitudes toward ELLs were less likely to hold misconceptions regarding students' abilities and the role that L1 played in L2 development. These teachers were also less likely to perceive working with ELLs as consuming considerable classroom resources and were more likely to provide higher quality instruction (i.e., mastery- as opposed to performance-focused instruction) for ELLs.

Professional Development: Attitude Change versus Resistance

While in his review on the topic, Furman (2008) noted that it was not yet time for definite conclusions, mounting evidence has linked pre-service and in-service ELL preparation with increased positive attitudes toward ELLs. Capella-Santana (2003), for example, found that a teacher preparation programme emphasizing cultural awareness, field experiences with ELLs, and bilingual education courses positively changed multicultural attitudes and knowledge in a sample of 52 pre-service elementary education teachers. Teachers developed positive attitudes toward minority students' culturally encoded behaviours and native language instructional support. Almarza (2005) found that elementary pre-service teachers ($N = 240$) participating in an authentic multicultural education immersion course developed positive attitudes toward ELLs. Similar, in their study of 143 junior-high and middle school content-area teachers, Youngs and Youngs (2001) found that the completion of foreign language, multicultural education, and ESL courses as well as work with culturally diverse students significantly predicted teachers' positive attitudes toward ELLs. Similar results were reported in Sas' (2010) study of 159 teacher candidates completing their student teaching requirements. In this study, the number of spoken languages and experiences with language minority students, as well as the participants' gender, accounted for about 17% of the variance in attitudes toward L2 learners.

Yet, content-area teachers working with ELLs often have no interest in pursuing ELL preparation (Beckett et al., 2006; Reeves, 2004, 2006) and are reluctant to modify their teaching practices to accommodate ELLs' needs (Clair, 1995; Reeves, 2004; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). In two separate survey studies of high school teachers, Reeves (2004, 2006) found that less than half of surveyed high school teachers expressed interest in receiving ELL preparation. Clair (1995) found that teachers felt no need to educate themselves about ELL-specific pedagogy, as they believed that "good teaching" was sufficient in accommodating ELLs' academic needs. Similar, Beckett et al. (2006) noted difficulties in recruiting pre-service and in-service elementary teachers into a technology-enhanced ELL preparation programme.

Researchers and educators have offered several explanations for content-area teachers' reluctance to seek ELL preparation and to modify their instruction for ELLs. Reeves (2004), for example, attributed the reluctance to receive ELL preparation to teachers' negative experiences with often ineffective, one-time in-service professional development experiences. Content-area teachers also questioned "the effectiveness of making instructional and procedural accommodations for ELLs" (p. 59) and the appropriateness of using some methods and materials designed for ELLs in their content-area classrooms (Clair, 1995; Harper & de Jong, 2004). Some teachers believed that the strategies that worked well with native English-speaking students were equally effective with ELLs (Clair, 1995; de la Luz Reyes, 1992; Harper & de Jong, 2004; see also Goldenberg, 2008). Other teachers believed that it was not their responsibility to educate ELLs, but rather that of ELL specialists (Valdes, 2001, as cited in Reeves, 2006) and that they simply lacked the time for extra planning and for addressing the needs of ELL students in their classrooms (Reeves, 2006; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010).

Present Study: The Need to Examine Teacher Motivation Toward ELL Preparation

Despite evidence supporting the importance of teacher ELL preparation, few content-area teachers—less than 13%, according to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2008)—who work with English learners in the United States actually have such preparation. Further, currently only 11 states offer teacher incentives for earning an ESL license and/or endorsement and only three states require that all pre-service teachers demonstrate their competence in working with ELLs in order to earn a teaching credential (“Quality Counts,” 2009). Thus, the vast majority of in-service and pre-service teachers have a choice regarding whether or not they learn about how to teach ELLs.

Though a relatively large body of research has examined factors underlying teacher attitudes toward ELLs, limited research has explored content-area teachers’ attitudes toward and motivation for ELL preparation, especially from the perspective of the content-area teachers who proactively seek such preparation. Our study seeks to fill in this gap by exploring the following research questions: (a) How did content-area teachers’ ELL specific attitudes relate to their decision to proactively seek ELL preparation? (b) What kind of professional beliefs motivated content-area teachers to proactively seek ELL preparation? and (c) What kind of professional experiences motivated content-area teachers to proactively seek ELL preparation?

Method

Settings

Data were collected over a period of one semester from a sample of in-service content-area teachers enrolled in a graduate-level course, *Teaching English Language Learners*, at a large urban Midwestern university. During the semester of the study, the university offered the course for the first time. Students (1 male, 11 female) enrolled in the class varied in their professional roles (2 kindergarten teachers, 4 elementary teachers, 1 high school science teacher, 2 ESL teachers, 1 French/Spanish teacher, 2 doctoral students). Ethnicity of the course population varied as well (2 Black, 10 White).

The graduate course introduced students to the *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol* (SIOP) model, an instructional approach designed for educating ELLs in content-area classrooms. The objective of the SIOP model is to teach content to ELL students in regular education classrooms while fostering their English language development (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2007). Teachers employ specially designed strategies that enhance ELLs’ language skills and comprehension of academic content. This approach is consistent with Content-Based Instruction (CBI) movement in the United States (Kaufman & Crandall, 2005) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Europe (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina, & Westhoff, 2007).

Participants

Among 12 graduate students enrolled in the course, eight participants met the selection criteria, that is, they were K-12 content-area teachers who took the course as a selective (i.e., voluntarily). Six white females (1 kindergarten, 4 elementary, and 1 high school teachers; age range: 23-48; teaching experience range: 1-26) agreed to participate. Two teachers worked in urban schools, one teacher worked in a rural school, and three teachers worked in a small town school. Two teachers spoke Spanish as their second language. Participant demographic data are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Participant Demographic Data

Name ^a	Degree Attained	Grade Level Taught	Years of Teaching	ELLs: Career ^b	No. ESL Teachers ^c
Glenda ^d	M.Ed.	2	17	2	1
Joanne	M.Ed.	K-1	26	4	1
Lee	M.Ed.	2	12	10-15	1
Kate	B.A.	K	18	5	--
Helen	B.A.	4	2	2	--
Jane	B.S.	9-12	1	2	2

Note. ^aAll names are pseudonyms. ^bNumber of ELLs taught during career. ^cNumber of ESL teachers in the school building. ^dGlenda, Joanne, and Lee worked in the same school building.

Data Sources

The data for the present study were derived from four sources: (a) a survey, *English-as-a-second-language (ELL) Students in Mainstream Classrooms: A Survey of Teachers* (Reeves, 2006), (b) semi-structured interviews, (c) informal conversations, and (d) classroom observations. Teacher interviews and survey data served as the main data sources; informal conversations and classroom observations served as means for data triangulation and for contextualizing the study findings.

The interview protocol included experience/behaviour and opinion/value questions (Patton, 2001). The survey collected demographic information and measured teachers' (a) attitudes toward ELLs' inclusion into content-area classrooms, (b) attitudes toward course modification for ELL students, (c) attitudes toward ELL professional development, and (d) beliefs about language ability and language learning. For the purposes of our study, we added to the survey a list of reasons for initial enrolment into the SIOP course and asked participants to rank order these reasons with respect to their importance on a scale ranging from 1 = *most important* to 7 = *least important*. Reasons for enrolment were as follows: (a) meeting programme, school, or

district requirements; (b) personal enrichment; (c) learning new teaching strategies; (d) earning a credit; (e) being able to help ELL students in the classroom; (f) being able to help all students in the classroom, and (g) developing cross-cultural knowledge. Additionally, participants could provide their own reasons for enrolment and could list benefits and challenges of inclusion in an open-ended format.

Table 2
An Example of the Open-Coding Procedure

Code	Description	Example
Demographics	Teachers witnessing demographic changes in their schools.	“We have a lot more Hispanic children coming in the last couple of years.” “[...] the past maybe three years, four years, probably since I first saw the rise in the Spanish-speaking students.”
Support	Teacher experiences with school support systems for inclusion.	“I deal with these students and we do not have an ELL programme where I work. We just have a migrant program and we just have a part-time translator, and she works between the counties and the health organizations.” “We don’t have professional development on ELL students because it’s not a high priority.”

Data Collection and Analysis

Following the recruitment stage, the participants completed Reeves’ (2006) survey. The survey completion took 20 minutes and was conducted during the regular class period. Individual interviews were scheduled at the participants’ convenience and were completed over a period of one month. The interviews lasting from 20 to 40 minutes were transcribed verbatim.

Based on the results of the initial data analyses and to clarify participants’ meanings, the participants were invited for additional interviews, as needed. Further, in order to verify the accuracy of emerging conclusions, researchers remained in contact with the participants throughout the entire data analysis stage.

Interview responses and the questionnaire open-ended response items were analysed by open-coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and thematic delineation techniques (Glesne, 2006). First, open-coding techniques were used to organize data within individual participants’ responses. (Table 2 demonstrates the open-coding schema.) Next, thematic delineation techniques were applied to analyze all participants’ responses across the interview questions and across the research questions. For example, the two codes presented in Table 2 were collapsed within an

“instructional context” (i.e., school-level factors theme). In the next step of the analysis, all data sources, including “qualitized” (Tashakorri & Teddlie, 1998) survey data, were triangulated to obtain an accurate picture of participants’ ELL-related attitudes, beliefs, and professional experiences underlying their decision to seek ELL preparation. To substantiate findings from the interview analyses, written summaries of the preliminary findings from each individual interview were provided for the participants’ verification through member checking (Glesne). An example of member checking is provided in the Appendix. The participants’ comments and clarifications were incorporated in the analysis.

Results

ELL-Related Attitudes

Survey and interview data revealed that participants expressed positive general attitudes toward inclusion and named several benefits associated with it. Similar to Reeves’ (2006) study, some aspects of inclusion elicited more complex responses.

General attitudes toward inclusion. All six teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my class.” Lee, Glenda, and Joanne noted that they wanted to teach more ELLs so as to gain experience for possibly obtaining a future ELL endorsement (discussed later in the paper); they also sought opportunities to see how their ELL teaching had changed over the years.

Kate and Jane’s interviews showed a genuine empathy for their ELLs students. These teachers often used affective language when talking about their students’ difficulties and success stories. Kate had a “special place in [her] heart” for her ELLs and identified with their fears and insecurities about learning a new language in a new place. To help, she developed personal connections with her students by incorporating their cultures into instruction and creating an atmosphere in which they would feel “wanted.”

Jane’s empathy extended to all students with special needs in part due to her personal history of neglect. In high school, Jane suffered a spinal injury. As a result, she missed a lot of school and felt that neither teachers nor the administration were supportive. “That has made me very sensitive to kids with special needs... I know how it is to be ignored and have things made more difficult for me.” In her interviews, Jane noted that she was planning on enrolling in as many special education classes as possible to prepare herself to work with students with different needs.

Kate, Glenda, and Jane went “the extra mile” to meet their students’ needs. During her student teaching, Jane felt that the two ELL students in her mentor’s class “were not given any help at all.” She chose to work with them one-on-one and reported their neglect to the principal. Glenda

consulted with ELL teachers and the district coordinator and provided “a lot of one-on-one instruction” in addition to contacting a struggling student’s mother. In her survey, however, she rated “earning a credit” as her primary reason for enrolment in the SIOP course, followed by “helping ELL students in my class.” This priority was also evident in Glenda’s interviews.

All teachers agreed that the inclusion of ELL students benefited all students and created a positive educational atmosphere. Jane and Helen valued exposure to different customs, points of view, and ways of thinking. Jane also noted that having ELL students in her classroom helped other students learn about diversity and tolerance. Helen shared an example of how her Spanish-speaking students enriched a book discussion by making “some connections that some of the other kids could not.” Kate and Glenda believed that inclusion exposed ELL students to language and interaction on an everyday basis, which helped them internalize vocabulary, improve comprehension, and “become immersed in the regular class ways.”

Attitudes toward specific aspects of inclusion. Although our participants had generally positive attitudes toward ELLs’ inclusion, their opinions regarding the mainstreaming of students with no or limited English skills students were not as uniform. Three participants agreed with the statement, “ELL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.” All teachers but Helen noted that ELL students increased their workload, required more time, and, in some instances, slowed down the progress of the class.

Among other challenges, the teachers identified accommodating language needs in content areas, overcoming the language barrier when communicating with parents, being supported by the system, and building background knowledge. For most, language was the biggest challenge. Glenda had difficulty identifying the language skills her ELL students would need to perform academic tasks. Helen noted that breaking down a concept into smaller steps was harder when she couldn’t speak a student’s language. Glenda and Lee felt that ensuring ELL students’ comprehension during reading and oral discussions was difficult.

Most of our participants, even those whose schools provided translating services, experienced difficulties communicating with ELL students’ parents. They relied on informal sources, either other English-speaking parents or older siblings, for translation. Jane and Kate stated that one of the biggest challenges of inclusion was the lack of resources, administrative support, and confidence in ELL students’ abilities by some teachers in their schools.

Conclusion. The analyses of teacher ELL-specific attitudes data revealed a weak link to teachers’ decision for seeking ELL preparation. First, positive attitudes toward ELL learners served as the main motivational reason for enrolment for only two out of six participants (i.e., Jane, who was genuinely concerned with all students with special needs, and Kate, who had a “special place in [her] heart” for ELL students). Second, similar to Reeves (2006), we found a

pattern showing some discrepancies between teachers' general attitudes toward ELLs' inclusion and their attitudes toward certain specific aspects of inclusion. In particular, teachers had concerns regarding inclusion of students with no or limited English skills, time constraints, increased workload, communication with ELL families, and impact on other students associated with inclusion—all of which may be arguably associated with negative perceptions of inclusion. Thus, our initial hypothesis grounded in Youngs and Youngs (2001) and holding that pre-existing positive ELL attitudes guided teachers' enrolment decisions was only partially supported by the findings, suggesting that other factors may have played a greater role in teachers' decision to seek ELL preparation.

Professional Beliefs

All participants believed in a commitment to “good teaching,” aspects of which were individualized instruction and commitment to students' success. Beliefs regarding ELL pedagogy, ELL students' attributes (i.e., language, language learning, and ability), and self-efficacy in working with students with no or limited English skills varied.

Commitment to “good teaching.” The teachers believed that all students can learn and that the ways in which they learn are highly individual. As they perceived it, the role of the teacher was to find the right ways to help all students achieve their potential and experience success. Lee compared the role of the teacher to that of a coach who knows the “game” and the “players” well and creates situations in which the “players” experience success and discover their strengths. Kate believed that the role of the teacher was to create an “atmosphere of community and bonding” and to help each student develop a love for learning and the knowledge and the skills needed for future success. Educational equality for all students, regardless of needs, was also noted. Glenda commented, “We need to stop looking at students as ‘these kids.’ We need to think about them as all kids with individual needs.”

ELL pedagogy beliefs. In general, teachers considered ELL pedagogy to be outside of their comfort zone. All participants reported having no college-level ELL courses prior to the SIOP course and no or limited ELL PD. In the absence of formal knowledge and professional preparation, teachers relied on their prior experience, common sense, and trial and error in developing intuitive approaches to teaching their ELL students. Kate and Joanne noted that some of the strategies they used in kindergarten (i.e., songs, puppets, sign language, gestures, pictures, and labels) worked with their ELLs. Glenda and Jane relied on extra one-on-one instruction. Glenda also used strategies that had worked with lower functioning students (e.g., buddying up, modeling, hands-on). She consulted with school ELL teachers and the district's ELL specialist, but did not believe that their recommended strategies would work for the whole class.

Accordingly, teachers' perceptions of what constituted effective ELL pedagogy varied. With regard to curricular modifications, the teachers disagreed. Half of the teachers believed that

lessening the amount of work was appropriate; other half of the teachers believed in simplifying curriculum. All teachers except Kate agreed that allowing ELLs more time to complete coursework was a good practice. Although the majority thought that ELLs should be graded based on achievement rather than effort, they reported that they sometimes evaluated their ELL students based on effort. Only Jane and Helen reported always grading their ELL students based on achievement.

Teacher beliefs about language and language ability. Teacher beliefs about language and language ability varied less. Five participants agreed or strongly agreed that English should be made the official language of the United States. When asked how long they believed it takes ELL students to acquire English proficiency, Lee, Jane, and Helen agreed that two years of U.S. schooling was sufficient. Glenda alone believed that ELLs should avoid using their L1s; she did not allow her students to use their native languages in class. Only Lee and Helen reported having never provided materials for ELL students in their native languages. Some participants believed that although the language barrier lessened ELLs' academic progress, it did not indicate low academic abilities.

ELL self-efficacy beliefs. Notably, despite limited formal knowledge about language and ELL pedagogy, teacher perceptions of self-efficacy in working with ELLs depended on their students' level of English proficiency. Lee and Helen, having worked only with fluent English proficient students in their classrooms, did not differentiate between their overall teacher efficacy and their self-efficacy in working with ELLs. Both teachers noted that their experiences with ELLs were not different from any other school work.

By contrast, Glenda, Joanne, Kate, and Jane worked with students with limited or no English language skills. They often lacked confidence in performing some basic teaching tasks with their students with no or limited English skills and doubted their ability to provide effective instruction, diagnose accurately students' learning difficulties, and connect with the students. Jane said: "I don't know... how to handle that when they do not speak... any [English]. I do not know how to get started." She added that learning science was difficult even "for kids who speak English."

Conclusion. The analysis of teacher beliefs indicated that seeking ELL preparation was compatible with teachers' self-concepts, including (a) commitment to "good teaching" for all students, (b) perceived lack of formal ELL pedagogy knowledge, and (d) perceived low self-efficacy in working with students with no or limited English skills among teachers working with this ELL population. According to Brophy's (2004) motivational theory, such compatibility between self-concepts and a given task is an integral part of the value aspect of motivation; this appeared to have played a role in our participants' decisions to seek ELL preparation. Additionally, we found that teachers' intuitively developed ELL pedagogies were often

accompanied by misconceptions and inconsistencies previously noted in the literature (de la Luz Reyes, 1992; Flores, Cousin, & Diaz, 1991; Reeves, 2006).

Professional Experiences

Analysis of interview and survey data revealed four themes linking teachers' ELL-specific professional experiences to their decision to seek ELL preparation: (a) instructional context, (b) professional situation, (c) prior knowledge about the SIOP model, and (d) institutional context.

Instructional context. Although employed in varied public school settings, all teachers had experienced inclusion and anticipated teaching more ELL students in the future. Helen, Joanne, and Lee noted a noticeable increase in their schools' ELL populations in the last two or three years. Kate commented that the presence of migrant ELL populations had become more stable in her rural school over the years. With the ELL population surging, some participants felt a need to equip themselves with ELL pedagogy. Helen noted that she was taking the SIOP course to prepare for a group of Hispanic students coming to her classroom the following year.

Participants' experiences of inclusion differed depending on students' language proficiency (discussed elsewhere) and school support. Some teachers experienced limited school support in accommodating ELLs and felt left to their own devices. Kate noted: "We do not have an ELL programme where I work. We just have a migrant programme and ... a part-time translator, and she works between the counties and the health organizations." Jane observed that the large inner city high school where she did her student teaching had just two overstretched bilingual resource teachers who were never present for the two ELLs in her class.

Joanne, Lee, and Glenda's school formerly offered little preparation, resources, or support for accommodating ELLs. As Lee noted, "a whole lot of nothing" was happening and "you would just let it go." In the last three years, however, the school enacted an ELL improvement plan through which it hired a Spanish-speaking parent liaison and implemented a family resource centre, pull-out programmes for younger ELLs, and two PD sessions on multicultural education and the SIOP model.

For Joanne, Lee, and Glenda, collegiality contributed to their decision to take the SIOP course. First, when Joanne received a flyer from the course instructor advertising her new methods class, she shared this information with her two colleagues and invited them to follow. Second, teachers saw enrolling together as an opportunity to share classroom experiences.

Professional situation. For all participants, their professional situation played a role in the decision to take the course; all six were pursuing advanced degrees or rank classifications (i.e., Masters of Education or Rank I) and upgrading or learning new pedagogical skills. Jane and Helen, beginning teachers, wanted to build their teaching repertoires and self-confidence.

Joanne, Lee, and Glenda, mid-career teachers, wanted school employment that would allow them to continue working with children but with fewer physical demands and time constraints. Joanne and her two school colleagues were working on their Rank I, a rank classification associated with higher salaries and alternative employment opportunities. Lee had just started her Rank I with an ESL endorsement. Joanne and Glenda were working toward their early childhood education (ECE) Rank I. Two weeks into the class, they changed their concentrations to ELL. When asked about this, the teachers discussed future employment and expected increase in demand for teachers with ELL preparation. Joanne noted, “I think having decided to go ahead and get my Rank I in the area of ELL, I would be able to pick up a job anywhere.” For Glenda, earning credits toward Rank I was the top reason for enrolling.

Prior knowledge about the SIOP model. Except for Jane, all participants had some prior knowledge of the SIOP model. Lee, Joanne, and Glenda learned about the model from a PD session offered at their school and “had heard good things” from other colleagues participating in a collaborative school-university grant project involving the model. Joanne noted that “the interest level was very high.” Helen and Kate learned about the model from Dr. S, the SIOP instructor, while taking one of her previous courses. They spent one class period viewing SIOP video materials. Based on the available information, the teachers had positive preconceptions about the model as one that benefitted different students and could be applicable to regular classrooms. Glenda said, “I knew it would be beneficial to teach those children that are ELL children; actually, all children, but especially ELL students.”

Institutional context. Dr. S’s name was prominent in teacher interviews about why they enrolled. First, Dr. S advertised the course by showing SIOP materials to her other classes and sending out flyers to former students inviting them to take the class. Showing the SIOP video materials may also have “demystified” ELL pedagogy for content-area teachers and generated some interest. Second, she encouraged two of our participating teachers to consider seeking ELL endorsement. Last, Dr. S was a popular instructor of good reputation; the teachers had high expectations for the quality and relevance of her course. All participants except Jane knew Dr. S personally from previous coursework. Joanne noted, “I have known [Dr. S] for a very long time, and so I knew the class was going to be exactly what it was. What she is doing with the SIOP is great because she is influencing others.”

Conclusion. The analysis of teacher professional experiences indicated several features that were both common across participants and appeared to play the most prominent role in teachers’ decision to enroll. These features were (a) the perceived relevance of the course for teachers’ immediate and future instructional needs (e.g., demographic changes in schools, lack of ELL support systems vs. school-wide climate supportive of inclusion), (b) the perceived relevance of the course for teachers’ professional goals (e.g., perceived increase in demand for teachers with ELL preparation, programme advancement), and (c) expected success in the learning experience

(e.g., competent instructor, prior knowledge about the SIOP model). These features fall directly under the *value* (i.e., the degree to which people value potential rewards from a given activity) and *expectancy* (i.e., the degree to which people expect to succeed in performing a given activity) categories of Brophy's (2004) motivational theory. According to Brophy, these two aspects of motivation have to be present in order for a learner to become motivated to engage in a given task.

Discussion

This case study explored the relationship between content-area teachers' ELL-related attitudes, beliefs, and experiences as they relate to teachers' decision to voluntarily seek preparation in working with ELL students. Six teachers participating in this study were enrolled in a graduate-level Sheltered Instruction course at a large urban Midwestern university. To explore factors underlying these teachers' decisions to enroll in the course, we administered a survey and conducted a series of interviews. Our discussion of the study findings draws on two theoretical perspectives, namely, Youngs and Youngs' (2001) positive attitudes hypothesis and Brophy's (2004) motivational theory.

At first glance, our findings seem to align with Youngs and Youngs' (2001) hypothesis holding that preexisting attitudes toward ELL students, either positive or negative, may lead content-area teachers to seek or to avoid ELL preparation opportunities. First, as indicated by interview and survey data, teachers expressed positive general attitudes toward inclusion, which may reflect their true attitudes or social desirability (i.e., the desire to provide socially acceptable answers). Second, all participants possessed at least two characteristics linked to positive ELL attitudes by previous research (Lucas et al. 1990; Sas, 2010; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). These characteristics included a combination of past experiences with ELL students (across all participants) and some additional characteristics unique to individual participants (e.g., cross-cultural experiences, school climate supportive of inclusion, foreign language courses).

However, although most teachers were willing to go "the extra mile" for their ELL students, only two participants were primarily motivated to take the SIOP course because of their sense of empathy for their ELL students. Moreover, similar to Reeves (2006), we found a discrepancy between teachers' general attitudes toward ELLs' inclusion and their attitudes toward certain specific aspects of inclusion. In particular, our participating teachers had concerns regarding the inclusion of students with no or limited English skills related to time constraints, increased workload, impact on other students, and instructional and curricular modifications. Some misconceptions associated with negative perceptions of language and ability (e.g., native language support, time to reach English proficiency) were also present.

These findings indicate that, although our participants' decision to seek ELL preparation is not typical of content-area teachers, their ELL attitudes and beliefs profile is similar to that noted by previous research (Clair, 1995; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Reeves, 2004, 2006; Sas, 2010), suggesting that factors other than positive pre-existing attitudes played a role in teachers' enrolment decisions. Indeed, teachers' top ratings for enrolment indicated a range of priorities, with only two participants rating "being able to help ELL students" as their top reason. The other three top reasons included "being able to help all students" ($n = 3$); "earning a credit" ($n = 1$); and "personal enrichment" ($n = 1$).

To interpret other factors that seemed more prominent among our participants we turn to Brophy's (2004) motivational theory, which has been employed in recent research (Zhang et al., 2008) as a framework for studying teacher motivation for PD re-enrolment. As noted in the introduction, Brophy's motivational theory predicts that learners will engage in a given learning activity only if they (a) expect to succeed in performing this activity and (b) perceive that activity as relevant to the attainment of their goals and as compatible with their self-concepts.

The analysis of teacher professional experiences and beliefs data indicated that the value aspect of motivation for the SIOP course enrolment was the most prevalent and universally shared among our participants. First, all teachers perceived ELL preparation as being relevant to their immediate and future instructional needs and career goals. In interviews, teachers noted demographic changes in their schools and anticipated working with more ELLs in the future. Some teachers felt left to their own devices in accommodating ELLs due to a lack of school support; others experienced a school-wide climate supportive of inclusion and may have felt a pressure to comply. Notably, interview data indicated that teachers anticipated an increase not only in ELL-specific pedagogical knowledge, but also in their general pedagogical knowledge. "Getting two in one" was a common comment among participants. Moreover, although the class was the next step in programme advancement for all teachers, three mid-career teachers perceived ELL preparation as a means for expanding their employment and retirement opportunities (i.e., through ELL endorsement). These teachers also discussed the long-term value of ELL preparation given an anticipated increase in demand for teachers with such qualifications and expected to be able to "pick up a job anywhere" in the United States.

Second, the analysis of teacher beliefs data indicated that ELL preparation was compatible with teachers' self-concepts. These self-concepts included (a) a commitment to "good teaching" for all students as exemplified by teacher beliefs in individualized instruction, commitment to students' success, and educational equity regardless of needs, (b) a perceived lack of formal ELL pedagogy knowledge, and (c) perceived low self-efficacy in working with students with no or limited English skills. Consistent with Brophy's (2004) motivational theory, such compatibility between teacher self-concepts and stated objectives of the SIOP course appeared to have played a role in our participants' decisions to enrol by contributing to the value aspect of motivation.

This finding also highlights the importance of emphasizing educational equity throughout teacher preparation programmes.

The expectancy aspect of motivation was featured in all but Jane's interviews. This finding is particularly interesting given that teachers considered ELL pedagogy to be outside of their comfort zones. Interview data indicated that two factors, the role of the course instructor and prior knowledge about the SIOP model, may have contributed to teachers' expectations of success. First, the instructor had the reputation of being a competent educator; teachers noted that they expected a quality learning experience. "I also heard that [Dr. S] was teaching, and she is an awesome instructor" was a common comment among participants when discussing reasons for enrolment. Second, the instructor personally "invited" her students to take the class (e.g., sending flyers, providing introductory video sessions on the SIOP, having conversations about ELL endorsement opportunities). Showing the SIOP video materials in particular may have demystified ELL pedagogy for content-area teachers and generated some interest. Teachers also had "heard good things" about the SIOP from other colleagues and had positive preconceptions about the model as one that could benefit different types of students and could be applicable to their regular classrooms.

Conclusions and Implications

Given the continued growth of ELL populations in the United States and other English-speaking countries and a context of increased accountability for the academic progress of ELL students (Goldenberg, 2008; Kaufman & Crandall, 2005), greater attention should be paid to the issues of inclusion, quality education, and teacher preparedness in working with linguistically and culturally diverse students in all content areas. This study addresses the growing need to prepare all teachers—not just ESL or bilingual specialists—to teach ELLs. The literature on this issue is growing, but remains small, especially with respect to reports of empirical studies (see Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas et al., 2008). The results of this study revealed information that has potential significance for teacher education and professional development providers as well as for future research in the area of teacher education. Practical implications of this study include: (a) developing more aggressive strategies in recruiting content-area teachers into ELL preparation through advertisement and faculty advising, (b) using teachers who have gone through ELL preparation as an informal recruitment tool, (c) increasing the attractiveness of ELL workshops and courses by emphasizing the long-term value of ELL preparation, and (d) implementing programmes that address teacher self-efficacy concerns in working with students with no or limited English skills. Additional research is needed to: (a) further investigate motivational factors leading content-area teachers to seek and continuously upgrade their ELL preparation, particularly among middle and high school teachers; (b) study areas in which content-area teachers perceive their capacity to accommodate ELL students to be low; and (c) identify ways to improve teacher self-efficacy with regard to ELL students' instruction.

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Appendix
An Example of Member Checking

Researcher Analysis	Teacher Verification
<p>Glenda had mixed attitudes toward including ELL students into mainstream classes. On the one hand, Glenda believed that mainstream students benefited from ELL students' inclusion by learning to work alongside, collaborate, and communicate with children from other cultures. On the other hand, she was not sure that: (a) some ELL strategies were appropriate in general education classrooms and (b) ELL students benefited from such inclusion as opposed to being educated in separate classrooms.</p>	<p>I believe that ELL students should be mainstreamed in the regular education classrooms. I do feel, however, that they also benefit from the pull-out groups that occur in their smaller ESL class settings.</p>

Note. The directions for the teachers read: “Please indicate whether or not the information derived from your interview in the left-hand column accurately represents your opinions/practices.”