Before They Teach:
How Pre-Service Teachers Plan for Linguistically Diverse Students

By April S. Salerno & Amanda K. Kibler

Introduction

Today's new teachers, with growing frequency, are assigned to teach linguistically diverse students, often referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs) (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Pappamihiel, 2007). Many novice teachers, however, express feeling ill-prepared to work across languages and cultures, and researchers have found that new teachers need better training in this field (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Hooks, 2008; Jones, 2002; Short & Echevarria, 2004). Pre-service teachers (PSTs) sometimes base their beliefs about teaching language-minority students on experiences they had as students (Busch, 2010). Often, however, PSTs' personal experiences do not match those of linguistically diverse students (Jones, 2002). Compounding this mis-match is that teachers increasingly look less like students they teach, with student populations diversifying while the teaching force remains predominantly White and middle class (Hooks, 2008; Verma, 2009).

All these issues can result in linguistically diverse students' placement in classrooms where success is far from guaranteed. Monolingual teachers specifically might have little empathy for how students experience learning second languages (Pray & Marx, 2010). Teachers with little training in linguistic issues or second

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language acquisition (SLA) might not think about language until it becomes a "problem" (Valdés, Bunch, Snow, Lee, & Matos, 2005). Given the grave consequences of not providing students equal opportunities, understanding how novice teachers conceptualize linguistically diverse learners becomes imperative. This study considers how PSTs' describe linguistically diverse students and make recommendations for improving their own teaching of these students in case-study projects, written during the semester after student-teaching, just prior to graduation from a teacher preparation program at a public, university in a South-Atlantic state.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching linguistically diverse students is not an exclusive responsibility of English as a Second Language (ESL)[1] teachers but is instead a responsibility of all teachers with linguistically diverse students in their classrooms (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). With the introduction of the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards in the United States and their emphasis on the development of sophisticated disciplinary knowledge for all students, such "shared responsibility" (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012) has taken on increasing importance (Bunch, 2013).

Grant and Agosto (2008) have asserted that teacher educators must assess their roles in promoting social justice. Providing equitable educational opportunities to students across subjects requires preparation of teachers across disciplines in effective, sensitive ways regarding language. Valdés et al. (2005) contend, "No matter what subjects they teach, and whether they work with kindergarteners, middle school students, or high school students, teachers use language in many varied ways in all of their teaching activities" (p. 126). Yet many teachers are unaware of and must first consider their own language use and the ways in which language is used in their disciplines, what has recently been described as "pedagogical language knowledge" (Bunch, 2013; Galguera, 2011). From a teacher preparation perspective, de Jong and Harper (2005, 2010) argue that while many view quality instruction for ELLs as "just good teaching," the challenging linguistic tasks and classroom contexts students face suggest otherwise. Teachers not versed in ELL instruction, they contend, might mistake students' silence for limited cognitive ability, or consider first-language (L1) use as an academic hindrance. Further, de Jong and Harper (2005) maintain that content instruction must support second-language (L2) development. Although "many content-area teachers assume that ELLs will be taught English in another class" (p. 109), teachers of all domains must be prepared to plan content- and context-specific instruction through a language lens.

Teachers' Perceptions of Students and Teacher Capacity

Teachers' instructional choices often have roots in how they perceive students; these perceptions can have lasting implications for how students experience their classrooms and school in general. Regarding language in classrooms, Fillmore and

Snow (2000) suggest that one of five roles teachers fulfill is "teacher as evaluator." They argue, "Teachers' judgments can have enormous consequences for children's lives—from the daily judgments and responses that affect students' sense of themselves as learners to the more weighty decisions about reading group placement, promotion, or referral for evaluation" (p. 8). For teacher educators, such judgments might be situated as part of teacher "capacity." McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008) view capacity not only as "knowledge, skills, and dispositions" but also teachers' abilities to take part in "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998), to participate in a "culture of evidence" by employing analytical skills, and to promote a democratic society by supporting students' abilities to "contribute in the public arena" (p. 149). Regarding teaching diverse learners, Howard and Aleman (2008) add three more aspects of teacher capacity: content knowledge as intersecting with a "complex notion of culture and learning" (p. 162); knowledge of effective teaching practice in diverse settings; and development of critical consciousness, including awareness of individual instances of prejudices and institutionalized systems of inequality. In addition, Grant and Agosto (2008) situate a similar idea of social justice as a teacher capacity. They discuss debates that emerged during integration about whether White teachers have capacity to evaluate Black students fairly. A similar question might arise today about monolingual teachers' capacities to evaluate linguistically diverse students.

The current project takes PSTs' student descriptions as examples of the type of teacher judgment Fillmore and Snow (2000) described. In so doing, this project seeks to understand how PSTs' perceptions of linguistically diverse students appear before they begin full-time teaching and to further understand capacities these PSTs demonstrate as they finish preparation. PSTs' student descriptions can thus serve as windows into how, at the point of completing preparation, PSTs evaluate linguistically diverse students. Additionally, this study might reveal how teacher education has prepared PSTs for making weighty decisions and how capacity comes into play in evaluating students. This project adds to existing knowledge on how to improve preparation for beginning teachers by taking a unique perspective in directly examining PSTs' student evaluations as a means for understanding the types of judgments PSTs might make about students as PSTs become full-time teachers.

This project is situated within a growing body of research suggesting teachers have good reason for framing judgments of linguistically diverse students positively in terms of the vast, untapped resources these students bring to American classrooms (Scanlan, 2007). García and colleagues contend that ignoring students' bilingual resources perpetuates educational inequities (García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2010). Referencing students as "emergent bilinguals," they contend that this re-labeling shifts dialog about students from one of need to one of assets. Such positive thinking about linguistically diverse students has broad implications for how teachers can structure classrooms to welcome meaningful contributions from students, families, and language communities.

Research Question

Given the importance of understanding how teachers conceptualize linguistically diverse students, this project's focal question is: How do PSTs at a university in the South-Atlantic region describe linguistically diverse students in the PSTs' end-of-program case-study projects, and what strategies do the PSTs recommend for working with the students?

Design and Methodology

Data Collection

This project is a document analysis of culminating case-study projects PSTs wrote in their final field-experience course before graduation. We believe that action research (AR) is essential in informing instructional practice and illuminating critical educational issues (Herr & Anderson, 2005), and this project fits within that belief in two ways: it is situated in a course in which PSTs learn research skills, and it is a self-study AR project of the first author's practice as co-instructor for one of the two sections of this course. Through the course, PSTs received training in conducting qualitative observations, taking fieldnotes, interviewing, analyzing work samples, and conducting quantitative behavior counts. PSTs revisited classrooms where they student-taught the previous semester; they picked as case-study foci three or four students they considered challenging to teach and selected research questions. The first author and fellow course instructors told PSTs that focal students need not be struggling in school. PSTs then observed students five times, interviewed their teacher once, and gathered three work samples per student. They analyzed fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and samples, and they wrote about findings and strategies for each student. Papers were generally about 15 pages in length. Suggested sections included: an introduction and overview; methods; context; student descriptions and findings, discussion, and recommendations. Analysis focused on the three latter sections.

The course focus was on teacher research and in building the type of capacity McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008) contend is necessary for participating in a "culture of evidence." The course does not, however, focus on linguistically diverse students. PSTs' experiences and prior training in teaching linguistically diverse students varied with their disciplines and backgrounds (see Sampling section below). Given there was no requirement that PSTs focus on linguistically diverse students, it is possible that PSTs' student descriptions are based more accurately on their own instructional needs than had there been imposed assignment guidelines for writing about linguistically diverse students.

Limitations. Interpretations here are generally limited to data included within PSTs' papers; information PSTs omit from papers was not available for analysis. The state in which the university is located does not require specific coursework on linguistically diverse students but instead only generally requires knowledge about

linguistically diverse students without stipulating how that knowledge is taught or assessed. Consequently, PSTs' exact prior experiences with linguistically diverse students are unknown. This sampling, however, might be considered typical of PSTs nationwide, given that novice teachers' training with linguistically diverse students varies widely due to many states' inconsistent or nonexistent requirements for specific training.

Sampling. The first author invited PSTs in both course sections, including the section she did not teach, to participate. We used an IRB-approved, blind-consent process in which we did not know participants' identities until after graduation. Ultimately, 65 of 79 PSTs consented. Participants included PSTs preparing to work with varied age levels—from early childhood to high school—and across content areas. Consequently, PSTs' students were also located within a range of grade-level and content-area contexts (see Table 1 for PST and student descriptions). Of the 65 PSTs, 16 wrote about 20 linguistically diverse students, most of whom they described as ELL identified. Five students—two exited from ELL services, one who grew up bilingual, and two native Spanish-speakers in a Spanish class—were not identified as ELLs. All names are pseudonyms. In quotes, names are changed to bracketed pronouns. What is known about students' language backgrounds and ELL status is taken from PSTs' papers (see Table 1). Because school locations were kept secret even from the instructors, contextual descriptions are based on PSTs' papers. Generally, however, PSTs worked within schools in or near a small Southern university town, also home to an international refugee center. Given the proximity of this center and the recent new growth of ELL student populations in the South (Salomone, 2010), PSTs taught students from a range of linguistic and national origins. This changing landscape of U.S. ELL populations increases the importance of training all teachers to instruct linguistically diverse students, including those in settings not traditionally considered as immigration gateways.

Role of researchers. Given the first author's instructor role, it is important to consider how she affected data. She graded and gave feedback to 13 of the 65 participating students, including four of the 16 PSTs writing about linguistically diverse students. We analyzed her feedback on paper sections included in this study. None of the feedback suggested changing content. Instead, with one exception, feedback pushed PSTs to give details and clarifying information. In one exceptional case, feedback asked a PST about implications of describing race and SES for a language-minority student while omitting it for another student. In the final draft, the PST did not change the description of the language-minority student.

Data Analysis Procedures
We performed a first level of analysis to reduce data (Miles & Huberman, 1994), including for further analysis only sections about students. We then used NVivo software to apply "start codes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to sort linguisti-

Table 1
PST and Student Profiles

PST	Content Area	Grade level	Student language/ national origin/ethnicity*	ELL status
Emma	elementary	3rd	Spanish	ELL
Robin	elementary	3rd	Chinese and English	unidentified
Meredith Student A	English (in ESL classroom)	11th	Burmese	ELL
Meredith Student B	English (in ESL classroom)	11th	Arabic	ELL
Meredith Student C	English (in ESL classroom)	10th	Spanish	ELL
Taylor	elementary	1st	unknown	ELL
Fran	elementary	4th	Tagalog	ELL
Martin	English	8th	Spanish	exited
Dillon	social studies	11th	from Brazil	ELL
Stanley Student A	Spanish	8th	Spanish	unidentified
Stanley Student B	Spanish	8th	Spanish	unidentified
Marcus	elementary	2nd	Spanish	ELL
Missy	English	6th	Nepali	exited
Brenna Student A	elementary	4th	Asian	ELL
Brenna Student B	elementary	4th	Hispanic	ELL
Barbara	elementary	5th	from Iran	ELL
Ali	elementary	1st	from China	ELL
Constance	elementary	kindergarten	unknown	ELL
Kara	elementary	2nd	Tamil	ELL
Kristen	elementary	3rd	from Burma	ELL

*Information is limited to what PSTs provided in papers; the assignment did not require them to include this. Where possible, students' L1s or countries of origin are identified. See the Findings section for further discussion of language information provided by PSTs.

cally diverse students from other students. Having read many papers already, the first author was familiar with contents. Based on this familiarity, she developed a list of identifiers PSTs used to label students. These "descriptive codes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) included students who were "gifted," in "special education," "linguistically diverse," and described based on diversity or SES. We included within the linguistically diverse code the five students not specifically ELL identified.

We then reduced data again to consider linguistically diverse students. We began with a new set of "start codes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) chunking ELL data into descriptions and recommendations. We analyzed descriptions and recommendations separately, looking initially for descriptions of students' L1s, using an "in vivo" process, coding directly from papers' text whenever a new language label was encountered (Strauss, 1987). In a second round of "interpretive" coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994), we studied not only language descriptions but all descriptive pieces, exhaustively coding for three prevalent themes: behaviors, language use, and families. We then looked within these codes for "patterns" (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, we turned to PSTs' recommendations. Not wanting to omit strategies, we again used exhaustive, "in vivo" coding.

Results

Figure 1 illustrates how PSTs describe students and recommend strategies. Descriptions focus on behaviors, languages, and families. Recommendations are

Figure 1
Project Model
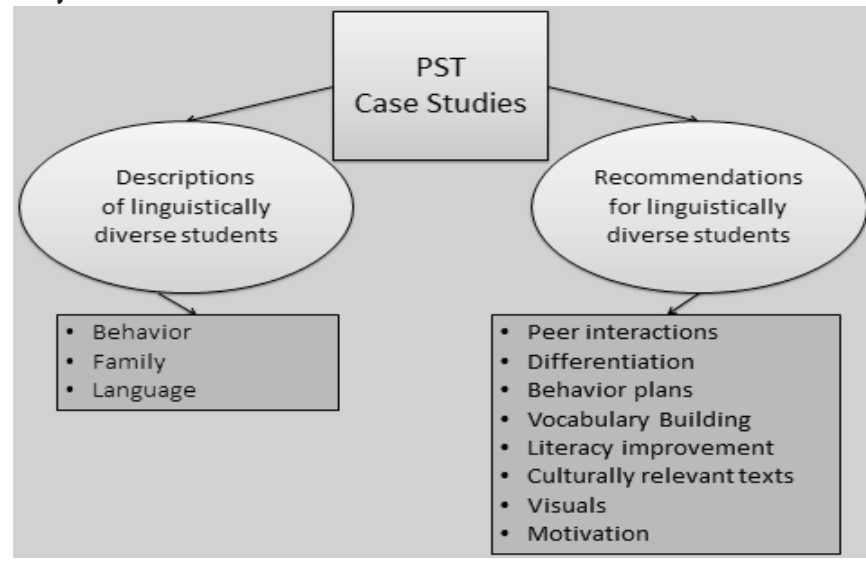
varied, including strategies like peer interactions and behavior plans but omitting resources such as families and first-languages.

Student Descriptions

Behaviors. Most commonly, PSTs describe linguistically diverse students' behaviors in terms of quietness, engagement, and friendliness (see Table 2 for an overview).

Quietness. PSTs often portray students as "quiet" and "reserved." Emma, for example, describes a third-grader at a predominantly White upper-class school: "I

Table 2
Descriptions PSTs Included

	Behavior			Language				Family			
	Quietness	Engagement	Friendliness	Language Named	Country of Origin	Ethnicity	Neither	Related to Language	Related to School Involvement	Discussed But in Other Ways	Not Mentioned
Emma	x			x				x			
Robin	x			x					x		
Meredith (A)		x	x	x						x	
Meredith (B)	x			x						x	
Meredith (C)		x		x							x
Taylor		x					x			x	
Fran		x		x							x
Martin		x		x							x
Dillon			x		x						x
Stanley (A)		x		x						x	
Stanley (B)				x							
Marcus	x					x		x			
Missy		x	x	x				x	x		
Brenna (A)			x			x		x	x		
Brenna (B)	x					x		x			
Barbara	x				x					x	
Ali	x				x						x
Constance	x					x				x	
Kara		x		x				x			
Kristen	x				x			x			

chose [her] because she is a quiet student whose family speaks Spanish at home and I worried that I did not pay enough attention to her as she never created trouble."

In contrast to typical framing of "quietness" or "shyness," Robin takes a different stance, describing her student in terms of "aloofness." Robin, working in third grade, is the only PST to describe a student as attending an afternoon heritage language school. Robin describes the student's behavior as related to her "gifted" identification:

> [Her] aloof behavior could present a challenge inside the classroom. It can be hard for students like [her] to relate to her peers since she is so academically ahead of them, but there are strategies to make sure the affective needs of gifted students are met as well as their academic needs. … Many students are shy and reserved; however, no student should feel over-looked or that they are not part of the classroom community.

Although Robin frames this discussion in terms of aloofness, she also expresses that the student must not be "overlooked." She does not link this fear to the student's language status, as Emma does. Instead, she writes of the student's giftedness.

A final PST, Meredith, working in an English class for L2 speakers of English, takes a more complicated view. Of PSTs in this study, Meredith had the most extensive experience working with linguistically diverse students through her placement in an ESL English classroom. Given this greater experience, her descriptions throughout this data are compared with other PSTs' as a window for observing how additional experience with ELL students can affect PSTs' understandings of them. In describing a tenth-grade student's shyness, for instance, she looks beyond the behavior to consider potential personal and linguistic factors:

> [She] was very quiet and reserved. She was hesitant to speak in English and never participated in class. Over the course of the semester, I was able to build a relationship with her and she gradually became more communicative with me. It seemed that her hesitancy to speak had a lot to do with her natural shyness, as well as trying to adjust to an unfamiliar place, with unfamiliar people, and immersed in an unfamiliar language. However, her challenge seemed to be compounded by a difficulty utilizing English verbally. Unlike most of the other English Language Learners in this class, she has not lived here very long, and hasn't had as much time to cultivate conversational English, which is most of the other students' strong suit (when compared to written English).[2]

Here, Meredith tries to connect to the student, yet she recognizes the student's L2 learning might contribute to what appears as "quietness" or seeming "reserved," an identity which can be assigned to linguistically diverse students (Lightbown & Spada, 2011, p. 66; Toohey, 2000). Such explication of quietness as a language-related factor is missing from others' examples. This might suggest Meredith's more in-depth ESL experience complicated her assessment of the student's behavior in ways other PSTs' viewpoints have not been challenged.

Engagement. Also predominant in PSTs' descriptions of challenges are perceptions that linguistically diverse students are unengaged in instruction. Sometimes disengagement is presented passively with students not causing disruptions. Taylor, in a school where about a third of students receive ELL services, describes a first-grader: "I often noticed [him] zoning out or daydreaming during whole group lessons and individual work time."

Taylor refrains from blaming the student and instead indicates she herself had a problem reaching him. At other times, PSTs present disengagement not as passive "daydreaming" but as disruption. In these instances, blame is often assigned. Fran, at a school she writes is in a "less affluent" neighborhood, describes a fourth-grade student:

> His home language is Tagalog, however, his English speaking abilities are indistinguishable from other students in the class. While [he] consistently performs well, he can sometimes become bored in a whole group setting and distract others. On [a date], he giggled throughout a music lesson, and continued to look around the room after being asked to close his eyes (observation). He has also been known to not give a full effort because he knows he will perform "well enough" by simply completing an assignment.

Fran here concludes that her student is not giving his "full effort." Notably, she reports that his English is "indistinguishable" from others. Fran does not explain her reasoning, nor does she indicate how long the student has been learning English; his language might be well-developed, or Fran might be mistaking conversational for academic language proficiency (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). Fran's student might become disengaged when not understanding content-specific language, appearing to Fran as his not giving "full effort."

Martin, in an eighth-grade English class for students "at risk," describes a student he says tested out of ESL[4] services in second grade but tested high for attention-deficit problems in sixth grade: "Unfortunately he also seems to be going through a phase in which he does not buy into the benefits of the education he is being offered." Martin details that the student scored highly on achievement tests in sixth-grade but began receiving mediocre grades in seventh grade and at least one failing grade in eighth grade. Interestingly, Martin attributes the student's declining grades as "going through a phase," suggesting that Martin considers the behavior temporary or a normal stage. One might worry that Martin does not consider other possibilities, including that the student, having stopped receiving ESL services and having been tested for special-education services, might have benefited from supports easing the transition from ELL services (Rivera, 2009). Instead, Martin consistently discusses the student's lack of motivation:

> With his not buying in, [he] is floundering academically. Clearly, [his] seeming lack of motivation to do well affects his classroom participation and grades.

Again in contrast, Meredith complicates engagement in explaining distracted

behaviors she observed of an 11th-grade student, enrolled in U.S. schools for two prior years with courses in self-contained ELL rooms. Instead of suggesting he lacks motivation, Meredith considers the instruction:

> These restless behaviors potentially reveal a way in which [his] learning needs are not being met. While the … curriculum is research-based, it mostly scripts direct instruction, individual seatwork, or class discussion. Rarely is there an opportunity for students to get up out of their seats or to work collaboratively with other students. While [he] does try to be attentive, and does complete all of his work, I was surprised at all of the instances during observations in which [he] did not appear to be completely engaged.

She also describes working with a second student, a 10th-grader:

> Because he avoided any interaction with teachers, it was difficult to talk with him and get to know him in the same way I could with other students. Therefore, I made a concerted effort to approach him on a day-to-day basis, even when it was obvious he was not particularly interested in talking to me.

At first, Meredith appears to blame the student for avoiding teachers or not talking to her. Then, she quotes a mentor teacher telling her Latino students might feel disenfranchised at the school. She describes the conversation as suggesting to her that students might feel "marginalized, or even discriminated against in some ways, by the school and/or the community."

In both descriptions, Meredith takes a more complicated view than other PSTs. She questions not only students' behaviors but also larger, systemic influences, such as whether the curriculum meets students' needs and whether the school has contributed to the second student's marginalization. This shift comes at the mentor teacher's suggestion. Because the first author worked closely with Meredith during student-teaching, she knows other instructors suggested to Meredith that the curriculum might lead students to disengage. Interestingly, Meredith considered suggestions both from her mentor teacher and other teachers within her paper as areas where multiple interpretations are possible. Meredith's analysis thus becomes a more sophisticated study of factors within the classroom, beyond just the disengagement and lack of motivation that Martin suggests. Given Meredith's student-teaching ESL experience, it is possible that mentoring and intense focus on instructing linguistically diverse students deepens PSTs' understandings (Lucas et al., 2008).

Friendliness. In a positive characterization of students, many PSTs describe linguistically diverse students as "friendly" or sociable. Dillon writes about an 11th-grade exchange student at a school he presents as "diverse": "The [school] community accepted [him]. He attended social events, like Friday night football games, the homecoming dance, and boys' basketball games, and participated in athletics, like the boys' varsity soccer team." Though Dillon's exchange student

might have different social standing than immigrant students, Meredith describes her student who immigrated to the U.S. three years ago in similar terms:

> While there are other students in the same level class who appear to communicate with more ease and fluency while conversing in English, utilizing better grammar and verb agreement, [he] is confident, socializes often, and communicates well enough to have meaningful conversations with others (personal observation). [He] often participates in class and always does what the teacher asks of him immediately. Constantly cheerful and kind, [he] is well-liked by his classmates, and often interacts with them during class.

Meredith's description is typical of PSTs' descriptions of students as "friendly" in her highlighting peer interactions, yet she is again atypical in her differentiation of the student's language skills from those of his peers. Such descriptions of students as friendly, although contrasting with "quiet" descriptions above, reveal PSTs' positive regard of students.

Language. At first, in coding for language, we examined how PSTs identify students' L1s. PSTs specifically name L1s for 12 of the 20 students. For four students, countries of origin, such as China, are given but not languages. For two students, ethnicity ("Asian" or "Hispanic") is named but not language. Two students are identified only as ELLs without indication of nationality, race, or language. These findings suggest that for nearly half the students, PSTs do not prioritize mentioning or are unaware of students' first languages, though research advocates teachers' learning about students' L1s and specific language abilities (García & Kleifgen, 2010; Valdés et al., 2005).

We next examined how PSTs describe students' language skills. Meredith, in an ESL English classroom, and Stanley, in a Spanish classroom with native and non-native Spanish-speakers, give greater detail, perhaps because of their courses' explicit linguistic foci. Stanley writes about a native Spanish-speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and Meredith indicates her "friendly" student above converses well but struggles with literacy skills. Meredith and Stanley are not, however, the only PSTs to describe language. Dillon, for instance, writes:

> It was a challenge for [him] to process information quickly in English. This became clear when [another teacher] asked him a direct question. The question, involving the interpretation of song lyrics, was challenging for a native speaker. I can only presume how [this student] felt at the time. In addition, lectures that lasted for extended periods, especially if they dealt with nuanced or abstract understandings, like the politics of the Cold War, posed significant challenges for him due to his limited English proficiency.

Dillon recognizes that lengthy lectures with "abstract understandings" and possibly complex academic vocabulary and content posed difficulties. Such descriptions are encouraging signs that Dillon might be processing how the student encounters challenging concepts and how the student's receptive and productive skills (ACTFL,

2012) might differ. Dillon goes on to detail that he has noticed the student's various coping strategies. Recognizing and enabling such strategies can be important in improving instruction.

Overall, however, PSTs' description of language use ranges in detail, with not all PSTs giving language the consideration previous examples provide. In other instances, PSTs capture language ability in a single sentence, such as Fran's mentioning that her student's English was "indistinguishable" from peers. Even those providing detail about language overwhelmingly focus on English. The exception is that Meredith mentions students talk with classmates in Burmese and Spanish, but she describes this talk as "off-task," although she does not speak the languages herself. Overall, PSTs' descriptions depict English skills as "limited."

Sometimes, language is considered a "barrier." Marcus, in a second-grade classroom, begins description of his research question with the phrase: "if the language barrier she faces daily inhibits her from learning to her fullest potential." This characterization of a student's "language barrier" might suggest an implicit view that a student's L1 constrains English learning. Later in his paper, Marcus writes: "In the interview with the homeroom teacher, she was asked a follow up question regarding [the student] and the language barrier. The question was do you think the language barrier [she] has to overcome inhibits her success in the classroom?" These additional "barrier" references suggest Marcus has normalized viewing the student's speaking another language and possibly not having mastered English as obstacles; this exemplifies de Jong and Harper's (2005) point that teachers without SLA training might incorrectly view students' L1 as a hindrance to learning English.

Families. Family descriptions are often brief and related to not speaking English. Missy, in a middle-school English classroom, differentiates between family members' English skills:

> His father's English proficiency level is very low and his mother does not speak any English; Nepali is spoken in the home. His paternal uncle is fluent in English and serves as the point of contact and translator for [his] family, filling out forms at [sic] responding to teachers' e-mails and phone calls.

Missy writes from her vantage point as someone who sends correspondences and receives responses. This is a predominant theme within the data, not just concerning linguistically diverse students but regarding all students' families. Families are also often described in terms of if and how they volunteer in classrooms or attend school events. Brenna, in a fourth-grade class, describes a student's family:

> Although his parents do not speak English as a native language, they are very dedicated to helping their son succeed in school. For example, his mother attended parent-teacher conferences and brought the vocabulary workbooks that she has [him] work on at home.

Although possibly explicable given PSTs' work under mentor teachers who might

take greater roles in initiating parent contact, such description is disconcerting in assumptions it might suggest about families not participating in school events. While Brenna might be expressing appreciation for a mother who appears at school despite risk of teachers perceiving her as uneducated, another interpretation is also possible. If there is a stated conclusion that parents attending events are supportive, there might also be an implicit assumption that families not attending are unsupportive (Barge & Loges, 2003; de Jong & Harper, 2005). While intended meaning here is unclear, problematization of families is present in other papers as well. Marcus explicitly states a student's challenge is her family: "The largest obstacle for [her] to conquer is when she goes home after school because both of her parents do not speak English at all." This deficit view fails to acknowledge that families provide "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) supporting instruction. Further, Marcus describes his student as "part of the working class society," while Brenna depicts her student's parents as from an "upper-middle class family." These connections might suggest PSTs implicitly tie beliefs about families' supportiveness to SES rather than resources families provide (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

PST-Recommended Practices

Strategies PSTs discuss for linguistically diverse students are varied and multi-faceted. In fact, they present such a wide variety of strategies, it was difficult to code and group them, and it would be impossible to discuss them all in this paper. Strategies are highly individualized, depending on students' contexts and profiles in each paper and sometimes depending on PSTs' reflections of their own behaviors. Stanley, for instance, discusses how he might use humor and management plans to diffuse confrontations with students. Barbara suggests that because "apprehension of speaking" might cause her student to appear quiet, she might give her extra response time. Meredith considers deepening her relationship with a student in helping him feel less disenfranchised. And Martin notes that his student, although in a "phase" of not buying into school, has succeeded before when teachers held him to high expectations. Beyond such individual recommendations, most frequently referenced strategies include structuring peer interactions, differentiation, behavior plans, vocabulary building, literacy instruction, culturally relevant texts, visuals, and targeting motivation (see Figure 1). Ali, in a first-grade classroom, extends these suggestions, linking peer interactions to culturally safe classrooms:

> One of the starting points I believe is to creating a classroom environment where cultural and linguistic diversity is accepted and encouraged. ELL students may feel different because their language and culture differs from other students, resulting in less interaction between peers.

Ali goes on to recommend teachers include students' cultures within images and texts while encouraging cooperative work.

The presence of such a diversity of recommendations is encouraging, suggesting

that PSTs know to put forward a variety of research-based strategies to address students' individualized profiles. And it might suggest that this assignment was somewhat successful in pushing PSTs to develop individualized strategies (Koshy, 2005). Still, questions remain. Given de Jong and Harper's (2005) arguments that what might be viewed simply as good teaching in general must coincide with individualized L2 instruction, it remains unclear how appropriate PSTs' strategies are to their contexts, to linguistically diverse students in general, and to specific students' academic strengths and needs. It is also unclear how able PSTs are to implement strategies. Such questions necessitate further study. Still, these recommendations might suggest capacity these PSTs have for evaluating students if asked to make decision-bearing judgments about them (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Grant & Agosto, 2008).

Discussion

Understanding PSTs' descriptions of and recommended strategies for linguistically diverse students provides an important window for conceptualizing how PSTs use their teacher capacities in making consequence-bearing judgments in their role as evaluators (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Howard & Aleman, 2008).

Descriptions and Diversity of Students

In this study, PSTs describe students in terms of classroom behaviors, language use, and families. Regarding behavior, most PSTs portray students as "quiet" and "reserved," explaining they chose focal students because they would otherwise go unnoticed. While it is encouraging that PSTs' are self-aware enough to realize they might "overlook" students, there is also cause for concern that students are invisible to PSTs (Roberts, 2009) or that PSTs have not fully developed capacity for creating democratic spaces where students feel comfortable speaking (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). Additionally, Emma explicitly describes shyness alongside students' linguistic diversity, suggesting she might implicitly link the two. Although unclear, this juxtaposition might indicate Emma is affected by ELL student stereotypes (Harklau, 2000). Robin's analysis of a bilingual student who is gifted exemplifies that linguistically diverse students cannot be regarded as a uniform group but have a range of backgrounds, experiences, and abilities (Short & Echevarria, 2004; Valdés et al., 2005). Frequently, PSTs write students appear "friendly." Given teachers' evaluation roles (Fillmore & Snow, 2000), positive descriptions such as Meredith's of her student as "constantly cheerful and kind" might have positive implications for him and others like him in immediate classroom experiences and longer-term course placements.

Regarding language descriptions, PSTs do not identify L1s for nearly half the students, despite research suggesting teachers should become familiar with students' specific linguistic abilities (García & Kleifgen, 2010; Valdés et al., 2005).

Often, language descriptions are short, consisting of a single sentence. Sometimes, language is depicted as a "barrier." Family descriptions are similar in brevity and situation, in accounts of families' not speaking English. Taken as windows into how these PSTs have developed capacities to evaluate linguistically diverse students (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Howard & Aleman, 2008), these descriptions suggest that beginning teachers' judgments might be based in incomplete pictures of students, perhaps because PSTs do not adequately understand the complex notions of culture and learning Howard and Aleman (2008) advocate. Descriptions of how students and families do not participate rather than how they do participate, or on language they do not speak rather than language they do speak, are limited perspectives from which teachers make instructional decisions without acknowledging students' "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992). Yet such simplistic perspectives are not omnipresent in the data. Stanley, in a Spanish classroom, provides more complex description of students' language. Meredith, in an ESL English classroom, considers mentors' feedback that curriculum might not interest students or minority students might feel disenfranchised, possibly indicating developing understanding of systemic inequalities that Howard and Aleman (2008) discuss. Such complexities suggest that experiences working closely with linguistically diverse students can impact capacities beginning teachers develop for evaluating linguistically diverse students.

PSTs' Recommendations and Viewing Families and Languages as Resources

Regarding recommendations, analysis revealed varied instructional strategies rooted in research, yet what PSTs do not suggest must also be considered. Just as PSTs give sparse details in describing students' L1s and families, they generally do not suggest using them as resources, although including languages (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Valdés et al., 2005) and families (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Moll et al., 1992) are strategies often recommended by research. Besides Stanley, who as a Spanish instructor teaches some students' L1, PSTs only twice imply using L1s. Constance suggests her quiet student ask a peer about word meanings, but she does not specify the language, so it is unclear if she intends English or an L1, and interestingly Marcus, who earlier described the language "barrier," suggests:

> In her article, Unlocking Academic Vocabulary, Deluca says "students may recognize similar words from their own language and should be encouraged to share pronunciations and spellings of these with the class" (DeLuca, 2010).[5] This not only helps [the student] with participating in class, but students would look to her for help or want to know how she would say the particular word in Spanish.

Marcus adds such interaction would build his student's vocabulary and comfort in the classroom. Aside from this reference, there is no other explicit mention of using L1s instructionally. Meredith instead describes L1 speech as an off-task behavior, "The instances in which [he] was off-task involved him talking to his neighbor in

Burmese when [the mentor teacher] was speaking to the class" and for another student, "During class, he spends much of the time talking in Spanish to his friend, texting on his phone, or sleeping with his head on the desk."

Regarding using families as resources, the situation is similar. References to involving parents are almost nonexistent. Constance writes the exception: "Providing ample opportunities for parents to be involved at school will improve their parents' English understanding as well as cultural understanding of what their children is [sic] doing in school and they will be able to provide better supports for the child at home." Even here, Constance's suggestion could be viewed as paternalistic in that the school teaches parents to be "supports" rather than parents' offering resources (Auerbach, 1995).

Why PSTs include little discussion about languages and families is unclear. Possibilities include: PSTs know little about students' languages and families, PSTs are unfamiliar with SLA, or they do not understand immigrant students' and families' experiences in general. There is some evidence mentor teachers might also influence PSTs' thinking. Just as Meredith describes a teacher persuaded her to reconsider engagement, Missy explains a teacher influenced her to not help a student transition from an ESOL[6] classroom:

> As soon as he entered the mainstream class, [the student] started working hard, but he did not perform particularly well on the first several assignments and began to lose confidence. I tried to speak with [the mentor teacher] about altering some assignments to better suit [his] needs, but she felt that that would be unfair to the other students.

Unsurprisingly, given literature that fairness and equality are not the same (Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003), Missy describes how the student then grew frustrated, refused to work, and started misbehaving. Missy questions neither the teacher's argument that differentiating would be unfair, nor the teacher's suggestion of similar literacy instructional approaches regardless of whether students are English learners or native English-speaking struggling readers. Yet in her discussion, Missy explicitly reviews literature advocating otherwise.

While it might be a positive sign that Missy sees disjuncture between research and her mentor's advice, given that Missy does not explicitly note the contradiction, it is unclear how she viewed the advice or how she will make future instructional decisions. Mentor relationships might be a specific relationship type in the collaborative communities McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008) discuss. Given their argument that teacher capacity development is contextualized, these findings suggest mentors' presence is one important contextual element. In this data, mentors appear to have both positive and negative influences on PSTs, but further investigation is needed to clarify how they shape PSTs' views of linguistically diverse students.

Additionally, while presence of diverse strategies in PSTs' recommendations is encouraging, it remains unclear how appropriate strategies are for individual

students, how aware PSTs are of differentiating quality L2 instruction from general "good teaching" (de Jong & Harper, 2005), how prepared PSTs are to carry out their plans, and how findings might differ by certain grade-level or content-area contexts. These questions remain as future research areas. Further, Missy's and Meredith's cases suggest school environments affect how PSTs implement training and convictions regarding instructional decision-making for linguistically diverse students. Additionally, families and first-language resources are largely disregarded in PSTs' plans for instructing linguistically diverse students, despite research advocating inclusion of languages (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Valdés et al., 2005) and families (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Moll et al., 1992).

Implications

Implications for Teacher Education

Findings suggest that as teacher educators, we should strongly consider messages we send to PSTs about linguistically diverse learners and families. In our own teaching, this means we must push PSTs to better understand students' language skills and to view families and L1s as instructional resources. Additionally, we must challenge PSTs' thinking about accepting stereotypical images of linguistically diverse students. And we must support students like Missy who receive conflicting messages from different sources during pre-service training.

Additionally, implications stretch beyond our own teaching to ways experiences are structured for PSTs to work with linguistically diverse students. Findings suggest that although many state licensure regulations and teacher education programs nationally do not require PSTs to have specific training experiences with linguistically diverse students (Salerno & Lovette, 2012), such opportunities could be helpful in complicating PSTs' descriptions of students and strategies for teaching. Figure 2 traces how Meredith's student evaluations differ from those made by peers without the in-depth experience she had teaching linguistically diverse learners. Meredith indicates more complex understanding as she relates quietness to language, considers that curriculum or school culture might cause students to disengage, differentiates students' language skills, and provides details about students' L1s and language abilities. These findings point to the need for teacher education programs to give PSTs experiences where they get to know linguistically diverse students as individuals in supportive environments with skilled mentors. As the cases of Missy and Marcus show, exposure to linguistically diverse students in mainstream classes with mainstream teachers does not appear sufficient. PSTs instead need training focused specifically on instructing linguistically diverse students. Such experiences should include working in various classroom settings so PSTs have opportunities for personal interactions with linguistically diverse students, as well as to gain experience managing linguistically inclusive classrooms.[7] PSTs then need opportunities to engage in discussions and receive feedback about

Figure 2
Meredith's More Complicated View
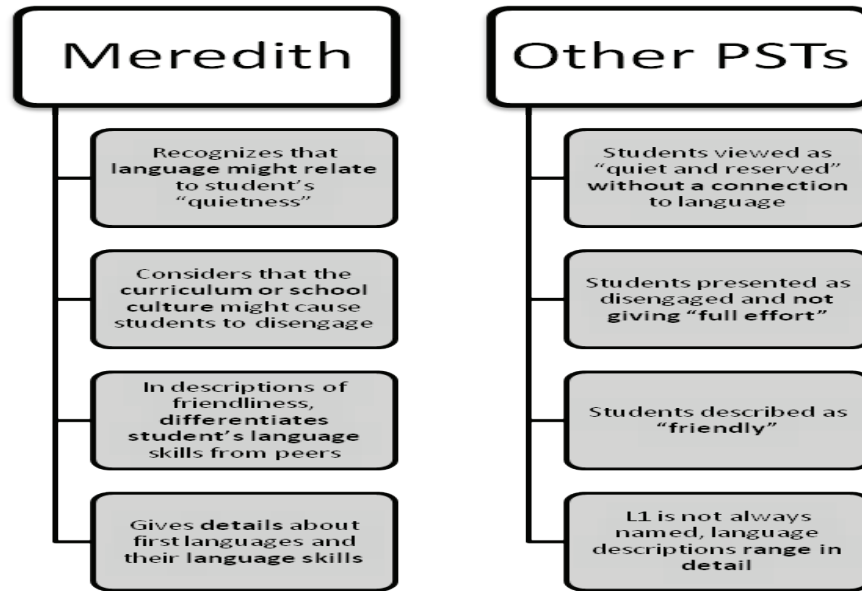
instructional approaches taken within these settings. PSTs' needs for support might vary. Missy's experiences suggest that once armed with strategies, PSTs need help building confidence, so they do not back down when opposed. Marcus's openness to allowing Spanish cognates in class suggests he might likewise be open to instruction that students' families and L1s can be resources. As teacher educators, we must help PSTs recognize that they have authority to evaluate their linguistically diverse students and that decisions they make can have lasting consequences for students. We must work together to ensure that such decisions are based upon understandings of children, their families, and their language resources that are as complex and complete as possible.

Notes

[1] This article's authors use ESL to refer to actual English instruction while ELL instruction can include content-area instruction for students who are also learning English. Phrasing from students' papers is maintained when possible. even if not in line with the authors' usage; such rerferences are marked. Additionally, ELL can refer to school-assigned student identifications.

[2] Parenthesis here and throughout are maintained from PSTs' original papers.

[3] Parentheses in such cases are PSTs' references to evidence sources.

[4] Student's description.

[5] The paper omits the page number, p. 28.

⁶ Her description.

⁷ We would like to thank Meredith for her insights on this finding.

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