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By

Tzu-Ying Ho

December 2016

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO ESL TEACHERS'
EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Throughout the United States, the increasingly diverse enrollment poses cultural and linguistic challenges for its education system. As the number of English language learners (ELLs) is increasing rapidly and steadily, teachers have to be prepared to meet the needs of the linguistically and culturally diverse student population. Since most ELLs are taught by teachers who do not receive adequate training and support (Téllez & Waxman, 2006), professional development plays an essential role in enhancing teacher quality in ESL education. Because of the lack of research on ESL teachers' knowledge and practice along with professional development, this study explores ESL teachers' experiences of professional development by employing a narrative approach.

This study uses narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as a navigational tool (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007) to capture and describe ESL teachers' learning processes and outcomes through professional development. This includes—and is not limited to—the support they receive, the barriers they encounter, the changes in their teacher knowledge and teaching practices, and the shaping effects of the social, cultural, and political context in which ESL teachers' professional development experiences unfold. In this study, ESL teachers live out stories of practice, tell stories of those experiences, and modify them by retelling and reliving them. This is how change happens on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

Through storytelling, this study delves into the narratives of three certified ESL teachers who are working with ELLs in public elementary schools in the fourth largest city in the United States. Those life stories express the ESL teachers' experiences of

professional development and form the primary source for this study. Three narrative threads are identified in the ESL teachers' educational life, including the teaching thread, the curriculum inquiry thread, and the thread of multiculturalism. These three narrative threads shape and reshape the participants' identity and self-image as ESL teachers. Faced with the challenges of creating meaningful learning experience for ELLs, the participating ESL teachers take on the role as change agents while making sense of theory in light of their experiential knowledge. Their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) is not only rooted in their teaching practices, but also derived from their daily interactions with people of different backgrounds.

After recognizing the necessity to attend to cultural diversity in the classroom, the ESL teacher participants recommend incorporating multicultural education into the design and implementation of professional development. To promote the continuity of experience (Dewey, 1983), professional development programs should be organized in a consecutive way in which the use of reflective practice (Schön, 1983) allows ESL teachers to be engaged in a meaning-making process. In order to better facilitate ELLs in English learning, they suggest that ESL teachers create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment, be familiar with the students' home practices and cultural traditions, and address cultural differences in beliefs and practices. Acknowledging the essential role of native language in the education of ELLs, they propose that ESL teachers should be receptive to the students' native language and responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of ELLs. Although ESL education is facing with difficult situations, ESL teachers must keep a critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) and make collective efforts to provide an inclusive and equitable education for ELLs.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Prologue

One Monday afternoon, several in-service teachers came from different school districts after work and gathered in a classroom as graduate students to take a course on instruction at the University of Houston. In class, an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher shared her concerns about her teaching practices that were informed by her self-evaluation of her instruction. During the break, I approached her and listened to her story. She shared, “These kids are getting to the third grade, and they are struggling. They have to take the STAAR test in English for the first time, and they aren’t passing. They aren’t passing because they aren’t getting enough ESL in the lower grades. So, ESL is a very important part of professional development because we have to get them ready.”

The conversation haunted me for days because I had also seen some of my students struggling to learn a foreign language. As an elementary school teacher in Taiwan, I had taught English for seven years. Over the years, students entered my classroom with the hope of mastering the English language. However, for some students, learning English was not easy. They fought hard to conquer it. Hence, the U.S. ESL teacher’s story aligned with my experience of serving English language learners (ELLs) who have an urgent need to enhance their English language proficiency in order to succeed academically and socially.

The first teacher workshop I attended in Taiwan provided an impressive lesson on understanding challenges for ELLs. On a humid Saturday morning, with a cool breeze blowing across my face, I rode my red scooter at full speed up a hilly terrain to reach the

educational training agency. As the workshop started, I was startled. The presenter did not speak in Mandarin or English. Instead, she talked in an unknown language with a cute puppet in her left hand. “What’s happening here? Am I in the wrong place? Is she talking in French, German, or some other language?” I felt scared, isolated, and insecure. I looked around the room for help. I saw that the faces of my fellow teachers were slightly confused, anxious, and uncertain. I imagine I had the same expression on my face at that moment. “Okay,” I said to myself, “I need to get my thoughts back and focus. The language sounds strange, but it shouldn’t be hard to just repeat it.” I tried to persuade myself and get on track. However, it was really hard to engage in the lesson or respond to the presenter because I could not decipher the meaning of the odd syllables.

This training experience increased my understanding of the awkward situation that ELLs face in my classroom. They find themselves in an English learning environment without a clue of what is going on. Because of their limited English proficiency, they feel scared to speak up, insecure in their behaviors, and even isolated from their classmates. Now that I am aware of difficulties and challenges that ELLs are faced with, I apply multiple teaching strategies and alternative teaching materials to encourage them to participate. I connect curriculum to their previous knowledge and relate it to their real life in order to create pleasurable and meaningful learning experiences for them. Most important of all, I put myself in their shoes and see the world through their eyes.

Devoting myself to language education, I am concerned about teaching and learning for ELLs. I never forget the moment when a fifth-grade little boy opened his heart and told me, “I hate English, but I like to be in your English class (in Mandarin).”

At the beginning of a new semester, this active boy came to my class and refused to speak in English. I was worried about him, but I gave him time to adjust to this new environment. Since there were a lot of interesting activities happening in my class, he gradually found it harmless and even amusing to participate in them. Then, he started to stay after class with me to learn phonics and spelling. Sometimes we just chitchatted. Later on I found out that the reason why he hated English was because he had awful experiences in learning English. He had been deemed as a failure in English learning so many times that he did not believe in himself. What he needed was a person who listened to him, showed care about him, and gave him support in learning English.

It is hard to watch students struggling with learning English. As a language teacher, I play a key role in making things possible for them. Since I know about their needs and strengths, I can find a way to help them out. Those students spur me to learn more and grow with them. I believe that teachers are meant to make learning experiences meaningful and to provoke positive changes in their students' lives. In order to create meaningful learning experiences, professional development opportunities are needed to enhance the quality of teaching. The influence of teacher quality on student performance is undeniable. How a teacher teaches has a huge impact on how much students learn. Acknowledging the importance of professional development, I participated in various types of professional development activities, such as courses and workshops, conferences and seminars, and mentoring and peer observation while serving ELLs in elementary schools in Taiwan. Those experiences prompt me to inquire into ESL teachers' experiences of professional development in the U.S. context.

Story Retelling

After I gained my master's degree in education and received the elementary school teacher certificate in Taiwan, I was employed by Luzhou Elementary School in New Taipei City as a substitute English teacher from 2008 to 2010. At that time, elementary schools in New Taipei City were implementing a series of curriculum reforms, one of which was to advance English education in response to the trend of globalization. English was incorporated in the elementary school curriculum and assessed as one of the subject matters in midterm and final exams. Also, more teaching hours were allocated to English learning to develop fundamental skills in English reading and writing. The implementation of flexible learning hours in English required English teachers to be equipped with knowledge and skills to design and enact English curriculum and instruction.

Since there was an unprecedented demand for professional development, the trained leader of the English teacher team organized school-based workshops for fourteen English teachers to participate in curriculum development. Once a week we gathered together to brainstorm and produce collaborative work through individual contributions. We took turns to demonstrate teaching, introduce picture books, and share relevant and insightful readings. We also invited teachers from other schools to exchange ideas, materials, and resources. With alternative teaching resources, constructive teaching feedback, and interactive discussions, the burden on the English teachers was reduced, while the effectiveness of their teaching increased. Not only teachers but also students enjoyed the innovative curriculum and authentic learning. In 2010, our team was thrilled to receive the Teaching Excellent Team Award, and we presented our work in a regional seminar.

My teaching career continued as I was hired by Linsen Elementary School in Taoyuan County as an official English teacher from 2010 to 2012. For professional development, the school arranged seminars on a wide range of topics, such as educational policies, school hygiene and safety, teachers' rights and responsibilities, communication with parents, curriculum and instruction, and controversial issues in education. All teachers were required to participate in those seminars, but only a few of the seminars met the teachers' needs. Most of the seminars failed to engage the teachers in the topics. As for the English teacher team, there were some opportunities to generate professional dialogues among six English teachers, such as selecting English textbooks, planning English curriculum, and holding English speech and reading contests. However, the English teachers were used to making their own decisions and tended to manage their classrooms independently. In the end result, there was little chance for the English team to share or collaborate in English curriculum and instruction.

In on particularly stifling faculty meeting, teachers stared at the school principal as he advocated a new Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development program (Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2013). Based on his description, I could not see how this program would benefit me because I felt overwhelmed by the kinds of programs that had been executed in the school. Finally, a group of fifteen teachers decided to break through the suspicious atmosphere. They voluntarily joined this program. On some occasions, I spotted them talking enthusiastically in the meeting room with university professors. At other times, I noticed they applied new pedagogical methods in their classes. My curiosity was piqued. I asked one of the teachers, "Why are you comfortable with other teachers observing you in your classroom? How do you

maintain a healthy relationship with each other when you are evaluating each other? How can your energy not be drained out by the heavy workload and the intensive program?”

She smiled and responded with ease:

I’m evaluating myself with the help of my colleagues and professors. Those teachers who team up with me are my friends. We support each other in difficulty, appreciate every endeavor in making changes, and respect different thoughts as part of professional deliberation. As you know, evaluation is not meant to be harsh criticism. What I try to do is to adopt some changes in lesson planning and teaching; that way, the program is rooted in my daily classroom practices.

Actually, I save energy by being able to more effectively engage my kids in learning.

I was enlightened by her answer and eager to solve the puzzle of professional development for myself. Starting with taking ten-hour online courses, I grasped basic ideas of the program, especially the circulative process of designing indicators and a professional growth plan, conducting observation and debriefing, and developing a teaching portfolio. In the two-day workshop that followed the online coursework, I was challenged to put the concepts into practice, considering the particular circumstance of my classroom.

Story Unfolding

After the intensive training, I became part of the team sharing the same vision. This team was composed of teachers and administrators who were in different years of teaching, grade levels, and subject matters in school. We had known each other for a few years, but it was through this program that we could connect and understand each other’s

educational philosophies. I started appreciating the efforts of all these teachers, even in different subject areas and positions, to provide kids with various educational experiences. Gathering in a meeting room, we considered school vision, mission, and specialties to design school-based indicators for evaluation with the assistance of university professors. In the conversation, teachers from diverse backgrounds brainstormed ideas from multiple perspectives and generated a holistic viewpoint. Based on the indicators, we created an applicable rubric for evaluation in an attempt to suit individual teachers' needs and practices. However, argument and uncertainty rose up when the rubric referred to the distinctive and changeable nature of teaching and learning. Ultimately, our discussion led to an agreement to keep the rubric flexible in practice. Since each teacher's belief and will are vital to decision-making, teachers started sharing their experiences and concerns.

In the teachers' lounge after our meetings, the conversations keep flowing – How do kids respond to the new practice? What if we integrate it into the curriculum? How about we try team teaching next time? I was used to hearing the teachers complain about students' misbehavior, parenting issues, or heavy workload. Now, they were showing care and support. The dynamics in the teacher team, like a ripple in the water, was spreading out and expanding slowly. As soon as the rubric was developed, the whole team was divided into several small groups of three teachers. Teachers freely chose the partners with whom they would like to collaborate and build up a trust relationship. My group was composed of dynamic individuals with varying levels of experiences: one male administrator who teaches science in fifth grade, one female administrator who teaches reading in second grade, and me, a female English teacher in fifth grade.

Apprehensive about the differences, I had doubts about whether we could work in the group effectively and professionally.

Teaming as a small group, we listened to each other's challenges and dilemmas, and we tried to figure out what we could improve in our individual classroom practices. Accordingly, we individually designed professional growth plans by targeting specific points in the rubric of evaluation. We took turns giving teaching demonstrations, recording videos, and taking field notes. Throughout these experiences, my belief in the power of this exercise grew. Finally, instead of giving a fancy teaching demonstration, I confidently presented my regular teaching on stage. I received much beneficial, practical advice from my partners, but it was still a challenge to accept criticism of my teaching. After I collected all the field texts and analysis reports in my file, my teaching portfolio was ready for future use. Though unpacking myself was frightening at first, I am glad I summoned the courage to join a team for professional development purposes.

The professional development experiences I had in the two elementary schools I served in were very different from one another. It is obvious that there are different types of professional development and various ways to implement professional development. The effect of professional development is influenced by many factors, including the teachers' eagerness to learn, the school's ability to change or to remain stable, the dynamics of teacher teams, and so on. As far as I am concerned, professional development is essential not only for improving teachers' teaching quality, but also for enhancing students' academic achievement. As a result, I devoted myself to pursue a doctoral degree in teaching and teacher education as an opportunity to expand my understanding of teachers' experiences of professional development. In this study, I

explore ESL teachers' learning processes and outcomes through professional development, including the support they receive and the barriers they encounter, the changes in their teacher knowledge and teaching practices, and the shaping features of the social, cultural, and political context in ESL teachers' professional development experiences.

Background

Throughout the United States, the number of enrolled students, whose first language is not English, is increasing (Vogt, 2009). The U.S. Department of Education (2015) reported that approximately 4.4 million English language learners (ELLs) were enrolled in public schools in school year 2012-13, roughly 9.2 percent of all public school students in the United States. In certain states, the percentage of ELLs in public schools is especially worth noting. Texas, for example, is ranked fourth in terms of large and fast growing population of ELLs. In school year 2012-13, ELLs constituted 15.1 percent of public school enrollment in Texas. Besides, the percentage of students in ELL programs was generally higher in urbanized school districts. For instance, in Houston Independent School District (2014), ELL enrollment increased in 2013-14 and accounted for 30 percent of the district population. Houston's increasingly diverse student population poses new cultural and linguistic challenges for its education system. While the ELL population rapidly and steadily increases, teachers have to be prepared to meet the needs of the linguistically and culturally diverse student population.

About 56 percent of U.S. public school teachers have at least one ELL in their class. However, less than 20 percent of those teachers are certified English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual teachers (Téllez & Waxman, 2005). Most teachers of ELLs

do not feel they are prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students. While the Texas Education Agency (2014) listed Bilingual/ESL as one of the approved shortage areas for the 2014-2015 school year, Houston Independent School District (2015) is facing a critical shortage in bilingual education. Results from a study conducted by the Texas A & M University showed that 40 percent of Texas school superintendents reported a shortage of certified teachers in ESL or bilingual education. Besides, 30 percent of Texas school districts indicated that more than 11 percent of their ESL or bilingual teachers were uncertified in the area (Texas Education Agency, 2007). Therefore, systematically and substantially providing professional development programs is an urgent need to enhance teacher quality in ESL or bilingual education.

As the number of ELLs in the United States is increasing rapidly, the issue of how to educate students who are not proficient in English becomes the center of national debate. It also becomes an issue faced by urban schools as the U.S. Department of Education (2015) reported that the percentage of students in ELL programs was generally higher in urbanized school districts. My investigation starts with an examination of language diversity and language ideologies. A variety of languages have been spoken in the United States. Why our education does not educate people to be bilingual or multilingual? One of the reasons is that the U.S. founders envisioned “a country with a unified history, with unified traditions, and with a common language” (Hechinger, 1978, p. 130). Official English movement, also known as English-only movement, contends that “national unity, American identity, and the English language itself are threatened both by immigration and languages other than English” (Lawton, 2008, p. 78). However, research shows that “second generation immigrants are more likely to lose proficiency in

their native language than to remain bilingual” (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010, p. 702). It signals a devalued view of the minority language and a persistent neglect of their linguistic and identity practices that directly affect educational equity for ELLs.

Another reason is that language ideologies of standardization and monolingualism underlie educational language policies in the United States (Farr & Song, 2011). These policies ignore the bilingualism that ELLs can develop through schooling and discount their native language and cultural understanding in school settings. Even though research has consistently shown the importance of building on their native language as they develop English language proficiency, educational policies have viewed ELLs from a deficit perspective and increasingly demanded English alone to be used in their education (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Those conflicts result in misconceptions about the relationship between bilingual education and educational failure (Lawton, 2008). As a result, educational inequities are perpetuated in the education of ELLs.

To date, thirty-one states have passed English-only laws (U.S. English, 2015) and have mandated English to be the only instructional language in public schools. English-only laws are shaping the education of ELLs. Bilingual education programs were completely eliminated in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts and replaced by English immersion programs (Berliner & Glass, 2014). All public schools are required to conduct instruction in English. ELLs are taught overwhelmingly in English through sheltered English immersion and then transferred to a mainstream English-language classroom. Ironically, no evidence shows that statewide English-only initiatives improve learning outcomes of ELLs (Parrish, Merickel, Perez, et al., 2006). When ELLs do not receive

comprehensible input and additional support, they are excluded from learning in our educational system.

Because of the rise of ELL enrollment and the increase of linguistic and cultural diversity in urban schools, culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000) is promoted to use cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students for effective teaching and learning. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within lived experiences, “they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). From this perspective, the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups are incorporated into curriculum and instruction because they affect students’ dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning. Therefore, culturally responsive teachers relate teaching content to the histories and backgrounds of their students in various ways to legitimize what students already know and to keep students engaged in learning.

There is a high concentration of ELLs enrolled in large urban schools that are serving predominantly minority student populations. Urban schools in the United States are characterized by large enrollments and complexity resulting from political, social, economic, and cultural factors. Schools in urban areas are more likely to serve diverse student populations representing racial and ethnic minorities, multiple languages, and high concentrations of poverty. Besides, urban schools face issues of drug and alcohol abuse, gang and street violence, and crime in the surrounding communities (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Therefore, students in urban systems need more resources and support

to assure their learning as they represent different cultures, ethnicities, and socio-economic groups.

Since the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the educational reform movement in the United States has increasingly focused on raising standards and accountability for schools. Rigorous and measurable standards have been developed to ensure high student performance and close the minority-majority achievement gap. However, the accountability system does not close the gap or improve student achievement (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Instead, a focus on standardization narrows the curriculum and limits teachers' autonomy in instructional planning (Berliner & Glass, 2014). Besides, when a curriculum is standardized, urban students who are suffering from the effects of poverty, discrimination, or other problems are more likely to fail, quit, and drop out of schools without receiving specific pedagogical help or additional supportive interventions (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Therefore, teachers should have curricular freedom to address the needs of their students from socioeconomically, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Since the enactment of NCLB in 2001, standards-based and test-based accountability has dominated the field of education. High-stakes testing is used to improve the quality of education with a system of rewards and sanctions for students' academic performance. It turns out that students are flunked, teachers are fired, and schools are shut down, but little change is found in the achievement gap (Berliner & Glass, 2014). Using a single indicator of competence to make decisions about individuals or schools is inappropriate. A test score says little about a student's overall achievement. Those test scores are incapable of capturing the realities of classroom life. Especially in

urban settings, test scores are influenced by the realities of family affection, income and hardship, neighborhood crime rates, after-school facilities, and so on (Berliner, 2013). The failure to meet the needs of particular students, as well as the overemphasis on high-stakes testing linked to accountability, increases disengagement and dropouts among urban students.

A worthy discussion about curriculum and instruction cannot be generated without understanding the complex context in which urban education takes place. Teachers need to understand a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge about the urban context to gain insight into educational policies, urban pedagogy, and the lives of children living in densely populated urban settings (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). To close the disparity between the academic world and the real world, teachers have to take into account the unique situations and special needs of particular urban students as well as relating curriculum and instruction to the histories and backgrounds of urban students. Hence, the development of curriculum and instruction draws on the strengths of urban students, rather than being involved in the right-wing discourse of minority student incompetence.

The rapid increase of ELLs in the United States and the continued lack of academic achievement of ELLs indicate that professional development should be provided to help teachers improve student outcomes and narrow the achievement gap for ELLs. Teachers play vital roles in constructing and enacting ESL curriculum and instruction, but most ELLs are taught by teachers who do not receive adequate training and support (Téllez & Waxman, 2006). Since teachers lack the knowledge and skills to work with ELLs, professional development should be designed and implemented to

address the needs of teachers who are serving ELLs. Because of the lack of research on ESL teachers' knowledge and teaching practices along with professional development, this study explores ESL teachers' experiences of professional development regarding the challenges and the support, the changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practices, and the features of the social, political, and cultural context in ESL teachers' professional development experiences.

Significance of the Study

In order to improve the education of ELLs, professional development is a necessary approach for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills and be prepared to meet the language and academic needs of ELLs (Vogt, 2009). Teacher educators and consultants are dedicated to creating professional development programs for teachers of ELLs. The extent to which these programs meet teachers' needs and the extent to which teachers absorb knowledge from these programs and apply it to their teaching practices are questions worth investigating by navigating teachers' experiences of professional development. Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to explore ESL teachers' learning processes and outcomes related to formal and informal professional development. By reflecting on ESL teachers' professional development experiences and narrating ESL teachers' educational practices through their stories, this study is intended to provide teacher educators and consultants with practical considerations in professional development design and enactment.

ESL teachers need to learn how to give ESL instruction to enhance academic achievement of ELLs. Thus, professional development programs should be provided to prepare teachers to serve the linguistically and culturally diverse student population.

Thus, this study investigates how and what ESL teachers learn through the passage of professional development, as well as how contextual factors shape their learning. Qualitative research is needed to truly understand ESL teachers' experiences of professional development through thick and rich descriptions and from teachers' viewpoints. Teacher quality is one of the factors that influence student academic achievement. However, the connection between teacher learning from professional development and teacher change in knowledge and practice is not well understood. There is a need for an in-depth exploration of ESL teachers' perspectives of the connections between professional development experiences and changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practices. This study provides a deeper understanding of ESL teachers' professional development experiences and how these experiences influence teacher knowledge and teaching practices. Through this research, teachers' voices shed light on how to construct positive professional development experiences in order to stimulate professional growth.

Research Questions

In this research, I explore ESL teachers' teacher knowledge and teacher change in the process of professional development by conducting a narrative inquiry. The preliminary research question is: What are ESL teachers' experiences in professional development? The following questions guiding the investigation are:

- What challenges do ESL teachers encounter and what support do they receive while serving English language learners?
- What are the changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practices that occur through professional development?
- What features of the social, cultural, and political context are significant in ESL teachers' professional development experiences?

In the pursuit of creating meaningful professional development experiences for ESL teachers, this study conducts narrative inquiry as a navigational tool (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007) that allows us to capture and characterize ESL teachers' personal practical knowledge in action.

Theoretical Framework

There are five theoretical pillars on which this study relies. First, to investigate teachers' experiences of professional development, Dewey's (1938) theory of experience is fundamental to the study. Second, Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of teaching and educational thinking give the study a life space in which to navigate. In the inquiry of professional development, my study examines interrelated components including teacher educators as the teacher, ESL teachers as the learner, ESL instruction as the subject matter, and the socio-cultural milieu to provide holistic view of educational thinking. Third, Connelly and Clandinin's (2000) concepts of personal practical knowledge triggered the study to explore teachers' professional development experiences. Reflecting on professional development programs that prepare teachers through theoretical practices, this study explores how teachers incorporate what they learn in their curriculum practices. Fourth, because teachers are viewed as knowledgeable and knowing persons, the view of teachers as curriculum makers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) is also an important underpinning. Fifth, to understand teachers' learning and teaching practices, adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) is additionally vital.

The most important focus of the study, of course, is professional development for teachers of ELLs. It includes types of professional development experiences being offered to teachers, barriers uncounted and support received through professional

development, changes in incorporating knowledge and skills gained from professional development experiences into teaching practices. Based on the work of scholars like Dewey, Schwab, Connelly, Clandinin, Craig, to name a few, the study explores ESL teachers' professional development experiences in a dialogic approach.

The Power of Terms

What does it mean to be an English language learner? What association do we make with the term, English language learner? Why do we believe this phrase become the “preferred” term? The federal government defines a limited English proficiency or an English language learner as an individual who is 3 to 21 years of age, enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school, often born outside of the United States or speaking in a language other than English in their homes, and not having sufficient mastery of English to meet state standards, excel in an English-language classroom, or participate fully in society (NCLB, Sec. 9101, (25)).

Despite the differences among ELLs, García, Kleifgen, and Falchi (2008) elucidate the ethnolinguistic and social characteristics of ELLs. Most ELLs are Spanish-speaking Latinos (75-79%). Most are poor (75%). Most live in households in which no one over the age of 14 is a speaker of English (80%). Most live in urban areas (91%). Half live with parents who have not completed eight years of schooling. Half were born in the United States. Although approximately half are in elementary schools, the greatest increase of the ELL population is in high-school-aged students. Lastly, there is a lack of early childhood programs for ELLs, and few are enrolled in school prior to kindergarten.

With these general characteristics in mind, what name can best describe these students? A number of terms have been used to refer to students speaking in a language

other than English and acquiring English in school, including limited English proficient students, English language learners, non-native English speakers, children with English language communication barriers, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, language minority students, subtractive bilinguals, bilingual students, and so on. Each label is attached with different connotations and problems.

Federal documents, educational agencies, and legislation use the term limited English proficient student, but it focuses on the students' limitations rather than their potential. English as a Second Language student refers to a subject and not to people. Besides, it does not encompass students for whom English is a third or fourth language. Both terms culturally and linguistically diverse student and language minority student can include students who are already bilingual, while the latter may better offer a legal basis for their rights and accommodations. The term emergent bilingual is proposed to emphasize the students' potential in developing their bilingualism.

In this study, I use the term, English language learner (ELL), because it seems to be the most inclusive label, while acknowledging the fact that these students are engaged in learning English in school. Although it is the commonly accepted term in discussion of this population, I have to be aware of its possible implication of devaluing other languages and putting the English language in a sole position of legitimacy. Words have incredible power to greatly influence our perceptions of people and programs. We do not want to impose negative meanings to those terms and label our kids as limited or subtractive learners. Therefore, it is very important to be conscious of the power of the

language and the terminology we use as we engage in discussions concerning cultural and linguistic diversity.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to explore ESL teachers' professional development experiences. In this chapter, I first investigate professional development for ESL teachers, including practice of, and research on, ESL teachers' professional development. Then, I adopt Dewey's (1938) theory of experience as a theoretical foundation to research on experience. In addition, Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of teaching and educational thinking provide a framework of curriculum making to investigate ESL teachers' experiences of professional development. Drawing attentions on teacher knowledge, Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) notion of personal practical knowledge triggers this study to explore teachers' educational and practical experiences in the process of professional development. In order to understand teachers' learning and teaching practices, adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) is also under investigation. The last but not the least, I examine the view of teachers as curriculum makers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) that values teachers' voices and sheds light on applying narrative inquiry to navigate ESL teachers' professional development experiences in this study.

Professional Development for ESL Teachers

Professional development is an essential aspect of educational life of teachers. It is also a necessary component of educational reform efforts. Professional development initiatives have been undertaken by various groups, with competing interests, and in diverse formats. Teacher professional development opportunities and their effectiveness have been studied substantively since the late 1970s (Ponder, Maher, & Adams, 2010). Professional development has been defined by Thomas Guskev (2000) as "processes and

activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (p. 16). According to Guskey, three important factors that influence the quality of professional development are: context, process, and content. Additionally, research has shown that professional development is most effective when it is long-term, collaborative, and school-based (Hunzicker, 2011). Professional development programs should be linked to teachers’ daily school practices and connected to teachers’ prior knowledge. Adjusting professional development programs to teachers’ diversity of behaviors and beliefs increases their effectiveness.

The perspectives of teacher professional development have changed from a deficit model to a growth or capacity building model as the knowledge base related to teacher professional development began to change in the 1980s (Ponder, Maher, & Adams, 2010). The typical format consisted of one-shot workshops, university courses, or guest lectures without considering teacher input or consultation often results in disconnection from the work of teachers. Teachers fail to transfer knowledge and skills gained from professional development into their classrooms. Therefore, Ponder, Maher, and Adams (2010) proposed seven major models of professional development include training, observation/assessment, involvement in a development/Improvement process, study groups, inquiry/action research, individually guided activities, and mentoring.

Professional development emerges from a process of reshaping teachers’ existing knowledge, belief, and practices, rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted that researchers need new ways of relating to professional life in schools and viewed restorying experiences as

essential to teachers' personal and professional growth. The particularity of teachers' experiences and the importance of reflection on and inquiry into those experiences are taken as a mechanism for change in teachers' knowledge and teaching practices.

Narrative inquiry becomes a means to capture and describe experiences as they occur in the midst of teachers' lived experiences, to look inward, outward, backward, and forward at teachers' experiences in order to capture their temporal nature and their personal and social dimensions, and to see them as situated within the places or sequences of places in which they occur and from which they emerge. By creating a new sense of meaning and significance for teachers' experiences, teachers' voices are validated through the collaborations and narrative interpretation of researchers. Narrative has been placed center stage in teacher education, as well as in professional development, as both a method in and an object of inquiry.

Research that focuses on professional development for teachers of ELLs is rare. Knight and Wiseman (2006) conducted a research synthesis on professional development and culturally and linguistically diverse students. Among 19 studies, they found 8 studies dealing with professional development for specific programs and/or using specific instructional programs. Only 2 studies addressed professional development for multicultural or culturally relevant instruction. They located 9 studies investigating professional development through learning communities engaged in inquiry. These were mostly qualitative case studies that showed improvements in student learning and increases in teacher professionalism. They concluded that although some professional development models included best practices and research-based instructional programs, these studies in general provided little guidance on how to provide teachers the necessary

knowledge and skills. Besides, these studies did not show the impact of the various professional development activities on teachers' teaching practices or students' learning outcomes. As Knight and Wiseman (2006) point out, "clearly, professional development for teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse student is a neglected area of research" (p. 89).

Fillmore and Snow (2002) advocated the need for teachers of ELLs to be familiar with linguistics knowledge in general and knowledge of second language acquisition in particular. By acknowledging the value of second language acquisition, Johnson (2006) focused on how teachers make sense of second language acquisition in their professional lives and the settings where they work with ELLs. Tarone and Allright (2005) also emphasized that second language acquisition is relevant to teachers when teachers can challenge their knowledge and beliefs about their students' language learning. Since language cannot be separated from culture, when students are learning a language, they are inevitably exposed to a different way of seeing the world (Rogoff, 2003). Teachers of ELLs have to be aware of their responsibility to navigate the cultures representing ELLs. They are required to gain knowledge of the particular cultural practices in which students and their families engage, as well as the familiarity with particular communities in which both teachers and students are involved. In that way, teachers are able to help students negotiate cultural differences between home and school.

In the view of acquiring specific knowledge and particular teaching strategies as effective teacher training, Sheltered Instruction and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) have become the basis of professional development for teachers of ELLs (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). Based on findings of empirical research, Sheltered

Instruction is promoted an instructional approach to incorporate specialized strategies and techniques in an attempt to increase academic achievement of ELLs. The purpose of Sheltered Instruction is to close the achievement gap between native English Speakers and ELLs. On the other hand, the SIOP model is developed to ensure that Sheltered Instruction is implemented consistently across classroom by evaluating the extent to which particular teaching practices are consistent with the principles of Sheltered Instruction. Through the SIOP model, teachers of ELLs are trained to distribute a lesson-planning guide and evaluate the classroom implementation based on the principles of the model to ensure systematic language development among ELLs.

Didactic professional development focusing on delivering content and evaluating instruction fails to understand and support authentic professional learning among teachers (Webster-Wright, 2009). The most productive professional development is characterized by a collaborative method (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004), an interactive approach (Greenberg, 2001), and a teacher-centered process (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004). Effective professional development resides in teachers collaboratively engaging with one another and building a teacher network to help discuss problems in their classrooms. Teachers are involved in the planning and development of professional development that is relevant to classroom instruction to promote continuous teacher learning process. Hence, teachers should take active roles and continuously engage in the professional development process to nourish the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a job-embedded and learner-centered approach.

Research provides insights into ways of incorporating innovative instruction, cultural relevancy, and equitable power relations into professional development programs

at school sites through paying attention to the following essential elements: (a) high expectations and engaging programs with demanding curricula for all teachers; (b) focus on research-based instruction programs; (c) learning communities that provide opportunities for teachers to carry out innovations; (d) knowledge and value of other teachers, their students, their families, and their communities to promote cultural empowerment; and (e) self-assessment by teachers through their creation of a personal improvement (Clair & Adger, 2010; Menken & Look, 2000; Walqui, 2006).

In recent years, school districts nationwide have initiated professional development programs for ESL teachers. Four models of professional development for ESL teachers have been outlined by Crandall (1993): the craft or mentoring model, the applied science or theory to practice model, inquiry or reflective practice model, and a combination of all three models. The craft or mentoring model focuses on collaboration with a master teacher including lesson plan development, peer observation, and reflective practice. The applied science or theory to practice model includes video training, discussion of objectives, teaching principles, modeling of the technique, analysis, application, and follow-up. Inquiry or reflective practice models involve teachers and often others (researchers or administrators) in all phases of action research. The fourth model is a combination of all three models in one setting, integrating theory and practice to enhance professional development. Successful professional development programs concentrate on aspects of professional growth that are relevant for the particular instructors in the institutional, sociocultural, and political context in which they teach (Abbott & Rossiter, 2011). Therefore, a program with a range of teachers from novice to expert must adopt a professional development model that is flexible enough to address

the professional development goals of instructors at varying stages of professional development.

As to the required knowledge and skills for ESL teachers cultivated through professional development, Téllez and Waxman (2005) pointed out that school systems must augment teachers' knowledge of ELL instruction through extensive professional development opportunities that span many years. Teachers of ELLs must have a strong understanding of language acquisition and of the concept of communicative competence and know how language function forms the basis for ELL instruction. They must be content area experts as well as language teachers, able to restate questions, paraphrase concepts, and summarize key ideas in English. As teachers of immigrant students, they must understand the processes of cultural growth and adaptation. Teachers of ELLs must also be experts in the development of curriculum, the proper use of a range of assessment strategies, and technology. Finally, they must have a keen knowledge of classroom, school, and community contexts, and be willing to act as advocates for ELLs.

There is a dearth of research in the literature on professional development for ESL teachers. Several articles in the literature describe specific professional development programs. Eun and Heining-Boynton (2007) investigated the impact of professional development programs for ESL teachers on their classroom practice and on the way that teacher efficacy and organizational support at the school level. They collected data by using questionnaires administered to 90 elementary and secondary teachers participating in ESL training programs. Results indicated that teacher efficacy and organizational support significantly predict level of professional development impact without interacting with years of teaching experience.

Abbott and Rossiter (2011) reported perceived professional development needs, interests, and challenges of ESL instructors in rural Alberta from the perspectives of instructors and administrators. The findings highlighted the importance of professional development designed to meet the specific needs of rural instructors and to facilitate effective ESL teaching and learning in their communities. They offered recommendations for designing professional development for ESL programs.

The findings of Nugent's (2007) study revealed that teachers value professional development experiences that improve their teaching strategies and offer relevant and practical knowledge. To be successful, teachers believe that they need more time to conduct ongoing informal dialogue with colleagues while applying new learning. In addition to support from colleagues, teachers benefit from the additional assistance provided by internal coaches. Teachers experience barriers related to lack of time and sense of ownership, preconceived notions, insufficient training, and management of noncompliant student behaviors.

He, Prater, and Steed (2011) described their effort to design and deliver professional development sessions based on key features of effective professional development to facilitate teachers to move beyond 'just good teaching' because that is not enough. In addition, they examined the impact of the professional development on teachers and the ELLs in a school district. The participants of the study were 22 teachers from one school district in the U.S. who participated in the 46 hours of professional development sessions over the course of one year. Findings indicated that the research-based, needs-oriented professional development provided teachers with useful strategies and resources. The performance data of the ELLs also demonstrated the effectiveness and

impact of the professional development. Implications were drawn to further enhance the collaboration between university and school districts, and between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers for the achievement of ELLs.

Franco-Fuenmayor (2013) conducted two research studies by using a mixed-methods approach to examine dual language, bilingual, and ESL teachers' knowledge, professional development experiences, and perceptions about second language programs in Texas. The first study was conducted with 225 bilingual and ESL teachers in a large suburban school district. It examined bilingual and ESL teachers' knowledge of research on bilingual programs, instructional issues for ELLs, general instructional strategies, and second language development among bilingual/ESL teachers who work in different language programs. Also, the study considered the professional development opportunities provided to teachers of ELLs. In addition, it examined teachers' perceptions about administrators, program implementation, program features, school and community, and adequate training along with the degree of program satisfaction.

The second study included 335 dual language and ESL teachers from 40 school districts in Texas. It investigated whether the program of instruction, grade level, years of experience, types of route to certification, and feeling of pre-service teacher preparation made a difference on dual language and ESL teachers' knowledge and perceptions of second language programs. It also focused on the type of professional development that teachers receive and program strengths and challenges. Findings from both studies indicated significant differences in regards to teachers' knowledge and perceptions based on a number of variables examined. There were similarities and differences in regards to professional development experiences, program strengths and challenges. Besides, a large

number of teachers of ELLs are not receiving adequate training and that bilingual and dual language teachers know more than ESL teachers about research on bilingual programs and second language development.

Johnston, Pawan, and Mahan-Taylor (2005) conducted a pilot study on the professional development of working English as a second language and/or English as a foreign language (ESL/EFL) teachers after graduation from a US master's program. The pilot study followed the thrust of much recent research in teacher education in seeking to portray teacher knowledge not as an isolated set of cognitive abilities but as fundamentally linked to matters such as teacher identity and teacher development. In this study, teacher knowledge is seen in relation to teachers' lives and the contexts in which they work. Four clear focuses are identified in the literature: teacher identity, teacher life stories, professional development, and teacher beliefs and knowledge. Each of these focuses is related to the others and taken together they comprised a detailed picture of the professional development of ESL teachers. Besides, the entire ESL teacher's professional development is permeated with the particular qualities and characteristics of the socio-cultural and socio-political environment or environments in which it takes place.

Multiculturalism has been taken as an essential educational issue, especially on the Houston landscape. Teachers acknowledge diversity by engaging students in learning about their home cultures and languages. The work of Chan (2006) revealed that the inclusion of culture in the curriculum helps to develop positive attitudes among racial and ethnic minorities. Even though teachers attempt to acknowledge the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of their students in the curriculum and teaching practices, they encounter challenges as diverse beliefs and values intersect and even differ significantly

from their own. Values and cultures are deeply rooted in life. They shape the way individuals view and respond to the world, impact how people make choices, and influence the nature of behaviors. Besides, values and cultures vary between individuals. Teachers, students, their families, and members of school community hold their own unique set of values and bring with them to the school milieu.

Although teachers are faced with challenges of acknowledging diverse cultures, teachers need to create opportunities for exposure to, and interaction with, individuals of diverse background. In a culturally sensitive curriculum, teachers should address potentially sensitive issues, such as racism, gender equality, cultural values, etc. In order to encourage cultural awareness, teachers could invite students to share aspects of their own cultures and encourage them to learn about the cultures of their peers. Most important of all, teachers must be alert to their own perceptions to ensure they are delivering instruction without prejudice, discrimination, or bias.

In the closing statement, Chan (2006) emphasized that “we have the expectation that children of ethnic minority background need to ‘adapt’ to ‘our’ school communities, but we may overlook that, as a host country for immigrants, we also need to explore the extent to which this relationship may be reciprocal” (p. 173). In other words, teachers need to explore ways of accommodating for diverse cultures in ways that are respectful to the differences. Instead of solely prescribe to mainstream ways of knowing, teachers make authentic knowledge about different ethnic groups accessible to students. Multicultural education guides students in understanding that no single version of “truth” is total and permanent.

All in all, the public live in cover stories of believing that schools meet the needs of a culturally-diverse student population by carrying out educational policies. However, the secret stories of what is actually lived on the school landscape and in classrooms are often not presented or explored. In this work, Chan (2006) explored the ways in which diverse beliefs and values intersected as the teachers implemented the event of a field trip in a narrative inquiry approach. These secret stories recognize that the process of acknowledging culture in the curriculum is complicated. Sensitivity to such stories allows teachers to explore their role in facilitating the acculturation of individuals of ethnic-minority background.

Pedrana (2009), as a teacher educator, tried to make sense of how the experiences of Latino bilingual teachers, who work with Latino students, influence their practice. In the course of “Foundations of Bilingual/ESL Education,” she guided the student teachers to negotiate the roles, responsibilities, rules, and perspectives attached to being bilingual education teachers. She proposed that “we must, as teacher educators, begin to comprehend that teacher candidates must be able to use personal practical knowledge about language and culture— teaching and learning from as many perspectives as possible (p. 188),” so that these teachers will be better equipped to guide their students in navigating their cultures and languages. “Experiences directly influence who we are and what we do as teachers” (p. 175). Thus, understanding how personal experiences are interweaved into teaching philosophy and practice is critical to engage ESL teachers in professional growth. Narrative inquiry is undertaken to explore, personally and professionally, ESL teachers’ experiences of navigating languages and cultures that ELLs bring into the classrooms.

Language can never be neutral because it necessarily imposes a point of view in which things are viewed and a stance toward what we view (Bruner, 1986). Neither can culture be neutral because it accompanies with beliefs and values that affect how people perceive the world and influence the nature of behaviors. In the era of globalization, school becomes a place with linguistic and cultural diversity where multiple identities, beliefs, and values encounter. In this diverse learning environment, who has been oppressed and whose voices get heard are concerned by educators. When immigrant students bring their languages and cultures to the classroom, it is a challenge for ESL teachers to find equilibrium between languages and cultures.

This tentative research seeks to understand what meaning-making emerges from being a Latino teacher working with Latino children in bilingual education contexts. A major element in this work is actively looking back into previous experiences to connect with the memories that Latino teachers hold within so as to better understand what compels them to do what they do. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquirers are able to move inward and outward, backward and forward, and always located in place to examine participants' lived stories. In this work, looking backward into personal experiences is essential to help Latino teachers make sense of who they are and what they do, but there is much more to explore in this research. Narrative inquirers could address both personal and social issues by looking inward and outward, present temporal issues by looking not only to the event but to its past and to its future, and define the physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes.

In this work, one of the Latino teacher candidates used to be opposed to bilingual education, and another found bilingual classes confusing to him. That leads me to wonder

-- What is the value of bilingual education to Latino students? The other Latino teacher candidate reflected on his suffering from an identity crisis in his adolescence when he was “Americanized” and rejected his roots. That manifests the importance of bilingual education for students to learn their culture and appreciate their roots. Realizing learning is painful for students who come from other countries and English is not their primary language, the Latino teacher candidates committed to make sure that students receive a fair opportunity to get a high-quality education they deserve.

This work reveals conflicts and struggle that Latino teachers and Latino students undergo in bilingual education context through reflective practices. When I retrospect to my experiences of learning and teaching English in Taiwan, my students and I never encountered any cultural identity problems. For most citizens in Taiwan, Mandarin is their mother tongue. It is the primary and official language that has been used in daily life. Although English has become a compulsory subject at the elementary level, English is still learned as a foreign language in Taiwan. English, as a language to express viewpoints and as a medium to convey western culture, is not permeating every area of life yet, so students are familiar with Chinese culture and possessed of eastern culture roots. However, cultural identity problems may occur in English immersion schools where eastern and western cultures intersect. Thanks to this work, I got a chance to look into the narrative, that is, “Latino teacher candidates are juxtaposed between two languages and two cultures, which can become one more of the many epistemological dilemmas as teachers” (p. 175). That reminds me to be sensitive of epistemological dilemmas when I conduct my research on ESL teachers who work with linguistically and culturally diverse ELLs.

Concerning about educational reforms in China, Xu and Connelly (2009) wrote a practical-theoretical paper by employing a narrative inquiry approach to EFL teacher education and development based on China's educational reform context, theory of teacher knowledge, Joseph Schwab (1970, 1971, 1973, 1983) and his ideas on the "practical" nature of curriculum, and John Dewey (1938) and his theory of experience. The purpose of this article was to understand the consequences and possibilities of applying narrative inquiry to EFL teacher education and development in China. They advocated the application of narrative inquiry for curriculum researchers to think about phenomena as a life space consisting of the dimensions of time, the personal-social, and place. Building on the existing educational system, ongoing school reforms, and culturally establish ways of knowing and being in China, the paper discussed a set of considerations for taking a narrative approach to EFL teacher education and development. The authors concluded with the potential of teacher development to shape global values that may be shared among cultures.

The authors pointed out that teacher education and development plays a pivotal role in educational reform, and it is the key to successful curriculum development. Narrative inquiry is developed as a way of thinking about teacher education and development in settings where China's curriculum reform policy is facing with internationalization and globalization of education. Each country has its own culture from which generating traditional practices and local knowledge. To avoid separating education from life by adopting western ideas in other culture, they presented a narrative inquiry approach to teacher development to narratively link development programs to its local education system and to its culturally established ways of knowing and being.

Because of the overemphasis and overuse of theory, teacher education and development are treated as the application of theories. Thus, research should begin amidst actual practices, that is, studying the actual experience of practice rather than an idealized form of theoretically defined practice.

In denying that teachers merely transmit curriculum content with minimal modification, the authors regarded teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons and value teachers' personal practical knowledge that is central to both the understanding of teacher actions and the design of teacher development programs. Teachers' personal practical knowledge derives from the totality of personal experience in their past experience, in their present mind and body, and in their future plans and actions to guide their teaching practices. Teachers are holistically known as persons who carry cultural and social qualities originating from their personal lives into teaching and learning. The best way to understand teachers' personal practical knowledge is to narrate their own stories of teaching. Thus, narrative inquiry is suggested to observe the narrative knowledge that shape and inform teachers' practical life. Learning how teachers experience and narrate the teaching act can not only bridge the gap between educational theory and curriculum practice, but also facilitate teacher educators and consultants in designing and implementing EFL teacher education and development.

It is hard to understand language when it is set apart from the context. As an instrument for communication, language conveys culture in the narrative. Both language and culture generate from daily life in which human beings interact personally and socially. To obtain profound understanding of language, culture plays an important role in ESL teaching and learning. In realizing the quality of language learning, professional

development is narrative community development that increases the possibilities at the intersection of ways of knowing and being in the global sense. Language and culture are closely intertwined and the meaningful learning of a language constitutes the learning of a culture. In the process of professional development, ESL teachers mutually learn in the context of local and global community in which different ways of knowing and being come together in language teaching and learning. Therefore, a narrative approach to ESL teachers' professional development helps shape global values twisted by cultures.

As mentioned earlier in this study, there is little reported research on professional development for ESL teachers. More empirical research in the area of professional development experiences of ESL teachers is needed. As a result of limited literature available on the subject of professional development for ESL teachers, this research focuses on ESL teachers' experiences of professional development by employing an empirical approach to explore the challenges and support that ESL teachers encountered, the changes in ESL teachers' teacher knowledge and teaching practices, and the features of social, political, and cultural context in the passage of professional development.

Dewey's Theory of Experience

The fundamental basis of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience is that there is an "organic connection between education and personal experience" (p. 25). However, not all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. He proposed the principle of the continuity of experience as a criterion by which to discriminate between educative experiences and mis-educative experiences. Present experiences that are worthwhile educationally will live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences and promote having desirable future experiences. For Dewey, "the two principles of continuity and

interaction are not separate from one another. They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience” (p. 44). Thus, education is essentially a social process. Any normal experience is interplay between objective conditions and internal conditions. Therefore, education must be based upon experience, and educative experience is seen to be a social process. The principles of continuity and of interaction provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience.

According to Dewey (1938), education, experience, and life should be understood as a whole, not as a combination of parts. Experience has to do with continuity because all experiences make us like or dislike something, or guide our actions to reach certain goals. These experiences influence our next new experiences. The value of an experience depends on the direction it takes and the goal it is moving toward. For Dewey, “the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 35). In this sense, an experience is associated with time. The connections among the past, the present, and the future are shaping experience. In order to understand and make sense of the event or experience, we have to look back on what was going on in terms of the present experience, and based on this understanding, we can reasonably predict what the experience will be in the future.

A meaningful experience occurs when we engage in reflection to solve a current problem. The most important part for problem solving is not just finding solutions but having the motivation to solve the problem. In experience, there is a relationship between reflection and action. A problem is emerged and thinking is employed to examine the

situation in the action. It also includes a relationship between the action and the environment in order to make progress. The process is called an interaction as “the interaction assigns equal rights to both factors in experience-objective and internal conditions” (p. 42). Experience exists because there are objects outside of the individual and interaction between the objects and internal conditions.

Schwab’s Four Commonplaces of Teaching and Educational Thinking

Schwab attacked the ineffectual state of the curriculum field and critiqued its over-reliance on limiting theories. He claimed that the field of curriculum research “had become moribund because of an inveterate unexamined reliance on direct application of theories, especially from the social sciences” (Roby IV, 2013, p. 1). Thus, he proposed that the curriculum field must identify and solve its own practical problems to energize curricular debate. By applying problem-solving methods, he challenged educators to think through real problems on the spot, without slipping into vague generalities. He insisted that educators should keep pluralistic view to generate dynamic ideas, so that plausible solution would come from more than one perspective. The mission for an educator, just like a scientist, is to inquire the world instead of making scientific conclusions that are impermanent and changeable.

The commonplaces of education are interrelated curricular components encompassing learners, teachers, subject matter, milieu, and curriculum making. Scholars in curriculum studies have employed the educational commonplaces to guide the process of curriculum development and to create a structure of analysis for curriculum inquiry. Commonplaces are necessary to curriculum development because their use or neglect always affects curricular planning and execution. In the process of curriculum making,

experienced representatives of each component bring experience and wisdom to curriculum deliberation. These representatives must work with each other to ensure proper coordination among the commonplaces because changes in one have consequence for the others. Besides, any component should not dominate the others. Unbalanced domination by a single commonplace or by omitting some would lead to theory-based curricula or result in parochial concerns, such as child development, teacher needs, subject matter innovation, or social change.

Education has been viewed as a contested space, always a site of struggle over what constitutes an effective relationship between theory and practice. To bridge the theory-practice divide, Schwab proposed arts of the eclectic and employed polyfocal conspectus. He insisted that educational problems should be examined through multiple perspectives instead of a solitary theory because no single theory from the social sciences can explain or define the curricular basis for effective teaching. In order to formulate the problematic situation, educators should modify competing theories in the fluidity of discussion and particularize the educational commonplaces in an incremental, local, and ongoing process. As a result, “the problematic situation evolves into a situation of problems that develop in a spiral rather than a serial progression of connecting and testing problems with solutions” (Roby IV, 2010, p. 764).

Instead of applying theories directly from the social sciences, educators should identify real problems on the spot and solve practical problems through the problem-posing and problem-solving activities. Therefore, my research interest is to investigate problematic situations of professional development by inquiring into ESL teachers’ practice and experience. In an attempt to provide pluralistic viewpoints and generate

educational debate, my study not only analyzes theoretical pillars, but also conducts narrative inquiry to listen to ESL teachers' voices.

In the four commonplaces of teaching and educational thinking, the five bodies of experience which must be represented in the group which undertakes the task of curriculum revision are subject matter, learners, the milieus, teachers, and curriculum making. "Defensible educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of equal rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter" (Schwab, 1973, pp. 508-509). Coordination is the proper relation of these four commonplaces. Thus, the commonplaces must be coordinate in the planning of curriculum. Based on Schwab's four commonplaces of teaching and educational thinking, this study interests primarily in the specific contexts of teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse students in ESL classrooms.

The concept of the educational commonplaces creates a structure for my study to navigate ESL teachers' experiences in the process of professional development. In the inquiry of professional development, my study examines interrelated components including teacher educators (teachers), ESL teachers (learners), ESL instruction (subject matter), and the social/cultural milieu to consider how the collective scholarship deals with a problematic situation. The specialists of each component work as a collaborative group and coordinate properly without unbalanced domination in order to provide a holistic view of educational thinking and formulate ESL teachers' professional development.

Connelly and Clandinin's Conceptualization of Personal Practical Knowledge

Being aware of the discrepancy between curriculum theory and curriculum practice, Connelly (2009) is dedicated to studies of teachers' personal practical knowledge to observe the narrative knowledge that shapes and informs their daily life. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1988), teacher's "personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any one teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation" (p. 25). Teachers' personal practical knowledge derives from the totality of personal experience in their past experience, in their present mind and body, and in their future plans and actions to guide their teaching practices. Besides, teachers' personal practical knowledge can best be understood through their own stories of teaching, which preserve both the teachers' voice and perspective. Thus, studies of teachers' personal practical knowledge focus on how teachers experience their practical life, not on how they say they experience it in interview studies. Generated from the notion of teachers' practical knowledge, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) promote the view of teachers as curriculum planners and develop the idea of narrative inquiry. Moreover, Craig's (2003, 2006) series of school-based work presents the relationship of teacher knowledge to school reform.

Personal practical knowledge is understood as tacit, implicit, and fluid, rather than static or fixed. It is consisted of "habits, cultural practices, beliefs, and rituals that are so taken for granted in a person's daily life that they remain opaque" (Salvio, 2010, p. 640). Consequently, personal practical knowledge is not passed on through explicit instructions or in formal settings; however, it is shaped by "one's social position, emotional life, politics, institutional demands, conscious and unconscious desires, tastes, and aesthetics"

(Salvio, 2010, p. 640). Personal practical knowledge is also characterized as a form of situated knowledge that is derived from practice and situated in the work of practice.

In curriculum studies, personal practical knowledge has been used to account for “tacit knowledge” that influences teachers’ practical action in the classroom. Research studies in personal practical knowledge “have explored how experienced teachers make decisions about teaching in the classroom based on practical experiences cultivated during their careers” (Salvio, 2010, p. 640). Thus, personal practical knowledge has broad relevance for research in teacher education, autobiographical studies, curriculum theory, and professional development for teachers and administrators, including studies interested in “how teachers think,” “teacher lore,” and “teachers’ lives.”

Personal practical knowledge is constituted by a set of discourses to engage the tension between theory and practice and to illuminate the value of inquiry in education. Inquiry into personal practical knowledge involves practitioners and scholars in investigating educational problems under consideration of the social, political, and cultural context in educational experience. Therefore, studies in personal practical knowledge “reflect and elaborate on one’s educational and pedagogical experiences for the purpose of provoking deeper insights and understandings into education in and out of school” (Salvio, 2010, p. 640).

The notion of personal practical knowledge enlightens my research in several ways. First, personal practical knowledge is situated in the work of practice, so it provides a broad space to study on ESL teachers’ educational and pedagogical experiences. Second, personal practical knowledge is related to research in teacher education, autobiographical studies, and professional development, so it allows a

narrative inquiry into ESL teachers' professional growth. Third, personal practical knowledge emphasizes the process of discourse and cherishes the value of inquiry in education, so it supports my research to adopt narrative inquiry as research methodology. Last but not least, personal practical knowledge involves practitioners and scholars in investigating educational problems under consideration of social condition, cultural surround, and political context, so it suggests a holistic and dynamic perspective through which my research understands ESL teachers' experiences cultivated during their careers.

Knowles' Adult Learning Theory

Since child learning is different from adult learning, andragogy becomes the new theory of adult learning (Knowles, 1968). Andragogy evolved with four assumptions: learning is self-directed, based on experience, socially influenced, and problem based (Knowles, 1980). Besides, motivations are internal, and adults need a reason to learn (Knowles, 1984). Therefore, adults need to be responsible for their decisions on education, draw upon their experiences to aid their learning, become oriented to the developmental tasks of their social roles, become internally motivated to learn subjects that can be applied immediately in problem solving, and need to know the reason for learning. In professional development programs, teachers are posited as adult learners who need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction. Also, teachers have a repertoire of experience that provides the basis for learning activities. Besides, teachers are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life. As a result, adult learning should be problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

Adult learning theory has been promoted in distinguishing the unique attributes of adult learners in order to incorporate the principles of adult learning in the design of professional development programs. Knowles (1972) stated that professional development programs should seek opportunities to incorporate the principles of adult learning theory into professional development activities in order to maximize adult learning process. Adult learners need to be self-directed. They display readiness to learn when they have a perceived need. They desire immediate application of knowledge. By understanding how teachers learn, professional development programs are able to provide teachers with learning opportunities that are self-directed, relevant to teachers' experiences, applicable to their work, and centered on collaborative learning. Therefore, quality professional development is designed with teacher input and embedded in the reality of schools and teachers' work. It fosters critical reflection and meaningful collaboration and affords teachers opportunities for personal and professional growth relating to human development, language, and culture.

Adult learning theory not only provides a framework for understanding how adult learners are different from younger learners, but also provide insight into implementing quality professional development programs to meet the needs of teachers at all phases of their careers. Trotter (2006) provided an overview of age and stage theory, cognitive development theory, functional theory, and how these theories can impact professional development programs. Age and stage theory points out that learning is continued throughout the life cycle. As individuals age, they become more reflective of their lives and of their careers. Thus, professional development programs must take into consideration of the practical knowledge of the educators. According to cognitive

development theory, the intellectual development of adults moves from concrete to abstract and from external to internal standards. Thus, programs of professional development should realize the different needs of targeted teachers to make the development more meaningful and transferable into the classroom. Functional theory distinguishes two traits in adult learners: the autonomy of direction of learning and the use of experience as a resource. Thus, adults prefer to plan their own educational paths, and chose educational topics and subjects that they could directly apply in their own classrooms. Consequently, being aware of adult learning theories will aid school districts in offering effective, sustainable professional development activities.

Connelly and Clandinin's View of Teachers as Curriculum Makers

In educational enterprise, images or metaphors are frequently used to describe roles for the teacher. A pervasive metaphor for the teacher in curriculum development and reform is the conduit metaphor (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). While implementing the curriculum, the teacher functions as a conduit transmitting propositional knowledge with prescribed methods to students. With the conduit metaphor, teachers are perceived as mediators between curriculum documents and student outcomes. Hence, the conduit metaphor conveys the disconnected relationship of teachers to curriculum. The teacher has come to be seen as separate from curriculum in the same way as the fields of curriculum and teaching have evolved separately (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). The lack of a curriculum-making role for teachers is evident in the curriculum reform movement.

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) asserted that “the distinction between curriculum and instruction is a distinction between ends and means” (p. 365). Curriculum and instruction are perceived as independent unity as teachers and teaching are means to

curriculum ends. Hence, curriculum is linked to subject matter, instead of classroom practice. Teachers and teaching mediate between the curriculum and students. Further, Clandinin and Connelly (1992) claimed that “designing curricula for teachers to implement for instructional purposes appears unreal, somewhat as if the cart were before the horse” (p. 365). They proposed that the technical means-ends language should be softened with personal and experiential terms.

As advocated by John Dewey (1938), means and ends are inextricably intertwined in curriculum development when the lived experiences of teachers and students in classrooms are taken into account. Curriculum should be taken as the course of one’s life, rather than merely the course of study. Teachers live out a curriculum alongside their students. Teachers do not transmit or implement a curriculum and objectives, but evoke desired experiences from their students in curriculum making. The teacher is an integral part of the curriculum constructed and enacted in classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). However, “the extremes of technical rationalism encroach on classroom practice, narrowing the space within which lived curriculum can be instantiated” (Craig & Ross, 2008, p. 296).

Technical rationalism is founded on the epistemology of positivism that frames the examination of teacher knowledge. In technical rationalism, knowledge is based on theoretical and propositional form of logic. Technical rationalism promotes a way to solve societal problems by applying scientific theory and technique and forms modern views of professionalism (Schön, 1983). Teaching is simply the technical mastery of a set of discrete procedures, achievement of which is readily manifested as a corresponding set

of discrete behaviors. In that way, technical rationalism splits knowledge and action. Theory and practice are perceived dualistically.

The field of education has been viewed as a contested space, always a site of struggle over what constitutes the relationship between theory and practice. Joseph Schwab (1969, 1971, 1973, 1983) diagnosed the field of curriculum as moribund and critiqued its reliance on theory over practice. His notion of “the practical” is based on the four bodies of experience (the teacher, the learner, the subject matter, and the milieu) represented in a collective group that undertakes the task of curriculum deliberation. For Schwab, the teacher is the agent of curriculum within a set of commonplaces. Teachers have to bring their experiences and wisdom to curriculum deliberation and work with experienced representatives of other components to ensure proper coordination among the commonplaces. Schwab’s “practical” and curriculum commonplaces repositions teacher agency at the center of curriculum development and provides reasons for teachers to become curriculum makers, rather than curriculum transmitters or implementers.

The centrality of Clandinin and Connelly’s narrative understanding of education is the conceptualization of teacher image (Craig, 2011). The image of teachers as curriculum planners (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) was first introduced and then referred as the teacher as curriculum maker image (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). The creation of the teacher as curriculum maker image is mainly influenced by John Dewey’s theory of experience and Joseph Schwab’s the practical and curriculum commonplaces, as well as emerging from Connelly and Clandinin’s programmatic research. As curriculum makers, teachers are viewed as knowers and doers in the educational enterprise. Teachers actively construct and enact curriculum alongside their students, rather than merely transmit and

implement curriculum as dictated by policy makers. The image of teachers as curriculum maker encloses the gap between curriculum and instruction and provides an alternate vision of the teaching profession.

Building on both Tyler's (1949) and Schwab's (1969, 1971, 1973, 1983) scholarship, Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (1992) created the teacher as curriculum maker image. Due to the distinction between the knower and the known, as well as the estrangement between curriculum and teaching, the image of teachers as curriculum makers is forged to acknowledge teachers as self-directed individuals and minded professionals who reconstruct meaning through reflection and bring curriculum alive through active interactions with students. Accordingly, curriculum is more than a planned document or a program of study. It is a course of life in which teachers and students live and engage as they interact with one another. The image of teacher as curriculum maker acknowledges the teacher as a holder, user, and producer of knowledge, rather than a transmitter or implementer of knowledge (Craig, 2010).

In contrast with the image of teachers as curriculum implementers, teachers are situated at the intersection where teaching and learning encounter and at the centrality of educational commonplaces in curriculum deliberation. Teachers are not viewed as implementers to install a stated curriculum package and not taken as mediators between curriculum documents and student outcomes. Instead, teachers play a pivotal role in selecting learning experiences, planning educative activities, and constructing mutual interactions with students. The image of teacher as curriculum maker is derived from the notion of teachers' personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that embraces the epistemological stance of teachers as knowers (Craig & Ross, 2008).

Teachers' personal practical knowledge is emerged from a view of teachers as active agents, underpinning the image of teachers as curriculum makers. As described by Connelly and Clandinin (1988), a teacher's "personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any one teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation" (p. 25). Teachers do not come to their instructional tasks with a fixed knowledge base. They will develop a new understanding of teaching during instruction based on their previous experiences and their intentions of the future. Therefore, personal practical knowledge is emerging from the narrative continuities of teachers' lives. The experiential image closely connects to teacher knowledge and provides an alternate insight into teacher knowledge.

Chapter III

Methodology

This study employs narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as a method to uncover ESL teachers' stories related to professional development. Narrative inquiry is applied to examine professional development experiences of ESL teachers, changes in their teacher knowledge and teaching practices, and influences of the social, cultural, and political context on their experiences. Narrative inquiry is a human experience method (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) to examine how teachers come to know in their own words. As described by Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin (1990), narrative inquiry is "a study of the ways humans experience the world," based on the theory that "humans are storytelling organisms, who individually and socially, lead storied lives" (p. 2). Further, narrative inquiry "is a collaborative document; a mutually constructed story created out of the lives of both researcher and participant" (p. 12). Therefore, narrative inquiry is the lens by which ESL teachers live out their narratives and the researcher captures their storied knowledge. This study is presented in a way of telling stories of lived experiences held by ESL teachers who are seeking professional growth while interacting with ELLs in the urban context.

Narrative Inquiry

To clarify the meaning of narrative inquiry, they state that "It is equally correct to say 'inquiry into narrative' as it is 'narrative inquiry.' By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). That is, narrative is both phenomenon under study and method of study. Narrative

inquiry is an approach to study the ways people create meaning of their lives as narratives. Because of its focus on human experience and the qualities of life and education, narrative inquiry is considered as a form of qualitative research.

To conduct research into an experience, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) propose the directions that this framework allows narrative inquiries to travel: inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place. Inquirers are encouraged to explore the narrative by simultaneously investigating the internal conditions, the existential conditions, the temporality, and the concrete boundaries. As a result, narrative inquirers address both personal and social issues by looking inward and outward, address temporal issues by looking not only to the event but to its past and to its future, and define the physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes.

In realizing that method cannot disconnect from phenomena, Connelly (2009) advocates narrative inquiry as method to understand participants from their perspectives, in their own terms, and in the context of their ongoing daily practical life. Recalling from his cattle ranch experiences, Connelly learned from his father as a narrative inquirer working with phenomena and the practical landscape of curriculum. However, controlled experiment and associated statistical methodology tend to control nature and subject it to theory and applied method. Therefore, to study the phenomena of human experience, Connelly engages in field-based inquiries in curriculum studies.

Four Commonplaces of Teaching and Educational Thinking

Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of teaching and educational thinking give this study a life space in which to navigate ESL teachers' professional development experiences and personal practical knowledge. Based on his notion, "defensible

educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of equal rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter” (pp. 508-509). In other words, coordination is the proper relationship of these four commonplaces. The four bodies of experience must be coordinated and represented in the planning of curriculum. In my study, Schwab’s commonplaces of education provide a framework of curriculum making to examine professional development design and implementation, as well as a framework to explore ESL teachers’ experiences of professional development.

In this professional development framework, ESL teachers are considered as the learners while teacher educators are taken as the teachers. The subject matter expands to not only content knowledge and ELL instruction, but also pedagogical strategies and teacher dispositions. The milieu becomes teaching and learning situations affected by social, cultural, and political factors, such as professional development policies, educational language policies, school climate and culture, and teacher learning community. This framework highlights the complexity and multifaceted nature of ESL teachers’ experiences of professional development. Craig (2012) explains that when teaching and learning fuse, curriculum and meaningful education could take place without negating the continuity of experience (Dewey, 1938).

Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) create the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space as a research framework where this study can be situated among the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space is derived from Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience, particularly with his notions of situation, continuity, and interaction. In

narrative inquiry, the Deweyan view of experience is related to personal and social as interaction, referred to past, present, and future as continuity, and bound with place as situation. Therefore, the task of narrative inquirers is to address temporal matters that occur in specific places or sequences of places and focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry.

Like other qualitative methods, narrative inquiry relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) assert that the language and criteria for narrative inquiry are under development, and they identify some possible criteria being proposed and used, such as apparency, verisimilitude, transferability, etc. They suggest inquirers search for and defend the criteria that best apply to their work. Although narrative inquiry is not yet fundamentally established, it provides researchers flexibility in exploring the nature of human life and characterizing the phenomena of human experience.

The writing of empirical narratives is constituted of time and place that are written in the form of plot and scene respectively (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It is difficult to write scenes composed of character, physical environment, and context, but they are essential to narrative. Plot is presented in temporal constructions. Writing a chronology is a manageable task, whereas the writing of narrative can be baffling and discouraging because it stresses on meaning, interpretation, and explanation. Narrative inquiry, “like life, is a continual unfolding where the narrative insights of today are the chronological events of tomorrow. The narrative is unfinished and that stories will be retold and lives relived in new ways” (p. 9).

The risks, dangers, and abuses possible in narrative studies are falsehood, the inter-subjective quality, the “multiple I’s,” and “the Hollywood plot.” Connelly and Clandinin (1990) bring up criticisms of narrative inquiry to remind narrative inquirers to act as narrative critics in doing qualitative inquiry. Narrative researchers are demanded to be alert to unintentional and intentional deceptions emerging from fake data. In addition, they are required to be aware of not only “narrative smoothing” but also “narrative secrets.” Accordingly, empirical narrativists cannot avoid the task of criticism and must find ways of becoming “I, the critic.”

Narrative Sources

This study is grounded in the method of narrative inquiry. It is an inquiry into the narratives of three certified ESL teachers who are teaching ELLs in public elementary schools in the fourth largest city in the United States. These stories express the ESL teachers’ experiences of professional development and form the primary narrative source for this study.

Contextualizing the Narratives

This study is situated in the fourth largest city in the United States. It is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the southern U.S. While the city is experiencing growth in the number of ELLs in public schools, more high quality ESL or bilingual teachers should be produced to meet the demands. Even though school districts in the city have provided professional development opportunities for ESL teachers, teacher shortages in ESL or bilingual education have become evident in the city. Therefore, ESL teachers are highly encouraged to complete professional development

programs to ensure they are equipped with necessary knowledge and skills in the area of ELL instruction.

This study centers on the experiences of ESL teachers in public elementary schools. For this reason, certified ESL teachers, who are working with ELLs in public elementary schools, are included in the study. Purposive sampling is adopted to select three ESL teachers who are participating in professional development programs provided by school districts in the city. Teacher participants are self-determined based on their self-identification as a classroom teacher teaching ELLs and volunteering to participate in the study. A total of three participants were recruited to engage in this study. They are female doctoral students, whose ages range from mid 30s to early 40s. The years of teaching experience in public elementary schools varied, ranging from 12 to 20 years at the time of the study. Two of them are Hispanic and one is African American. All the participants received an ESL teacher certification and consistently attended district professional development activities to maintain the validity of their ESL teacher certification. The following section presents the profile of each participant.

Diana, a female African American in her mid 30s, is a certified ESL teacher with 12 years of teaching experience in public elementary schools. She also served as an ESL instructional specialist for one year to provide support to other teachers. When Diana was a first year teacher, her principal encouraged her to obtain an ESL teacher certification because teachers in the largest city in the southern U.S. were considered to be competent to have ELLs in their classrooms only if they were certified ESL teachers. Thus, Diana took the ESL supplemental exam and became a certified ESL teacher. From that point forward, she was held accountable for how to implement specific ESL modifications.

Meanwhile, she participated in professional development to become a stronger teacher in the area of ESL teaching. For Diana, the role of an ESL teacher is “a gatekeeper because the students have to work with us and get the key to the knowledge base of language to be able to excel in every other area of their lives.” The attitudes and resilience of ELLs motivated Diana to continue teaching in ESL, as she said, “Because of their drive and ambition to continue practicing and learning, that lets me know that what I am teaching is not in vain.”

In the school district where Diana is teaching, it has become a requirement for all teachers to be certified in ESL since 2001 because the school district has over 36 percent of ELLs with over eighty different languages. Located in the fourth largest city in the United States, her school is demanded to serve the rapidly growing population of ELLs by putting a lot of time and effort into making sure ESL teachers are sufficiently prepared through professional development. In Diana’s 2nd grade class, there is a mix of linguistically and culturally diverse students. About half of her students are native English speakers, while the other students are only fluent in their native language, such as Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, African languages, or Middle Eastern languages. With this mix of students, Diana differentiates her instruction to accommodate students with varied academic and language development needs. Since Diana has a self-contained classroom, she is responsible for building her students’ English language skills whenever she is teaching a lesson in any of the academic subjects.

Paula, a female Hispanic in her early 40s, is a certified ESL teacher with 19 years of teaching experience in public elementary schools. When Paula was a first year teacher, she was having a hard time teaching ESL that made her feel like she was drowning

because the teaching materials were underdeveloped and had no structure. At that time, she was frustrated because her students were not making any progress in learning English. Even though she learned about instructional strategies in college, she did not really know how to apply them to teaching. Therefore, most of her professional development experiences occurred in the beginning where she did not know how to teach an ESL lesson. As her knowledge and skills were accumulated through experience, she stopped attending training after school or on Saturdays because of her family duties and heavy workload. Paula emphasizes that “ESL is extremely important for English language learners” because they are struggling to pass the STAAR test for the first time in third grade. Since ELLs have little exposure to English at home, Paula feels obligated to help them develop a language ability that matches their grade level.

In the school district where Paula is teaching, all elementary schools are required to offer an ESL program or alternative language support programs for ELLs who speak a language other than English. Languages spoken in this school district include Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Mandarin Chinese, Urdu, and Nepali. Located in the largest city in the southern U.S., her school has over 44 percent of ELLs with diverse backgrounds and meets satisfactory standard on the STAAR test in reading and math. In her 1st grade class, Paula shares the same ethnical background with most of her students who are bilingual in English and Spanish. Seeing that her students are exposed to little English in their daily lives, she talks to them a lot in English, constantly repeats key words and phrases, and provides visual support and modeling for ELLs. Throughout the years, Paula becomes a better ESL teacher by learning from professional development, teaching experiences, and mistakes in classroom practices.

Lauren, a female Hispanic in her early 40s, is a certified ESL teacher with 20 years of teaching experience in public elementary schools. She devoted herself to bilingual education for 17 years and then continued to teach in ESL education for 3 years. She also served as an ESL support teacher with her teaching partner to help mainstream teachers work with ELLs. At an early age, Lauren moved from Peru to the United States with her family and started to learn the English language. Because her English learning experience was filled with loneliness and awkwardness, she was committed to create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for her students, as she disclosed, “I wanted to give back to the community and be a light for those who come to this country without knowing English.” Lauren was compassionate toward ELLs with linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and sensitive to their English language development and cultural accommodation. With twenty years of teaching experience in bilingual and ESL education, Lauren learned a great deal of instructional strategies and techniques through professional development. She refined her teaching practices and extracted best practices from her teaching experience while interacting with ELLs.

In the school district where Lauren is teaching, ESL is provided to ELLs as an intensive program of instruction to accelerate acquisition of proficiency in English language and literacy. ESL instruction is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and is provided through supplemental pull-out or content-based classroom instruction. One of the school district’s greatest strengths lies in its multicultural diversity as the school has over 35 percent of ELLs with diverse backgrounds. Serving as an ESL support teacher, Lauren is working with ELLs at different grade levels and at different levels of English proficiency.

She has four ESL groups that are composed of roughly twenty students coming from different countries, including Nigeria, Vietnam, Jamaica, India, and Nepal. She divided them into four ESL groups based on their English language proficiency: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High. Lauren not only pulls out ELLs from their general education classrooms but also comes into their classrooms to model language strategies and support ELLs during content-area lessons.

Prior to the study, each participant was assured that their personal information would be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of research. Pseudonyms were allocated to all characters within the narratives. Any field texts collected from or about participants were held in confidence. All participants were informed of the right to withdraw from the study or request that field texts collected about them not be used.

Role of Researcher

My role as a researcher in this inquiry gives me opportunities to get close to the narratives of the teacher participants. However, being a human instrument requires me to explicitly identify myself and recognize my bias throughout the research process. Recognizing my bias demonstrates I am aware of my beliefs that may influence how the field texts are collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Because we see the world through our own filters, I need to scrutinize and address how my identity, such as my gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, personality, educational experiences, affects the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of the field texts.

I work collaboratively with my teacher participants to construct a trustful and collaborative relationship to live the shared story of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In narrative inquiry, trust in relationships among the researcher and

participants is fundamental for urging storytelling. Both participants and the researcher should feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories. As the narrative inquiry proceeds, they are engaged in living, telling, reliving, and retelling their stories where a mutually constructed story is created out of the lives of both the researcher and participants.

Procedures of Inquiry

For this inquiry, I utilize a variety of narrative field texts and resources to portray the experiences of teacher participants in professional development programs. The professional development experiences, as storied and restoried by teacher participants, are illuminated through interviews, informal conversations, electronic journaling, and documents.

Interviews

Since humans are storytelling organisms and stories are a way of knowing, interviews are used to understand the lived experiences of the participants and the meaning that they construct from their experiences. In conducting interviews, I follow three steps proposed by Irving Seidman (2013). First, I focus on the participants' life history, including their educational life and professional life. Next, I emphasize the participants' experiences of professional development. Finally, I encourage the participants to reflect on the meanings emerging from those experiences. A series of three interviews lasting 1-1/2 hours (4 hours total) are conducted with the participants. Interviews are recorded digitally on audio recorders with the agreement of the participants and take place in private rooms to assure participants' privacy and confidentiality.

Electronic Journaling

The purpose of electronic journaling is to provide an opportunity for the participants to reflect upon and share their thoughts about their professional development experiences. The participants are encouraged to use electronic journaling to communicate with the researcher on their own computer. Because this is a reflective piece, there is no prompting question utilized. Throughout the study, the researcher also takes reflective journals to record and reflect upon personal experiences. As LaBoskey (1994) posits, “reflection is a three-step process including problem definition, means-ends analysis, and generalization that is carried out with the attitude of open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness” (p. 4).

Documents

Valuable sources of information are collected as documents, such as lesson plans, handouts from professional development programs, announcements of community or school events, notices posted on bulletin boards and classroom walls, agendas and minutes from School Council meetings, and samples of student work and so on. Those documents are gathered to learn about ESL teachers’ professional growth while interacting with ELLs.

Analytical and Interpretive Devices

After collecting field texts, four narrative devices to facilitate analysis and interpretation are: broadening, burrowing, storying/restorying, and fictionalization (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). With detailed data analysis consisting of coding, storylines are interweaved and tensions are more pronounced from the narratively constructed experiences of ESL teachers in professional development programs.

Broadening

Broadening is employed to determine the context of the study and to bring forward connections with the broader educational landscape and related literature. To see the larger picture, broadening occurs when the narrative is situated in a larger social, cultural, political or historical context. This study investigates how ESL teachers' experiences of professional development are influenced by the larger context, such as educational policies, school climate and culture, and teacher learning community.

Burrowing

Burrowing is used to probe into the meaning-making of ESL teachers' storied experiences and highlight particular experiences. The emotional, moral, and aesthetic qualities of lived experiences are examined, especially when these feelings are associated with particular experiences. This approach allows the participants to make meanings of their stories and the researcher to reveal the nuances of the participants' stories.

Storying and Restorying

Storying and restorying of ESL teachers' experiences illuminate how teachers change their understandings and identities across contexts and activities over time. As the participants are telling and retelling their stories of professional development experiences, empirical narratives are created and narrative threads are emerged. But, the stories they tell may change as their experiences change over time. It is essential that the participants convey the truth of the story at that particular time as the truth can change with time and with context.

Fictionalization

The purpose of fictionalization is to decrease the likelihood of the participants being identified and getting harmed. In order to protect the participants' real lives or the relationships between the researcher and participants, fictionalization can be employed to compose research texts by shifting circumstances of these stories. An example of this would be the participants' lives bumping up with dominant cultural and industrial narratives.

Trustworthiness

Like other qualitative research methods, narrative inquiry relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability, but focuses on authenticity, resonance, and trustworthiness. Strategies, such as triangulation, member checks, and peer debriefing (Carspecken, 1996), are applied to ensure accuracy, consistency, and trustworthiness in an attempt to provide authentic research account.

Triangulation

The purpose of triangulation is to use multiple sources, methods, and investigators to compile the field texts. In this study, I conduct multiple interviews with the same participant to verify the participants' interpretation of their stories and to find the consistency in their stories. Besides, I gather field texts through multiple methods, including interviews, electronic journaling, conversation, and documents. Consistency checks are conducted to see if each set of field texts confirm or deny the other sets.

Member Checks

I share the study in progress with the teacher participants as a way to check the authenticity and accuracy of the collectively constructed narrative. The participants have opportunities to provide detailed context and alternative interpretations and to make sure

I accurately represent their voices. As the experiences are made explicit, both the researcher and the participants are engaged in a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through the inquiry.

Peer Debriefing

To check possible biases, I invite my peers, who are working in the similar field and familiar with qualitative research, to look through my study in progress, so that they can provide insights into the interpretation of the collected field texts. Besides, debriefing with my peers generates critical feedback and stimulates my reflective process as I strive for transparency throughout the study.

Ethical Considerations

Narrative inquirers need to be aware of, and thoughtful about, ethical concerns throughout an inquiry. Three primary ethical principles that every researcher should address are: protecting participants from harm, ensuring confidentiality of research data, and the question of deception of subjects (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). This educational research involves activities that are within usual procedures of schools and as such involves little or no risk. Across the narrative inquiry process, I have to ensure that participants in this study are protected from physical or psychological harm, discomfort, or danger that may arise due to research procedures. Besides, I collect consent forms from participants, so that they are fully informed of the purpose and procedure of the research, the known and potential risks, and the right to withdraw from the research.

Once the field texts in the study have been collected, I make sure that no one else has the access to the field texts. Any field texts collected from or about participants are held in confidence. Anonymity for participants is assumed to be an integral feature of

ethical research. Thus, pseudonyms are allocated to all the characters within the narratives. Moreover, all participants in the study always have the right to withdraw from the study or to request that field texts collected about them not be used. As far as I concerned, there is no deception of subjects taking place in this study. Furthermore, this study is reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Houston.

Researcher-Participant Relationship in Narrative Inquiry

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that in the process of beginning to live the shared story of narrative inquiry, the researcher needs to be aware of constructing a collaborative relationship in which both participants and researchers feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories. Humans are individually and socially living their stories and telling their ongoing stories of experience as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others, so the stories and their meaning shift and change over time. Thus, participants and researchers are engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving their stories as the narrative inquiry proceeds. The two narratives of participant and researcher become a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through the inquiry.

In narrative inquiry, trust in relationships among researchers and participants is fundamental for urging storytelling. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) indicate that not only participants but also researchers are continually telling stories which merge together to create new stories. Consequently, a two-part inquiry agenda is proposed to promote the collaborative relationship in which a mutually constructed story created out of the lives of both researchers and participants.

Chapter IV

Narrative Threads in ESL Teachers' Educational Life

Working alongside Diana, Paula, and Lauren, the participants in this study, I understood the task as an inquiry into what links might be established in the ESL Teachers' educational life. There are three narrative threads central to their professional journey that anchor the inquiry into their life. One is the teaching thread where they play the role of ESL teachers interacting with ELLs. A second thread is curriculum inquiry, in which they work dialectically to meet the needs of their students with diverse backgrounds. The third is the thread of multiculturalism where they are challenged to acknowledge the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of their students and the students' parents. All of the three narrative threads shape and reshape the three ESL teachers' identity and their self-image as ESL teachers.

The Teaching Thread of ESL Teachers

Reflecting on her teaching practices, Diana realized that ELLs develop their language skills through social interactions in a comfortable classroom setting. When Diana was a classroom teacher dealing with ELLs, she established close relationships with her students. For example, when she spoke or interacted with them, she tried to use simpler sentences at the beginning. However, she held them accountable for getting the same academic assignments to learn as other students, so that she could progress their language development. Diana continued:

This is how I was able to help the students. They were comfortable coming to me and talking to me. I never discouraged them from practicing their English. None

of them ever thought to use their native language in the room. They just felt comfortable enough to step out and try the language.

Additionally, Diana tried to make sure she provided a lot of social interactions throughout the day because she was aware that ELLs had to develop social language before academic abilities. Since ESL teachers were responsible to cultivate both abilities, she included social interactions into the academic school day, so that her students could grow and flourish. When asked to share her challenges in ESL instruction, Diana said:

English language learners mostly struggle with the written form that is the last section to be developed. Their writing skills normally take the longest time to form because they have to be able to comprehend what they are hearing, saying, and reading. So, cultivating their writing skills was the biggest challenge for us (ESL teachers).

Since Diana was conscious that writing was developing for ELLs and that it took longer for some ELLs to flourish, she came up with a writing strategy that would attend to everybody. This writing strategy, as described in the following passage, built ELLs' background knowledge and developed their writing without singling them out.

What I would do was I would pick up an age-appropriate nonfiction book. At a young age, students are fascinated with animals, especially animals that they do not see every day. For example, a book about sea otters was age-appropriate because it would have one to three sentences of the nonfiction fact about the sea otter, and then, on the opposite page, it would have an actual photograph of the sea otter doing whatever the text describes. I would sit on the floor, read the page, and show students the photograph. And then, they would turn to each other and

talk about what they just heard. In that way, I could build everybody's knowledge base, listening strategies, as well as retelling strategies. After the students turned and talked about that page for two minutes, I would ask the question, "What's the most important fact that we need to get from this page?" With whatever fact that one of the students shared, I would write it on a graphic organizer. We would do that for every couple of pages, so that about the time the book was finished, they had a graphic organizer of facts. Once that was done, I extended it into a writing activity. I would say, "If you say one of the most important facts, for example, the sea otter sleeps on its back," I may have it written in an incomplete sentence, "then, how would we write that in a complete sentence?" They would try. Somebody would say, "Sea otters sleep on their back." And I would say, "Good one. Is there another way to say it?" And they would come up with another way. Once they could say it in words, they knew how to build the sentence. They would do that for each fact, to the point when about the time they finished, they all had a summary of the book.

Another participating ESL teacher, Paula, shared the same concern about the language development of ELLs in writing and writing skills. In order to help ELLs develop reading and writing skills in English, Paula emphasized the use of modeling and visuals. In reading, Paula taught her students a word after showing several of its visual images, so that her students could recognize essential information and its relationship to supporting ideas. Visuals make both the language and the content more accessible to ELLs. Paula further explained,

It requires me time to find the pictures before I present the lesson to give them examples of what the word means. There is more of connection when they can see the pictures, not just me talking about the word. It is to fill them with the information. And that meant reading different books on the same topic and having something for them to look at.

In writing, Paula put up high frequency words and key words in her classroom, so that ELLs could use them as a resource when writing. For example, Paula had been talking about antonyms, so she put them up on the walls. When it was her students' turn to either write or talk, they could pull from the information that she had been giving them. Paula continued:

Once their speaking is good, their writing is good. And then, they can express themselves, but their spelling is not there. And I kind of struggle because they will spell it in Spanish. The expectation is, okay, the word "the" is up there. The word "like" is up there. There's no reason for you to be spelling it the way you think it sounds because you have the resource to look up.

Pointing at one of the word walls, Paula further explained that her students were studying weather. She had a lot of key words for it up there, so that when her students were writing, they were able to reference the content of what they were going to write about. Meanwhile, she modeled for ELLs what they were expected to do or produce by sharing her thinking processes aloud. Paula said:

Of course, there is modeling. I have to, you know, model for them how to write it, but they're really pushing for the kids to write. So, I probably don't model as much as I should because I want them to write instead of watching me write, or

we can write it together. Like they'll tell me what to write and I'm writing it. But I focus more on having them write.

Lauren, another ESL teacher participant, described a typical day at school. To bring variety and fun to learning, Lauren always started off with a song or a poem for her students to practice their English. Poems and songs help ELLs master new vocabulary and learn about sentence structure. Repetition in reciting poems or singing songs provides needed practice in the English language. Besides, Lauren normally implemented learning stations in her ESL classrooms, which were very modifiable for ELLs, as they could be engaged in adjustable levels of English learning. She gave such an example in the following passage.

As a whole group, sometimes in small groups, the students will decide what they are going to write about or talk about. I'll write the sentences down for them to use, either in their writing time or in their speaking time. And then from there, I will go to little stations because I like stations with my students. I love that small group time. I'll take a little group. The other children are either at the computer station, the reading station, or the writing station. We have a program, called Reading A-Z, that has an ESL component. Also, BrainPOP has an ESL component, so they usually go on those educational sites to read stories, watch movies, or play games. The ones that come with me, we do reading. I sit with them. We talk about whatever they were writing about. And then, we just rotate, usually 3 to 4 times depending on the time issue because sometimes teachers have different things that we have to do.

ESL teachers, including Diana, Paula, and Lauren, work with ELLs in a variety of conditions: pull-out classes where some ESL teachers pull out mixed-level proficiency groups while others pull out by the proficiency level (i.e., Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High) and push-in classes where ESL teachers come into the general education classrooms to support ELLs during content-area lessons. Each of these settings requires ESL teachers to use different ways of organizing the classroom, designing a curriculum, and presenting lessons. Therefore, the inquiry into curriculum becomes an essential part of educational life for the participating ESL teachers to meet the diverse needs of ELLs who do not share a native language or a common culture.

Curriculum Inquiry Thread

In her inquiry into curriculum, Diana acknowledged herself as a curriculum maker who tailored her instruction to meet individual needs and create the best learning experience possible. Thus, she has to be very creative and self-directed to take the provided curriculum but negotiates it in active relationship with her students to address their needs as ELLs. She further explained,

I have to be very creative to differentiate my instruction to accommodate language barriers. Differentiated instruction is a big deal, but I do not think everybody knows how to do it. I modify curriculum, teaching methods, learning resources and activities to address the needs of my students according to their learning level or readiness. I incorporate cooperative activities or student-centered activities when they would give me feedback in either oral or written form. They have to interact with their classmates to try to develop their language because I know that they are going to learn academically, but I want to make sure they communicate

what they know in English. When I had just language arts, I did it very heavily because a lot of language development is integrated with reading language arts.

In addition, Diana revealed several issues that she experienced while working with ELLs: (1) ELLs, according to high-stakes accountability data, may perform below the level even though they are successful in classrooms, (2) The data of students' academic performance cannot represent what is happening and how ELLs are progressing in classrooms, and (3) ELLs are inclined to be labeled as failures by standardized tests when they do not make the same rate of growth as native English speaking students, which she articulated in the following passage.

The challenge for me is being able to explain to administration why English language learners on paper, according to high-stakes accountability data, may not perform on level when they are successful in my classroom. All administrators see is what is on the data chart. They are not thinking about what I am actually doing in my room to move the child along. The child may be progressing, but not fast enough for them. If a student's academic performance does not look like everyone else's, there is an issue. I experienced issues with the administrators when they questioned, "Why is he only reading this level when he should be here?" I would respond, "Don't you see they are ESL learners? Don't you see where they started? You are just expecting the same rate of growth."

When asked about how she was able to navigate her way through this challenge, she responded:

I would get together with my teaching partners and talk about why we had a particular language learner performing below the reading expectation. We knew

that every student was circumstantial. We find out we have the same characteristics of why students may have looked performing below but actually successful. And then, we would be able to have a general explanation for administration — these are the trends; this is what we were doing; this is what's happening; and that's why it looks like that. It would straighten out the numbers, so it didn't look like I was the only one that was having that result. All of us were facing the same situation.

Thinking back to her own childhood English learning experience, Paula realized that since she was immersed in English and it worked for her, she tended to talk a lot in English to her 1st grade students, so that they were immersed in an English learning environment. However, Paula asserted that she believed in bilingual education, which allowed ELLs to maintain their native language and culture. Here is how the conversation went:

Paula: I was immersed in English. My first language I believe was Spanish. With my cousins, I was picking up a little bit of the English language. But then at three, my mom put me in pre-kindergarten. I was just immersed in English. And then, all the way through, you know, elementary school, middle school, and high school, everything was in English. So, I cannot really remember from my learning experiences...

Researcher: Did that have any influence on your teaching?

Paula: Well, I don't know about my teaching. Well, somewhat because I was immersed in English, I feel... Remember I was saying how I talked to them? I tried to talk to them a lot in English. I feel that has made me

believe that immersion works. But I also believe in teaching bilingual education, too. But immersion worked with me, and I'm bilingual, so I think that when we were here in the classroom, in the beginning of the year, those poor kids they don't understand me (laughing), but I think I do... I believe that immersion is not bad. And so, I keep talking to them, talking to them, and then they get over. So, maybe that...it's not so much of learning, but just believe that immersion is okay.

Paula was aware of the conflict between English immersion and bilingual education that was emerged in this conversation. Her personal and professional experiences led her to inquire into her own standpoints on this contested issue. She held a strong belief in bilingual education because of her ethnic and cultural backgrounds, even though she tried to have her students submersed in English, just like the way she was learning the English language in an immersion environment. As she said in the interview, she had another reason why she created an English immersion classroom for ELLs.

I have some students who are still reading and writing in Spanish, but when they come to the English language, it's all hard transition. I think it's because at home nobody speaks English, so that's why I'm trying to talk to them as much as I can in English because I know they don't get any English at home. And when they go to the third grade, they have to pass the STAAR test.

Knowing that ELLs were having a hard time in transition from their native languages to the English language in order to pass the STAAR tests in the third grade, Paula, as an ESL teacher, acknowledged her responsibilities and obligations to equip ELLs with a certain level of proficiency in English. She strived to achieve that goal by

bringing English immersion to her classroom because she noticed that ELLs were not exposed to much English in their daily lives. Paula gave such an example when asked about her remarks on how she learned that “the kids can learn.”

I’ve seen it. Like I said, they can express themselves well when they talk, so that when they write, they can. But I’ve seen the kids who come at the beginning of the year. They don’t speak English very well. They don’t understand me. Or they can’t talk back to me. At the beginning of the year, I had one little boy who doesn’t get any English because nobody speaks English at his house. Only on the TV, I would imagine. I imagine they probably watch the Spanish channel. The only English he gets is here. When I’m teaching ESL, I’m supposed to teach everything in English. Throughout the day, if I’m not teaching, like we were getting in line, or we were going to the cafeteria, I’m talking to them in English. When I’m talking, he’s heard it so much, you know, get in line, or stop right there, or go get water now. He’s heard it so much that now he’s learning it. Like I said, he’s still not speaking to me in English, but he knows. What I’ve seen with him is I can talk to him in English and he knows what I’m saying. He may not be able to have the conversation with me. Just the constant repetition makes a big difference.

Paula became more positive about her ESL teaching and more confident that her students were learning because of the ESL curriculum, as well as the materials provided, were designed with a more organized structure. Instead of overlapping with what had been taught in kindergarten, she covered more than just the colors, the numbers, and the ABCs. Now, she was covering English grammar, such as compound words. In her own words, “I’m covering a lot more with the kids, and they’re able to do it. Again, a lot of it

is repetition. And then, they get the practice.” Paula became more satisfied as an ESL teacher because she was able to introduce something new or add on to what her students have learned based on learning objectives.

In the curriculum inquiry process, Lauren invited ELLs to brainstorm ideas for speaking and writing topics, which motivated them to learn from their prior knowledge and experiences and empowered them to be contributors to their own learning. Not only did Lauren pull out ELLs from their general education classrooms, she also went into their classrooms to sit with ELLs while the general education teacher was teaching or co-teach with the teacher to model language strategies for ELLs. That required Lauren to have a lot of communications and collaborations with other teachers and engage in collaborative inquiry into curriculum, as she described in the following passage.

I go to the second grade class because most of the kids are in one class together. I have about 3 Advanced High students and 2 Advanced students. I pull one student from another class as well. So, we all go into that classroom. And I just push in, which means I go there and then co-teach with their teacher. I can either sit with one of them that are struggling with something in English, such as their writing or language. Or I may just sit there and co-teach with the teacher. Not pull out a small group, but actually be with them in that large group. It just depends on what the teacher and I planned.

With Advanced High students in the fifth grade, Lauren was supposed to pull them out during reading. However, all the students had different schedules. Sometimes it was science, and sometimes it was social studies. That made it difficult to pull them out

during reading, so she had to plan with their teachers and provide them with additional language support in learning content areas. She made the following remark:

So, what I've done is I'll talk to the teachers. I'll plan with them. And then, I will teach. I'll go with whatever is. For example, one of my students is doing his science project. So, we did the research. And we did the project together. It's not always the same plan for me. I plan with the teacher for that.

When asked about how she made plans with other teachers, she replied:

I didn't meet with homeroom teachers each week usually because they are really busy. What I do ask is if they will let me see their lesson plans. For example, if I know they are going to have a unit for 3 weeks, we will talk about it at the beginning of the unit and then go from there. Or if the student is not doing well, they'll ask, "Can you please go over this with them?" Or they will say, "Can you please take him, so that he can have just one on one about this one thing?"

Because in classroom, you've seen that, it's very difficult to give everybody a lot of time. So, I need to have a lot of communications with other teachers. I've been in this position for three years. I have first grade, second grade, and fifth grade. And my partner will take third grade and fourth grade. We've kind of kept that up, so we will grow with our kids. And they know us all. In that way, we can also communicate a lot with the teachers.

ESL teachers, including Diana, Paula, and Lauren, are not only curriculum implementers but also curriculum makers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). They are not just passively transfer prescribed curriculum materials. They modify curriculum materials, teaching methods, learning resources and activities to address the diverse needs

of ELLs in order to meet the stated aims of the curriculum. With their personal practical knowledge, they inquire into curriculum to provide the best learning experience possible for ELLs. Under certain circumstances, they have to communicate and collaborate with other teachers regarding language development and academic achievement of ELLs. Since ELLs with different nationalities bring their backgrounds and experiences to the classroom, multiculturalism becomes an essential thread in participating ESL teachers' educational life.

Thread of Multiculturalism

ESL teachers encounter complex issues as ELLs, who come from a wide range of ethnic groups, bring their languages and cultures to the classroom. The cultural diversity can enrich the students' learning experiences, but it also can pose challenges for ESL teachers to navigate a way to communicate with ELLs and their parents as well as understand differences in cultures and values. Diana became sensitive to cultural differences while interacting with ELLs and their parents. She noticed that cultural diversity permeated the daily life of the classroom, so it is imperative for ESL teachers to have consistent communication with ELLs and their parents in order to gain a better understanding of their family cultures and home practices, as she said in the interview.

I learned a lot about the culture through working with English language learners and interacting with their parents. Also, when I did my master's degree, I learned about multicultural education. One of the courses was about general customs, practices, and beliefs in a wide blanket of culture. The professors told us generic beliefs and practices in African, Hispanic, and Asian cultures. When they talked about it, I could relate to it based on my interaction with parents. I learned how

they hold teachers in higher regard and their practices in the homes. Because I knew a little bit of that, it would come out in the classroom.

When sharing her experiences of differences in cultures and values, Diana gave an example of how the Asian or African parents hold teachers in much higher regard than the U.S. parents do.

For example, I spoke with parents who were from different countries in Asia and Africa. They hold the teacher in much higher regard than the U.S. parents do. For the U.S. parents, they do not generally trust teachers to the extent that the Asian or African parents do. They hold us in a very high regard. What we say to do, the child is expected at home to do it. When the child makes mistakes, a lot of their parents call me right back to the school and apologize to me in front of everybody. Then, they go home and reprimand their child. That is not done by many American-born parents.

In the multicultural classroom, Diana was facing the challenge of communication with ELL parents who cannot speak English. The parents wanted to know what was happening to their child at school, even if they couldn't communicate easily with her. Thus, Diana prepared her students to explain their learning process to their parents, so that she could get her message across to them. She also had someone who spoke their language to translate during parent-teacher conferences, so that she could connect and build a relationship with ELL parents. During the interview, she observed:

The biggest challenge I have is communication with the parents. Many times I have a lot of parents that have absolutely no English. Their child is the first one in their homes to learn English. When it comes time to send homework home, I

prepare the students and say, “You know how to do this. When you go home, I want you to explain to mom and dad how you are supposed to do, so you teach them at the same time.” When their parents would come for parent conferences, many of them would bring a family member, another adult or their oldest child, with them. They would bring someone with them to translate, so that we could still communicate and still have a relationship. Because they desire to work with me, I could connect to them.

From her interactions with ELLs and their parents, Diana learned that she had to take into consideration of their home practices and cultural traditions when she was making judgements or decisions. Besides, she encouraged ESL teachers to get familiar with the beliefs and practices in home environments of ELLs, which she elaborated on as shown in the following passage.

I think it is actually valuable for teachers to be knowledgeable of any practices or traditions in the home environment. Many teachers make quick judgments and poor decisions because they do not fully understand, or they are not fully aware of beliefs and practices in the home. It is reflective when students come to school academically. If a child does not do his/her homework, instead of just saying you did not do your homework, find out why. Something in their home life or in their culture prevented them from being able to do it. I guess that if there was one valuable advice I would pass on, that is, if you are an ESL teacher, just as you will have many students that are not American-born, be familiar with ESL students’ beliefs and practices in the home.

Therefore, becoming familiar with and including cultural traditions of ELL families helps to not only avoid miscommunication or cultural blunders but also create a welcoming and respectful learning environment. Besides, connecting with ELL parents can be challenging due to cultural and language barriers. However, with consistent discourse and cultural understanding, ESL teachers can work together with parents to build a strong relationship to ensure students' success. As a result of those experiences with ELLs and their parents, Diana understood that language is developmental. She became sensitive and patient while working with people.

Sharing the same view with Diana, another participating ESL teacher, Paula, created a welcoming and supporting environment for ELLs to use their native languages and share their cultural traditions and practices in class. When asked about how she incorporated the cultures of ELLs into curriculum, Paula said:

It is also a tool to get kids talking because kids are not from the same background. So, it is the tool for children that are very quiet in class to talk about themselves. This holiday is coming up. I know they celebrate this holiday. Other people might not celebrate it. If I can somehow incorporate that in our lesson today, it gives them a chance to talk about their own culture. They feel more welcome with them in the class.

Paula allowed different languages and cultures to exist in her classroom. Besides, she showed her students that she was interested in learning about their languages and cultures. She would ask, "What is this in your native language? How do you describe it?" Paula believed that encouraging ELLs to use their native languages or share their own cultures elevates their self-esteem, as she further explained in the following passage.

Whenever a teacher highlights a child's own language or culture, it makes them feel special. You're not making them feel isolated. You are interested in something that they can teach you about. That would absolutely raise their self-esteem and make them feel more important.

Paula also emphasized that ELLs should learn and foster their native languages as much as possible because their native languages, coming along with their own cultures, are significant to them and their family. She noted:

Students learn English easier and quicker when they have that background in their native languages, so it is important for them to be able to read and write in their native languages. It is also part of their culture. Coming to America does not mean you lose your identity of where you came from.

Paula pointed out the connection among language, culture, and identity. Language and culture are undeniably intertwined. Since culture is transmitted through language, ELLs learn their culture through language. Besides, the language that ELLs use forms an important part of their sense of who they are. In other words, languages symbolize identities. Languages are used to signal identities by those who speak them.

Learning from her personal experiences, Lauren, another participating teacher, understood what it felt like when people made assumptions about her culture and identity based on her appearance. Thus, she was careful about how to introduce the cultures of ELLs in her class. She shared the following:

One of the things that I'm always careful about is being authentic and being respectful also because I have been in many, many, many places where they'll try

to add something “Latino,” or do something “Mexican.” I’m like, “I’m not Mexican. I’m from Peru.” It’s a totally different culture.

In order to avoid cultural bias, Lauren did not want to make quick judgments or assumptions about the cultures that ELLs brought to the classroom. Instead, she wanted to provide cultural materials that were authentic to ELLs. She addressed this in the following passage.

You have to be authentic and careful in my opinion. I cannot just look up something on the internet and then bring it to you. And I’ll be like, “Hey, look! This is from your culture.” Because it may not be. I can look up something and ask, “Do you do this thing in your culture? Do you have this?” Because if I haven’t been to your country, I don’t know what to say. Even if I’ve seen them in a movie. A lot of movies, especially from here, are not right. So, I think you have to be very careful and authentic.

Without full understanding of the racial and cultural backgrounds of ELLs, ESL teachers might adopt inappropriate materials from the internet or movies. Thus, Lauren preferred to invite ELLs to bring in something representative of their cultures and share their languages and cultures with the class. She further explained:

Sometimes people will be like, “Oh, we’re trying.” It’s okay to try, but you also have to be careful to not be rude. I think it’s better to ask the students, “Can you bring something from home? Can you bring a dish from your home?” I love doing that. “Do y’all wear something different? Can you bring it?” But I’m not gonna try to bring something to them that I don’t even know anything about.

Even with good intentions, making statements or judgments based on cultural assumptions and stereotypes could be viewed as abrupt and rude to ELLs. In order to show respect for the cultures of ELLs, Lauren was very careful about how to make it authentic and representative of their cultures and experiences. She gave another example of how cultural assumptions might affect a relationship in the following paragraph.

I remember one time I went to a place with my sister-in-law. I said, “Can I have a slushy with tapioca?” She said, “How do you know about tapioca? You are Mexican.” I looked at her, “Well, how do you know about it? You are Chinese.” And she said, “I’m not Chinese. I’m Vietnamese.” And then, I said, “Well, I’m not Mexican. I’m Peruvian.” It was so funny because she was assuming that I was Mexican. So, I threw it back at her. A lot of times we do that. We just assume things. And kids will do that all the time. You have to be careful in my opinion. We are educated adults, so we need to be respectful. That’s what I would like to see more, the respect. You bring your culture in, just like I’m gonna bring my culture in. I’m not gonna assume that I know because I don’t know, unless I’ve lived in your culture for years. Or I may not understand anything about it.

Respect is the key to incorporating the cultures of ELLs into curriculum in multicultural classrooms. Making assumptions without knowing the racial and cultural backgrounds of ELLs may hinder efforts to support ELLs in learning. To prevent false assumptions, Lauren encouraged ELLs to share their cultural traditions and practices as primary resources to make their learning authentic and representative of their cultures, which showed her respect for and interest in the cultures of ELLs. ESL teachers can develop cultural awareness and enhance sensitivity to different cultures by introducing

the students to different cultures and encouraging them to respect other cultures. In multicultural classrooms, ESL teachers create room for differences where all cultures are considered valuable and where students from different cultures are important.

The three narrative threads that I have just unraveled disclose the participating ESL teachers' educational life. Starting from their experiences as an ESL teacher, as a curriculum inquirer, and as a bridge to multicultural practice, the three ESL teachers articulated their relationships with their ELLs, colleagues, and ELL parents in the educational landscape.

Chapter V

Inquiry into Professional Development Experiences

This study is a narrative inquiry into ESL teachers' experiences of professional development. These descriptions are mainly based on interviews with three ESL teachers whose experiences I have to honor and give voice to by presenting their lived stories. This study captures the ESL teachers' experiences of becoming and being ESL teachers while the number of English language learners in public schools has increased and professional development in ESL instruction has become more demanding. Particularly, this study emphasizes the meanings of their personal and professional experiences as ESL teachers and highlights the features of the social, cultural, and political context. This study also describes the support ESL teachers receive, the challenges ESL teachers encounter, and the changes in their teacher knowledge and teaching practices as they are seeking professional growth. It is as much a study about struggle, frustration, and challenges as it is about accomplishment and hope.

Challenges Encountered and Support Received

Diana, an ESL teacher serving in a linguistically and culturally diverse elementary school, recalled that she learned a lot through professional development. She learned about the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), a highly recommended teaching approach for ELLs, and the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Systems (TELPAS), an assessment system of English language proficiency in the State of Texas. She explained how SIOP was implemented with assistance from the ESL support teacher in the following passage.

I actually learned quite a bit through professional development. I learned about SIOP, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, almost ten years ago. They taught us how to integrate that into our classroom. Sheltered instruction is basically incorporating more social strategies and social opportunities throughout your lessons to give students more opportunities to practice their language. They encouraged us to use sheltered instruction, which is able to help students develop vocabulary and social skills in academic settings. They also measure throughout the year. Our ESL support staff has brainstormed a list of quick modifications that we can put within lesson plans and we can actually use in the classroom based on the lesson we already have written out, so that English language learners would not get lost or left behind.

Diana asserted that there was not much professional development specifically for teaching ELLs. In addition to SIOP, TELPAS was introduced to ESL teachers, but it was more about how to rate ELLs based on their English language proficiency, instead of how to enhance ESL instruction. She explained how TELPAS was applied to ensure success for ELLs as below.

The only other real professional development, which is specifically for that type of learner, delves more in how to rate the learners for the state. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Systems, TELPAS, is what every ESL teacher has to complete in the State of Texas in February and March each year. With TELPAS, every English language learner has a TELPAS rating. It is based on what the teacher has observed in a student's areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers have to rate them as a Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced,

and Advanced High student in each of those four areas of language development. By the end of March, they take the teacher's feedback, and give one rating based on those four sections. By May, this student is rated as an ESL Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High student. Or, if students are a little bit older, they use that score to exit them out of the ESL program and into general education, which means no further modification will take place. So, they monitor them to see how well they do without the modifications. If they do okay after two years, they are exited out. They are just in a regular general education. No more modifications are necessary for student success.

When asked about her challenges as an ESL teacher, Diana responded, "cultivating their writing skills was the biggest challenge" because "that is the last section to be developed" and "their writing skills normally take the longest time to form." To deal with such challenges, she came up with writing strategies. Sometimes she received support from her teaching partners. At other times, "we received additional support from the content area specialist, the reading specialist, the math specialist, and the science specialist." She continued:

What they would do is, even though they would assist us in coming up with lessons, activities, and resources, they would also find additional ESL resources to go with the lesson, so that we could have additional support to still be able to be successful in that subject area with our ELL students. We would receive support through that and also through professional development.

Diana recommended school districts to provide regular professional development programs for ESL teachers. Meanwhile, she also perceived the socio-economic and

socio-political impact on the implementation of professional development for ESL teachers, as she articulated well in the following passage.

It is recommended that school districts provide regular professional development programs for ESL teachers. Every school district is not necessarily on board with it because they feel it is not a need if they do not believe their population is large enough and if they can't afford to do it economically. But our school was in a school district that was very heavy in second language learning because of the location. So, a lot of time and effort was put into making sure that we could develop language for learners that were considered to be ELLs.

Besides, Diana emphasized that professional development programs should be designed to engage ESL teachers in the process of reflective practice in order to look beneath the surface. After ESL teachers took away some tips and tricks from training and then applied those strategies in their classrooms, they should reflect and evaluate on their own teaching practices to develop a deeper understanding of their teaching and continue to improve their teaching practices, as she described in the interview.

The only issue I had with professional development was they would give you something that was kind of describing the surface because that's what teachers want it. Tell me what I can do or some quick tricks I can do. But we never revisited it to talk about the effect of using these strategies. We never did a continuation. So, here is the next step. We never went deeper.

Reflecting on prior experiences and current practices allows ESL teachers to be engaged in a rigorous way of thinking and in a meaning-making process. Therefore, professional development programs should be organized in a consecutive way in which

the use of reflective practice will result in a succession of changes that are developed from one another and are strengthened through the process to promote continuous improvement in teaching practices.

Another participating ESL teacher, Paula, shared the same ethnical background with most of her students who were bilingual in English and Spanish. Thinking back on her experiences of professional development, Paula shared, “Most of my professional development came from in the beginning where I didn’t know how to do an ESL lesson. Even though in college they talked about strategies and you knew all of these, I didn’t really know how to teach it. So, most of my trainings came from within the district.” It showed that teacher education did not fully prepare Paula to become an ESL teacher. It also indicated that there was a gap between college training and classroom practices and a split between theory and practice. Thus, it is essential for Paula to have access to high-quality professional development.

Paula attended a wide range of professional development, not just focusing on ESL. For example, she attended reading professional development on how to teach vocabulary where she got good ideas to show pictures and then the word, so her students could make connections between the text and the visual images. She also attended writing professional development where she learned to put high frequency words and key words on the walls, so her students could use it as a resource when writing. Paula pointed out that trainings were not limited to ESL instruction because ESL teachers could expand their knowledge and skills by attending diverse trainings in education.

Based on Paula’s experiences, most professional development provided through school districts was not mandatory. “Those were I volunteered to go because I wanted to

learn.” Paula continued, “I went because I needed it. I needed the direction on how to teach it.” Meanwhile, she kept on asking herself, “How can I improve? What’s out there? How can I make it more fun for them here?” Moreover, she continually looked for resources as she said, “I have walked away with good ideas, and I still will look for those opportunities.” However, the schedule of training determined whether she could go or not, as she shared in the following passage.

Everything is pretty much voluntary, after school or on the Saturday. It’s on my time which honestly I’m not gonna go because, you know, with the family and work. I’m not gonna go. But before when I was single, yes, I signed up, you know, graduate school. I went on Saturdays. I went because I need it. I need the direction on how to teach it.

Paula had a strong will to attend ESL professional development programs, but some factors prevented her from going. The major reason was her family. Since most of trainings were provided after school or on Saturdays, Paula had to make a choice between staying with her family and seeking professional growth. As she felt more comfortable with her teaching, she stopped attending those trainings after school or on Saturdays, but she still looked for trainings that were right before the school started or on the school time.

Paula disclosed that the most valuable experience of professional development for her was training for reading because “that’s the tough one,” and then training for ESL because “you just feel the pressure that these kids need to be prepared” for the STAAR test through a comprehensive ESL program, as she further explained as below.

But now, the kids have to take the test in English for the first time in third grade.

So the pressure is really on, I don't know about Pre-K, but kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers to teach them the English. It's extremely important because these kids are getting to that test grade where they have to take the test in English and they can't (whispering). They can't. Maybe they can read it, but they can't understand what they're reading, like the vocabulary.

Paula kept on emphasizing that "ESL is extremely important for English language learners" because in the school district where ESL education was for the ELLs, and the school district had a big population of ELLs. Those students had little exposure to English at home. If they did not make enough progress in ESL program in the lower grades, they would be struggling to pass the STAAR test at third grade. Therefore, the pressure was on ESL teachers. "Then, ESL is a very important part of professional development because we have to get them ready," Paula asserted.

Paula told a story about her first year teaching. At that time, "I was drowning. I was having a really hard time," said Paula. Although she had resources of teacher edition, workbooks, case tapes to play music and stuff, the material was underdeveloped and had no structure. She continued, "I was teaching what I was supposed to teach. I just didn't see the kids were learning." Instead of looking for ESL professional development, Paula asked her friend who was teaching ESL to adults to help her. She reflected, "But it was kind of, you know, different. I was frustrated because I didn't see that anything was changing. Kids were still talking in Spanish. I didn't see the English kicking in."

For now, the material has improved. It has changed to cover the English grammar, such as how to conjugate verbs, compound words, synonym, and antonyms. It has also

become more organized in structure without repeating the same content in kindergarten and elementary levels. However, Paula expected to receive training for how to use the textbook before she had already been using it, as she made the following remark.

I think that's a problem that they send us the books. We start to use them. And then later on we get trained on how to use them. So, it's backwards. They should train us and tell us: this is what you are going to get; this is how you can use it; and make the most out of it in your classroom.

Paula is self-initiated and self-driven in the path of professional development. Since the school district did not provide training for how to teach the textbook and she found the content in the textbook limited, she used the textbook as a guide and looked for online resources to design activities in which her students were engaged, as she expressed in the following passage.

Here, this is the review of compound words (flipping the textbook): raincoat, sunglasses, snowman. It's just like one page, but it's a guide. Before I'm just teaching the ABCs, the colors, you know, that kind of stuff. I didn't have a guide and now this... If they have provided the training, maybe they would have given me a full lesson on how to teach this. But this is pretty much all they give you, and then I have to go online to find that activities. But I mean this was a good start for me.

Even if ESL teachers do not get trained on how to use the textbook, "we're taking our time to see what we have, and then we have to share with our coworkers, so that they're not wasting time," said Paula. When faced with challenges, she not only sought out support from colleagues but also asked for ideas and resources. Paula pointed out that

resources for teaching ELLs had gotten better, such as teaching materials and online resources. “A lot of the websites that we go to are in English, but more and more are also in Spanish. So in that sense we’ve come a long way.” She concluded, “If anything we were lacking is maybe the training, not so much the resources.”

When applying knowledge and skills learned in professional development in her classroom, Paula described it as a trial-and-error process because she was always learning from making mistakes, as she further explained in the following passage.

Just I would say whenever you do something for the first time, you are bound to make mistakes. When I went to the trainings, they showed us how, and they look wonderful, but then when I came back here, it didn’t quite, you know, work the way they presented it. I don’t know if it’s because they were teaching adults, and then when I came back, I was teaching children. But I think after I got the practice, I was able to get over those challenges. But for the first time, I think, it was hard because I was still trying to figure out anything that I brought back to the classroom.

Paula realized that there was a discrepancy between teacher training and class implementation. The possible reason for that might be different types of target learners in two situations. The former was training adults, while the latter was teaching children. What ran well in teacher training might not work well for children in the actual learning situation. However, Paula was able to navigate through those challenges after she got some practice and made some adjustments for her particular class.

In addition, Paula received support from other teachers and the principal. The principal was always supporting her by saying, “Whatever you need, let me know. I’ll try

to get it for you.” Paula stressed, “But most of support is collaborating with other teachers.” She continued, “That has helped my growth where I’m able to share my ideas and then hear from other people.” A community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that shared a concern and generated situated learning had been constructed among teachers. This collective form of professional development was rooted in classroom practices with the goal of gaining knowledge derived from teachers’ work with their students.

Lauren, another participating ESL teacher, was possessed with twenty years of teaching experience and a master’s degree in bilingual education. Looking back on her experiences of professional development, Lauren said, “One of the things that has been really big since I started with ESL is the SIOP training.” Within her school district, it was mandatory for all ESL teachers to be trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, from which she learned different strategies for language instruction. As an ESL support teacher, she had periodic meetings with other ESL teachers. Those meetings were mainly about TELPAS testing or how to show growth of ELLs. Sometimes they had meetings about vocabulary or about a new program that they wanted to try. She concluded, “But the big professional development that has been given to us through the district has been the SIOP training.”

Lauren had learned a lot of strategies and terminologies through professional development. “There’s nothing new under the sun.” She continued, “So, what we always have done is we have these best practices that we use with our students, like proximity, repeating, giving time, or total physical response, just everything.” For her, when professional development opportunities came up, usually they were provided with the same strategies that she had learned before. What helped her was that they reminded her

of those strategies. Sometimes she wondered, “How do these people get paid so much for not giving us anything? They give us the same thing in professional development.” She continued, “We had to be there for hours and we didn’t learn anything. That, to me, is a waste of our valuable time.”

When asked about how she incorporated what she learned in professional development in her classroom, Lauren not only discussed her best practices in ESL instruction but also shared a strategy that came up in conversation with an ESL counterpart, as she described in the following passage.

One of the strategies that I did really like. One of our ESL counterparts from those schools said that she always keeps a list of strategies in the front of her lesson plan book or somewhere she’s always looking at it. In that way, she can always refer to it and just do another strategy because teachers usually go back to the same three that we always love to do because we know it works. But if we actually have other options, we can always keep them in our lesson plan book or our phone to look at. That didn’t come from professional development. It came from actually speaking to another person.

Take the training for brain development as an example, Lauren discussed what made the training “amazing” for her. First of all, it provided with new information and resources. She said, “There was something that I don’t even know. They were very interesting.” Secondly, it was supported with research-based findings and evidence-based practice. She explained, “That’s a really good way and here’s why. Here’s the prove.” Making connections between theory and practice would ensure that she was doing something right. Most important of all, what she learned from the training could be

applied right away in her classroom with no cost of time and money. She emphasized once again as she said, “But mainly, it gave me things that I could do with my students tomorrow.” She continued:

In that training, she was talking about brain research, like how we use our brain and how we can help kids use their brain more. She gave us one handout with a bunch of ideas, but you don’t need a handout for the activities. You just, of course, need to know what they are. I think that’s a big thing for teachers. They have something that they can take back and do instantly. That’s not gonna cost them money. That’s not gonna cost you time. That you can just do with nothing, except just your students and you. I think that’s really important.

Reflecting on her professional development experiences, Lauren pointed out that even she learned some new knowledge or skills in teacher training, if she was not able to apply those strategies in her classroom or practice those techniques in some way right after the training, what she learned would fade away and never be put into practice. She gave such an example of training for brain development as below.

In the 20 years I’ve been teaching, I can’t tell you that I’ve learned so much in every single professional development that I’ve gone to. But I can tell you that there have been a few that are really amazing. However, for example, we went at the end of last year to this training that was so cool. It was talking about brain development. It was really cool, but it was at the end of the year. We actually went when the kids were no longer there in school, so you have to wait the whole summer. You’re gonna forget everything. If you don’t apply it right then and

there. It just kind of goes away. So the other day, I brought out that sheet that we had gotten. Why aren't we doing this? Because we forgot about it.

Therefore, Lauren suggested that follow-up activities should be included in the design and implementation of professional development. In that way, teachers would be encouraged to apply their learning in their particular classrooms and share their growth and struggle with other teachers. For Lauren, teachers, as well as students, were engaged in learning when they got opportunities to digest the information, practice the skills, and apply what they learned in similar situations, as she mentioned the learning process in the following passage.

I think when we were trained, it's kind of left there. There is no follow-up, and there is no opportunity for us to talk about what we just learned. I think that when we talk about professional development, it's kind of like when we teach a class. If I teach my students something, and they don't have time to talk about it with other peers, and then actually do it on their own and practice it, and then teach it to somebody else. They are not gonna keep it. It's not gonna be important to them.

Once their learning was connected to practice and derived from experience, teachers would gain personal practical knowledge that not only increased relevance but also enhanced authenticity in their experiences of professional development. In order to promote understanding and meaning making, Lauren suggested that teachers should reflect on and examine their professional development experiences to drive continuous improvement in their classroom practices, as she further explained in the interview.

I may get excited about something that I learned, but then that's it. The same thing kind of happened with us again, if we don't have the time to talk about it, to

maybe analyze, or to think: “Did it work for you? How did you do it? Maybe I can try it this way.” We don’t have that in my school. Now, my partner and I do talk about: “Hey, let’s try this. Let’s try that.” But, that’s just on our own.

When asked if there was a platform for discussion or a community for support in her school, Lauren responded, “I honestly think that if professional development was done how it was intended, what you were saying would happen.” She continued, “But we don’t have that in my particular school.” Most of the time Lauren was prompted to try something new when other teachers shared what worked for them in conversation. They would say, “Oh my god, I just tried this. It really worked.” Or they might share, “This website was really cool.” It was her colleagues who motivated her to try things out. Lauren and her colleagues were able to share and support each other in an informal way.

Serving in a school where different languages were utilized, Lauren was faced with a challenge to explain a concept to her students who spoke a language other than English because she realized that a concept could not be directly explained with visuals, actions, gestures, or objects. “I could not speak all these other languages.” She continued, “So, those are the challenges sometimes when students speak in other languages.” Lauren told a story of a little girl who just came from India in the following passage.

On the other day, I was trying to teach this Indian girl who can read the words but may not understand what they mean. For example, it was a little story about this mom trying to hurry her son because she doesn’t want to be late. I said, “Let’s look at the word, late. Do you know what it means to be late?” She said, “No.” And then I was like, “Oh, my goodness.” Because she’s from India, I don’t know the word for late. That’s a concept. It’s a hard one.

Lauren expressed her struggle when she could not find a way to explain the concept of being late to the Indian girl. Aside from the language barrier, she assumed that if the concept was not acknowledged in her culture or was not experienced in her real life, it would be more difficult for her to understand it, as she addressed as below.

If I can't explain to you not even with gestures when you can't understand that concept, that's tough. Because there's something you can teach with. This is a bottle. Or this is a spoon. But for time and being late, that's difficult. Especially, she doesn't even realize that she's supposed to be here at a certain time or that she's never late. She doesn't understand what that means. She's not gonna understand that concept. I thought that was very interesting because I tried to give her different scenarios and she just smiled at me.

Lauren always wondered, "I wish there were teachers who could speak all these other languages and give that support." She used Google translate or bidirectional dictionaries to improve communication with and increase understanding of ELLs. She showed them the corresponding translation from English and asked, "Does that make sense?" Even though she did not know if the translation was accurate, they would respond, "Yes. Or no, I don't get it still." With the difficulty in communication with the Indian girl, Lauren reached out to her Indian friend to be able to connect with the Indian girl mentally and emotionally, as she told another anecdote in the following passage.

With the Indian girl, I have an Indian friend. They are at school. At one time she was crying. I was like, "Oh, no. What's wrong?" She was not stop crying. So, I finally took her to her. And then they were able to speak to each other. They were

able to understand each other. She was able to explain to me what was going on.

She was able to explain to her what we were trying to help her understand.

With her friend's help with translation and explanation, Lauren was able to narrow the communication gap with the Indian girl. Even though Lauren tried to figure out different ways to create a welcoming learning environment and provide language support to ELLs, she realized that ELLs might not perceive in the same way as they could not express themselves as well as they would in their native language that made it difficult to reach mutual understanding. As an ESL teacher working with students of different languages and cultures, Lauren was sensitive to their feelings and emotions with the consideration of the social-emotional needs of ELLs. Acknowledging the essential role of native language in the education of ELLs, she illustrated some possibilities to provide that kind of support to ELLs as below.

If there were teachers that spoke the students' language in every school, that would be amazing. That would be great. Or at least like, you know, this might sound like a little bit of segregation, but if there is population that speaks a certain language, there is like two teachers that are in a certain school with them. That would be cool to be able to send them there. Or at least have that contact where you can get that support. I can't even imagine. That's so tough.

While Lauren was addressing what could be provided to ELLs, she also brought up what support was lacking for ESL teachers, which was the accessibility to contact information of teachers or interpreters who could speak native language of ELLs. For her, it was difficult to imagine that their native language could be utilized to facilitate their classroom learning because teachers could not speak the students' native language.

However, she emphasized that providing support with the students' native language in their learning could not be underestimated.

Like the participating teachers, Diana, Paula, and Lauren, many of today's ESL teachers in the United States are challenged when their language of instruction differs from the native language of many of their students and the students' parents. Thus, support systems are established to involve teaching partners, specialists, colleagues, administrators, and principals in the education of ELLs in an attempt to provide resources and opportunities of professional growth for ESL teachers. With the challenges of creating high-quality learning experience for ELLs, the participating ESL teachers became change agents for the ever-growing population of ELLs in order to make sense of theory in light of their experiential knowledge.

Changes in Teacher Knowledge and Teaching Practices

Smiling confidently, Diana shared her story of becoming an ESL teacher in a firm-sounding tone, as she said, "In school settings, I feel like I am at home." She continued, "I have done a lot and dealt with a lot. I guess everybody finds their line. Maybe this one is mine." Diana's teacher knowledge was evolving, while her teaching practice was expanding. Her professional development experiences not only drove her to look beyond the textbook and see the big picture but also prompted her to become more thoughtful and creative, as she recalled in the interview.

I think having the ESL exposure forced me to see the big picture. It forced me to look beyond the textbook, beyond just technology, and actually get in there and get more creative. It also forced me to actually sit back to think and be a little bit more thoughtful before actually writing a lesson out.

Throughout the years, learning from her experiences of ESL teaching and professional development, Diana understood that curriculum and instruction were not limited to the implementation of textbooks and the integration of technology. Instead, creativity in curriculum design and deliberation in lesson planning brought curriculum and instruction alive and enriched students' learning experiences as she put them into practice in a reflective manner. Once again, Diana presented herself as a curriculum maker (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) who constructed and enacted curriculum alongside her students, rather than a curriculum implementer who merely transmitted prescribed curriculum.

Besides, those experiences were undergone with personal accounts that were transformed into embodied knowledge (Johnson, 1989) as Diana became an ESL teacher. In her ESL teaching, she was able to consider multiple perspectives with the understanding of the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of ELLs and their parents, instead of interpreting her teaching practices from her personal standpoint. She revealed her personal and professional growth as an ESL teacher in the following passage.

I guess those experiences personalized ESL teaching for me to the point where I have to fully understand that it's not just about me, and that everybody does not like me. I am also knowledgeable of any practices or traditions in the home environment because it's reflective when students come to school academically. So, if you are an ESL teacher, be familiar with the students' beliefs and practices in the home.

In the deliberation of curriculum and instruction, Diana was able to see the broad picture by contemplating the four interrelated components: teachers, learners, the subject

matter, and the milieu – the four elements introduced in Schwab's (1973) notion of commonplaces of teaching and educational thinking. Through professional development experiences, Diana acknowledged that ESL teaching was not just about how the teacher carried out the curriculum, but more about how the learners experienced the curriculum as they brought their home practices and cultural traditions to the classroom setting. In her interaction with ELLs, she identified and addressed cultural differences in beliefs and practices in order to better facilitate ELLs in English learning.

Gaining knowledge and skills from professional development for teaching ESL, Diana became more sensitive to people who spoke a language other than English and more conscious of their English language development. Because of her experiences with ELLs and their parents, she understood that language was developmental. When asked about how she had changed as an ESL teacher as a result of her professional development experiences, she responded:

Those experiences make me more sensitive to adults. When I am out in public, I still try to develop their language because my professional experience is one of being conscious of ESL language development. Now I'm more open and understanding. I know language is developmental because of my experiences with English language learners and their parents. I don't get frustrated. I learned to just be very patient. I go right back to where I was and what I was working on, if they are trying to come out with the right word, or they are trying to figure out what they want to say. I learned to just be patient.

The practice of developing English language skills for people around her became part of Diana's way to live her life, whether she was in an educational setting or in the

public domain. When she was interacting with people who spoke English as a second language, it became a natural process for her to be aware of their English language development and responsive to their level of English language proficiency. Being acquainted with the fact that they were developing their English language skills, Diana became more open to differences among people, compassionate toward others, patient to repeat or rephrase questions, and more willing to allow wait time.

When serving as a mentor, Diana usually worked with peers, student teachers, or other adults. Because of her professional experiences in English language development, she was receptive to their changing needs and adjustable to different levels of English language competence. She stated, “When I speak with peers or other adults who are still in developmental stages, I make sure that I may speak slower, in simpler sentences, or in two or three different ways to see if they can catch it.” She reiterated, “I am sensitive to that now when helping, talking, or working with people.”

Her teaching practices informed by her teacher knowledge were put into effect in her daily practices related to English language development. In that sense, her teacher knowledge was not only rooted in her teaching practices, but also emerged from her daily interaction with people of different backgrounds. As Diana declared, “those experiences personalized ESL teaching for me.” Her personal and professional experiences directly influenced who she was and what she did as an ESL teacher. Derived from the totality of her experiences, personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) was found in her teaching practices and blended by her personal background and characteristics in particular situations.

Serving as an ESL instructional specialist, Diana observed and evaluated student teachers by using the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), a teacher evaluation system similar to the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS). Instead of bringing the forty-page document to monitor the progress of student teachers, she walked in the classroom with their lesson plan to follow the flow of their teaching. As she recalled on her personal experiences, she commented, “it would be intimidating for a student teacher” to be examined with the checklist for their teaching techniques and behaviors. During observation, she wrote down their strengths and any areas in need of clarification. In the debriefing session following the class, she discussed unclear moments, told them their strong points, and made recommendations of how they could have done differently.

Diana affirmed, “To me, that’s more valuable. It turned out to be more valuable for them because every time when I came back, they put the recommendations into practice.” She continued, “They said they appreciate me doing that. It’s not just filling out the checklist. It’s more personal for them.” In her effort to promote professional growth among student teachers, Diana noted that providing recommendations for improvement was more valuable than filling out evaluation checklists because the constructive feedback prompted changes in their teaching practices and personalized their professional experiences. If teacher evaluation was executed in the form of checklists without considering narratives and generating dialogues, Diana asserted, “It’s only good for numbers.”

Pondering upon her previous experiences of being evaluated by her principal, Diana disclosed that she benefited from deliberately thinking in a reflective way and

making practical sense of her ESL teaching that moved beyond the scores received on the evaluation checklists. Diana did not come to her instructional tasks with a fixed knowledge base. She developed a new understanding of teaching during instruction by reconstructing her past experiences and her future intentions to tackle a present situation. Her personal practical knowledge linked theory and practical work, where theory was drawn from practical experiences and applied back to practical actions.

Playing the role of ESL instructional specialist made Diana a critical and mindful teacher with patience. Even though it was a tough task, it was, in fact, enjoyable and intriguing as she built up her aptitude in ESL teaching. With a positive mindset, she described her professional growth as below.

Being an ESL instructional specialist is tough, but it's actually fun because it actually makes me a stronger teacher. If I have to go in and be critical as someone else, I have to be mindful. Besides, I have to be patient and realize that this is just their first semester, that they are nervous, and that they are still developing their teaching style. So, I go in and I watch them. I also look all the way around the room to see if all are in the right place. Sometimes it's just looking without anybody having to tell me. I can piece together how things work. So, it's actually interesting to do it.

In the mentoring process, Diana focused her full attention on the present situation before she made a judgment and gave suggestions because she was aware that teacher knowledge was derived from practice and situated in the work of practice with the consideration of various backgrounds and characteristics of student teachers. With personal practical knowledge, she was able to envision how things would work and

provide a holistic perspective on student teaching after observing the teaching and the organization of the whole classroom. Her teacher knowledge was strengthened through a deeper understanding of the work of practice while she was mentoring student teachers, which allowed her to make connections between theory and practice.

In terms of another participating ESL teacher, Paula reflected on her experiences of professional development that reconstructed her teacher knowledge and changed her teaching practices. After attending a training on reading, she noted, “When I’m teaching vocabulary, I need to give it more importance.” She started to teach vocabulary by utilizing visual images. “So the kids can make that connection,” she explained. The development of her teacher knowledge and teaching practices were intertwined with her experiences of professional development, as she asserted in the following passage.

I think throughout the years I didn’t have a lot of resources. As soon as I taught something, I would put it away, but that has changed over the years. That side is the ESL side. I have visuals up for them to refer back to. So, that’s something that I think has changed. Before you could come in like a customer, and you didn’t know what I was teaching. But now you can come in to my classroom, and you can know what they’ve been learning and what they’re learning now. So I think that leaving things up for them to use as a resource. They can look up and feel a little bit more independent, instead of always asking me.

Recognizing the necessity of providing visual aid as resources for ELLs, Paula changed her way of teaching by keeping images on the walls. As she went on narrating her teaching practices, she revealed changes in her teacher knowledge that supported her future intention to cultivate independent learners. Her experiences of professional

development played a central role in shaping her teacher knowledge as an inspiration for her teaching practices. Meanwhile, she noticed that those changes not only guided how her students formulated their learning, but also influenced how people outside of the classroom perceived her teaching.

When asked about what teacher knowledge was needed in working with ELLs, Paula told a story about a little girl who hardly talked and was extremely quiet in her class. From the beginning of the year, she knew the little girl did not understand much English, so she ended up putting her in the lower ESL group focusing on vocabulary development. With her, Paula had to respect her comfort level and understand that eventually she would start to speak up. She concluded:

I think that ESL teachers have to understand the silent period that students have. I think we have to accept that. You have to understand that they're embarrassed or they're shy. And you have to respect that and just know that eventually they will start to talk. The little girl understands me. Like they'll tell her she told you to do this. She said, "I know (whispering)." I think don't get frustrated when some of the kids are slower than others.

Throughout the years, Paula's teacher knowledge as an ESL teacher was developing while she was working with ELLs. She stressed that ESL teachers should allow ELLs to have the silent period and learn at their own pace. She observed that even when ELLs understood what was said in English, they could shy away from saying anything in the language they were learning because they felt they were not ready. They should not be forced to speak because it required them more time to listen to others talk,

digest what they heard, and observe their classmates' interactions. As Paula emphasized, "the kids can learn" and "eventually they will start to talk."

Paula expressed that professional development related to teaching ESL reading was most valuable for her as she felt the pressure of preparing ELLs for the STAAR test. However, she never attended any training on ESL reading. Over the years, she had applied what she learned in training on teaching Spanish reading into teaching ESL reading. In the interview, she was wondering whether she should use the same strategies in Spanish reading to teach students how to read in English. She divulged:

Like for me, I know how to teach them how to read in Spanish. And so I use those same strategies to teach them how to read in English, but is that a good idea? I don't know. I haven't really been trained on how to teach reading for ESL. I've only been trained on Spanish reading, so does that kind of make sense? I'm just using those strategies, and somebody might say, yeah, when it's reading, you know, it was different, but I don't know. It's different alphabet. Should I have been using the same strategies?

While sharing her perspectives on her professional development experiences, Paula reflected on her practice for teaching ESL reading. She questioned herself if it was adequate to teach strategies in Spanish reading when she was teaching ESL reading. She also expressed a regret that she had not been trained on how to teach ESL reading. It became an inevitable situation for her to employ what she learned in training on Spanish reading to teach ESL reading. Because of this discrepancy, Paula indicated that ESL reading would be the most beneficial professional development as she felt unsure about her teaching practices and had a strong need for change.

Her teacher knowledge forged by her teaching experiences was challenged and reconstructed when Paula tried to make sense of her teaching practices. She utilized reading comprehension skills that she learned in training on Spanish reading to teach ELLs how to read in English. As she identified that Spanish and English are two different languages with different patterns, she wondered, “Should I have been using the same strategies?” Paula delved into her teaching practices and realized that she lacked essential knowledge for teaching ESL reading which was fundamental to ensure that ELLs were prepared for the STAAR test.

The insufficiency of her teacher knowledge was revealed after Paula was probing into her teaching practices and examining the learning outcomes of ELLs. Even though she applied teaching strategies learned in ESL writing training to classroom practices, she recognized the need to improve her teaching for ESL writing after evaluating her students’ performance in class. She shared her concerns as below.

I try to fill them with a lot of information, and then I have all the high frequency words and the key words, but it’s still not all of them are going down the same path. Some are still writing in Spanish. They’re understanding in English, but they’re writing in Spanish.

Being conscious of students’ progress in learning and students’ response to her teaching, Paula was compelled to engage in professional development because she had to make her students’ learning experiences meaningful and successful. She reflected on her teaching and said:

You start to do the same thing over and over again, so you can tell the kids kind of, like, “Ugh (making a boring facial expression),” because we’re doing it in the

same way. So, I will try. So, I have to go out and get it. I have to, like, go to professional development.

Paula was sensitive to nuances in her teaching practices while she was interacting with ELLs in an ESL classroom. By analyzing her classroom practices, she distinguished strengths and weaknesses of her ESL teaching that drove her to pursue professional growth. Through professional development, she tried to improve her teaching and meet her students' needs in learning. With those experiences, Paula became a competent ESL teacher and gained confidence in her ESL teaching ability as she noticed that her students were learning and implementing what they learned in relevant situations. She stated:

I feel more confident and my students are more successful through my professional development, through my experiences, through my mistakes. I've been able to become a better ESL teacher. I'm more confident. And you're rewarded when you see them, you know, pick up on what you're teaching them, and they're using what you're teaching them. You know it's good. I know I'm more confident now.

After making some changes in what and how she taught ESL classes, Paula felt fulfilled as an ESL teacher. She was content to strengthen her ability in teaching ESL as she was capable to cover a higher level of English learning and her students could pick up what she taught. She added:

I'm more satisfied with the way I'm teaching. But that has only become through professional development and through experiences, mistakes, you know, that kind of stuff. Now I'm much more satisfied as an ESL teacher because I'm covering the grammar [more than just the colors, the numbers, and the ABCs]. Before we

started talking, we talked about compound words. I'm covering a lot more with the kids, and they're able to do it.

Paula disclosed that she became a better ESL teacher by learning from professional development, teaching experiences, and mistakes in classroom practices. She was more confident and satisfied with her teaching because she started to incorporate the English grammar in teaching and her students applied their newly learned grammar skills to their writing. The cultivation of teacher knowledge helped Paula construct a positive teacher identity that was transmitting through her teaching practices.

As another ESL teacher participant, Lauren showed her desire to testify whether what she learned in professional development could be employed in her ESL classroom in an attempt to advance student learning. Serving as an ESL support teacher, she was working with ELLs at different grade levels and different levels of English proficiency. She had to consider their developmental stages in cognition, affection, psychomotor, and language when she put new knowledge and skills into practice and made adjustments for a particular group of her students. Hence, her teacher knowledge in ESL teaching was constructed and reconstructed through continuous reflection and inquiry into her teaching practices. She articulated the importance of making practical sense of her ESL teaching in diverse circumstances as below.

I like to try things out. When somebody shows something, sometimes he will tell us that it works with this, it works with that. But I like to try in my own classroom to see if it actually does work for my students because it could work with my kindergarteners, but not with my fifth graders, right? Some strategies are kind of difficult for kindergarteners, but they are easy for fifth graders.

Lauren gave an example of incorporating the latest program called Flowcabulary, a library of educational hip-hop videos and activities for K-12 online learning to help students master academic content while building core literacy skills. She commented, “Well, that could work with some kids, but not everybody likes raps.” Before she decided to adopt suggestions for teaching ESL, she contemplated what might work with certain types of learners. And then, she carried it out with modifications in her classes. She further explained:

So, I like to try them out in my own classrooms when I am given a suggestion of what could work with a certain content area, or a different subject that you want them to learn, or vocabulary, and things like that. And even if I don’t like it, but it works with somebody, so you know, try it out.

Despite her preference in teaching methods, Lauren was inclined to give it a try to see if the newly learned instructional techniques could be exercised to reach culturally and linguistically diverse students and achieve their learning goals. Without putting new knowledge and skills into action, she could not justify the legitimacy of her teacher knowledge and teaching practices that aim to provide a quality education of ELLs. In that sense, she raised awareness of nurturing the knowledge that teachers generated as a result of their teaching in a specific educational context, which was known as personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Lauren’s experiences of professional development highlighted the experiential and contextual nature of her teacher knowledge that emerged from her classroom practices and interactions with ELLs.

Even though Lauren was willing to apply different teaching methods in her classes, she revealed that instructional strategies promoted via professional development

were new terms for old concepts. With twenty years of teaching experience in bilingual and ESL education, she had learned about those strategies and techniques. She found that when novel teaching approaches were proposed, they were integrated with the same strategies that she had learned before, as she claimed, “There’s nothing new under the sun.” From her perspective, emerging approaches to education were adorned with fancy names that were typically built on the fundamental principles of teaching and learning. Therefore, participating in professional development reminded Lauren of various instructional strategies and techniques, rather than guiding her to explore innovative knowledge and skills of language teaching.

Throughout the years, Lauren never stopped pursuing professional development and striving to develop the full potential of ELLs. She was exposed to primary principles and methods for teaching ELLs through professional development. Her experiences of professional development allowed her to master teaching principles and establish her teaching style, as she declared, “I have my strategies. I have these best practices that I use with my students.” While Lauren was implementing advice and suggestions received at teacher training in her ESL classes, she refined her teaching practices and extracted best practices from her teaching experience in the interactions with her students who were learning the English language in addition to their native language. After examining her students’ performance, Lauren constructed patterns of her teaching and counted on those practices to bring about meaningful learning for ELLs, such as proximity, repeating, giving time, or total physical response.

While Lauren was recalling a challenging moment to explain an abstract concept in English to a new coming Indian girl, she reflected on her previous interactions with

other ELLs, as she said, “I hadn’t encountered that in a long time where it’s a concept that she doesn’t understand at all.” She continued, “Or maybe I’m encountering, but they are not saying anything. Maybe they are shy. Some of the students may not say I don’t understand.” By retelling the story concerning the Indian girl, Lauren revisited the teaching scenario that took place at a specific time and within a certain context. The story was expanded as she drew on her prior knowledge and experience with other ELLs to interpret what was happening in her class. Besides, she tried to understand the situation not only from her standpoint but also from her students’ perspectives. In order to make sense of the scenario, she articulated how ELLs were shying away from using the English language in the following passage.

It was funny. One time when we were in circle and I was like, “Okay, let’s talk about whatever subject.” They were just looking at each other (laughing) because they were shy about it. Sometimes that’s challenging to get them to not be shy about speaking the language.

Although Lauren depicted the scene in an amused tone, she divulged a challenge faced by ESL teachers, that was, how to encourage ELLs to talk. Her concern about developing English speaking skills for ELLs resonated with Diana’s emphasis on wait time and Paula’s attention on silent period in ESL instruction. Moreover, Lauren’s personal experience as a newcomer to the United States echoes with some of her students’ experience of moving to a new country and learning a new language, as she illustrated her personal background and personality as below.

My family was from another country. When we came here, I just not shied to speak. I just tried. My dad wasn’t shy. But my mom and my brother were very

shy, so they would not speak to anyone unless they could say it right. So, it's challenging. Some little kids are like that, too.

Detecting the hesitancy that her mother and brother held toward using the newly learned language, Lauren became compassionate toward ELLs and sensitive to possible factors that made them feel insecure about speaking up in class. She noticed that ELLs tended to remain silent even when they did not understand what they had been told because they were embarrassed to ask for support. Since ELLs expressed themselves more openly in their native language, Lauren allowed her students to use their native language in discussion and communication. She gave a such example as follows.

I have had students that came from other country. There was a student in my classroom who was from that country. So, I definitely pair them up. I would say, "Y'all talk and translate for him and translate for me." But at the same time, I give them enough scaffolding for that to happen, but for them to also try on their own because that's important as well.

Based on her personal experience as a newcomer to the United States, Lauren found it beneficial for ELLs to speak in their native language in a school environment as it became an alternative way to provide language support. Meanwhile, she afforded them instructional scaffolding to promote deeper level of learning and independent learning. Both her personal and professional experiences forged her teacher knowledge and informed her teaching practices while she was working with ELLs. As she showed her empathy to ELLs facing with numerous challenges, she recollected her childhood language learning experience in the following passage.

But I remember when I came to the United States, my class was all in English. I did not understand anything. I was in the corner with earphones on and stuff. It was very lonely, and it was difficult. And even though everybody looked like me, because everybody was Latino, but none of them spoke Spanish. It was just very weird (stressing). It was very like, “Uh.” I would ask questions in Spanish. They would look at me like, “What were you saying?” That was a very difficult time, so I can imagine my own students.

Thinking back on the time when she was placed in a classroom where English was the only language utilized, Lauren uncovered that her English learning experience was filled with loneliness and awkwardness. Without knowing English, she could not participate in classroom discussions and general learning activities. She was seated in a corner of the classroom with limited learning support. At the same time, she could not communicate in her native language because nobody of common descent spoke her language even though they looked like her. That was a shock for her because she could not rely on the language that she felt most comfortable with to socialize with her peers or support her leaning in class. Despite the fact that she was brave enough to use the newly learned language and accommodate herself to the new environment, it was so tough for her to find a way out that she did not want her students to be placed in the same predicament.

Inspired by her personal experience as an English language learner from Peru, she made her mind to become a change agent for her students and devoted herself to the education of ELLs, as she asserted, “I wanted to give back to the community and be a light for those who come to this country without knowing English.” Understanding all the

challenges that ELLs faced when they settled in an English speaking country, Lauren expected that she could illuminate the lives they lived and the world they were part of. In her ESL classroom, she tried to brighten the path to achievement for ELLs by making positive changes in her teaching practices and creating a warm and inclusive learning environment.

For Lauren, her personal practical knowledge was embedded in the enactment of instructional tasks and embodied in her mind and body that guided her to make meaning of her teaching experience and give personal accounts of her teaching practices within specific contexts. When she retold the story of an Indian girl in her class, she shared her personal experience as a newcomer with her family to the United States. Her narration disclosed how she made sense of her previous experience, made decisions about present interactions with her students, and planned future appropriate actions in response to novel situations. Her personal practical knowledge was blended by her personal experience and rooted in her teaching practices.

The participating ESL teachers, Diana, Paula, and Lauren, constructed and reconstructed their teacher knowledge through making sense of their teaching practices that were reflected in their previous experience, in their present mind and body, and in their future plans and actions. Throughout the years, their teacher knowledge as ESL teachers was forged and expressed in their teaching practices while they were working with ELLs. As they went on narrating their experiences of professional development, they revealed changes in their teacher knowledge and teaching practices that supported their future intention to advance the education of ELLs. The cultivation of their teacher knowledge and the reinforcement of their teaching practices were intertwined with their

experiences of professional development. Emerged from their teaching practices, their personal practical knowledge was embodied in individuals, bounded in specific time, and embedded in particular situations, including the social, cultural, and political context.

Features of the Social, Cultural, and Political Context

In the school district where Diana was teaching, it was a requirement that all teachers became ESL certified or they would be asked to resign because the school district had approximately 36 percent of ELLs with over 80 different languages. Located in the fourth largest city in the United States, her school was demanded to serve the rapidly growing population of ELLs by putting a lot of time and effort into making sure that ESL teachers were sufficiently prepared through professional development to provide an equitable education for students whose first language was not English.

Seeing that ESL teachers were faced with challenges to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse learners, Diana recommended that school districts provide regular professional development programs for ESL teachers. However, she perceived the socio-economic and socio-political impact on the implementation of professional development for ESL teachers, as she commented, “Every school district is not necessarily on board with it because they feel it’s not a need if they don’t believe their population is large enough and economically they can’t afford to do it.” Diana revealed the fact that not every school district in the urban areas recognized the necessity to invest in professional development for teaching ELLs, even if most teachers had or could be expected to have at least one ELL in their classrooms.

From the perspective of decision makers, it seemed to be justifiable for the school districts to determine whether professional development programs would be put into

effect based on the size of the ESL teacher population and the cost analysis along with studies of program outcomes. However, without providing sufficient training for ESL teachers, it would turn into an issue of social justice because ELLs should deserve equal access to a high-quality education regardless of their language background. They should have the right to be taught by teachers who took specialized training for teaching ELLs. Because of limited funds and resources, it became imperative for ESL teachers to act as advocates on educational equality and justice for ELLs.

In her ESL classroom, Diana had students who were only fluent in their native language, such as Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, African languages, and Middle Eastern languages. “I had to differentiate my instruction to accommodate any language barriers,” she said. When she spoke or interacted with them, she tried to use simpler sentences at the beginning. But she still held them accountable for getting the same academic assignments to learn as other students. She reiterated, “So, I have to be accommodating for their building of the English language whenever I was teaching a lesson in any of the academic subjects.”

In an attempt to become a competent ESL teacher, she pursued professional development and learned about how to implement appropriate ESL modifications. According to Diana, there was not much professional development specifically for teaching ELLs. In addition to the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Systems (TELPAS), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was introduced to ESL teachers as a highly recommended teaching approach for ELLs. Through the SIOP training, she gained some instructional strategies to enhance her ESL instruction that aimed to improve academic performance of ELLs.

As an ESL teacher in a public elementary school, Diana encountered complex issues since ELLs with different nationalities brought not only their languages but also their cultures to the classroom. In her interaction with ELLs, she identified and addressed cultural differences in beliefs and practices of ELLs in order to better facilitate them in English learning. With twelve years of teaching experience, she claimed, “I guess that if there was one valuable advice I would pass on, that is, if you are an ESL teacher, just as you will have many students that are not American-born, be familiar with ESL students’ beliefs and practices in the home.” For Diana, becoming familiar with home practices and cultural traditions of ELL families helped to avoid miscommunication and create a welcoming and respectful learning environment.

Seeing that professional development for ESL teachers focused mainly on the SIOP model and the TELPAS training, Diana suggested, “Actually incorporating the multicultural education piece into it.” She continued, “They trained us on instructional strategies for the English language learners, but no one has ever acknowledged the multicultural differences and how they impact the learners’ development.” Since cultural diversity permeated the daily life of the ESL classroom, Diana became sensitive and responsive to the backgrounds and prior knowledge of ELLs, which was echoed with the concept of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000). From her interactions with ELLs and their parents, she learned that she had to consider the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of ELLs while she was making decisions and judgements.

After recognizing the necessity to attend to cultural diversity in the classroom, Diana pointed out the lack of professional development for multicultural education. She learned about general customs, practices, and beliefs in a wide blanket of culture in a

multicultural education course while she was getting her master's degree, rather than through professional development. In order to train ESL teachers to be adaptive to multicultural classrooms and receptive to diversity of ELLs, Diana recommended incorporating multicultural education into the design and implementation of professional development. As she further explained, acknowledging cultural diversity enriched her students' learning experiences when she allowed them to discuss various customs, practices, and beliefs and contribute their own cultural experience in the classroom.

Coming from a wide range of ethnic groups, ELLs were compelled to learn the English language in the United States in order to succeed not only socially but also academically. With the same goal, ESL education was designed to teach English to students whose first language was not English. In that sense, ESL teachers were only required to speak English and did not need to know the languages and cultures that ELLs brought to the classroom. However, it was not the case since Diana was obliged to integrate culture into her ESL classroom, as she said, "I am also knowledgeable of any practices or traditions in the home environment because it's reflective when students come to school academically." She continued, "So, if you are an ESL teacher, be familiar with the students' beliefs and practices in the home."

In the era of educational accountability, high-stakes testing was adopted to determine academic achievement of ELLs. However, those test scores could not capture what was happening and how ELLs were progressing in classrooms. Diana divulged, "The challenge for me is being able to explain to administration why English language learners on paper, according to high-stakes accountability data, may not perform on level when they are successful in my classroom." Viewed from a deficit perspective, ELLs

were inclined to be labeled as failures by standardized tests when they did not make the same rate of growth as native English speaking students (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Moreover, these tests could not be relied on to provide accurate assessments of their abilities in content areas because levels of language proficiency interfered to obtain valid scores.

Another participating ESL teacher, Paula, kept on emphasizing that “ESL is extremely important for English language learners” because they had to take the STAAR test in English for the first time in third grade, and they were struggling to pass it. The school district where Paula was teaching had a big population of ELLs that accounted for 30 percent of the district population. If ELLs did not build up general English skills in the lower grades, they would have a hard time to pass the STAAR test in third grade. Thus, Paula felt obligated to help her students develop a language ability that matched their grade level. Especially when they got to third grade, those students had to gain third grade level vocabulary and reading ability to pass the STAAR test.

Because of the enactment of educational accountability policies, ESL teachers were held accountable for academic achievement of ELLs. Paula expressed that she was under “the pressure knowing that these kids are depending upon us for them to do well when they have to do everything in English. I feel more responsible for that.” Hence, it was tough for Paula to watch her students suffering from standardized testing because of underdeveloped ESL program and limited exposure to English. She commented:

I think it’s because at home nobody speaks English, so that’s why I’m trying to talk to them as much as I can in English because I know they don’t get any English at home. And when they go to the third grade, they have to pass the

STAAR test. They're gonna have to pass it. And they need that third grade level vocabulary. They have to take that STAAR test. Then, ESL is a very important part of professional development because we have to get them ready.

As Paula pointed out that the pressure was on ESL teachers to teach ELLs the English language and make them achieve the national benchmarks, she raised awareness of an ongoing task for ESL teachers to pursue professional growth. Entrusted with this responsibility, she constantly searched for professional development opportunities because she believed that ESL professional development was important for teachers to improve ESL instructional practices and enhance academic achievement of ELLs. Through professional development, Paula became more confident and satisfied with her teaching because she started to incorporate the English grammar in teaching and her students applied their newly learned grammar skills to their writing.

Paula held a positive attitude towards professional development because she walked away with good ideas from most training, and she committed to look for opportunities to learn new ideas. After training, she was encouraged to share and collaborate with her colleagues in the school setting. She noticed that collaboration was highly promoted among teachers on campus. Working together and exchanging ideas with her colleagues enhanced her professional growth. She stated:

They really push for collaboration that we work with each other, so I think that has helped my growth where I'm able to share my ideas and then hear from other people. And sometimes their way is... it's really good, then I'll do it. Sometimes just like, well, my kids are too young to quite do that yet. I think that has been able to collaborate that has helped me grow.

Learning from other people and their experiences, Paula was capable of applying some good strategies to her teaching. She also made professional judgements on what method was suitable for the particular group of her students based on her knowledge and experiences. In collaboration with other teachers in the school setting, Paula brought about changes in her teaching practices and grew as professionals.

When asked about any connection established with teachers outside the campus, Paula expressed, “It’s really hard. Once with the family, it’s just get really hard to be part of other organizations.” She recalled her experience of getting together with teachers from other schools in the following passage.

At the beginning of the school year, before the kids come back to school, the school district brings schools together. We have to go to the training. Maybe it will be 10 elementary schools from this part of town. We are supposed to go to the same location for training, but we get to pick what session we want to go to. And at that time, I may be able to collaborate with other teachers from other schools and hear from them, so I would say that’s the most I can get as far as outside to affect my professional development.

Paula revealed that there was limited opportunity for teachers to connect and cooperate with other teachers from different schools through professional development. When she met and talked with other teachers in different training sessions, she could seize the chance to have some collaborations with them. When asked about the feel of the culture in her school towards professional development, she sighed and said:

Okay, honestly, and this is kind of bad. We are kind of overwhelmed with all the work we have to do, so that when they tell us you have to go to professional

development, we're like, "Oh, I have so much to do. I don't want to go to professional development." Sometimes they were really good, and sometimes they were not so good. And it's, kind of, a waste of our time.

Even though Paula held a positive attitude towards professional development, pursuing professional development was not a common goal shared by teachers, and so it was not part of the school culture. Teachers in her school were inclined not to participate in professional development because they were overwhelmed by their workloads and had no desire to waste their time on attending ineffective professional development. Paula further explained:

But I think what helps is when they let us pick what we want to go to, administrators need to know – don't just force us to go. This is mandatory. They just require everybody to get this training. No, let us pick what we want because we know what we were lacking in.

Paula indicated that professional development would be more attractive to teachers when they could choose training according to what was lacking in their knowledge and skills. Thus, administrators should allow teachers to make their own decisions to meet their professional development needs because the urge for professional growth varied by person, time, place, and situation. Paula viewed teachers as self-directed individuals who could reflect on their teaching, identify deficiencies in their practice, and look for additional training and resources.

Paula envisioned that a comprehensive ESL program should be established where ELLs could be fully prepared for the STAAR test and ESL teachers could reach all of their students, so that each of them could be successful in learning. It was devastating for

her to watch ELLs struggling to pass the STAAR test because of the language barrier. Feeling the pressure building within, she was driven to pursue professional development in order to strengthen her ability in ESL instruction. She stated:

So, I think my vision is for an ESL program to be in place where the kids don't have to experience that anymore because it's hard on them. And that's why I keep going back to the ESL professional development. It's really (stressing) important (tapping the desk) because these kids when they get there, they are not ready. And we feel the stress and I feel better about how I'm teaching ESL. The resources have gotten better, and I, you know, I like it. And I see the improvement, but not all of them. So, my vision would be for us to be able to reach all of them.

Once again, Paula emphasized that ESL professional development was really important because the pressure was on ESL teachers to pave a successful path for ELLs by enhancing their ESL instruction through continuously pursuing professional growth. She observed that ELLs did not develop English language proficiency to pass the STAAR test. They depended on ESL teachers to help them sharpen their English skills. Hence, ESL teachers were obligated to assist ELLs to cultivate their language ability that matched their grade level in order to pass the STAAR test. Paula was satisfied with her ESL teaching because her students were improving along the way. However, not all of them were going down the same path and making learning progress. Thus, she expected that ESL teachers could reach all of their students and meet their diverse needs.

In terms of Lauren, another ESL teacher participant, she was teaching in a public elementary school where a lot of students were Spanish speakers. She had four ESL groups that were composed of roughly twenty students coming from different countries,

including Nigeria, Vietnam, Jamaica, India, and Nepal. She divided her students into four ESL groups based on their English language proficiency, so she had a group of Beginning students, Intermediate students, Advanced students, and Advanced High students. Hence, the students in each group were varied in ages. Although she tried to put them into groups by their English language proficiency, sometimes it was difficult to divide them by the same criteria because of the students' class schedules. She preferred to pull them out from their classrooms during reading, but some students had different class schedules, so she had to adapt to their schedules and assist them in learning content areas in their classrooms.

Lauren had been teaching in bilingual and ESL education for twenty years. Most of her students spoke a language other than English and came from a culture with traditions and values that differed from mainstream American culture. When her students brought their languages and cultures to the classroom, Lauren found ways to help them adjust to new surroundings and invite their culture into the classroom. She declared, "One of the things that I'm always careful about is being authentic and being respectful." To prevent false assumptions, Lauren encouraged her students to share their cultural traditions and practices as primary resources to make their learning authentic and representative of their cultures. Moreover, she enhanced their cultural awareness by introducing them to different cultures and encouraging them to respect other cultures.

Acknowledging the essential role of native language in the education of ELLs, Lauren always wondered, "I wish there were teachers who could speak all these other languages and give that support." It was tough for her to imagine utilizing her students' native language in ESL teaching because she could not speak other languages except

English and Spanish. To facilitate their language learning, she assigned a peer partner who knew their native language and allowed them to use their native language in discussions when possible. Besides, she reached out to adults who could speak their native language to serve as interpreters when communication problems came up. “If there were teachers that spoke the students’ language in every school, that would be amazing,” Lauren commented. For her, the importance of providing support with the students’ native language in their learning could not be underestimated.

As a newcomer to the United States, Lauren shared similar experiences with her students who tried to learn a new language. Because her English learning experience was filled with loneliness and awkwardness, she was committed to create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for her students, as she disclosed, “I wanted to give back to the community and be a light for those who come to this country without knowing English.” Lauren was compassionate toward ELLs with linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and sensitive to their English language development and cultural accommodation. Understanding the need of ELLs to maintain their native language, she advocated that ESL teachers should allow different languages and cultures to exist in their classrooms. Lauren emphasized:

To me, I always think that it is important for them to keep their mother tongue.

That’s most important. I don’t know how that can happen. All I know is that ESL certified teachers need to be receptive to everybody’s language and be able to be okay with people speaking other languages in their own classroom.

Lauren envisioned an education of ELLs where teachers could speak the students’ native language to facilitate them in learning; at the same time, students could continue to

use their native language to support their English language development. However, she could not imagine what the current education system would entail to bring about those changes because ELLs who came from a wide range of ethnic groups brought various languages and different cultures to the school setting. She further explained:

And I think it's important for them to hear their language even at school. I don't know what that would entail for our education to be able to give that to everybody because I mean there are so many countries and so many languages that I don't know, so I wonder.

For all that, Lauren rethought the possibility for ESL teachers to have access to contact information of teachers, parents, or interpreters who could speak the students' native language. Thus, ESL teachers could reach out for support from the outside to smooth out misunderstandings that arose due to communication problems or cultural differences. On the other hand, Lauren emphasized the importance for ELLs to retain their native language whether it was through speaking with peers in the classroom or hearing other people use the language in the school setting. When she encouraged her students to use their native language and share their cultural traditions, they tended to see the value of bilingualism and preserve their culture and heritage. Therefore, Lauren suggested that ESL teachers should be receptive to the students' native language and responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of ELLs.

Reflecting on her experiences of professional development, Lauren asserted, "But the big professional development that has been given to us through the district has been the SIOP training." It was mandatory for all ESL teachers in her school district to be trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol. Throughout the years, Lauren

learned so many instructional strategies and techniques through professional development that she commented, “I’ve seen that all. There’s nothing new under the sun.” For her, when professional development opportunities came up, they were usually provided with the same strategies that she had learned before. Sometimes she wondered, “How do these people get paid so much for not giving us anything? They give us the same thing in professional development.” She continued, “We had to be there for hours and we didn’t learn anything. That, to me, is a waste of our valuable time.”

Lauren expected to explore inventive knowledge and skills of language teaching, rather than reviewing various instructional strategies and techniques through professional development. She added, “I think when we were trained, it’s kind of left there. There is no follow-up, and there is no opportunity for us to talk about what we just learned.” In professional development, teachers should be treated as active learners. They would be more engaged in learning if they were given opportunities to digest the information, practice the skills, and apply what they learned in similar situations. Therefore, Lauren suggested that follow-up sessions could be provided to help teachers reflect on their teaching practices and discuss changes in student learning. In that way, teachers would be encouraged to apply their learning in their particular classrooms and share their growth and struggle with other teachers.

When asked if there was a platform for discussion or a community for support in her school, Lauren responded, “I honestly think that if professional development was done how it was intended, what you [the researcher] were saying would happen.” She continued, “But we don’t have that in my particular school.” Lauren expressed that even when she got excited about what she learned, if she did not talk about it with her

colleagues or think about how to incorporate it into her teaching, she would leave it behind and never put it into practice. Although there was no formal platform to share or discuss in her school, Lauren was motivated to try something new when her colleagues shared what worked for them in conversation. Besides, she and her teaching partner with similar teaching background were able to encourage and support each other to try different things.

Situated in three different public elementary schools where ESL programs were provided to meet the needs of ELLs, the participating ESL teachers, Diana, Paula, and Lauren, inquired into their experiences of professional development in an attempt to better serve the linguistically and culturally diverse student population. When they lived out their narratives, their professional growth was closely relevant for the participating ESL teachers in the social, cultural, and political context. After recognizing the necessity to attend to cultural diversity in the classroom, Diana pointed out the lack of professional development for multicultural education. Because of the enactment of educational accountability policies, Paula felt the pressure of preparing ELLs for the STAAR test. Acknowledging the essential role of native language in the education of ELLs, Lauren advocated that ESL teachers should allow different languages and cultures to exist in their classrooms. Their lived experiences provoked deeper insights and understandings into professional development for ESL teachers.

Chapter VI

Summary and Discussion

Teaching English as a foreign language in Taiwan, I began this inquiry by asking myself how I continually looked for professional development opportunities and pursued professional growth to meet the needs of my students. To unpack the puzzle of ESL teachers' experiences of professional development, I employed a narrative methodology to understand and interpret my own developmental experiences and my participants' professional development experiences. By looking for themes and tensions about challenges they encountered, support they received, changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practice, and features of the social, cultural, and political context, I identified three narrative threads in ESL teachers' educational life, including the teaching thread, the curriculum inquiry thread, and the thread of multiculturalism. Those narrative threads interwove with the ESL teachers' experiences of professional development that were explored in this study to capture their lived stories of becoming and being ESL teachers.

ESL Professional Development Experiences

The three participating ESL teachers indicated that professional development provided through school districts for ESL teachers were mainly regarding the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). The SIOP model is to address the academic needs of ELLs and improve their academic English in all content areas, while the TELPAS testing is to assess the progress that ELLs make in learning the English language. That resulted in a tendency for ESL teachers to receive training on the same instructional strategies and attend training not specifically for ESL teachers in order to advance their knowledge and

skills in teaching. It is noticeable that opportunities for professional development in the areas of ESL teaching, modification and differentiation of teaching, and multicultural education are limited.

ESL teachers are calling for specialized ESL training to enhance their knowledge and practice in serving the diverse needs of ELLs. However, not every school district with a high concentration of ELLs identifies the necessity to invest in professional development for teaching ELLs based on the size of its ESL teacher population and the cost analysis along with studies of program outcomes. ELLs deserve equal access to a high-quality education regardless of their racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic background. They have the right to be taught by teachers who are fully trained for teaching ELLs and sufficiently prepared to face the linguistic and cultural challenges in teaching. Because of limited funds and resources targeted to ELLs, it is imperative for schools to advocate for ELLs-centered policies, funding, and learning conditions and for teachers to act as advocates on educational equality and justice for ELLs.

Reflecting on their experiences of professional development, the ESL teacher participants suggested to provide ongoing and consecutive professional development that was designed to engage ESL teachers in the process of reflective practice. In professional development, ESL teachers should be treated as active learners who have opportunities to discuss what they learned from training, apply their new learning in their particular classrooms, and share their growth and struggle with other teachers. Moreover, ESL teachers should be encouraged to reflect on teaching practices and examine changes in student learning in order to develop a deeper understanding of their teaching and drive continuous improvement in their classroom practices. To promote the continuity of

experience (Dewey, 1938), professional development programs should be organized in a successive way in which the use of reflective practice (Schön, 1983) allows ESL teachers to be engaged in a rigorous way of thinking and involved in a meaning-making process.

According to Dewey (1938), a meaningful experience occurs when teachers engage in reflection to solve a current problem. While a problem is emerged, thinking is employed to examine the situation in the action. Through reflection, teachers gain developmental insight into their practice, so that they are motivated to take action to solve the problem. Furthermore, reflection is a purposeful tool to be utilized to reflect-in-action (Schön, 1983) as teachers draw on their tacit knowledge to guide actions during teaching and critically evaluate their responses to practice situations. For Donald Schön, reflection-in-action is often displayed in teachers' everyday work when they recapture their experience and critically deliberate upon their practice to gain new understandings and improve future practice. Therefore, reflective practice can be a beneficial process in teacher professional development to incorporate reflection into practice.

Being exposed to ESL teaching and working with ELLs, the participating ESL teachers constructed and reconstructed their teacher knowledge while making personal and professional interpretations of their teaching practices. Those experiences were given personal accounts that generated experiential understandings and cultivated embodied knowledge (Johnson, 1989) as they became ESL teachers. In that sense, their teacher knowledge was not only rooted in their teaching practices, but also emerged from their daily interaction with people of different backgrounds. Therefore, the ESL teachers did not come to their instructional tasks with a fixed knowledge base. They developed a new understanding of teaching during instruction by reconstructing their past experiences and

future intentions to tackle a present situation. Derived from the totality of their experiences, personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) was found in their teaching practices, blended by their personal background and characteristics, and embedded in particular situations.

The professional development experiences of the ESL teacher participants played a central role in shaping and reshaping their teacher knowledge as an inspiration for their teaching practices. As they went on narrating their teaching practices, they revealed changes in their teacher knowledge that supported their future intention to provide a quality education for ELLs. Those changes guided the way they structured classroom experience and interacted with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. On the other hand, their teacher knowledge forged by their teaching experiences was challenged and reconstructed when they tried to make sense of their teaching practices. Furthermore, they were compelled to participate in professional development when they recognized the insufficiency of their teacher knowledge by probing into their teaching practices and examining the learning outcomes of ELLs. Once their learning was connected to practice and derived from experience, they gained personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) that not only increased relevance but also enhanced authenticity in their experiences of professional development.

The three participating ESL teachers had more than ten years of experience teaching ELLs. Most of their students spoke a language other than English and came from a culture with traditions and values that differed from mainstream American culture. In the interactions with ELLs, they acknowledged that ESL teaching was not just about how the teacher carried out the curriculum, but more about how the learners experienced

the curriculum as they brought their languages and cultures to the classroom. In order to better facilitate ELLs in English learning, they suggested that ESL teachers should create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment, be familiar with the students' home practices and cultural traditions, and address cultural differences in beliefs and practices. Moreover, ESL teachers should invite their students to share their cultural traditions and practices as primary resources to make their learning authentic and representative of their cultures, rather than making quick judgments or assumptions about the cultures of ELLs.

Those suggestions were echoed by the concept of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000) that uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant for them. Being culturally responsive means that teachers embrace their students' sociocultural references and integrate diverse ways of knowing and doing into curriculum and instruction. According to Geneva Gay, teachers should be prepared to develop a knowledge base about cultural diversity, include ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrate caring and build learning communities, communicate with ethnically diverse students, and respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction (Gay, 2002). Culturally responsive teaching bridges the disconnections between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and sociocultural realities. In this approach, both teachers and students are empowered to probe into social issues that have meanings to their lives and develop a critical consciousness about power and inequality.

After recognizing the necessity to attend to cultural diversity in the classroom, the ESL teacher participants recommended incorporating multicultural education into the design and implementation of professional development. As cultural diversity permeates

the daily life of the classroom, it is imperative for ESL teachers to be responsive to diversity of ELLs and adaptive to multicultural classrooms. Through multicultural education, ESL teachers develop cultural awareness and enhance sensitivity to different cultures by introducing students to various cultures and encouraging them to respect those cultures. Multicultural education guides students in understanding that all cultures are considered valuable and that all students from different cultures are important. The work of Chan (2006) revealed that the inclusion of culture in the curriculum helps to develop positive attitudes among racial and ethnic minorities. Although teachers are faced with challenges of acknowledging diverse cultures, teachers need to create opportunities for exposure to and interaction with individuals of diverse background.

Acknowledging the essential role of native language in the education of ELLs, the participating ESL teachers explored different ways to provide support with the students' native language in their learning. Since encouraging ELLs to use their native languages or share their own cultures elevates their self-esteem and improves interpersonal relationships, ESL teachers should be receptive to the students' native language and responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of ELLs. Moreover, ELLs should learn and foster their native languages as much as possible because their native languages, along with their own cultures, are significant to them and their family. The language that ELLs use forms an important part of their sense of who they are. Understanding the need of ELLs to maintain their native language, the participating ESL teachers advocated that ESL teachers should allow different languages and cultures to exist in their classrooms. When ESL teachers encourage their students to use their native language and share their

cultural traditions, the students tend to see the value of bilingualism and preserve their culture and heritage.

Limitations of the Study

This study employs narrative inquiry as the methodology which gives prominence to human experience. This narrative inquiry is primarily concerned with the ways the participating ESL teachers experience the district professional development activities. It is not the purpose of this study to generalize, but rather to highlight the salient issues in understanding their experiences of professional development. Narrative inquiry is a way of knowing, which moves beyond traditional methods of inquiry and away from numbers, variables, and generalization. It allows this study to pay attention to the particularities of each ESL teacher's unfolding life, so it has no intention to make generalizations. In this narrative approach, the ESL teachers are able to give an authentic account of their own lived experiences and create meanings of their lives as narratives. The narrative stories, which are told, lived, retold, and relived by the ESL teachers, bring about an experiential understanding and a reflection of multiple realities.

This narrative inquiry is a small-scale study that delves into professional development experiences of three ESL teachers. The sample is so small and idiosyncratic that it is hardly possible to make it representative of the larger population. However, the participating ESL teachers have a vast wealth of personal and professional experiences that cannot be tapped through any form of literary research. Through storytelling, this narrative inquiry achieves a richness of depth that empirical research involving larger samples is unlikely to yield. Moreover, any part of the participating ESL teachers' stories may, through narrative resonance (Conle, 1996), settle into a later context or into the

context of another ESL teacher's life experience. By telling and sharing their experiential stories, the ESL teachers create correspondences among all of their stories. In addition, other ESL teachers may perceive connections to their own experience and make a response through resonance when they listen to those stories.

Because of the storied nature of life, narrative inquiry attends to the contextual construction of meaning through storytelling. Storytelling becomes a means of making sense and a way of knowing for the participating ESL teachers to share the complexity of their professional development experiences. Because the narratives of the ESL teachers are primarily self-reported in nature, the collected field texts can rarely be independently verified and may contain potential sources of bias. As a researcher, I have to be alert to "narrative secret" and "narrative smoothing" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and note them as limitations. Within narrative inquiry, there is no claim to objectivity for stories. As the ESL teachers live out stories of practice, tell stories of those experiences, and modify them by retelling and reliving them, those stories give insights into professional development for ESL teachers. Their engagement in professional growth is illuminated through their lived accounts. In short, narrative inquiry needs to be employed in a manner that plays to its strengths rather than its limitations.

Future Research

This narrative inquiry offers a glimpse of three ESL teachers being engaged in constructing and reconstructing their teacher knowledge and teaching practices through professional development. Further research can be conducted to contribute to what is known about teacher knowledge development and personal practical knowledge by taking a similar approach to cross-case analysis in an attempt to look for similarities and

differences. Cross-case analysis also helps to search for patterns as a means to go beyond individual studies to larger frameworks of understandings. It involves identifying the individual case findings of situated experience and synthesizing those findings to explore patterns and develop broad themes across cases. Since the repeated patterns remain situated rather than generalized, any attempt to apply the findings to the decision-making process in other contexts ought to be made with special caution.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practices through professional development over time, future research can also carry out longitudinal studies. These studies allow the researcher to follow particular individuals over prolonged periods of time, often lasting many years or decades to examine the relationship between professional development and the development of teacher knowledge and teaching practices. Besides, a comparative study on professional development experiences between novice and experienced ESL teachers can also provide useful insights into the design and implementation of professional development. In the research design, a different profile of teachers, such as ESL teachers at the middle-school and high-school levels, can also be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the perspective of the professional development providers, teacher educators, administrators, and colleagues, who have direct contact with the participating ESL teachers, deserves further research. This narrative inquiry limits its investigative scope to the personal and professional experiences of ESL teachers in the process of professional development. According to Dewey (1938), education, experience, and life should be understood as a whole, not as a combination of parts. Thus, professional development must be based upon lived experiences, and educative experience is

essentially a social process. To gain the holistic picture of how professional development is experienced by ESL teachers in the social, cultural, and political context, it is valid as well as indispensable to examine the viewpoints of teacher educators and other people involved in the process.

Concluding Remarks

The prevalent image of teachers as curriculum implementers has stunted teachers' professional growth and bounded their stories of who they are, rather than cultivating them into who they could be (Craig, 2013). Thus, an alternate image of teachers as curriculum makers should be introduced and nurtured in professional development programs to exert teacher agency and keep the voices of teachers alive. Inspired by Schwab's (1969) notion of teacher agency and Clandinin and Connelly's (1992) idea of the teacher as curriculum maker image along with personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), the approach to cultivate teacher images is through inquiry into the self. The self can be cultivated through imperceptible decision-making and ongoing meaning-making of experience in context and over time. When ESL teachers are involved in deliberation about what and how to teach and engaged in dialectic reflection on their lived experiences, the visions of self are emerged from their curricular and instructional work.

According to Cheryl Craig (2013), teachers naturally gravitate toward teaching their best-loved selves as part of their stories to live by. A narrative account should be employed to inquire into ESL teachers' personal sense of self and unfold their stories of knowing and being. Because teacher knowledge is embodied within individuals and embedded in the social, cultural, and political context, the professional development

experiences of ESL teachers are valued as an authoritative source. Narrative authority (Olsen, 1995) is rooted in personal practical knowledge of teachers as it focuses on what teachers actually know or how that knowledge is acquired. In order to author lives in more informative ways, ESL teachers need to inquire into the meanings that they have constructed from their life stories, including sacred and mundane stories. Therefore, narrative authority allows all voices to be heard by creating spaces for the meanings that ESL teachers make and for the stories that they live and tell.

Seeing that ELLs bring different ways of knowing and being to the classrooms, ESL teachers should incorporate various pedagogical actions and interventions into instruction and expand teaching content beyond the formal curriculum of school knowledge. In this approach, ESL teachers could make connections between school and its context as well as catalyzing community resources to facilitate quality ESL education. In critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2008), both teachers and students are viewed as active agents in making decisions and making meanings of their lived experiences. Teachers actively construct and enact curriculum alongside their students and establish a constructive relationship by sharing power and authority between students and teachers. Moreover, both teachers and students act as agents of change. They gain critical consciousness, acquire a critical lens and language, and contest educational and societal inequities in an attempt to produce social transformation.

Because most educational policies follow the top-down decision-making process, teachers and students are powerless to express their needs and will. It is essential to listen to voices of ESL teachers and ELLs who are the center of education. ESL teachers need to be critical to what has existed in reality and examine what has been taken for granted.

Being critical is not being negative, but being constructive, being hopeful, and then taking action. The hope in ESL education is on ELLs who have the freedom in learning. They should be empowered to question the hegemonic ideology and challenge the distribution of power through multiple lenses of race, ethnicity, class, and gender (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Although ESL education is facing with difficult situations, ESL teachers must keep a critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) and make collective efforts to provide an inclusive and equitable education for ELLs.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE: A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Tzu-Ying Ho from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Houston. The project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Cameron White, professor in Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Houston.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to participate in research activities that make you feel uncomfortable and may refuse to answer particular questions. Although you will be unable to remove specific comments from the audio recordings or transcripts, you may withdraw specific comments from the summary data and reports. Draft of interim forms of the summary data and reports will be shared with you within three months of the completion of the study. You will have an opportunity at that time to withdraw or rephrase specific comments for the summary data and reports.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research involves full disclosure of purposes to participants. This means that the research progress will be shared with you throughout the inquiry process and that you will have access to the print and media data if you so desire.

The intent of this research is to characterize the experiences and perceptions of ESL teachers. More specifically, the research aim is to capture your experiences and cull what knowledge you have developed over time as an ESL teacher. The research procedures for this study include audio-taped interview and electronic journaling with the principal researcher. These procedures will produce information on the lives of ESL teachers and, in particular, their experiences and perceptions of ESL teachers' professional development.

PROCEDURES

Interviews: A series of three interviews lasting 1-1/2 hours (4 hours total) will be conducted with you. Interviews will also be recorded manually and digitally on tape-recorder with the agreement of the participant. All interviews will be arranged in advance with the participant and will take place in a classroom or conference room to assure participant's privacy and confidentiality. In the audio-taped interviews and discussions, you may be asked questions such as:

- Tell me about your experiences of professional development.
- What do you learn from those experiences?
- How have they changed your teaching practices?

Reflective Journal: Electronic journaling will be a part of this study where you can communicate with the principal researcher on your own computer. The estimated personal time commitment would be 1 hour per week for 4 weeks (4 hours total).

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Interviews and conversations will be transcribed. Audiotapes and transcripts will be archived and stored in a locked office for a minimum of 3 years at the University of Houston. Consent forms will also be secured in locked cabinets in a locked office for a minimum of 5 years. Interviews will take place in locations where privacy is ensured. These places include: classrooms, conference rooms, meeting rooms. The locations of our meetings will be convenient and comfortable for you. In any written document that arises from the work, your contributions will be associated with the pseudonym to protect your identity.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Research studies that involve audio-taping for the purpose of gathering information may be uncomfortable, but do not pose risks. If discomfort is observed/ shared, taping on the particular occasion will be halted and resumed at a later date. If discomfort persists, the participant may ask to be dropped from the study or the principal investigator will recommend that the participant not continue participating in the study.

BENEFITS

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand ESL teachers' experiences and perceptions of professional development.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, conference papers, or professional publications. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified. For all publications related to this study, you (and all other participants) will be assigned pseudonyms. You may give final approval to direct quotes excerpted from your verbal or written comments.

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO TAPES

If you consent to take part in this study, please indicate whether you agree to be audio taped during the study by checking the appropriate box below. If you agree, please also indicate whether the audio tapes can be used for publication/presentation.

Yes _____ No _____ I agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Yes _____ No _____ I agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. All procedures have been explained to me and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me.
4. Any benefits have been explained to me.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Tzu-Ying Ho, M.Ed., University of Houston doctoral student and researcher, at 832-535-8889, or her supervisor Cameron White, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Houston, at 713-743-8678. I may also contact Rebecca Perez, Administrative Assistant of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at 713-743-4977 to leave a message for Ms. Ho.
6. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any verbal or written question. I may also withdraw particular comments at a later date.
7. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING MY RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

8. All information that is obtained in connection with this project and that can be identified with me will remain confidential as far as possible within legal limits. Information gained from this study that can be identified with me may be released to no one other than the principal investigator. The results of the research may be published in empirical journals, professional publications, or educational presentations without identifying my name.

SIGNATURES

I HAVE READ (OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME) THE CONTENTS OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS. I HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS. I GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR MY RECORDS AND FUTURE REFERENCE.

Study Participant (print name): _____

Signature of Study Participant: _____

Date: _____

I HAVE READ THIS FORM TO THE PARTICIPANT AND/OR THE PARTICIPANT HAS READ THIS FORM. AN EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH WAS GIVEN AND QUESTIONS FROM THE SUBJECT WERE SOLICITED AND ANSWERED TO THE PARTICIPANT'S SATISFACTION. IN MY JUDGMENT, THE PARTICIPANT HAS DEMONSTRATED COMPREHENSION OF THE INFORMATION.

Principal Investigator (print name and title): _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

The following questions will be asked of each participant in the study. These questions serve as starting points to gather information about how ESL teachers' experiences of professional development influence their practice. Additional questions will be asked based upon the participants' responses. Interview sessions will be recorded and transcribed with the agreement of the participants.

First Interview Questions: Live History

1. How did you come to be an ESL teacher?
2. Tell me about your ESL teaching experiences.
3. Tell me about your relationships with students, mentors, other campus teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider community.

Second Interview Questions: Professional Development Experiences

4. Tell me about the challenges that you have confronted as an ESL teacher.
5. How were you able to navigate your way through those challenges?
6. Talk about the various people or systems that have supported you in teaching English language learners.
7. Tell me about your experiences of professional development.
8. What did you learn from those experiences?

Third Interview Questions: Reflection on the Meaning

9. In what ways have your experiences of professional development informed, reformed, or transformed your teaching practice?
10. How have you changed as an ESL teacher as a result of your experiences and new knowledge? (i.e., in practice, attitude, values, etc.)
11. What is the vision that you hold for ESL teacher professional development?



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Division of Research
Institutional Review Board Application

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11/21/2016 9:11:54 AM

Institutional Review Board
Application ID :

14513-01 - (8626)

Title :

A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional
Development

Approval details for the Application Id: 8626

	Decision	Approver Name	Date	Comment
PI signature	Approved	Ho, Tzu Ying Ms.	09/20/2016	
DOR signature	Approved	Admin, IRB	09/23/2016	

University of Houston

Division of Research

Application Data for Application ID: 8626

Title	A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development
Application Type	Renewal with Revision
Review Type	Expedited
Expedite Code	7: Research on individual or group characteristics or
Exemption Code	Not Applicable
Research Reason	Doctoral Dissertation

Investigator Data for Application ID: 8626

PI Name	Is Principal?	Is Co-Investigator?	Is External?	Other Personnel Type?	Is Student?	Faculty Sponsor Name
White, Cameron Dr.			No	Thesis Committee Member	No	Not Applicable
Mountain, Mignonette Dr.			No	Thesis Committee Member	No	Not Applicable
Hutchison, Laveria F. Dr.			No	Thesis Committee Member	No	Not Applicable
Craig, Cheryl Dr.			Yes	Thesis Committee Member	No	Not Applicable
Ho, Tzu Ying Ms.	Yes		No		Yes	White, Cameron Dr.

Renewal application data for application Id: 8626

Question	Answer
1) Is this Renewal of your previously submitted paper application?	No:
2) What is the current status of this project? (select one)	Renewal. Study is ongoing AND no new participants will be enrolled BUT there will be ongoing contact with previously consented subjects.
3) Restate the purpose of the Study. (Renewals Only)	To continually improve the efficiency of classroom instruction and the effectiveness of student learning, this study explores ESL teachers' learning process and outcomes through the passage of professional development. By reflecting on ESL teachers' professional development experiences and narrating ESL teachers' educational practices, this study is intended to provide teacher educators and consultants with practical considerations in professional development design and implementation.
4) Provide a summary of the number of participants for the past year:	
4.01) Number of subjects who have participated:	3 participants in total
4.02) Number who withdrew (both subject and investigator initiated):	None
4.03) Explanation of withdrawals	N/A
4.04) If this information is not available, explain:	
5) Provide a description of the subjects since commencement of the study:	
5.01) Number of subjects who have participated:	3 participants in total

5.02) Number who withdrew (both subject and investigator initiated):	None
5.03) Explanation of withdrawals	N/A
5.04) If this information is not available, explain:	
6) Did any subject voice complaints about the study or his/her participation in the study? Did any subject have any unanticipated events or were any subjects injured? If yes, provide a report of each incident or indicate that a report has already been submitted to the CPHS (include date of submission).	No
7) List all publications and/or conference presentations resulting from this project since the last approval date.	"To Swim or to Drown in Professional Development: An English as a Second Language Teachers' Experience," poster session, 1st Annual Graduate Research and Scholarship Projects Day 2014

Revision application data for application Id: 8626

Question	Answer
1) Revision Description (check all that are appropriate)	Revision to currently approved protocol
2) Risk Involve:(Check One)	This revision does not increase risks to participants enrolled in this study. (For students, signature of faculty sponsor is required.)
3) Describe the proposed revision. If applicable, include a scientific justification for the revision (for example, changes in the study population).	1. Change the research reason from "pilot study" to "doctoral dissertation" because this pilot study turns out to be my doctoral dissertation. 2. Change the title to be the same as the dissertation title (I changed it from "Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners: A Narrative Inquiry into Experiences" to "A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development") The revised title is more clear and straight forward. 3. Revise the preliminary research question from "How ESL teachers' experiences of professional development influence their classroom practice?" to "What are ESL teachers' experiences of professional development?" because the revised preliminary research question can cover the previous one and lead the following investigations: What challenges do ESL teachers encounter and what support do they receive while serving English language learners? What are the changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practices that occur through professional development? What features of the social, cultural, and political context are significant in ESL teachers' professional development experiences? 4. Change the faculty sponsor from Dr. Cheryl Craig to Dr. Cameron White. Because Dr. Cheryl Craig's employment at the University of Houston will end on August 31, 2016, I went through the process of "Request to Change Advisor" at MyAdvisor in Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education. Starting from August 5, 2016, Dr. Cameron White is my advisor, as well as my Faculty Sponsor. 5. Add Dr. Cameron White, Dr. Cheryl Craig, Dr. Laveria Hutchison, and Dr. Mignonette Mountain as Thesis/Dissertation Committee Member

Question	Answer
4) State the specific research hypotheses or questions to be addressed in this study	The preliminary research question is: What are ESL teachers' experiences of professional development? The following questions guiding the investigation are: What challenges do ESL teachers encounter and what support do they receive while serving English language learners? What are the changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practices that occur through professional development? What features of the social, cultural, and political context are significant in ESL teachers' professional development experiences?
5) What is the importance/significance of the knowledge that may result?	To continually improve the efficiency of classroom instruction and the effectiveness of student learning, this study will explore ESL teachers' learning process and outcomes through the passage of professional development. By reflecting on ESL teachers' professional development experiences and narrating ESL teachers' educational practices, this study is intended to provide teacher educators and consultants with practical considerations in professional development design and implementation.
6) Type of Subject Population (check all that are appropriate)	Adults
6.01) Expected maximum number of participants	Expected maximum number of participants are 3 ESL teachers.
6.02) Age of proposed subject(s) (check all that apply)	Adults (18yrs-64yrs)
6.03) Inclusion Criteria:	Teacher participants are classroom teachers who are working with English language learners in class. Besides, participating teachers are certified ESL teachers.
6.04) Exclusion Criteria:	Teachers are not classroom teachers who are serving English language learners in class. Besides, teachers are not certified ESL teachers.
6.05) Justification:	This study centers on the experiences of ESL teachers who serve English language learners. For this reason, certified ESL teachers who are working with English language learners will be included in the study.
6.06) Determination:	Teacher participants will be self-determined based on their self-identification as a classroom teacher teaching English language learners and volunteering to participate in the study.
7) If this study proposes to include children, this inclusion must meet one of the following criterion for risk/benefits assessment according to the federal regulations (45 CFR 46, subpart D). Check the appropriate box:	
8) If the research involves any of the following, check all that are appropriate:	Interview
9) Location(s) of Research Activities:	UH campus
10) Informed Consent of Subjects: Your study protocol must clearly address one of the following areas:	Informed Consent. Signed informed consent is the default. A model consent is available on the CPHS website and should be used as a basis for developing your informed consent document. If applicable, the proposed consent must be included with the application. (http://www.research.uh.edu/PCC/CPHS/Informed.html) ATTACH COPY OF PROPOSED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Question	Answer
11) Describe the research study design. (Describe the research methods to be employed and the variables to be studied. Include a description of the data collection techniques and/or the statistical methods to be employed.)	This study employs narrative inquiry as a method to uncover teacher's stories related to professional development. The narrative inquiry will examine the experiences of ESL teachers, including challenges and support during professional development, changes in teacher knowledge and teaching practice, and the influence of socioeconomic, cultural, and political contexts. Four interpretive tools to be used are: broadening, burrowing, storying/restorying, and fictionalization. Broadening will be employed to determine the context of the study and to bring forward connections with the broader education landscape and related literature. Burrowing will be used to probe teachers' sense-making of storied experiences and to highlight particular experiences. Storying and restorying of teachers' experiences will illuminate how people change their understandings and identities across contexts and activities, and over time. Fictionalization will shift circumstances to decrease the likelihood of participants being identified.
12) Describe each task subjects will be asked to perform.	(1) Interviews: The purpose of interviews in research is to gain knowledge and understanding of the participants' experience and of the meaning that they construct of those experiences. In this study, a series of 3 interviews lasting 1-1/2 hours (4 hours total) will be conducted individually with the participating teachers. The 3 interviews will be conducted over a period of 3 months as scheduled by agreement between the researcher and each participant. The first interview focuses on life history, the second interview focuses on the details of experience, and the third interview focuses on reflection on the meaning. Interviews will be recorded digitally on tape-recorder with the agreement of the participants. If they choose not to be audiotaped, the researcher will take notes instead. Participants are not required to be audiotaped to participate in the study. All interviews will be arranged in advance with the participants and will take place in classrooms or conference rooms to assure participants' privacy and confidentiality. (2) Electronic Journaling: The purpose of the electronic journaling is to provide an opportunity for participants to reflect upon and share their thoughts about their professional development experiences. Because this is a reflective piece, there are no prompting questions utilized. The participating teachers will be asked to participate in electronic journaling with a time commitment of 1 hour per week for 4 weeks (4 hours total).
13) Describe how potential subjects will be identified and recruited? (Attach a script or outline of all information that will be provided to potential subjects. Include a copy of all written solicitation, recruitment ad, and/or outline for oral presentation.)	To recruit teachers for this study, an announcement will be made at a teacher professional development course at UH. Potential participants will be self-identified and based on teacher self-determination that he/she meets the selection criteria.
14) Describe the process for obtaining informed consent and/or assent. How will investigators ensure that each subjects participation will be voluntary (i.e., free of direct or implied coercion)?	The researcher will explain that there are no rewards will be given to potential participants for taking part in the study, and furthermore that all participation is voluntary. Additionally, it will be explained that participants may leave at anytime during the course of the study. All of this information will also be included on the participant consent form.
	In this study, data will be collected through interviews and electronic journaling as described below. Interviews: The purpose of interviews in research is to gain knowledge and understanding of the participants' experience and of the meaning that they construct of those experiences. In

15) Briefly describe each measurement instrument to be used in this study (e.g., questionnaires, surveys, tests, interview questions, observational procedures, or other instruments) AND attach to the application a copy of each (appropriately labeled and collated). If any are omitted, please explain.	this study, a series of 3 interviews lasting 1-1/2 hours (4 hours total) will be conducted individually with the participating teachers. The 3 interviews will be conducted over a period of 3 months as scheduled by agreement between the researcher and each participant. The first interview focuses on life history, the second interview focuses on the details of experience, and the third interview focuses on reflection on the meaning. Interviews will be recorded digitally on tape-recorder with the agreement of the participants. If they choose not to be audiotaped, the researcher will take notes instead. Participants are not required to be audiotaped to participate in the study. All interviews will be arranged in advance with the participants and will take place in classrooms or conference rooms to assure participants' privacy and confidentiality. Electronic Journaling: The purpose of the electronic journaling is to provide an opportunity for participants to reflect upon and share their thoughts about their professional development experiences. Because this is a reflective piece, there are no prompting questions utilized. The participating teachers will be asked to participate in electronic journaling with a time commitment of 1 hour per week for 4 weeks (4 hours total). Sample of interview questions are included in the appendix and sample questions are provided in the consent form.
16) Describe the setting and mode for administering any materials listed in question 15 (e.g., telephone, one-on-one, group). Include the duration, intervals of administration, and amount of time required for each survey/procedure. Also describe how you plan to maintain privacy and confidentiality during the administration.	Interviews will take place in private spaces either in classrooms or in conference rooms behind closed doors without students. (3 interviews of 1-1/2 hours = 4 hours total for each participating teacher) Journals are private documents. Teachers can write their entries at home or at school. The journals will be discreetly maintained by the researcher. (1 hour per week for 4 weeks = 4 hours for each participating teacher)
17) Approximately how much time will be required of each subject? Provide both a total time commitment as well as a time commitment for each visit/session.	For each participating teacher - Total time requirement 8 hours (4 hours interview and 4 hours journaling). Interviews: A series of 3 face-to-face and one-to-one interviews lasting 1-1/2 hours (4 hours total) will be conducted individually with the participating teachers. Electronic Journaling: The participating teachers will participate in electronic journaling individually. The time commitment will be 1 hour per week for 4 weeks (4 hours total).
18) Will Subjects experience any possible risks involved with participation in this project?	
18.01) Risk of Physical Discomfort or Harm	No:
18.02) Risk of Psychological Harm (including stress/discomfort)	Yes: :Research studies that involve audio-taping for the purpose of gathering information may be uncomfortable for participants. If discomfort is observed or shared, taping on the particular occasion will be halted and resumed at a later date. If discomfort persists, the participant may ask to be dropped from the study or the principal investigator will recommend that the participant not continue participating in the study.
18.03) Risk of Legal Actions (such as criminal prosecution or civil sanctions)	No:
18.04) Risk of Harm to Social Status (such as loss of friendship)	No:
18.05) Risk of Harm to Employment Status	No:
18.06) Other Risks	No:
19) Does the research involve any of these possible risks or harms to subjects? Check all that	

apply.	
20) What benefits, if any, can the subject expect from their participation?	There are no direct benefits to the participant for participating in this study. While some participants may gain knowledge of teacher experiences through reflection on their experiences and as a result of their participation in the study. This outcome is not assured or guaranteed.
21) What inducements or rewards (e.g., financial compensation, extra credit, and other incentives), if any, will be offered to potential subjects for their participation?	No inducements, reward, or other incentives will be offered to potential subjects for their participation.

Research Data for Application ID: 8626

Question	Answer
22) Will you record any direct identifiers, names, social security numbers, addresses, telephone numbers, patient or student ID numbers, etc.?	Yes: :A list of participating teachers will be recorded. Where all published research is concerned, pseudonyms will be assigned people's names. Participants may choose their pseudonyms if they so desire. To protect the confidentiality of the data, match lists will be kept in a separate location.
23) Will you retain a link between study code numbers and direct identifiers after the data collection is complete?	Yes: :Where the published research is concerned, pseudonyms will be assigned people's names. Participants may choose their pseudonyms if they so desire. To protect the confidentiality of the data, match lists will be kept in a separate location.
24) Will anyone outside the research team have access to the links or identifiers?	No:
25) Where, how long, and in what format (such as paper, digital or electronic media, video, audio or photographic) will data be kept? In addition, describe what security provisions will be taken to protect these data (password protection, encryption, etc.). [Note: University of Houston policy on data retention requires that research data be maintained for a minimum of 3 years after completion of the project. All research data collected during this project is subject to the University of Houston data retention policy found at http://www.research.uh.edu/Home/Division-of-Research/Research-Services/Research-Policies/Access-to-and-Retention-of-Research-Data.aspx]	Data in paper, digital, electronic media, and audio forms will be kept in filing cabinets and shelves in a locked research office (230 Farish Hall) for a minimum of five years and a maximum of 10 years.

Interview Questions - Interview Questions.docx

A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development

Interview Questions

The following questions will be asked of each participant in the study. These questions serve as starting points to gather information about how ESL teachers' experiences of professional development influence their practice. Additional questions will be asked based upon the participants' responses. Interview sessions will be recorded and transcribed with the agreement of the participants.

First Interview Questions: Live History

1. How did you come to be an ESL teacher?
2. Tell me about your ESL teaching experiences.
3. Tell me about your relationships with students, mentors, other campus teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider community.

Second Interview Questions: Professional Development Experiences

4. Tell me about the challenges that you have confronted as an ESL teacher.
5. How were you able to navigate your way through those challenges?
6. Talk about the various people or systems that have supported you in teaching English language learners.
7. Tell me about your experiences of professional development.
8. What did you learn from those experiences?

Third Interview Questions: Reflection on the Meaning

9. In what ways have your experiences of professional development informed, reformed, or transformed your teaching practice?
10. How have you changed as an ESL teacher as a result of your experiences and new knowledge? (i.e., in practice, attitude, values, etc.)
11. What is the vision that you hold for ESL teacher professional development?

Recruitment Script - Recruitment Script.docx

A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development

Recruitment Announcement

(Note: The following announcement will be made by the researcher at a teacher professional development course at UH as arranged in advance with the course instructor.)

Good afternoon. My name is Tzu-Ying Ho. I am currently a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Houston. The reason that I am here today is to extend an invitation to participate in my dissertation on professional development for ESL teachers.

The purpose of the research is to better understand the experiences of ESL teachers in professional development activities. For this reason, I am specifically looking for certified ESL teachers who are working with English language learners in class. In particular, I am seeking to interview three teacher participants.

There will be no reward for the participants, however, the information gathered will add to the research on ESL teachers' experiences and perceptions of professional development.

If you are interested in participating, or would like more information regard any aspect of the study, I will be available after the meeting to respond to your questions, comments, or concerns.

Consent - Consent.docx

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE: A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Tzu-Ying Ho from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Houston. The project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Cameron White, professor in Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Houston.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to participate in research activities that make you feel uncomfortable and may refuse to answer particular questions. Although you will be unable to remove specific comments from the audio recordings or transcripts, you may withdraw specific comments from the summary data and reports. Draft of interim forms of the summary data and reports will be shared with you within three months of the completion of the study. You will have an opportunity at that time to withdraw or rephrase specific comments for the summary data and reports.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research involves full disclosure of purposes to participants. This means that the research progress will be shared with you throughout the inquiry process and that you will have access to the print and media data if you so desire.

The intent of this research is to characterize the experiences and perceptions of ESL teachers. More specifically, the research aim is to capture your experiences and cull what knowledge you have developed over time as an ESL teacher. The research procedures for this study include interviews and electronic journaling with the principal researcher. These procedures will produce information on the lives of ESL teachers and, in particular, their experiences and perceptions of ESL teachers' professional development.

PROCEDURES

Interviews: A series of three interviews lasting 1-1/2 hours (4 hours total) will be conducted with you. Interviews will also be recorded manually and digitally on tape-recorder with the agreement of the participant. All interviews will be arranged in advance with the participant and

will take place in a classroom or conference room to assure participant's privacy and confidentiality. In the interviews and discussions, you may be asked questions such as:

- Tell me about your experiences of professional development.
- What do you learn from those experiences?
- How have they changed your teaching practices?

Reflective Journal: Electronic journaling will be a part of this study where you can communicate with the principal researcher on your own computer. The estimated personal time commitment would be 1 hour per week for 4 weeks (4 hours total).

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Interviews and conversations will be transcribed. Audiotapes and transcripts will be archived and stored in a locked office for a minimum of 3 years at the University of Houston. Consent forms will also be secured in locked cabinets in a locked office for a minimum of 5 years. Interviews will take place in locations where privacy is ensured. These places include: classrooms, conference rooms, meeting rooms. The locations of our meetings will be convenient and comfortable for you. In any written document that arises from the work, your contributions will be associated with the pseudonym to protect your identity.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Research studies that involve audio-taping for the purpose of gathering information may be uncomfortable, but do not pose risks. If discomfort is observed/ shared, taping on the particular occasion will be halted and resumed at a later date. If discomfort persists, the participant may ask to be dropped from the study or the principal investigator will recommend that the participant not continue participating in the study.

BENEFITS

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand ESL teachers' experiences and perceptions of professional development.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, conference papers, or professional publications. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified. For all publications related to this study, you (and all other participants) will be assigned pseudonyms. You may give final approval to direct quotes excepted from your verbal or written comments.

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO TAPES

If you consent to take part in this study, please indicate whether you agree to be audiotaped during the study by checking the appropriate response below. If you agree, please also indicate whether the audio tapes can be used for publication/presentation.

Yes _____ No _____ I agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Yes _____ No _____ I agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.

With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the tape-recorder at your request. Or if you do not wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. All procedures have been explained to me and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me.
4. Any benefits have been explained to me.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Tzu-Ying Ho, M.Ed., University of Houston doctoral student and researcher, at 713-743-0958 or at tho@uh.edu, or her supervisor Cameron White, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Houston, at 713-743-8678. I may also contact Rebecca Perez, Administrative Assistant of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at 713-743-4977 to leave a message for Ms. Ho.
6. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any verbal or written question.

I may also withdraw particular comments at a later date.

7. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING MY RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
8. All information that is obtained in connection with this project and that can be identified with me will remain confidential as far as possible within legal limits. Information gained from this study that can be identified with me may be released to no one other than the principal investigator. The results of the research may be published in empirical journals, professional publications, or educational presentations without identifying my name.

SIGNATURES

I HAVE READ (OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME) THE CONTENTS OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS. I HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS. I GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR MY RECORDS AND FUTURE REFERENCE.

Study Participant (print name): _____

Signature of Study Participant: _____

Date: _____

I HAVE READ THIS FORM TO THE PARTICIPANT AND/OR THE PARTICIPANT HAS READ THIS FORM. AN EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH WAS GIVEN AND QUESTIONS FROM THE SUBJECT WERE SOLICITED AND ANSWERED TO THE PARTICIPANT'S SATISFACTION. IN MY JUDGMENT, THE PARTICIPANT HAS DEMONSTRATED COMPREHENSION OF THE INFORMATION.

Principal Investigator (print name and title): _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Final Approval

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
DIVISION OF RESEARCH

Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

September 23, 2016

Ms. Tzu Ying Ho
Dr. Cameron White
Education

Dear Ms. Ho,

The IRB has reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Renewal with Revision
Title of Study:	A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development
Investigator:	Tzu Ying Ho
IRB ID:	8626 – 145113-01
IRB Coordinator	Danielle Griffin

The IRB approved the study from:

- Approval Date: 9/23/2016
- Expiration Date: 9/22/2017

As required by federal regulations governing research in human subjects, research procedures (including recruitment, informed consent, intervention, data collection or data analysis) may not be conducted after the expiration date.

Sincerely,

Office of Research Policies, Compliance and Committees (ORPCC)
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/>

cc: **Faculty Sponsor**

MNSA

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

September 19, 2016

Ms. Tzu Ying Ho
Dean, Education

Dear Ms. Tzu Ying Ho,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "A Narrative Inquiry into ESL Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development" on September 02, 2016, according to institutional guidelines.

The Committee has given your project approval pending clarification of the stipulations listed below:

1. Please update and upload all study related documents to reflect the new title of the study and advisor name and contact information

You must submit evidence of compliance with the above stipulations online via the Research Administration Management Portal (RAMP), by **October 19, 2016**. The material you submit to meet these contingencies must be certified by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects as acceptable before you may begin data collection. If you fail to respond by this date, your approval may be revoked. If study approval is revoked, this will necessitate your reapplying to the Committee before initiation of your research project. Research without the Committee's sanction could result in an administrative block to the receipt of your degree.

Please do the following:

- Write a letter containing a point-by-point response to the above changes, indicating whether you agree or disagree with each requested change.
- Revise documents attached to the study as needed in "tracked-changes" format or using a similar method to indicate what changes were made.
- Edit the study in the IRB system as needed, updating the documents with your new tracked-changes versions.
- Submit the changes back to the IRB, attaching your point-by-point response letter in the Submit Changes form.

If you have any questions, please contact Danielle Griffin at (713) 743-4057.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Lorraine Reitzel, Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

Protocol Number: 14513-01 Full Review: Expedited Review: X

Cover Letter - IRB Clarification Cover Letter